



Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, December 5, 2023
7:00pm

The Select Board Regular Meeting was held virtually in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Certain Other Activities and Projects, and signed into law on March 29, 2023, this meeting was conducted via remote participation.

Select Board participants:

Rich Maiore, Charles Oliver, Don Ludwig, Kara Minar, Erin McBee

Town Department participants:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet and Finance Director Jared Mullane

Finance Director update on FY25 budget

Jared Mullane shared the budget roll up document. He went over the budget revenue (tax levy) which includes debt exclusions, state and local aid and assessments. He confirmed the new growth number and tax rate have been finalized. The figures included for state aid are conservative due to their projected budget shortfall. He indicated local receipts/transfers are down from last year. He reported the five-year revenue and expense projections indicate a deficit. Mullane reported the Finance Committee is reviewing budget submissions and will meet with departments. They discussed override scenarios and Kara Minar wondered how feasibly it would be to reduce the amount by 50%. Charles Oliver reported the Capital Planning and Investment Committee is finalizing their project rankings.

Insurance Advisory Committee appointment

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Edward Denmark as the retiree representative.

Staff Report/updates (Attachment A)

Memorial Bench/Tree Policy

Town Administrator Tim Bragan reported on his review of various policies and additional information regarding memorials. He prepared a policy admitting he learned from his research having a policy allowing memorials is difficult to administer and maintain in a fair and equitable manner. Bragan also prepared a policy prohibiting memorials for the board to consider. They understood the rationale of having a policy in place to prohibit memorials. They asked Bragan to update the draft to include simply memorials instead of specifying benches and trees. They also confirmed this is for lands under the jurisdiction of the Select Board. They discussed seeking feedback from other groups in town such as the Library Trustees and Conservation that may have policies. They will finalize at their next meeting.

Insert with tax bills from the Finance Department

Finance Director Jared Mullane requested an insert informing residents of a new mailing address for tax payments. There will now be a lockbox address which will allow for expedited processing of payments. This was suggested by the town auditors. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve insert with amended note physical lockbox at town hall is still available.

Update on holiday lights on the common

Rich Maiore continues to work with a vendor to set up lights on the common. He reported the Finance Committee has approved \$3300 for this.

Select Board Reports

Erin McBee reported the Planning Board is working on multi-family site designation on Ayer Rd for the MBTA community requirements. They are discussing next steps for the Master Plan.

Kara Minar reported there are funds available for training on building codes regarding climate and energy.

Charles Olivier announced the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust will attend the December 19th meeting to present the Housing Production Plan.

Charles Oliver reported the Capital Planning and Investment Committee will review rating results soon.

Don Ludwig reported the newly formed Transfer Station Committee has had their initial meeting. Erin McBee and Libby Levison will co-chair.

Rich Maiore reported the consultant has completed their work on the Harvard Park woods location. Once reviewed by the Park & Recreation Commission the results will come to the Select Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm

Documents referenced:

General Fund - 5 Year Budgeted Revenue / Expense Projection

Memorial Bench/Tree draft policies – dated December 2023

Lockbox payment address insert – dated December 2023