

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 13, 2021
Stow Town Building & via Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Chair Ellen Sturgis; Megan Birch-McMichael; James Salvie; Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski

Absent: Cortni Frecha

Also present: Chief Michael Sallese, Lt. Darren Thraen, Marcy Eckel, Andy Riecker, Frank Ramsbottom, Katie Fisher

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

Public Input: None.

Board Member Comments: Board member Birch-McMichael met with Sen. Jamie Eldridge to discuss infrastructure and what we can do in the future.

Chair Sturgis congratulated Don and Nancy McPherson on the Aviation Month event that Minute Man Airfield hosted last month.

The Cultural Council is hosting a series of events this week, and on Thursday there is a free concert at Pine Bluff Recreation Area from 5 – 6:30 p.m.

Appointments

Andy Riecker - Library Board of Trustees

Marcy Eckel, Chair of the Library Trustees and Andy Riecker were present. Mr. Riecker's first job was working at his town library, and he has always promoted libraries wherever he has lived. Ms. Eckel said they had a robust response to the opening, and they encouraged the other candidates to consider running for something during the next election cycle.

Board member Salvie asked why this was not a joint appointment between the Library Trustees and the Select Board per the Charter. Ms. Eckel said the Library Trustees met last Thursday and voted for Andy Riecker, and their board realized they could not get a quorum for this meeting.

Board member Salvie clarified that this is supposed to be a joint meeting on the same night, of both boards together, whether it be for the Library Trustees, the Board of Health, the Assessors, or another elected board. He does not want this to become the standard operating procedure.

The Town Administrator said going forward the board should post a meeting and as many of the members that can attend should be here and actively participate in the discussion. The Board thanked Mr. Riecker for volunteering.

Board member Salvie moved to appoint Andy Riecker to the Randall Library Board of Trustees until the next election. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Francis Ramsbottom – Building Commissioner/Facilities Manager

Mr. Ramsbottom has worked in Acton for 14 years and has lived in Hudson for 25 years. He is looking forward to working in Stow. The Town Administrator had an internal working committee who interviewed 5 candidates from the pool of applicants, and Mr. Ramsbottom was the unanimous choice of the committee.

Board member Salvie moved to appoint Francis Ramsbottom as the Building Commissioner/Facilities Manager through May 31, 2022 and subject to annual appointment thereafter. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Nicholas Whelan – full-time Highway/Tree Grounds Driver-Laborer
Raymond Arsenault - full-time Highway/Tree Grounds Driver-Laborer

Board member Salvie moved to appoint Nicholas Whelan and Raymond Arsenault to the positions of full-time Highway/Tree Grounds Driver-Laborer. Board member Burns seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Amendments to Police Uniform, Clothing, and Individual Equipment Policy

Chief Sallese is proposing changes to how the police carry their duty gear, and to the existing tattoo policy.

The current traditional belt is very heavy and is typically carried for an entire 30-year career. He would like the option to change to an outer carrier vest that will move the equipment from the hips to 3 inches higher on the body and be supported by the shoulders. The vest can be removed when officers are in the station. Lt. Thraen said it also makes the equipment easier to reach. A firearm will still be in a secured holder at the waist. This will be optional and paid for from an officer's existing clothing allowance.

Prior to 2017 there was no restriction or policy regarding tattoos. The existing tattoo policy that went into effect in 2018 does not allow for tattoos to be shown. Many police departments are relaxing their tattoo policy as they have become more of a societal norm. The department currently has two employees who are adhering to the policy and are wearing long sleeves due to the location of their tattoos. The Chief is asking for a change to the policy that will give him the discretion to allow or not allow a tattoo to be uncovered and seen.

Board member Salvie moved to approve the amendments proposed by Chief Sallese to policy 4.36 Uniforms, Clothing, and Individual Equipment, and moved to approve the change in the policy regarding tattoos being conditioned on a review by Town Counsel. Board member Burns seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Police Accreditation Update

Lt. Thraen will be the Accreditation Manager; he has been going to the training and looking into the policies. The department was nationally accredited in 1988 and this lapsed in 1998 so the department has to start over. It is a one to two-year process, with multiple steps: application and acceptance; self-assessment, which is the step they are at currently; a mock facility tour, and more. There may need to be some small modifications to the building, such as adding an automated accessible door button at the entrance door. Once accredited, the fee is \$1800 for 3 years.

The Town Administrator added that a capital plan should be made regardless of the timeliness of the building assessment for accessible doors, upgrading the interrogation room, and other items to improve safety.

Board of Health - Trash Collection and Options

Board of Health members Mary McDowell, Merrily Evdokimoff, and Marcia Rising were present via Zoom.

Chair Mary McDowell reconfirmed that residents of Stow have to contract for private rubbish and recycling removal; there is no town-wide collection. If the Town wanted to pursue this it would be a group project between multiple departments and would go to Town Meeting. The cost is very high to do this, and many municipalities are paying more money as the cost of recycling is increasing. Some towns can't cover the cost as it was not in the budget. We cannot use transfer stations in other towns.

Regarding Waste Management (WM), the Health Agent was in contact with them daily during the recent issue and provided updates to the BOH and the Town Administrator. The BOH permits the haulers to come into town, however, the contract is between the resident and the hauler. The BOH has no jurisdiction over the individual contracts. Ms. McDowell believes that WM is back on schedule.

The Flu Clinic will be Saturday, October 16th from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. It will be inside and appointments will be required. There will be more details to follow.

Fiscal Year 2021 – Year End Transfers

There are ten transfers to be approved. The Finance Committee met tonight and they approved these transfers.

Board member Salvie moved to approve the year end transfers listed on a sheet provided tonight titled “General Fund End of Year Budget Transfers per MGL Chap. 44 Sec 33B.” totaling \$85,146. Board member Burns seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Sign Hallock Point documents

There are 3 documents to be signed regarding the Hallock Point property. There are 2 deeds, one for \$630,000 for the property that the Town is selling, and one for \$370,000 for the land that the Town is keeping. There is also the formal easement that the Board approved in a prior Executive Session.

Board member Salvie moved to execute the Hallock Point closing documents made available to the Board tonight by the Town Administrator. Board member Burns seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Strategic Planning

Every meeting will have some time for strategic planning and policy review.

Instead of having liaisons, the Board would like to meet with individual boards and committees to have more complete conversations board to board and to hear their work plans and how they intersect with the Select Board work plans. There will be a joint meeting in November between this Board, the Finance Committee, and the Capital Planning Committee to kick off the budget season. Chair Sturgis would also like to include the Community Preservation Committee at this meeting.

There are 3 tiers to these meetings with other boards and committees. Tier one is a general update and what the board or committee is working on this year so that the Select Board can do its job; tier two is the financial discussion so there is a consistent message at Town Meeting; and tier three is “hot issues”, such as covid or the recent issue with Waste Management. This Board needs to be clear as to why the boards and committees are coming to the Select Board, and most meetings will be tier one.

The first goal of the Board is to establish a work plan and goals for the Town Administrator, who will create a draft of goals with target dates. Under each category there will be approximately 3 tasks. The Board would also like a draft of this past year’s accomplishments.

Town Administrator’s (TA) Report

- MassDOT is closing Gleasondale Road from Sudbury Road to Marlboro Road overnight Thursday, July 15 to allow Hudson Light & Power to relocate utilities on the bridge before full construction begins. There will be a portion of Gleasondale without power overnight and HL&P has notified the residents.
- Beginning this week, the gate at Pine Bluff will be closed on Friday and Saturday nights at 11 p.m. by the police, and the police will still patrol the area. There will be a capital project moving forward to include cameras and updated internet access for Pine Bluff and for Community Park.
- Congresswoman Lori Trahan has notified the TA that Stow will receive a \$750,000 grant for funding of improvements to Track Road to connect to the Assabet Trail and possible access to the train station. Town Planner Jesse Steadman and Select Board member Jim Salvie helped to get the project submitted in a timely manner. This is an amazing win and will be a game-changer.
- The TA spoke with Representative Kate Hogan and will be putting together a meeting in August with two Select Board members and some department heads to discuss issues in town and how the state may be able to assist the Town.

- The TA will be interviewing for the Assistant Town Administrator soon, and has begun the Fire Chief process.
- The Library Building Committee has selected a vendor, designLAB architects.

Meeting Minutes

June 22, 2021: Board member Salvie moved to approve the meeting minutes of the June 22, 2021 meeting. Board member Burns seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

July 6, 2021: Board member Salvie moved to approve the meeting minutes of the July 6, 2021 special meeting. Board member Burns seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Correspondence

Board member Birch-McMichael asked if the emails coming to the Board for Nan's Market are also being sent to the Planning Board. The TA said these are for the possible phase two of the liquor license process.

Adjournment

At 9:22 p.m. Board member Salvie moved to convene Executive Session pursuant to MGL c. 30A, sec.21 (a) (2), to conduct a strategy session in preparation for contract renewal with Brad Brightman, Treasurer/Collector, and to adjourn thereafter. Board member Burns seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Sampson

Executive Assistant

Documents used at this meeting:

Police 4.36 Uniforms, Clothing, and Individual Equipment policy
 End of Year Budget Transfers
 Hallock Point deeds and easement
 Meeting Minutes June 22, 2021
 Meeting Minutes July 8, 2021

Documents and correspondence can be found in the Select Board's Office in the meeting folder.