

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 28, 2021
Stow Town Building & via Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Chair Ellen Sturgis, Megan Birch-McMichael, Zack Burns, Cortni Frecha, and Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski

Absent: James Salvie

Also present: Chief Michael Sallese, Troy Paradise, Lee Coopridger, Carol Lynn, Martin Meyer, and Katie Fisher

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

Public Input: none.

Board Member Comments: Chair Sturgis mentioned that Mark Roberts, who was present at the previous Select Board meeting, and his labradoodle “Mocha,” will be in Worcester this Sunday as part of their “4 Wheels 4 Paws 4 Hunger” project.

She asked the Select Board members to let the Town Administrator know when they will be on vacation, for the purpose of scheduling meetings.

Recognition: none.

Appointments

Chief Sallese presented Troy Paradise as the top candidate from 19 applicants for appointment to the Police Department. He recently graduated from Fitchburg State University with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and is working towards his master’s degree. He is Police Academy trained. The Board welcomed him to Stow and Chair Sturgis added that it is another great hire by the Chief.

Board member Burns moved to appoint Troy Paradise as Police Patrol Officer through June 30, 2022, subject to approval from the Town Administrator that physical and mental evaluations have been satisfactorily completed. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Collings Foundation “Battle for the Airfield” October 9 & October 10, 2021

Rob Collings was present via zoom. He explained that this is a WW II re-enactment weekend that has been done since 2007, with the only recent difference being the entrance road in Hudson. All permits for the pyrotechnics have been filed and there will be a Fire Department detail onsite as in previous years. There are more pre-sale tickets being purchased in the past two years, and tickets are available at the gate subject to availability. There are no covid restrictions in place, the only restriction is the availability of parking and the museum occupancy.

Green Advisory Committee Appointee Interviews

Lee Coopridger, Carol Lynn, and Martin Meyer were present and interviewed for the Select Board’s Green Advisory Committee (GAC) position. As the Select Board appointee, the person selected would also have to report back to the Select Board.

Lee Coopridger, 552 Great Road, has been involved with climate response topics for many years. He is a member of Sustainable Stow and has served on various Town committees over the years. He said we cannot solve the world’s problem, but as a small town we can show small communities how to get behind the state’s program and get to net-zero by 2050.

Martin Meyer, 25 Brookmill Road, has lived in Stow since 2017 and is a member of Sustainable Stow. He wants to get involved in local government, and sustainability has been a passion of his for his entire life. He thinks the idea of sustainability has been in the general mindset for many years, and now is the time to bring it forward with the opportunity to develop and form how we think about this program at a local level.

Carol Lynn, 30 Orchard Drive, has been a resident for 6 years, and is a member of 350 Mass MetroWest and Sustainable Stow. Educating people on why they should do this now is going to be a big issue. There will be a group of people who want to know how this will be beneficial to them, and they will need assistance going through the myriad of incentives that are available. She would like to work on Stow's Climate Action Plan.

Town Administrator Demboski noted that if one of these three candidates is appointed tonight, then Sustainable Stow would have 5 of its 9 members also being members of the GAC, meaning that Sustainable Stow would have a quorum of GAC members and therefore could not meet as a full group and discuss energy-related topics.

The Chair thanked all three of the candidates for stepping up to volunteer, and for all their work with Sustainable Stow. Chair Sturgis told the candidates that the Board would discuss and vote on who to select as the appointee, and that they were welcome to stay. The three candidates left the room. The Chair reminded the Board that they still have not excluded the option of a Board member being on the GAC. The Board was impressed by all 3 of the candidates but felt that Carol Lynn's experience reporting to executive committees, in addition to some other skills, aligned with what the Board was looking for in their representative.

Board member Burns moved to appoint Carol Lynn as Select Board member of the Green Advisory Committee for a term expiring June 30, 2022 and subject to annual appointment thereafter, and

Further, Board member Burns moved to designate the members of the Green Advisory Committee as Special Municipal Employees pursuant to Mass. General Law c.268A. Members must be registered voters of Stow and agree to comply with State Ethics and Open Meeting Law requirements. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Precinct Maps

Town Clerk Linda Hathaway joined the meeting and reported that Stow's precincts did not change after the 2020 census. Precinct 1 has 3,627 residents and precinct 2 has 3,547 residents. The Town Clerk presented the Board with the new map.

Board member Burns moved to accept the precinct maps for Stow as presented at the September 28, 2021 meeting. Select board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Hiring for Plowing Season

Chair Sturgis prefers that the Board authorize the Town Administrator to hire any temporary and per diem staff for the Highway Department as needed, not just plow drivers. The Board discussed and agreed to this change.

Board member Burns moved to authorize the Town Administrator to appoint any temporary and per diem staff for the Highway Department through June 30, 2022. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Strategic Planning

Chair Sturgis hopes to have a discussion soon about Select Board policies and the need to review outdated policies to either rescind or update. Tuesday, December 7 is the next Strategic Planning meeting, with the first half being budget season kick-off with the Finance Committee and the Capital Planning Committee. The second half is the Board's planning session.

Town Administrator's Report

- The Special Town Meeting (STM) warrant closes on Monday, October 4, 2021 at close of business.
- The Board of Health flu clinic is Saturday, October 16th at the Pompo Community Center. A formal press release was issued today about how to make an appointment. You can also visit our website, Facebook, or twitter accounts.
- The Library Building Committee is seeking feedback on the planned renovation and/or expansion of the library. Feedback boards and surveys are at the library and around town. Additional information is on the Town's website to submit feedback electronically. The deadline to submit feedback is October 4th. There is a library financial stakeholders meeting this Thursday.
- On Wednesday, October 13th at 7 p.m. there will be a Stow Acres Forum about the planned purchase of the North Course, prior to the vote at the STM on October 30th.
- On Thursday, October 14th at 7 p.m. the Finance Committee will hold a public hearing on the warrant articles being presented at the STM.
- Last Thursday the Town Planner and the TA met with the new owners of the Bose property. It is a for-profit master sports academy called The Masters Academy. They are partners with a school in Florida, and the school in Stow will be the only school like it in the northeast. They will keep the existing structures and make about \$28 million in improvements. They will need a zoning change to allow for an education facility in that location. The school will be a combination of a boarding school and a day program for grades 6-12, with boarding starting at grade 8. The first year would be fall of 2023 and would offer hockey, figure skating, basketball, e-sports, and lacrosse. They expect approximately 270 students and would increase enrollment each year. The full projection is about 6-7 years out, with a maximum capacity of 700-750 students with 75% living on campus and 25% commuting. The curriculum is five hours a day of education and 4 hours a day of their master program. The main focus is hockey, but they will also be adding more sports each year, including non-traditional sports such as drone flying, e-coding, e-gaming, etc. The meeting also included talks of building ice rinks and 2 turf athletic fields, and adding walking trails. There is the possibility of utilizing and entering into an agreement about Community Park, and improvements to the Hudson Road and Great Road intersection.
- There will be a press release regarding how we are celebrating Breast Cancer awareness month. On Thursday, October 14th at 7 p.m. the library is hosting a zoom with Sarah Thomas, an ultra-marathon swimmer who holds the world's record for the longest continuous unassisted swim. She is a cancer survivor and will speak about her determination to reach her goals. The Police Chief and the Police Association are selling pink patches for \$10. There will be "awareness and support trees" out front with pink lights and ribbons to which people can add words of support and hang on the tree. Employees have been given pink ribbons and bracelets that they can wear if they choose to do so, and October 14th will be designated as "wear pink day."

Board member Burns asked if the Special Town Meeting will have accommodations for outside participation due to covid. It will not be feasible to have an outdoor component, and all necessary precautions will be taken. The goal is for the best facilitated meeting in the best possible environment. Safety is the top priority.

Chair Sturgis suggested that residents call our local Assessors office, and not the state, if they have questions about the current cyclical inspection program.

Meeting Minutes

Board member Burns moved to accept the meeting minutes of the September 14, 2021 meeting as drafted.

Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Correspondence

Chair Sturgis said there is an enormous amount of information on the website that was not on it a little over a year ago, so please make use of it.

Board member Frecha clarified that when someone communicates with the Select Board office it is included in their packet for them to read in a timely manner. All board members do see the letters and are aware of the conversations that are ongoing.” Correspondence” is listed on the agenda in case there is an item that the Board would like to add as an agenda item at a future meeting.

Adjournment

At 8:25 p.m. Board member Burns moved to adjourn. Board member Birch-McMichael 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’s Office in the meeting folder.