

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 10, 2022
Stow Town Building & Zoom

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

Chair Sturgis called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Chair Sturgis advised everyone that Stow TV is recording this meeting. Anyone speaking during Public Input should state their name and address, and limit comments to two minutes or less.

Public Input:

Brian Burke, 125 Birch Hill Road, lauded the Select Board for adopting a civility Code of Conduct.

Alex Riker, 24 Asa Whitcomb Way, congratulated the Board on the Masters Academy agreement being signed tonight, saying it is a huge step forward for the Town.

Ann Needle, the Stow Independent, asked about a Public Notice regarding PFAS levels at the Bose property and asked who does the remediation.

Board Member Comments:

Chair Sturgis made the following announcements:

- Town Meeting is this Saturday, May 14th at 9 a.m. at the Hale School.
- The Town Election is Saturday, May 21st from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Center School.
- SpringFest will be Saturday, June 4th at Center School.

Board member Frecha spoke with the Animal Control Officer (ACO) about the inquiry to the Select Board regarding the dead Canada geese in the river. The ACO said there are no cases of avian flu in geese or birds in Stow or in the region, and that any number of things could have happened to cause this incident. The case was referred to the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Recognition

Board member Birch-McMichael acknowledged Jim Salvie's 12 years on the Select Board. He is not running for re-election and is running for the open position of Town Moderator. She recalled how they met on the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee, and has valued the time they have spent together on boards, working together with differences of opinion towards a common solution.

Chair Sturgis mentioned some of Salvie's accomplishments since 2010, with three years as Chair of the Board, including the transitions to new police and fire chiefs and the hiring of the new Town Administrator. She said that his leadership during some "dark days" of the Town showed a rare dignity and honesty.

Board member Frecha said she really enjoyed being on the Board with him, and appreciated his kindness and guidance when he mentored her as a newly elected Board member. She thanked him for his service over the years and said she will continue to respect and look up to him as a person who has wise things to say in a deliberate and considerate fashion.

Board member Salvie said it was a great 12 years. He added that it is so easy to get involved in town government, and he encouraged people to give it a shot. He said our biggest jewel in Town is our Town employees; he is grateful for them and for (Town Administrator) Denise, calling her hiring one of the best decisions he has participated in.

Recognition for Eagle Scouts

The Board acknowledged and praised the service of Christian Eld, Matthew Ervin, and Liam Hall, who have all achieved the rank of Eagle Scout.

Board member Salvie moved to recognize Boy Scouts Christian Eld, Matthew Ervin, and Liam Hall for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout, and to sign the letters and proclamations that will be presented at their recognition ceremonies on Sunday, May 15 and Saturday, May 21, 2022. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Appointment – Ryan Boyd to Call Fire Lieutenant

Fire Chief JP Benoit said there were four candidates. Mr. Boyd is a former police officer and started with the Stow Fire Department in 2019 as a Call Firefighter. He will be a great asset to the department and the community. Mr. Boyd was present with his wife and three daughters and thanked the Board.

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board appoint Ryan Boyd to the position of Call Fire Lieutenant through June 30, 2022, and subject to reappointment thereafter. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Town Administrator (TA) Report

- Stow's Covid case count is at 30, which is a 6.25% positivity rate.
- The TA acknowledged recent work by employees, including police prosecutor Luke Dezago, Detective Fitzpatrick, and Officer Champoux for their professionalism during recent calls. The TA recognized Kathy Sferra (Conservation Director) for her work on the MVP grant application; many folks contributed and if we receive the \$1 million grant it will solely be because of her efforts. She thanked Assistant TA Dolores Hamilton for putting on a fantastic health fair, which had all our vendors and provided wellness opportunities. She thanked Geoff Beharrell and Doug Hyde in the Facilities Department and the COA staff for their help with set-up and support. She thanked the Highway staff for beautifying the outside of our buildings, and for the work they did with volunteer Aparra Borrowes here at Town Building.
- To clarify a statement that was in last week's Independent, if the Library renovation project article does not pass at Town Meeting, the question will still be on the ballot at the Town Election and the votes *will* count; please go out and vote as every vote does count.
- The highway and police departments have been receiving feedback on the recent traffic safety measures put in place to calm traffic speeds. The Traffic Safety Advisory Committee will address concerns and continue to find ways to try and mitigate some of the speed concerns.
- There have been questions about the Library renovation project and the TA has added a Q&A on the Town's website and Facebook page, and it will be in the newspaper this week. If the project passes, the TA will be asking the Board to expand the building committee in order to be more

inclusive with the process, by adding folks who are concerned with the project and allowing them to be part of the solution. There will also be plenty of opportunities for public feedback.

Chair Sturgis added a thank you to the Council On Aging, and in particular Gigi Lengieza and Director Alyson Toole, for their amazing work during Covid and their service to the senior citizens. She seconded the praise mentioned for the staff, and added praise for the Town Administrator.

Member Salvie spoke as a driver and a cyclist about the traffic delineators, and said it is difficult to come up with an infrastructure solution to something that is fundamentally a behavior problem.

Road Management Plan

Highway Superintendent Steve Nadeau presented his Pavement Management Program plan.

A Town-wide inventory of roadway and condition attributes has been conducted. Our estimated average daily traffic (ADT) seems to be back to pre-pandemic traffic. The Town has 60 miles of roads; 55 are public ways supported by Chapter 90 state funds and 5 are private ways supported by Town funding only. Mr. Nadeau reviewed the distress types, roadway surface ratings, how roadways are selected for repair, and repair treatment options and their costs per mile. The target is fixing 10 road miles per year.

Mr. Nadeau reviewed the 5-year paving plan which began in October 2019. Chapter 90 funds have not increased significantly over the past 11 years. Costs have been increasing and contractors are asking for more money via escalation clauses and fuel surcharges.

Mr. Nadeau will be working with an outside firm in July that will provide equipment to collect data via cameras and radar which will profile the roads and map them via computer. He will use this annually for a few years at a cost of \$5,600 per year, then do this bi-annually. This will help with record-keeping and with creating a plan for the roads.

SMAHT Red Acre Road Community Preservation Article

Mike Kopczynski, Chair of SMAHT (Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust), was present via Zoom.

Member Birch-McMichael had a procedural concern about the Board having received the SMAHT presentation slides directly from the Chair and they were not part of the correspondence or in the packet, so the public has not seen the slides. The meeting proceeded without the slide presentation.

Member Salvie asked if Town Meeting approves the \$1 million will SMAHT be using a competitive RFP (Request for Proposals) bid process to find a developer. Mr. Kopczynski said SMAHT does not want to be the developer and they will put out an RFP; most likely it will be a non-profit developer building the six units of housing.

Member Birch-McMichael wanted clarification that the units will be ownership units, not rentals. Mr. Kopczynski said to be financially viable they have to be larger for-sale units, and when the units are sold they will get money back.

Masters Academy, Inc. Development Agreement

In response to a comment at the beginning of the meeting, the Town Administrator said there are three wells on the property and one has parts per trillion slightly over the threshold. Anyone who purchases the property will have to deal with PFAS and it would be decided within the terms of

negotiation. It has been an ongoing topic of discussion between the seller and the buyer. It is not the responsibility of the Town.

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board approve and sign the development agreement for The Masters Academy Inc., pending non-substantive changes. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

2022 Annual Town Meeting Discussion and Article Votes

Town Moderator David Walrath was present via Zoom. Town Clerk Linda Hathaway was present.

Article 42. Stow Municipal Affordable Trust, Red Acre Road Community Housing

Board member Salvie moved that the Board recommend that Town Meeting support Article 42. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 43. Funding Support for Stow Town Hall Restoration

The Town Administrator said that the Community Preservation Committee voted last night to rescind Article 43 at Town Meeting, meaning they will request to table the article and will withdraw the Town Hall Restoration Project article.

Article 44. Renovations to the Randall Library

Member Salvie said the Town will not get this opportunity again with the Library renovation. Board members agreed that the current building is not safe and there is no dedicated space for the staff.

The Board decided to make further recommendations on Article 42 and Article 44 at Town Meeting.

The Board decided to support the salary portion of the TA's budget at Town Meeting if necessary.

Article 41. National Guard/Reserve Tax Relief

This is not a new exemption; the state law requires the town to re-vote it every two years. In 2020, this article passed 79-5 at Town Meeting. The Board will not make a recommendation on this article as it is not new and is simply accepting a state statute.

The Board strongly recommends that attendees wear a mask indoors. Information about the logistics and the presentations for Town Meeting are on the Town's website.

Meeting Minutes

Board member Salvie moved to approve the 6 p.m. special open session minutes for April 26, 2022 as written. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Board member Salvie moved to approve the regular open session minutes of the April 26, 2022 meeting as written. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Correspondence – No comments.

Adjournment

At 9:13 p.m. Board member Salvie moved to adjourn. Board member Frecha 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.