

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 13, 2023
Stow Town Building & Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Cortni Frecha, Ingeborg Hegemann Clark, Hector Constantzos, John “JT” Toole, and Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski

Absent: Megan Birch-McMichael

Chair Frecha called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and said the meeting is being recorded.

Public Comment

Comments are limited to items not on the agenda. Speakers should state their name and address, and limit comments to two minutes or less.

Lenny Golder, 67 Old Bolton Road, was present in the Warren Room. He asked about appointments that are to be made at the Select Board’s June 27 meeting. Ms. Dembkoski said that reappointments are on the June 27 agenda and then vacancies will be posted. Applications for new appointments go through her office and she makes recommendations to the Select Board.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Toole commended our public safety officials for the incredible job they did during the microburst on Barton Road last week. The microburst caused a lot of damage and their quick response and coordination with public utilities quickly made the area much safer for everyone in the neighborhood. He also commended Ms. Dembkoski who was involved with the communications and coordination.

Mr. Constantzos commended the SpringFest Committee for pulling together an extraordinary event. Mr. Constantzos noted that Juneteenth is Monday and encouraged residents to learn more about its significance in our country’s history.

Town Administrator (TA) Report

- The TA acknowledged the Fire Department for its handling of increased calls over the last few months, and specifically on Friday, June 2 when there were multiple emergency calls.
- The TA congratulated the Stow Police Department who won the food drive that was held on Saturday, June 3 by collecting more than 1,500 pounds of donations. It was a friendly competition between Stow, Bolton, and Lancaster; the other towns collected about 800 pounds.
- The TA thanked the Revitalize Randall folks for putting on a great Ice Cream Social on Friday night. It was a fun night for everyone who attended.
- The TA thanked everyone who worked behind the scenes for SpringFest, specifically Maura Hyland and Jackie Spataro. Even with the weather that day, everyone had a great time.
- Municipal Buildings will be closed Monday, June 19 for the Juneteenth holiday, and also on Monday, July 3 and Tuesday, July 4 for Independence Day. July 3 is not a holiday but a majority of the employees are taking the day off. There will be a few people working on July 3 but the building will be closed to the public for safety reasons. The TA will be off the week of July 3, 2023.

Nashoba Regional High School Building Project Update

Superintendent Kirk Downing was present via Zoom, to present Board Briefs 6 and 7.

The estimated taxpayer share of the building project will be \$178.6 million, which aligns with the anticipated amount that was reported in November. The total project cost estimate is \$241.7 million and the MSBA estimated maximum reimbursement is \$63.1 million. There is a public forum tomorrow night. Comparing the two Board Briefs shows how the conceptual design evolves over time.

Mr. Toole asked about solar to reduce the ongoing annual costs to run the buildings and to keep the maintenance levels down. Mr. Downing said one element of the project is a geothermal system.

Mr. Constantzos asked if the districts will still be paying for a current building and also the new building project. Mr. Downing said that will be covered in detail at the forum tomorrow night but did give a quick preview, saying some debts will be coming off the books before the new debt goes on.

Event Permit for 9/11 Heroes Run at American Heritage Museum

Kerri Lannan, Event Manager for the Travis Manion Foundation (TMF), and Hunter Chaney, Collings Foundation Director of Marketing and Communications were present via Zoom.

Ms. Lannan gave an overview of the event and the non-profit foundation. 1stLt Travis Manion, USMC, was fatally wounded on April 29, 2007 in Iraq. Before his final deployment, he told his family “If not me, then who?” which described his sense of duty and service to his country. The event on September 9 is a 5K run to raise money for the foundation. Among its projects, the TMF hosts Character Does Matter presentations for youth, and partners and hosts expeditions for Gold Star families.

John Colonna-Romano, 233 Boxboro Road, was present in the Warren Room and asked if this is included in any of the types of events in the agreement between the Town and the museum, and if there would be any noise making activities that would disrupt the neighbors. He added that it sounds like a good event. Mr. Chaney said they do not anticipate doing any tank driving but if there is a want and a need they will do it that weekend.

Board member Constantzos moved to approve a Special Event Permit for the Trevor Manion Foundation (TMF) 9/11 Heroes Run, to be held at the American Heritage Museum on Saturday, September 9, 2023 starting at 7:30 AM. Board member Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Green Advisory Committee – Municipal Fossil Fuel Policy

Arnie Epstein, Chair of the Stow Green Advisory Committee (SGAC) was present in the Warren Room.

SGAC is proposing a policy in which the preferred approach is fossil-free design for new and renovated municipal buildings, with exceptions for backup and emergency uses or where elimination of fossil fuels is not feasible or practical. The policy was originally proposed to the Select Board on July 23, 2022, and since then the Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee have reviewed the policy and support it. The policy can prepare Stow to meet a MA law requiring that statewide greenhouse gas emissions be reduced by 50% by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. The SGAC thinks the town can lead by example in addressing its buildings, as the SGAC encourages others to do the same.

The Board members had a discussion regarding other fossil-free energy options, such as solar or wind power. Ms. Hegemann noted that electricity is not completely innocent but this is a good first step. Ms. Demboski said this would become a Select Board policy, which the Board could change at any time.

Board member Constantzos moved to approve the Municipal Fossil Fuel Policy for the Town of Stow as presented by the Green Advisory Committee at this meeting.

Board member Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Board of Health – Outdoor Water Use Restrictions for Private Wells Draft

Mary McDowell, chair of the Board of Health (BOH), was present via Zoom.

On May 18 the BOH approved a draft of its outdoor water use restrictions, which is not enforceable as it is still a draft. The BOH will publish a summary and seek public input during an upcoming meeting.

Ms. Hegemann suggested an aquifer map so people can see the source of their well water.

Mr. Constantzos suggested that the language in section 2 (Purpose) and section 4B (Definitions-Drought Conditions) be matched up to avoid confusion as to who declares drought conditions. Mr. Constantzos also noted that enforcement will rely on neighbors' complaints.

Ms. Dembkoski offered to create a link on the town website with a separate email to solicit public feedback and collect comments for the BOH's public comment period. The BOH will come before the Select Board at a future meeting with the final draft.

Select Board Committee Assignments

Ms. Dembkoski gave an overview of each committee and how often it meets.

Board member Constantzos moved to make the following appointments:

- *John Toole as the Select Board appointee to the Capital Planning Committee, for a two-year term expiring June 30, 2025;*
- *Ingeborg Hegemann Clark as the Select Board appointee to the Complete Streets Committee, for a three-year term expiring June 30, 2026;*
- *Hector Constantzos as the Select Board appointee to the Green Advisory Committee, for a one-year term expiring June 30, 2024;*
- *Cortni Frecha as the Select Board appointee to the Local Access Channel Advisory Committee, for the remainder of a two-year term expiring June 30, 2024;*
- *Denise M. Dembkoski as the Select Board alternate to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), for a three-year term expiring June 30, 2026;*
- *Denise M. Dembkoski as the Select Board representative to the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal coordination (MAGIC), for a one-year term expiring June 30, 2024;*
- *Cortni Frecha as the Select Board appointee to the Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (SMAHT), for a two-year term expiring June 30, 2025; and*
- *Hector Constantzos as the Select Board representative to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Advisory Committee.*

Board member Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Settlement Agreement with Howard Stein Hudson Regarding Lower Village

The Select Board was happy to report that the Town has agreed to settle its lawsuit against the engineering firm of Howard Stein Hudson (HSH) over the design and management of the Lower Village Reconstruction Project. Neither party admits liability, and HSH will pay the Town \$1 million.

The Select Board thanked former Town Planner Jesse Steadman, Town Planning Director Valerie Oorthuys (who was the Assistant Planner for Mr. Steadman), the Town Administrator, Rick Holland of KP Law, Green International Affiliates, and Places Associates for their assistance.

Any questions concerning the settlement should be directed to the Town Administrator's office.

Board member Constantzos moved to ratify and sign the settlement agreement with Howard Stein Hudson regarding Stow's Lower Village.

Board member Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Police Local 206 Union Contract

The Board thanked Ms. Dembkoski for her written summary and her efforts in negotiating the contract. When asked if the police chief was involved, Ms. Dembkoski said the negotiations were conducted with the union by her and Asst. Town Administrator/HR Director Dolores Hamilton. It is advised by labor attorneys that department heads that oversee union employees are not involved in negotiations. The police chief has reviewed and approved all the changes. This is a one-year agreement, and a new contract could be ready by fall, but will be ready by July 1 of next year.

Board member Constantzos moved to approve and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the Police Local 206 Union Contract as presented at this meeting.

Board member Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Fiscal Year 2023 Year-End Transfers

Ms. Dembkoski gave an overview of the transfers. The largest transfer needed is to cover the snow and ice deficit of \$55,000. Most of the money being transferred from salary and wage accounts is due to vacancies in those departments.

Board member Constantzos moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 year-end transfers, as presented by the Town Administrator.

Board member Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Meeting Minutes

Board member Constantzos moved to accept the meeting minutes of the May 23, 2023 meeting as drafted. Board member Toole seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Correspondence

There was an email from Rita DiStefano-French regarding the Quilts for Valor program which gives handmade quilts to veterans. Ms. Dembkoski said the Fire Chief would like to bring back the Stow Veteran's Day breakfast, and they are working on coordinating the breakfast on Saturday, November 11 with the quilt presentations.

Mr. Constantzos commented on the email from Arnie Epstein regarding SGAC's support of the library renovation and the efforts to make the building "green." Ms. Dembkoski gave a quick update on the status of the library project and said there is a Library Renovation Project Page on the town's website.

Mr. Toole asked about the email regarding the fence at Stow Community Park. It is pending the procurement process for a fence replacement.

Adjournment

At 8:32 p.m. Board member Constantzos moved to adjourn. Board member Toole 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.