

**Carver Select Board
Meeting Minutes
Town Hall- 108 Main Street
February 27, 2024 - 5:00pm**

In Attendance: Chair Mark Townsend, Vice-Chair Jim Hoffman, John Cotter, Sarah Hewins, Dan Ryan, Town Administrator Robert Fennessy, Assistant Town Administrator Elaine Weston and Shelby Roy

Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance, Ryan read the community prayer.

Motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to contract negotiations (**Finance Director- Karen Preval**) that if discussing the matters in open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Town, and return to open session by Hewins, second by Ryan.

Roll Call: Affirmative – Ryan, Cotter, Townsend, Hewins.

(Hoffman absent for Executive Session)

Citizens Participation:

None

Ratify Finance Director Contract - (Out of order from Agenda)

Motion to ratify the Finance Director Contract with Karen Preval by Hewins, second by Ryan.

Vote 5-0

Fennessy introduced Karen Preval to the Board, and explained Preval's impeccable background of having extensive experience with Towns & Cities. She is currently the Auditor for Brockton, and the former finance director of Milton, MA, and will be a great addition to the town hall staff.

Preval was in attendance and explained how she is excited and looking forward to this opportunity to work for the Town of Carver.

Preval's start date is Monday, March 25, 2024.

Application for appointment to Earth Removal Committee: Judy Richards

Richards was in attendance. Richards thanked the Board for this opportunity,

and explained how she has attended several Earth Removal meetings and is looking forward to making a positive difference on the committee.

Motion to approve Judy Richards to the Earth Removal Committee by Hewins, second by Hoffman.

Vote 5-0

Town Administrator Screening Committee: Business Community Representative – appointment of Kevin Tracey due to resignation of current representative Arthur Borden

Tracey was in attendance for this appointment.

Motion to approve Kevin Tracey to the Town Administrator Screening Committee as the Business Representative by Hoffman, second by Hewins.

Vote 5-0

Update on Corrosion of municipal well

Director of Operations & Maintenance, Dave Siedentopf was in attendance.

Siedentopf explained that this is a project that is necessary, and would be funded by ARPA. He stated that the well in question is located behind the library and connects to the Town Hall, EMS, Old Police Station, Library, Old Fire Station and the New Fire Station.

He stated that the Mass. DEP is demanding that this system be updated due to the high readings from the sampling schedule.

The estimated cost for this update is \$61, 500. With this cost, this project will need to go out to bid.

Ryan asked if this effects the Elementary school.

Siedentopf explained that the Elementary school has its own system and is already corrosion controlled along with the Middle High School.

Siedentopf will work with the Procurement Coordinator Shelby Roy to get this out to bid in the near future.

The Board thanked Siedentopf for this update.

Review of Annual Town Meeting warrant articles: Revolving Fund; Group Health Insurance for eligible employees and retirees, Finance Committee by-law, Mullin Rule

Revolving Fund:

Townsend read the informational summary of the warrant article.

Motion to place this article on the warrant by Hoffman, second by Hewins.

Vote 5-0

Cotter questioned whether there would be any internal controls to monitor the program and the use of the funds.

Fennessy confirmed that the School Finance Officer would be the one to oversee the revolving fund.

Townsend noted that it is pretty specific on where the money goes and that the School Committee did vote 5-0 in favor of this article.

Motion to recommend this revolving funds article by Hewins, second by Ryan.

Vote 4-1 (Cotter)

Group Health Insurance:

Townsend reads the informational summary.

Townsend noted that the motion to place this article on the warrant was voted on at a previous meeting.

Ryan asked if the cost of this is factored into the budget.

Fennessy explained that this does not add any additional cost to the budget this year. He stated that there are a number of employees looking to retire early due to a prior change in the bylaw that would set the town's portion back from 75% to a 50-50% split, costing the retirees more per month if they retire on or after July 1, 2025. This article would reverse it back to what it was previously at 75-25% split. By retiring before July 1, 2025, those employees would be grandfathered in with the split of 75% town, and 25% retiree. Fennessy also explained that the difference is only until a retiree reached age 65, and that may be why more public safety personnel may be

affected, as they can retire earlier and thus would be paying 50-50% for a longer period of time.

Hewins stated that a number of employees were hired at the 75/25 ratio and the Town will only be effected when they retire.

Hewins stated that she did not think that it is fair to have hired people who have served in various capacities with the town for many years on the promise of a 75-25% split and then change it to 50-50% when they retire.

Hewins stated she understands that most of the affected employees are from Public Safety and the schools, and that the Town could lose public safety department heads that are very important to the Town.

Cotter asked if the Town has looked into different ratios, like 65-35%, etc.

Fennessy explained that there is a standing bylaw, and this step is to repeal it back to where it was before the change several years ago.

Hoffman asked if the budget would be effected.

Fennessy confirmed that it will not be affected by this change, and will stay the same amount for FY25. However, down the line it may have a minimal effect on OPEB liability at 75-25% versus 50-50%

Townsend explained that he feel that it is very important to keep good people employed in as long as the Town can.

Motion to recommend this article regarding group health insurance for eligible employees and retirees by Hewins, second by Hoffman.

Vote 5-0

Finance Committee bylaw:

Townsend reads informational summary.

Motion to place article on the warrant by Cotter, second by Ryan.

Vote 5-0

Section 4.3.1

Motion to approve by Ryan, second by Hewins.

Vote 5-0

Section 4.3.4

Strike through “should said board disagree with the recommendations of the Finance Committee”

Motion to approve as amended by Ryan, second by Hewins.

Vote 5-0

Section 4.3.6

Motion to approve by Ryan, second by Cotter.

Discussion: Strike through “and so listed in the appendix “Elected Officials”,

Motion to approve as amended by Ryan, second by Hewins.

Discussion: take out the wording “and members may be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in the discharge of their official duties”

Motion to approve as amended by Ryan, second by Cotter.

Vote 5-0

Section 4.3.7

Hewins made a motion for an amendment stating, “Finance Committee members may sit on another board, committee or commission but must recuse themselves from any Finance Committee vote on the budget of that board, committee or commission.

She explained that this will allow more people to serve.

Ryan suggested that you keep the initial wording, but also add Hewins language.

Motion by Hewins for this new bolded section to read “The Finance Committee members may not sit on another board, committee or commission without approval of

the Select Board or bylaw requiring a Finance Committee rep. and said member must recuse him or herself on any Finance Committee vote on the budget or financial matter of that board, committee or commission on which they sit”.

Ryan added an amendment to take out the word “that” in the first part of this section.

Second by Ryan.

Discussion:

Cotter explained that he believes that no one should sit on any other Board if they are on the Finance Committee.

Townsend agreed with Cotter on this statement.

Hoffman suggested that is also include a ban on the Full-time & Part-time employees serving on the Finance Committee.

Fennessy stated that is technically it may be a conflict if they did as there are budgets being voted on, and even if they would recuse themselves from their budget, by voting on other budgets it may affect the money available for their budget. Fennessy said a town administrator, in conjunction with the moderator and Finance Committee Chair would not likely appoint a town employee.

Vote 3-2 (Cotter & Hoffman)

Mullen Rule:

Townsend reads the informational summary

Motion to place this article on the warrant by Ryan, second by Hoffman.

Vote 5-0

Motion to recommend this article regarding the Mullen rule by Hewins, second by Hoffman.

Vote 5-0

Discussion and possible vote: Schedule new date for Annual Town Meeting

Fennessy explained the different factors as to why postponing Town Meeting would be beneficial.

Hewins explained that moving the date will give the Town more time to gather more information since there have been so many changes.

Townsend had a discussion with the Department heads on this and confirmed that they are on Board with this decision.

Cotter & Ryan expressed their concerns with delaying town meeting.

Motion to set Annual Town Meeting to Tuesday June 4, 2024 with a second night of Wednesday June 5, 2024 by Hewins, second by Hoffman.

Vote 4-1 (Cotter)

Town Administrator Update:

- Conservation Agent, Gary Flaherty has resigned as he is moving out of state. The Town is in the process of interviews for this position and hopes to have someone new on board soon.
- The Payroll benefits coordinator, Lynne Welsh has moved from this position to the Assistant Tax Collector position.
- Fennessy wanted to congratulate 4 recruits from the Fire department for passing their training.
- Room #4 in Town Hall is out of commission because it is being used for early voting.

Approval of Minutes:

February 6, 2024

Motion to approve as amended by Hoffman, second by Hewins.

Vote 5-0

Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of meeting

None

Select Board Announcements:

Hewins – Reminded the community of the Shane Gives Thanks Pantry.

Hoffman – Wished good luck to the boys and girls' basketball teams in the state tournament this upcoming weekend as well as the Track students.

Townsend – Signs went up yesterday around town designating that Carver is a Purple Heart community and thanks the Town's Veterans Department for working on this. Also, thanked the Department of Public Works for putting these signs up.

Next Meeting: March 5, 2024

Motion to adjourn by Hoffman at 6:50p.m., second by Ryan.

Listing of Exhibits: Judy Richards application, Revolving funds article, Group Health Insurance article, Finance Committee bylaw article and Mullen Rule article