

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 27, 2024
Stow Town Building & Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Cortni Frecha, Megan Birch-McMichael, Ingeborg Hegemann Clark, Hector Constantzos, John “JT” Toole, and Assistant Town Administrator Erin Mulcahy.

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.

Town Clerk Linda Hathaway gave an update on early voting and vote by mail. Her office sent out 1315 ballots and so far 600+ ballots have been returned. Voters have until the polls close on March 5 to return a ballot, but Ms. Hathaway recommends that people return them earlier. To date, 98 people have voted via the early in-person voting process.

Board Member Comments - none

Town Administrator (TA) Report

Ms. Mulcahy provided Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski’s report:

- Beginning in March, the Planning Board will move their meetings to the first and third Tuesdays so they will not conflict with the Select Board meetings. This will allow members of both Boards to watch and/or participate with the other Board as necessary.
- After an almost three year wait the new bucket truck was delivered to the highway department.
- The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) has established a hearing schedule for the Residences at Stow Acres and will meet to discuss different topics from March 5 through July. The schedule with topics can be found on the ZBA webpage.
- Our next Stow Municipal Message will be posted later this week.

Appointment of Call Fire Lieutenant

Fire Captain Barry Evers and Firefighter Stephen Laaper were present in the Warren Room.

The department has five Call Lieutenants on staff and currently there is one vacancy. There were many good applicants and after a thorough process Steve Laaper, who has been with the department since 2020 and has served successfully in many capacities, was selected for the promotion.

Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to appoint Stephen Laaper to the position of Call Lieutenant for the Town of Stow Fire Department, for a term ending June 30, 2024.

Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Jessica Laaper pinned the new badge on the uniform of her husband Call Lieutenant Stephen Laaper.

Town Center Streetscape Presentation

Present via Zoom: Planning Director Valerie Oorthuys; Jeff Maxtutis and Anna Sangree of BETA Group.
Present in the Warren Room: Land Use Planner Michael Slagle; Dennis Flynn of BETA Group; members of the Planning Board (PB).

Ms. Oorthuys provided background information on the Town's goal to upgrade the streetscapes in the town center, and how they got to this phase in the planning process. Funds were set aside for the concept phase of the work at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. An intersection study was coordinated with the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization to gather baseline data and preliminary recommendations. This study was completed last fall.

Ms. Oorthuys turned the meeting over to Dennis Flynn, the project manager from BETA Group, who provided an in-depth Stow Town Center Improvement Plan which reviewed project goals, existing conditions, a bike/pedestrian planning toolbox, and preliminary concept ideas. The goals are:

- enhance the experience for people walking and biking within and to the town center;
- improve connectivity for non-motorized vehicles between locations in and around the town center;
- prioritize safety for all road users with future investments;
- design for all ages and abilities.

After the presentation Select Board Chair Frecha opened the meeting to comments. Residents participated in person and via Zoom. A summary of the comments heard is: traffic counts focused on peak hours on a typical weekday did not include data when bike teams are travelling through the intersections, nor student foot traffic after school; the pros and cons of sidewalks extending east along Crescent Street included the strong belief that sidewalks would be used vs. the cost of sidewalks and concerns with shared use of pedestrian and bike ways; there is a lack of bike boxes or bike stencils at the Gleasondale Road (northbound) and Great Road/Route 117; there is a need for improvements at the intersection of Great Road/Route 117 (eastbound) and Crescent Street to increase safety for cars, cyclists and pedestrians; and concern for protecting private property rights.

PB Chair Lori Clark said this is the beginning stages and people can submit comments to the Planning Department. The documents will be posted to the Planning Department's Transportation webpage.

Special Event Permit – Stow Town Clean Up

Jennifer Henderson was present via Zoom.

Ms. Henderson is requesting a permit for the 15th annual Stow Town Clean Up. The event will be over the weekend of April 27-28 and the Highway Department will pick up the bags on Monday, April 29, 2024. The group considered pulling invasive plants but there are too many issues around this and they will not be adding that this year.

Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to permit Jennifer Henderson and other volunteers to use the Lower Common on Saturday, April 27, 2024 between 8 AM and 12 Noon to distribute trash collection bags and protective gear, for the annual Stow Town Clean Up, and to waive the requirement of an insurance certificate. There will be no removal of invasive plants and all participants will need to sign releases that will be returned to the Town by April 29.

Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Stow Police Department – Policies & Agreements

Police Chief Michael SALLESE was present in the Warren Room.

Policy Update - 5.07 Traffic Enforcement

In 2014, General Order 14-02 was enacted to ensure officer safety and officer response to back up fellow officers on vehicle stops. This was updated in 2015 so that the initiating officer may cancel the second officer, and in reviewing the order Chief SALLESE believes that this is decreasing officer safety. The Chief would like to rescind General Order 14-02 and make a procedural change to Policy 5.07 using the language that was presented at the meeting.

Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to approve the updated 5.07 Traffic Enforcement policy as presented by Stow Police Chief Michael SALLESE.

Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Central Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (CEMLEC) Mutual Aid Agreement

CEMLEC's new mutual aid agreement includes new laws, regulations, and requirements of police departments that have not been changed since 2013. CEMLEC augments local departments by providing specialized services, equipment, and personnel, such as SWAT, Motor Unit, Collision Reconstruction, K9, and Special Services. The department still has access to the State Police if needed.

Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to approve and sign the CEMLEC (Central Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council) Mutual Aid Agreement as presented by Stow Police Chief Michael SALLESE.

Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

POST Attestation for Police Chief

The MA Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission was established by the Acts of 2020 and officers must be certified to be a police officer. For 2024, officers with last names Q-Z are to be recertified by the Chief. The appointing authority for Chief SALLESE needs to attest to his character and fitness for his recertification.

Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to approve and have Cortni Frecha sign the POST Attestation for Police Chief Michael SALLESE.

Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Accept Donation from Bose

The police station was built in 1996 and the furniture has not been changed since that time. The Bose location in Stow is closing and would like to donate office furniture to the Police Department. The current furniture is not reusable and will be disposed of properly.

Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to accept the donation from Bose.

Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Disposition of Surplus Goods

The Facilities Department requested that 18 used tires that the Police Department has deemed surplus, with a value under \$10,000, be disposed of properly.

Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to declare the tires presented on the list as surplus and to authorize the disposal of these items.

Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Meeting Minutes

Chair Frecha said there was a request by Deb Woods to reexamine the part of the minutes with her comments. The Board tabled this until the next meeting.

Board Correspondence & Updates

The Board will put the issue of inaccessibility of announcements (text for images) on a future agenda.

The Board would like Library Director Tina McAndrew to update them on the library project.

Adjournment

At 9:18 p.m. Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to adjourn. Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Sampson

Executive Assistant

Documents used at this meeting:

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