

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 13, 2024
Zoom Only

Present via Zoom: Cortni Frecha, Ingeborg Hegemann Clark, Hector Constantzos, John “JT” Toole, and Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski

Absent: Megan Birch-McMichael

Chair Frecha called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Public Comment

Chair Frecha stated that comments are limited to items not on the agenda; speakers should state their name and address, and limit comments to two minutes or less.

Deb Woods spoke about information that was presented at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting regarding the renovation of the Randall Library. Ms. Woods said the project is no longer what was approved by town meeting.

Jon Mascia, 153 Harvard Road, spoke about clean water and safe roads in the community, a topic which he said he brought to the Board a year ago, and specifically the status of Harvard Road between Wedgewood Road and Cider Mill Road.

Board Member Comments - none

Town Administrator (TA) Report

- The town has received two state grants, one to improve cybersecurity and one is from the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program, which will allow for an ADA assessment of our buildings. The TA thanked Procurements and Grants Administrator Ashley Pinard for getting the applications filed and for the successful outcome.
- Yesterday there was a community open house to discuss and get feedback on the future of the North Course of Stow Acres. The TA thanked everyone who came out; it was a very successful day.
- Regarding the Bose property, they are no longer maintaining or plowing their property, and this has become a liability. They put up ‘no trespassing’ signs and when these were disregarded Bose installed a fence. There is a potential sale of the property scheduled for next month.
- The TA reminded folks that there is a shuttle which goes from the former fire station to and from the South Acton train station. The schedule is on the town’s website and will be in The Independent this week. There is also a shopping shuttle to and from several apartment complexes in town.

Appointments

Highway Department

Ms. Dembkoski said there were two excellent candidates for the position of Equipment Operator, both of whom are current employees. Mr. Whalen has more experience with the operator role.

Mr. Constantzos moved to appoint Nick Whalen to the position of Equipment Operator for the Highway Department. Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

For the Laborer position, Ms. Demboski said there were two excellent internal candidates. Mr. Higgins wants to grow in this position and make this his long-time career.

Mr. Constantzos moved to appoint Jamie Higgins to the position of Laborer for the Highway Department. Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Town Hall Building Reuse Committee

Stacen Goldman and Jonathan Daisy were present via Zoom, and were thanked for their willingness to step up and be on the committee.

Mr. Constantzos moved to appoint Stacen Goldman and Jonathan Daisy to the Town Hall Building Reuse Committee through June 30, 2025.

Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

2024 Annual Election Information

Town Clerk Linda Hathaway was present via Zoom.

The office has sent out over 700 Vote By Mail ballots and another 400 will go out this week.

Mr. Constantzos moved to approve the following slate of candidates on the ballot for the 2024 Annual Town Election, scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 2024:

Board of Assessors - One 3-year term

Board of Health - One 3-year term

Nashoba Regional School Committee - One 3-year term

Planning Board - One 5-year term

Trustee, Randall Library - Two 3-year terms

Select Board - Two 3-year terms

Stow Housing Authority - One 5-year term

Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Select Board 2023 Annual Report

The Board praised the draft of the Annual Report prepared by Office Assistant Phoebe Haberkorn.

Mr. Constantzos moved to approve the Select Board 2023 Annual Report as drafted.

Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Dissolve the Gleasondale Local Historic District Study Committee

The Planning Director has requested that the Select Board formally dissolve the committee. The remaining members of the committee are pursuing alternative means of preserving the historical character of Gleasondale Village and the formal committee does not need to continue.

Mr. Constantzos moved to dissolve the Gleasondale Local Historic District Study Committee.

Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Conservation Restriction on Hallock Point

Conservation Assistant Jacquie Goring was present via Zoom.

Ms. Goring said that the property was protected in 2021 and they are several years into waiting for the state review process. Because CPA funds were used for the project, a Conservation Restriction is required by a third-party holder, which will be the Stow Conservation Trust. The Conservation Commission has approved this and Select Board approval is the next step. The Conservation Trust signs next and then the EEA (MA Energy and Environmental Affairs) does the final signature and it will then be recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

Mr. Constantzos moved to approve and execute the Conservation Restriction on Hallock Point, as presented at this meeting.

Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Endorsement of the Small Town Administrators of MA (STAM) Legislative Priorities

Ms. Dembkoski is the current president of the STAM association and one of its goals is for the 100 communities to work together and present one voice to the administration on priorities that they feel are important to small towns. All association members are bringing this to their Boards to ask for support, so when they are submitted to the legislation it will be on behalf of the membership and the towns that they represent. There are many issues that do not affect the 351 municipalities equally.

Mr. Constantzos moved to endorse the legislative priorities of the Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts (STAM), as presented at this meeting.

Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Constantzos moved to accept the meeting minutes of the January 23, 2024 meeting as drafted.

Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Board Correspondence & Updates

There have been more changes to the draft Climate Action Plan that was included in correspondence, and the Board will review the final document at a future meeting when it is presented to them.

Regarding the Boy Scout Troop 1 request for parking at Pompo, the topic will be on a future agenda so the Board can give a formal response.

Mr. Constantzos was impressed with Asst. TA Erin Mulcahy's review of the status of West Acton Road.

Regarding the condition of Harvard Road, Ms. Dembkoski said that even though Highway personnel go out almost daily to check the status, the majority of the issue is a private civil matter.

Adjournment

At 7:44 p.m. Mr. Constantzos moved to adjourn. Mr. Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Sampson, Executive Assistant

Documents used at this meeting:

Documents can be found in the Select Board Office in the meeting folder.