

**Carver Select Board
Meeting Minutes
Town Hall
November 2, 2021 - 6:00pm**

In Attendance: Chair Mark Townsend, Vice-Chair Sarah Hewins, Jen Bogart & Jim Hoffman, Interim Town Administrator Rick LaFond & Assistant Town Administrator Elaine Weston.

Absent: Robert Belbin

The Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance and Hoffman read the community prayer.

Citizens Participation: none

Town Auction: Kathy Kay –Treasurer/Collector present. Kay received a call from an abutter of lot 124-15 who was interested in purchasing the parcel. It is completely landlocked by them. There are parcels under the Treasurer’s custodianship and is looking for approval to put these parcels out to auction. Hewins stated parcel 80-7 is a wetland and should be under the custodianship of the Conservation Commission. Kay stated she has no problem taking that parcel off. Hewins stated she will draft an article for Town Meeting. Bogart stated she had some things to say on Belbin’s behalf as he is not present. He is not in favor of selling off the Meadow Street and Oak Street properties. He would like to see if Oak Street would be viable for affordable housing or a playground even though it looked unbuildable. With Meadow Street being conservation based, he believes that is great because it takes everything off the table with different options.

Motion by Hewins to put up for auction lot 124-15, second by Hoffman.

Vote 4-0

Upland Ale d/b/a Brewery 44: Request for change of hours. Mike Johnson present to request the change. The hours are currently late afternoon to evening and is requesting additional hours when needed, up to 9:00pm. They are looking to hold events and functions.

Hewins asked if they would be open until 9:00pm every day. Johnson stated that currently it would only be one night, and in the winter, possibly a few nights. The latest they are open are Fridays and Saturdays until 10:00pm or 10:30pm. Bogart is pleased that a business is asking to stay open longer due to their success and sent her appreciation on behalf of Belbin who is not present. Townsend asked if there was an outstanding sign issue with the Planning Board. Johnson stated it is in the process of being resolved with the landlord. Currently there is no room on the structure to hold their sign. Townsend would like the motion conditional upon the Planning Board or Building Commissioner approval.

Motion by Hewins to approve change conditional upon the approval of the sign by the Planning Board or Building Commissioner, second by Hoffman.

Vote 4-0

Annual Town Meeting Warrant article deadline & Annual Town Reports deadline:

Finance Director Sue Moquin present. Hewins stated a deadline of December 20th would give people time to submit their articles. Articles need to be drafted, reviewed, go to Town Counsel prior to being posted.

Motion by Hewins to set deadline for Town Meeting warrant articles and petition articles as 4:00pm December 20th, second by Hoffman.

Vote 4-0

Motion to set the deadline for Annual Town Reports as January 31, 2021 by Hewins, second by Hoffman.

Vote 4-0

Interim Town Administrator:

Hewins stated as it stands now we will be hiring an interim going into budget season and town meeting. There is also the setting of the tax rate and there is currently no Town Assessor. If the tax rate doesn't get set, the tax bills don't go out and then there is a cash flow problem. She said if there is a cash flow problem, we would need to borrow money and that is a waste of taxpayers' money if we borrow money because we created this situation ourselves. She stated that is a serious situation going in to town meeting. She stated the by-law requires that the Town Administrator prepares the budget and presents it to the Select Board. Town finances are not like they were in the 1970's when the Finance Committee did the whole budget; things are more complicated now. The Finance Committee relies on staff and there is a new Finance Director who has not been with the town through one budget season as well as a new School Chief Operations & Finance Officer. She does not see finding an interim or permanent Town Administrator happening quickly. She does not want the search process rushed and is concerned that borrowing money is a waste of the tax payers money and that is wrong. She stated the Finance Director and the Town -and the Select Board - are being set up for failure.

Motion by Hewins to be one of a two member subcommittee to see if they can talk to the current Interim Town Administrator to see if he will stay with the town until the end of the current fiscal year, second by Townsend.

Bogart stated she would like Belbin to be here for this decision. He could not be here tonight due to staffing issues at his job.

Townsend stated if we are going to look for another Interim Town Administrator, an ad needs to be placed. We cannot do that and then go back and say we are keeping the current interim, LaFond.

Hoffman stated at the last meeting it was requested that Weston place an ad. Townsend stated that he asked Weston to hold off as there are still a number of things to be decided prior to the ad being placed such as full-time or part-time interim.

Vote 3-1 (Hoffman)

Executive Consultant: Townsend pointed out that Milanoski is under contract until April 16, 2022 and would be able to help out if the Town were in need.

Permanent Town Administrator Screening Committee (TASC): Eight of the nine members are willing to continue on as the screening committee. The Business community representative will need to be advertised.

Bogart would like to ask the groups included to re-submit a proposed name-it can be the same name, and it does not have to be, and would like to see it advertised for the at-large candidates. She stated there are unresolved issues she would like addressed prior to approving the members. Hewins is comfortable with having them re-submit, then she changed her mind stated it is offensive to the screening committee- we appointed them-and if there is someone you don't want to vote for, then you don't need to vote for them. Townsend stated the majority of the Board were comfortable with the previous Committee and they have been through it. He would prefer to allow all the members to come back and look for a Business community rep. Hoffman stated that the only members that were actually chosen were the at-large members and business community rep. Hewins confirmed that Committees did the selection and the Select Board appointed the whole committee.

Motion by Townsend to re-appoint the 8 members of the TASC that are willing to continue and authorize Weston to advertise for the Business Community rep on the website, second by Hewins.

Vote 2-2 (Hoffman, Bogart) motion fails

Motion by Bogart to ask the committees/boards to submit proposed names for the TASC and post the ad for the at large members and business community rep. and to interview the at large and business community reps, second by Hoffman.

Hewins asked why Bogart would want to interview all members. Bogart stated they may not all be interviewed, but questioned if the School Committee, Finance and Planning Board even knew that this was happening.

Townsend clarified that the Select Board would be voting on the Boards recommendations.

Hewins would like to see a motion to make an exception for the 2 public safety chiefs as they are the only two that are appointed by the Select Board, not the Town Administrator.

Bogart amended her motion to make an exception for the 2 public safety chiefs for the application and interview process for the TASC and to set the deadline for applicants as close of

business on November 15 for at large members & business community rep. and at the next scheduled meetings for the committees/boards, second by Hewins.

Vote 4-0

Charge/Guidelines/possible use of a consultant: Through Bogart, Belbin has suggested the change to add: utilize the use of professional staff or company, would like it advertised in print, online in professional journals, etc., all qualified applicants to be interviewed, 5 applicants given to Select Board, background checks on all applicants that meet qualifications, include diverse applicants to Select Board, must include female and people of color as long as they meet the Bylaw requirement, all applicants are given an application number; each applicant number is given a reason for not interviewing them or choosing them to move forward to Select Board.

Bogart would like to use a recruiter/consultant and to have 5 finalists and if there are not at least 3, to allow the search to be extended.

Hewins stated if there is going to be a screening committee then the screening committee needs to be respected and there must have been a reason there were only 3 finalists. She would not want someone recommended that would not be a good Town Administrator. She would like it to remain 'up to 5'.

Townsend agreed that there is a reason the screening committee did not move certain people forward. He does not want to get into telling the screening committee who to and not to move forward.

Bogart stated that the change could be for the Select Board to interview 3-5 finalists.

Townsend stated that the Board has no control over who is applying and if they don't meet the qualifications, they should not be moved forward as a finalist. Hewins agrees. He is comfortable with the 'up to' language. Hoffman agrees that if there are only two candidates that they TASC feels strongly about, he does not want one moved forward just to meet the number requirement and agrees that he does not want to tell the TASC what to do.

Hoffman asked if Hewins asked Walsh if there were any changes he would suggest as a change to the charge. She stated the only change was to change the wording to 'up to'.

Motion by Hewins to have 'up to 5 unranked finalists' as a change in the charge, second by Hoffman.

Townsend would like to see a consultant used and is comfortable with the wording of 'may'.

Bogart would like to see a consultant hired and would like the Board to be able to reach out.

Hewins stated there is a reason for the screening committee which is to take the politics out of the whole process and the screening committee should be the ones determining the process.

Hoffman stated the committee did a great job in a small timeline and does not think the Select Board should be telling them what to do.

Townsend would like to see an interim for a maximum of 6 months. If the process is started on January 1, a permanent should be decided prior to July 1 so they can start toward the beginning of the fiscal year.

Motion by Hewins to change date of chair chosen by January 14, 2022 may use a consultant and change the amount to up to \$20,000, the advertisement must be placed by February 7, 2022 unless a consultant is used and to present up to 5 unranked finalists by April 15, 2022, second by Hoffman.

Discussion on timeline of finalists to the Select Board and if it is enough time to process finalists in order to have someone in place for the new fiscal year.

Vote 3-1 (Bogart)

5 minute break at 7:25pm

Town Administrator Update:

Health Insurance : A meeting is scheduled with the Gateway Board of Directors to bring a high deductible plan forward as an option. This could save upwards of 20% per collective bargaining contract by offering a new plan design. These are initiatives and costs savings as they are fixed costs which can be moved into staffing funds, particularly in the Police Department. Another regional school district and possibly two towns may be interested in joining the group.

149 & 152 Plymouth Street: 152 Plymouth St. has unregistered vehicles and Town Counsel is drafting a letter to them. The deadline given is typically 30 days. There can only be so many unregistered vehicles and they cannot be in an open area which is interpreted by Counsel as anything not housed in a structure. The concern at 149 Plymouth St. is the condition of the structure. The Building Commissioner has been advised by Town Counsel to have a third party review the property and make a recommendation which will then be put forth as a court order.

Route 44 project: The project continues to move slowly. Fire suppression was discussed. The Fire Department has been using a consultant on the site. It is in the very early stages and the Redevelopment Authority will have a consult to assist them as well. The developer is funding a fiscal impact analysis and a report is expected to be received. A peer review may be needed as the person doing the fiscal report for the town is not being paid for by the town. LaFond stated the person and company is credible, but a peer review may be helpful.

Montello Street Interchange/Massworks: Due to the storm, the tree and drainage work has all been pushed back.

Town Planner & Town Assessor: Town Planner ad closes this Friday and a review process will begin next week. Town Assessor interviews are being done this week- there are four applicants being interviewed.

Storm recap: LaFond read a recap from Emergency Management Director Tom Walsh. Hurricane force winds occurred Tuesday night, October 26, into Wednesday. More than 98% of the Town did not have power. The Emergency Operations Center was operational on October 27th. No power restoration efforts were made by Eversource on this day. Two residents used the shelter that was opened. During Thursday and Friday, the communications with Eversource were poor and the Town did not have useful information on the Eversource crews and could not tell the Town if the priorities would be addressed or when. Concerns were expressed to Eversource clearly and meaningful information was not received until Friday night. Power, for the most part, was returned by Saturday. The departments of Emergency Management, Operations and Maintenance, Police, Fire and EMS should be commended along with the efforts of Chair Townsend and Interim Town Administrator LaFond. LaFond also mentioned that June Benson was preparing Meals on Wheels during the outage as well, with no lights or heat.

Townsend stated he spent a lot of time in the EOC during this event and would like to recognize the emergency service personnel, Operations and Maintenance staff and June Benson at the Council on Aging for their efforts during the storm.

Hewins agreed and thanked Townsend and LaFond for pointing out all of them including June Benson.

Hoffman thanked LaFond for the updates throughout the storm as well as Tom and June Benson.

Bogart stated she knew the crews were out there and appreciated getting all the updates.

Wade Street property: This will be discussed at a future meeting.

Next Meeting: 11/16/21 at 6:00pm

Minutes of 10/18/21:

Motion to approve by Hoffman, second by Bogart.

Vote 3-0-1 (Hewins abstain)

Select Board Community Announcements:

Bogart: Open Space and Recreation Plan Steering Committee workshop will be held Thursday at the Fire Station. Storm debris is being accepted at the Rochester Road shed, Hewins stated information on storm debris and where to take it is on the Town's website.

Hoffman: None

Hewins: None

Townsend: None

Select Board notes: Townsend: Discussion of traffic and public safety concerns related to King Richard's Faire. Chief Duphily will speak to the other public safety chiefs and will be at the next meeting to discuss.

Motion to adjourn by Hoffman at 8:01pm, second by Hewins.

Vote 4-0