

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 11, 2022
Stow Town Building & Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Megan Birch-McMichael, Ingeborg Hegemann Clark, Hector Constantzos, and Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski

Absent: Ellen Sturgis, Cortni Frecha

Chair Birch-McMichael called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and said that the meeting is being recorded. If the Chair calls on a person for comments, they are to state their name and address and limit comments to two minutes or less. Public Comment is for items not on the agenda.

Public Comment

Dorothy Granat, 11 White Pond Road, spoke about Board of Health requirements for license renewals, about Conservation land, and hydrocarbon test results.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Constantzos said that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and LGBT History Month.

Mr. Constantzos said there was a Facebook conversation about campaign signs on the Common that went missing and asked for clarification from the Town Administrator. Ms. Dembkoski said that when the Highway Department cuts the grass they remove any signs that are in the way and bring them to the Highway yard to allow whoever posted them to collect them and repost. In this instance the signs were inadvertently thrown away. An internal investigation determined that this was an accident, it was not intentional. The signs are back up and Ms. Dembkoski encouraged folks to not place signs on the public grass. Going forward when signs are removed they will be put to the side or in the former bus shelter so people can retrieve them. She apologized for the removal and disposal of those signs.

Chair Birch-McMichael addressed the Town Administrator review process, referencing the Town Charter section 4.1, as there is misinformation being discussed in Town. If the review had been in an executive session, it would have been a violation of the Open Meeting Law. This year, the comments were not uniform and to avoid being accused of leaving out any information, the Assistant Town Administrator included all the Board members' comments in the individual sections. The Chair said that as a public official she knew that her comments in this review, as well as any comments made in her role as a Select Board member, are a public record and she approached her written comments with that in mind. The Chair said that she "absolutely regrets any emotional and professional distress that this (review process) may have caused." As the Chair, she sets the agenda but does not see supporting documents before the other Board members, including this written review. Changes to the Charter are on the agenda and she hopes that they can provide some clarity to this section to avoid the issues that they went through this year.

Town Administrator (TA) Report

- As of October 6, there are 12 COVID-19 cases in Town, which is a 6.53% positivity rate.
- The Flu Clinic is Saturday at Pompo; pre-registration information is on the website and Facebook.

- The Board of Health has free at-home COVID-19 test kits available at Pompo, the Stow Food Pantry, the Board of Health Office, the Randall Library, and at the Flu Clinic on Saturday.
- The Town has received 16 defibrillators, purchased with ARPA funds, which will be distributed among our buildings and will double the number of units available in our public facilities.
- In addition to the new employees being appointed tonight, a Procurement and Grants Administrator has been hired via ARPA funds and will start on October 31.
- The Board rescheduled its first meeting in November as it is the same day as the State Election. The Board moved the meeting from Tuesday, November 8 to Tuesday, November 15.
- Highway Superintendent Steve Nadeau is retiring and will work through mid-December.

Appointments

Appointment of Highway Mechanic

Board member Constantzos moved to promote Jerry Camara to the position of Highway Mechanic. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Appointment of Highway Driver/Laborers

Board member Constantzos moved to appoint Corey Parks to the position of Highway Driver/Laborer. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Board member Constantzos moved to appoint Dean Osborne to the position of Highway Driver/Laborer. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Randall Library Building Committee 2.0

Kat Copeland was present in the Warren Room.

Ms. Copeland said that she and Lisa (Lavina) would like to be appointed to be able to continue this project and carry it to fruition.

Board member Constantzos moved to appoint Lisa Lavina to the Randall Library Building Committee 2.0, to serve until the project is complete and the renovated library is fully open.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Board member Constantzos moved to appoint Kat Copeland to the Randall Library Building Committee 2.0, to serve until the project is complete and the renovated library is fully open.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Election Update and Sign the November Election Warrant

Town Clerk Linda Hathaway was present via Zoom.

Election Day is Tuesday, November 8, 2022 and voting is at Center School. Early Voting is in person from October 22 through November 4 in the lower level of Town Building. For Vote By Mail, Ms. Hathaway said her office received ballots today and they are now ready to mail out 1,800 ballots. Ms. Hathaway recommended that those using Vote By Mail return their ballot as soon as possible. Ballots that are placed in the drop box at Town Building on Election Day after 3 p.m. will not be counted until November 12, 2022, which is the deadline for the Town Clerk to receive mail-in ballots. Details and more information are on the Town Clerk's webpage.

Board member Constantzos moved to sign the November 2022 Election Warrant as presented at this meeting. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Girl Scout Troop 62427 Community Project

Members of the Girl Scout Troop present in the Warren Room were Cadettes Elsie Konno, Ibbie Bruosta, Olivia Cole, Kate Duchesneau, and Lila White.

All five Cadettes presented information for a Hometown Hero project in Stow which would provide uniformity along Route 117 from Maynard to Bolton. They are hoping to earn a Silver Award, which is a community service award for a project that is done with minimal adult assistance, teaches a life skill, and advocates for change to a policy. They would be teaching younger troops about the steps they took to work with the Town to make this possible.

Ms. Hegemann said the thoroughness of the presentation answered all her questions.

Mr. Constantzos said he is a Town veteran and thanked them very much for doing the project.

Chair Birch-McMichael said they would like to have the troop come back to update the Board once the project is done.

Board member Constantzos moved to grant permission for Stow Girl Scout Cadettes in Troop #62427 to carry out their community project, honoring soldiers with banners posted on telephone poles along route 117, as presented at this meeting.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

PFAS Update from MassDEP (Department of Environmental Protection)

Regional Director Mary Jude Pigsley and Section Chief Kevin Daoust of the MassDEP Central Regional Office were present in the Warren Room.

PFAS¹ is a family of thousands of compounds with varying structure that are called “forever chemicals” because they are very persistent and do not biodegrade. They are in many consumer products, and most Americans have been exposed to some level of PFAS. They are used as a textile treatment, for grease resistant paper coatings, in hairspray and cosmetics, and in Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF) used by fire departments.

Currently there is no national standard for PFAS; Massachusetts is one of 16 states that regulates PFAS with a standard of 20 parts per trillion (PTT) for drinking water and for cleanup. This standard is health-based, protective of the most sensitive population (pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants, and the immune compromised), and accounts for exposure to PFAS from sources in addition to drinking water. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced in June that they will be issuing a national drinking water standard, and it is likely that it will be lower than MassDEP’s standard of 20 PPT.

Ms. Pigsley said they oversee 77 cities and towns and 42 have PFAS. However, Stow is unique in that it has five contaminated Sites²: Stow Center (16 Crescent Street, RTN 2-0021075), MA Firefighting Academy, Dept. of Fire Services (RTN 2-0021045), the former Gleasondale Mill (RTN 2-0021116), Bose (688 Great Road, RTN 2-0021541), and the Harvard Road area (RTN 2-0022042). Water quality data is available at eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us where you can enter the RTN to see specific details or use other search criteria on the website. For additional information, you can also google MassDEP PFAS.

¹ PFAS: Poly- and perfluoroalkyl Substances

² MassDEP capitalizes the word “Site”

The MassDEP map of Stow color codes various areas, with green being good, meaning non-detected; yellow is detected but below the drinking standard of 20 PPT; red is above 20 PPT. For Stow they had to create a magenta area, which is an imminent hazard level of 90 PPT. Whenever any detection is discovered people are given bottled water, and if a well exceeds 20 PPT, point of entry treatment systems (POET) are given which treats all the water coming into the home.

Ms. Dembkoski said the Town appropriates a lot of money towards PFAS remediation, and if the federal standard is lower, the Town will need to continue to appropriate money. She receives the most calls from residents in the Gleasondale area. Mr. Daoust said people can call MassDEP directly for information, and said that they are doing assessment work at the Mill and collected samples last week.

Police Department Update to Rules and Regulations – CROWN Act

Chief Michael Sallese said the CROWN Act is a new law going into effect on October 24, 2022. This will replace some of the department's existing rules and regulations, specifically removing 9.1, 9.1.D, and 9.2 and replacing them with a new rule 9.1. A copy of this change has been presented to both police and dispatch unions with no concerns.

Board member Constantzos moved to approve the update to Police rules and regulations to conform with the CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act, as presented by Police Chief Michael Sallese at this meeting.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Police Department Request to Participate in Home Base No Shave November

Chief Sallese explained that if an officer donates \$100 to the Home Base fundraiser, male officers can grow facial hair and female officers can wear their hair down or wear nail polish.

Board member Constantzos moved that the Select Board allow the Stow Police Department to suspend certain rules and regulations [9.1C, 9.2, 9.3] pertaining to grooming, for the month of November, in order to support the Home Base No Shave November fundraiser. This fundraiser is for the benefit of veterans, service members, military families, and the families of the fallen.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Select Board Proposed Charter Changes

Charter Review Committee (CRC) Chair Debbie Woods was present via Zoom.

Ms. Woods said the CRC is asking all boards, committees, and residents to submit suggestions on changes to the Charter, and why they are asking for the change, on or before November 15, 2022. Ms. Woods asked the Select Board to prepare a list of recommendations, and either she or other members of the CRC would come to the Board's meeting on November 15 to go through the list. The CRC will gather recommendations from all sources and have a public meeting in mid-December to review all the changes being suggested. The CRC has a deadline of mid-March to submit their recommendations for inclusion at the Annual Town Meeting.

Each Select Board member will send suggestions to Ms. Dembkoski by October 20, which will be added to the agenda packet for the next meeting on Tuesday, October 25, 2022.

Draft Charge for the EDIC (Economic Development and Industrial Commission)

Chair Birch-McMichael said that she met with EDIC Chair Tom Farnsworth and Planning Board Chair Lori Clark and each presented feedback from their board. The mission statement should be a high-level statement of what the EDIC is supposed to be doing, and Ms. Clark had offered a good summary of that. After a mission statement is approved and it is determined that the EDIC reports to the Select Board, then the Select Board will discuss the goals for the EDIC.

This will be discussed further at the November 15 meeting when there can be a full board discussion.

Town Administrator's FY23 Goals

The Board discussed and revised goal number two (assist in moving forward Town Hall Improvement Plan) to expand upon the scope of the goal. The goal will be to continue oversight of the Town Hall project with the focus on future use, improvements, or disposition.

Board member Constantzos moved to approve the FY23 Town Administrator Goals list, including the discussed amendment for goal number two.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Meeting Minutes

Board member Constantzos moved to accept the meeting minutes of the September 13, 2022 meeting as drafted. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Board member Constantzos moved to accept the meeting minutes of the September 27, 2022 meeting as drafted. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Board member Constantzos moved to accept the meeting minutes of the October 4, 2022 meeting as drafted. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Correspondence

The correspondence is listed at the bottom of the agenda.

The Board discussed the date and time of the Library Trustees Trivia Night.

Adjournment

At 8:53 p.m. Board member Constantzos moved to adjourn. Board member Hegemann 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.