

Select Board Minutes
Strategic Planning Workshop
Tuesday, July 6, 2021 – 7 PM
Stow Town Building & via Zoom

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

Chair's Comments

This is a workshop-style planning session, not a regular meeting and the Board will not be conducting regular business. It is the kick-off for the year and the expectation is to create goals during this session, not policy. At a prior meeting, the Select Board listed its work plan priorities as capital spending/infrastructure/money (and also how it relates to building committees), policy review (especially Select Board related), boards and committees, and police accreditation oversight and approval of new policies.

Roles of the Select Board and the Town Administrator

The Board discussed the role of the Select Board: set policies, coordinate work with boards and committees, appoint committees, delegate to the Town Administrator (TA), to be in charge of all investigations as outlined in the Charter, "CEO" (authorize and ensure), fiduciary, and oversight.

The Board discussed the role of the Town Administrator: supervise/coordinate personnel and departments, oversee the implementation of policies, propose the annual budget, have an open door for citizen input, be the "COO/CAO," and oversee the day-to-day operations. The question was raised regarding who signs contracts.

Goals of the Town Administrator

At the previous Board meeting, the top goals, or work plan, for the TA were Lower Village (financial oversight and meet with the committee), the website, Human Resources (HR), and the budget. Added to that list were: traffic/public safety, increase communication/PR, Master Plan launch with the Planning Board, and follow through on the IG investigation. The next step will be SMART goals.

The TA feels that her goals need to be more specific and gave examples from other towns. She sees it as starting with the Select Board work plan and from those items, goals would be developed for the TA to implement.

Discussion ensued about traffic and public safety being under the purview of the Select Board according to a bylaw. The TA has proposed a Traffic Safety Advisory Committee to present recommendations to the Select Board. A two-step model for boards and committees can then become getting started with the day-to-day details and cull policy questions and recommendations, then come before the Select Board.

Goals of the Select Board

The Board received a packet of Select Board goals from other towns, including a (fiscal) year-long meeting schedule with the filtering in of other items, such as a work plan.

The goals are: policy review; clarity on capital spending; define the Board's role in police accreditation; coordinate with boards and committees (replace liaison roles); "reclaim" leadership in the areas of the Master Plan, climate change, and transportation (assessing demand); Lower Village (Select Board priorities); a Charter and Bylaw review as it refers to recruitment; redesign the building committees model; follow up on the IG investigation (add as an agenda item); and forecasting infrastructure/money (change the assumption?).

The Board discussed how this process will begin. The Board will need to narrow down the topics and create a better focus on what they want to achieve, then present it to the TA, who will work on it and she will bring it back to the Board.

Combined Goals: Lower Village (researching grants and what are the Select Board's priorities); review the Charter and bylaws re: recruitment; and policy review (what we have and what we want to change).

Although these are combined goals, the Town Administrator will be involved in all the Select Board goals due to her role.

One work plan would be a better way to organize the goals; to include a plan for each item from the Board as a whole, as opposed to individual requests to the TA.

Policy Review and Planning

The TA reviewed the list of policies that have been found and which ones need to be updated. The goal is to have a Standard Operating Procedures manual.

The Board discussed creating a policy for proclamations and acknowledging causes. In addition to issuing a proclamation, the Board could increase awareness among community members by involving Town departments, or acknowledging an event associated with the cause. They discussed the difference between an announcement in "Board Member comments" versus a larger educational item. The TA will draft a "Recognition Policy."

When listed as an agenda item, a policy draft will not be approved at the first reading. This will give the Board members time to read and understand the policy and then make any comments or suggest amendments.

Calendar/Meeting Schedule

Strategic Planning will be added as an agenda item to upcoming meetings.

The Board will schedule a joint board meeting with the Finance Committee, the Capital Planning Committee, and the Community Preservation Committee in October.

The Board will schedule the next Planning Workshop in November, with the primary topic being the budget.

Adjournment

At 9:16 p.m. Board member Birch-McMichael moved to adjourn. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it was approved 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.