



Board of Selectmen

Date of Meeting: Monday, December 14th, 2020
Time: 6:30 PM – 8:13PM
Members Present: Chair Jamie Underwood; Selectmen Matt Mecum and Seth Ridinger;
April Steward, Town Administrator; Town Counsel Stephen Madaus, and
Alison Mack, Administrative Assistant to the Board

The meeting commenced at 6:30 PM.

Financial Warrants were signed in agreement.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The meeting will be livestreamed from the *Zoom Application*.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81351156389?pwd=dmkwK29ILzZOR3k4MU5HMU1XSFFQdz09>

Passcode: 146650

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +13126266799,,81351156389#,,,,,0#,,146650# or

+16468769923,,81351156389#,,,,,0#,,146650#

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Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

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Confirming Member Access:

April Steward, Town Administrator recited the following:

Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative.

- Seth Ridinger: Yes
- Jamie Underwood: Yes
- Matthew Mecum: Yes

Staff, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative.

- Town Counsel, Stephen Madaus: Joined later in the meeting
- Alison Mack: Yes

Introduction:

April Steward started off the meeting by stating the following: Good evening everyone. This Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's

Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the “COVID-19 Virus.”

In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor’s Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will feature public comment.

For this meeting, the Board of Selectmen is convening by video conference via Zoom App as posted on the Town’s Website identifying how the public may join. Please note that this meeting is being recorded, and that some attendees are participating by video conference. Accordingly, please be aware that other folks may be able to see you, and that take care not to “screen share” your computer. Anything that you broadcast may be captured by the recording.

Meeting Materials

All supporting materials that have been provided members of this body are available on the Town’s website unless otherwise noted. The public is encouraged to follow along using the posted agenda unless The Chair notes otherwise.

Meeting Business Ground Rules (Jamie Underwood)

We are now turning to the first item on the agenda. Before we do so, permit me to cover some ground rules for effective and clear conduct of our business and to ensure accurate meeting minutes.

- I will introduce each speaker on the agenda. After they conclude their remarks, the Chair will go down the line of Members, inviting each by name to provide any comment, questions, or motions. Please hold until your name is called. Further,
 - Please remember to mute your phone or computer when you are not speaking.
 - Please remember to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate minutes
- For any response, please wait until the Chair yields the floor to you and state your name before speaking.
- If members wish to engage in colloquy with other members, please do so through the Chair, taking care to identify yourself.

For Items with Public Comment:

After members have spoken, the Chair will afford public comment as follows:

- The Chair will first ask members of the public who wish to speak to identify their names and addresses only.
- Once the Chair has a list of all public commentators, I will call on each by name and afford 3 minutes for any comments.
- Finally, each vote taken in this meeting will be conducted by roll call vote.

Harold P. Naughton: Farewell Remarks and Legislation Updates:

Mr. Naughton expressed his personal thanks the Town of Boylston for 26 years of support. He reviewed some pieces of Home Rule Legislation that the Town has asked his office to act upon and is in hopes that they can be accomplished by December 31st.

1. House 4937: Insurance Proceeds Legislation – should have come out of the Policy and Steering Committee today and be heading to the floor.
2. House 3936: Validating the certain Election for the Town of Boylston – engrossed by the House on December 14th, 2020. Its on its way over to the Senate and they anticipate switch resolution.
3. Special Act regarding the School Committee, they have been speaking to the Governors Office. Mr. Naughtons current representative director, who is the incoming Representative has been handling that and is fully invested and prepared to grab the ball and run forward with them come January if needed to be refiled.

Mr. Naughton expressed his thanks to the Town and revealed a few memories of his times working with The Town of Boylston. April and the Board thanked Mr. Naughton for all he has done for the Town and highlighted some achievements that he has helped with over the years, such as the Police Academy and Highway Department.

Police Chief Report to the BOS:

- Speed Tractor has been deployed on Cross Street and School Street this month
- Nov 3rd – Officer on IOD return to duty
 - o Posted job announcement for 2 new Police Officer Positions – expired on 18th of November
 - Received 21 responses
 - Unfortunately, majority were not qualified due to no MA Full Time Academy, disciplinary/conduct issues, and location of residence
 - 4 candidates appeared before the Sergeant Interview Board
 - 3 to be interviewed by the Police Chief
- Nov 11th – Veterans Day Holiday – no issues noted
- Nov 12th – Ticket hearings
- Nov 13th – Ticket hearings
- Nov 20th – worked 7am-3pm shift for over time saving
- Nov 23rd – 25th - Began IMC in House Training
- Nov 23rd – Officer on IOD return to duty
- Nov 29th – worked 7am – 3pm shift for overtime saving
- Dec 2nd – Officer Return from parental leave
- Dec 4th – MEMA area Rep came by for an office call
- Dec 5th – Sergeant out on IOD due to slipping; possible damage to elbow; back to work on the 11th
- Dec 10th – Officer Parker appeared before a Grand Jury in Worcester on a case they are working
- Dec 15th – Office call with a resident interested in a career in law enforcement
- Dec 16th – Ticket hearings
- Dec 25th – Working the 7am-3pm shift

- Dec 28th – Budget due to the Town Administrator
- Jan 15th – Annual Town Report info due to Ali
- Trainings in January – Feb
- 3 COVID-19 Cases in the building
- Leicester PD offered us low band radios
- MA Chiefs are interested in seeing the number of Officers wanting the vaccine; half want it and half do not want it.

Crime Statistics:

- Only 15 Motor Vehicle Stops last month: hands off approach
- Still processing license to carry

Town Administrators Report to the BOS:

1. **Town Hall Closure:** Due to the increasing number of positive COVID-19 cases in our community, the decision was made to close Town Hall to the public effective Tuesday, December 8th. Staff is available by phone or by email and will be able to conduct in person business by appointment only. The Town of Boylston moved into the red category on Thursday, December 10th, with 38 positive cases within the last two weeks and a positivity rate of 6.67% over the last 14 days. The Commonwealth released its weekly public health report last Thursday, and it shows that our residents are currently at a dangerously high-risk from COVID-19. The rate of COVID cases locally is much higher than the state's average. We need to do more to protect our families, loved ones, and community. You can save a life by taking action.

Please take steps now:

- Wear a mask when outside, or inside shared spaces where you can't keep a safe distance from others
- Wash your hands often.
- Keep gatherings small – even with family and friends and make sure everyone wears a mask and keeps a safe distance.
- Don't share food or drinks.
- Stay home if you feel sick.
- Follow travel quarantine guidelines.
- Get tested.

For more information on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, visit [Mass.gov/StopCOVID19](https://www.mass.gov/StopCOVID19)

2. **Town Hall Updates:** Our Facilities Technician has drawn up plans to replace the existing Board of Health storage unit with an ADA compliant bathroom for the lower level of Town Hall. The update would also allow for access to the archives room without needing to pass through the Food Pantry. The BOH storage space will be relocated to existing storage along the main corridor in the lower level. The plans to relocate Parks and Recreation, and the Council on Aging offices have also been drafted. Both offices would have their own office space and would share the larger area as needed. Eventually, we will be looking to move the Council on Aging department to the Town House and the entire area downstairs could be utilized by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Seth suggested giving Parks and Rec the plan to review and get some feedback on what their needs may be. April will send it out to them tomorrow. Matt asked what the timeline for this would be. April stated that they need to get an estimate; might need an article in May at the ATM so looking around mid-summer.

3. **Governor Baker's Amendments to Senate Bill 2963 (Police Reform):** Bill 2963, all 129 pages, landed on the Governor's desk on December 1st. The Governor has since sent it back with amendments to the Senate and the House of Representatives. I have attached the signed policing amendment letter in your packet. I will be keeping an eye on this piece of legislation and will keep you advise on updates as they occur.
4. **Remote Work:** We were able to pull through with remote working, however, the consensus I received from most of the departments is it is better and more effective to work from our own office space. The computers work great, however, with no access to a printer/scanner and not being able to access mail, it is better to work in the offices and restrict access to the public whenever it is deemed necessary.

The Board and April discussed the information April received from Town employees and the plans each department submitted regarding working through these times.

Vote to Close Boylston Town House and other Town Buildings:

Matt Mecum made a motion to close the Boylston Town House to the public temporarily. Seth seconded. Voted all in favor. Matt: Yes, Seth: Yes, and Jamie: Yes.

April asked for some clarification regarding working Monday evenings from 6PM-8PM and if the board would like the employees coming into the office. Jamie suggested since its by appointment only, they see who calls during this time. Matt stated that regarding phone calls, most people are working during the day so 6PM-8PM would be the only time they are able to get in contact with the Town Hall. Seth stated that certain offices do need to come in and do business and we should operate as we did in the Spring, by appointment. Matt stated that if the Town Hall should be open, we should still be conducting business during those hours and the office should be staffed. Jamie suggested not cherry-picking offices. The Board agreed to keep the office open during the 6PM-8PM office hours and have each department staffed.

Vote to Authorize Town Administrator for Town Hall openings/closures:

Seth Ridinger made a motion to Authorize Town Administrator April Steward to have the authority to open/close Town Hall in accordance with what she considers to be an emergency. Matt seconded. Voted all in favor. Matt: Yes, Seth: Yes and Jamie: Yes.

5. **Mailboxes on Maple Way:** The snowstorm last week put the newly adopted mailbox claims policy to the test. Unfortunately, the heavy wet snow exiting from the town plow up in the Pleasant Hill Farms subdivision caused damage to several mailboxes. Although there has been assertions that the mailboxes were damaged by the snowplow itself, I have not seen any evidence of that with the pictures that I have received. I reached out to the manufacturer of the mailboxes, Yankee Mailbox, and they have been unresponsive. Our Highway Department personnel take great pride in the work that they do. Many of them

are residents that live in this community and would never intentionally drive town equipment in a reckless, half-hazard manner. There has been one resident who submitted a claim. The Highway Superintendent has approved the claim.

Vote to approve \$1,500 stipend for the Town Clerk from the Civic Tech and Civic Life Grant:

Seth asked if we legally needed to act on this since it was already voted on to accept the Grant on behalf of the Town. Matt mentioned that a lot of towns are doing this as well. Dawn mentioned it is a very broad grant. She used most of it for better signage for the Town which will support better communication. It's up to the towns discretion on how to use this money; surrounding towns used some over the funding to support the Town Clerks extra hours during the election. Stephen mentioned that if it relates to additional time for services, it would be appropriate. Dawn was working excessive hours and stated that she can provide that information to the board if needed.

Matt Mecum made a motion to approve the \$1,500 stipend for the Town Clerk from the Civic Tech and Civic Life Grant, Seth seconded. Voted all in favor. Matt: Yes, Seth: Yes, and Jamie: Yes.

Dawn thanked the Board for all their support.

Vote to approve MOU between The Town of Boylston & The Greater Worcester Land Trust Regarding the Acquisition of the Sewall Pond Property:

Colin from the Greater Worcester Land Trust came before the board to speak about the acquisition of the Sewell Pond Property. Colin mentioned that the site of Camp Harrington makes it very inviting for an active recreational facility. They were approached by the owners of the property to conserve it and the GWLT approached the towns Recreational Commission and Select board; over time it was decided that the best route would be for the GWLT to buy the property and to hold onto it until the Town of Boylston could buy it from them. Right now, they are looking for a MOU with the Town to move forward. Stephen suggested walking through the MOU with Colin. Stephen mentioned that an MOU is not binding, it's a memorandum of understanding between two parties on how they want to proceed in a certain matter: The Town and GWLT. It is not to create a binding obligation.

Colin mentioned that the GWLT was buying the property for \$150,000 and selling it for \$150,000 and eating the financing cost to make sure that the right thing happened. He knows that they can cover the 12 months of borrowing costs to make this happen, but anything after 12 months is going to have to be discussed between the town and GWLT. Colin suggested aiming for the 18 months is okay to do. He also mentioned that they are prepared to execute by December 31st. Seth stated that this is excellent news and he is very excited; wonderful opportunity to have some open space in this area. Jamie mentioned that this board and the Parks and Rec board are going to do their due diligence on finding out the cost to get it to be of value to the town. Colin mentioned that the current owners of the property stated they would be willing to grade the site and work with the town to get it to as close to as what we were intending for future use; it would be great to get more clarity from the P&R commission on what they would like to come from that.

Stephen asked if the number should be adjusted to reflect the added carrying costs. Colin stated that he has not calculated it but believes that \$160,00- on the MOU would cover that. Colin stated that he believes it will be around \$7,000 to carry it in borrowing costs for 12 months, the town may have to add in \$3,500 - \$4,000. Stephen suggested putting in language; \$150,000 plus carrying

cost. Jamie mentioned that this will have to go to the Annual Town Meeting for residents to vote on this; the Board is not authorized to purchase land without going before Town Meeting. They wanted to get ahead of it and give the town the opportunity to make that decision. Matt stated that a very important piece of information is that whenever the GWLT acquires this land, it is conservation. The Board, Colin, Stephen and April reviewed the MOU document. Stephen stated that he will make the changes discussed, carrying costs and date.

Matt Mecum made a motion to enter into the MOU with The Greater Worcester Land Trust pending changes and authorize the chair to sign the MOU, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor. Matt: Yes, Seth: Yes and Jamie: Yes.

Approval of meeting minutes: 11/30/2020

Seth Ridinger made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 11/30/2020 with the typo changes, Matt seconded. Voted all in favor. Matt: Yes, Seth: Yes, and Jamie Yes.

Town Planner Reports:

Seth asked if occasionally we could have the Town Planner provide a report to the BOS. April mentioned that she spoke with Paul this morning and he is planning on submitting a report to the Board next month.

Matt suggested having him come to a meeting quarterly.

*At 8:13 PM, on a motion made by Matt Mecum, the following roll call vote was recorded to go into Executive Session under: **Per MGL c.30A, §21, (6):** to consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. – 85 Sewell Street; and authorize the chair to review and approve the meeting minutes from tonight's Executive Session. The Board agreed they would not reconvene to open session. Roll call vote recorded as follows: Jamie Underwood: Yes; Matt Mecum: Yes; Seth Ridinger: Yes*

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Mack, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

Meeting Materials

Agenda	On File in the Board of Selectmen's Office
MOU with the GWLT	On File in the Board of Selectmen's Office
Town Administrator's Report	On File in the Board of Selectmen's Office
Highway Dept Report	On File in the Board of Selectmen's Office
Police Chiefs Report	On File in the Board of Selectmen's Office
Building Inspectors Report	On File in the Board of Selectmen's Office
Meeting Minutes 11/30/2020	On File in the Board of Selectmen's Office