



## Board of Selectmen

Date of Meeting: Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Time: 6:30 PM – 8:16 PM  
Members Present: Chair Matt Mecum; Selectmen Jamie Underwood 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.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Jay Corcoran Dedication:**

Matt mentioned that he spoke with some of the family members, and they were thrilled about the dedication. They asked if they could have some time to reach out to family and see when the best time for everyone would be, as some of the family members are spread out across the country.

### **Discussion/Vote on Public Participation Policy:**

Matt stated that in general, for government there is a sediment that meetings are less open than they should be, and he wanted to make sure that people know the board is here and willing to speak with them. Stephen Madaus asked if we would like to add a timeframe onto the policy for when residents would like to add something to the agenda; 3 business days.

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to vote the Public Participation Policy as written with the third bullet point also adding “to contact the Town Administrators Office or Board member within 72 hours before the date of the meeting so it can be placed on the agenda”, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.*

### **Vote to Appoint Ron Aspero as a Member of the Conservation Commission:**

*Seth Ridinger made a motion to appoint Ron Aspero to the Conservation Commission. Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.*

### **Discussion with School Committee Chair Susan Henry and Vice Chair Lori Hart; Regional School Committee Election and Goals:**

School Committee Chair Susan Henry and Vice Chair Lori Hart thanked the board for having them. The School Committee is a relatively young school committee; 3 of the 6 members started this past June or September. They are working together to get to know each other and see how they will work as a team. They are currently working on getting the newest members to feel comfortable in their roles and reviewing policies. The district is now regionalized which separates them from the town offices and departments. Lori mentioned that at the end of each year they do a School Committee self-evaluation which highlights their strengths and weaknesses. One item they noted as a weakness was communication and they focused on that this past year. They have

currently been working on getting everyone to know their roles. They will be working on how they reach out to the community. They do not want the community to think they can't come or speak to the school committee. They are going to be doing some Q and A forms, and have other ideas, such as getting the Superintendent involved. They have a unified vision of community engagement moving forward and they are excited – a whole new energy. Susan Henry stated that in January they are going to have a governance workshop where they are going to try and define a vision for community engagement and develop a strategy.

#### *Regional School Committee Election November 2022*

Missed the original deadline for the regional election in 2020; due to transitions in the school committee and the pandemic happening at the same time. At first, the school committee was going to pursue a special election, but it was complicated because the pandemic pushed things back; they had to submit a home rule petition for a special election and the legislature wasn't taking up anything that wasn't pandemic related. The school committee has voted to withdraw the home rule petition officially and commit to working towards the November 2022 election. Susan mentioned that she didn't really understand the election but has been putting a lot of time into learning the process. They have put together a timeline which clarifies how exactly the process works, what's every step in the process, who does what, and when it is due. They have an elections sub-committee as part of the school committee which have been charged with defining the outreach activities and developing some materials that will help answer some common questions that residents may have about this election since it is different. They have also designated a district clerk. Susan emphasized that this election is a very new process for Boylston/Berlin; it's the first election since regionalization in 2018, there is now one committee for all matters related to regionalized district when there used to be three, this is the only time that all six seats on the school committee will be considered vacant in the same election. It is the first time that both towns are going to be voting for all six seats. The regional school committee election is the only local election on the biannual state ballot and how it looks on the ballot is going to be different. Susan continued to describe some of the new information that will be presented to residents. There will be a new district improvement plan for FY23-FY28; significant policy document. The current Superintendents contract expires in 2025 and they are currently starting negotiations for a new teacher's contract and that will need to be done again in 2025 as well. Susan asked the Board if they had any ideas on activities that may be important to engage Boylston residents in learning about the election and what would be the kinds of forms that would be important for them to keep on their radar. Jamie suggested speaking with the electric companies to help get the word out. He also stated that he would hand out information at the polls at the national election. Seth stated that they would most likely be coming up with the same ideas that they have thought of and believes that its great they are being proactive. Stephen Madaus added that they should check in with their counsel to see what they can and can't do legally with the use of public resources. Susan said they were hoping to engage other groups to get involved. Matt stated that he believes the best chance of getting people engaged is one on one discussions – trying to get people to attend a forum or something about a school committee election that is going to happen in seven months is going to be tough. April suggested that they consider events that are already in existence, Memorial Day. Susan and Lori thanked the board for their time and let them know to please contact them if they have any questions.

#### **Highway Superintendent report to the BoS:**

Finishing up some bigger projects. This week they will be finishing up the mowing for the season, soccer fields, center of town, town hall, BES and the cemetery. Trying to keep up with the pothole repair. Tree work. Getting the snow equipment ready. The DPW held a hoisting continuing education class to renew all employees hoisting licenses. They invited surrounding towns as well as private contractors. They finished up the paving project for this year and believes they are about \$20-\$30 thousand dollars under budget. Last week Steve met with April and Jeff to review the employee evaluations. Needs to finish up some evaluations. Fall sweeping will take place next week. Water in the center of town will be turned off this week.

*Cemetery* – up to 13 full burials and 8 cremations for the year.

Matt stated that he has received a lot of comments for the Columbus St and Adams Street paving and its even better that its under budget.

Seth asked if they are short plow drivers and Steve responded that the subcontractors that were hired have stuck with them and they have built a great relationship.

Steve stated that they had an article to buy a truck at the last Town Meeting and they have purchased that truck. They are in the process of fixing a couple items on it and it should be ready prior to the first storm.

### **Police Chiefs Report to the BoS:**

Boylston Interim Police Chief and Elected Police Chief attended the meeting. The activity report for the Month of October was reviewed.

Boylston Interim Police Chief Robert Barbato stated that the Boylston Police Department will be asking for a new cruiser at the December 2021 Special Town Meeting. They described the issues with a current vehicle – Car 6 and explained how much the repairs would cost. A cost breakdown sheet is in the Selectmen's packet. Fixing these issues would be a major expense to the Town and they feel it would be a disservice to the town to put more money into this vehicle. They are also nervous that once you start fixing this car, they could find out more issues. Jamie asked how long the build out would be for a new vehicle and Chief Barbato responded about three weeks as there are several vehicles in the area available. Matt asked what the overall budget for maintenance on the Police vehicles were and Chief Barbato responded \$30,000; covers fuel, parts, and maintenance. Seth asked what issues were occurring with car 4 and Chief Barbato responded that the two-way radio doesn't work, and the blue lights aren't working correctly. Chief Annunziata explained that having an expert come out to diagnose the issue was costly. He added that currently the Police Department is down two cars. Seth stated that typically they have 2-3 cruisers working per shift and asked if it would fundamentally impair the Police department's ability to patrol and maintain public safety without having at least six operational cars. Chief Barbato responded that you must take the chiefs car out of it as that car needs work, and he would not use that car to patrol in because it doesn't have the necessary features needed. Seth stated that normally he would be hesitant with a large ask at a Special Town Meeting but if they are telling us that its fundamentally important for the Police Department to have that cruiser, then he thinks that we would get behind it. Chief Annunziata stated that he understands the hesitation in asking for this, but it was thought through and agreed upon that it was important. Jamie stated that he feels we put ourselves in this situation as we have kicked this can down the road for four years as they have nixed getting a cruiser for a couple years. They knew something was going to

break, they just didn't know which one was going to go first. Matt stated that he will certainly not put officers in the position that their safety is going to be put in danger but does have concerns; spending money at STM and making sure that the Finance Committee is going to get behind this. If you have two Police Chiefs sitting here telling you that you absolutely need a car, he would support it. Matt added that he is hopeful our State Rep is diligently trying to get us money for another cruiser. April added that when she spoke with Chief Barbato he mentioned that when you get down to four cruisers, and they try to rest a car a shift, these cars will be running nonstop, and we will be putting ourselves in a position that's not a good one to be in. The cost would be around \$60,000 and they are looking at a Ford F-150. They are looking at a pickup truck since they have had to rely on the Highway Department and Fire Department for help when they do not have a vehicle to carry larger items. Finance Committee will be doing the final review with the Board of Selectmen at the November 15<sup>th</sup>, meeting.

### **Town Administrator's Report to the BoS:**

1. **Special Town Meeting:** Boylston's Free Cash has been certified by the state. We may open and close the warrant this evening and hold our final review with the Finance Committee next Monday, November 15th. I would like to have the meeting via Zoom. There are ConCom and Planning Board meetings already scheduled for the 15th. Would it be OK if we moved the meeting earlier than 6:30?
  - a. The Board agreed on a 5:30 meeting.
2. **MIIA 2 Year Guarantee Proposal:** Our insurance company has offered the town a renewal proposal for FY23 and FY24 due to our favorable loss history. This is wonderful news for us as we continue to work to keep costs down.
3. **Clean Harbors:** I have included in your packet a Public Notification of Release letter from Clean Harbors. This is a compliance letter that must be sent to abutters in the event of any kind of a materials spill. The release area was remediated and there are no adverse impacts to soil, groundwater, or surface water due to this release.
4. **Performance Evaluations:** Jeff and I have been meeting with Department Heads to go over the evaluations for their direct reports. Each manager will meet one-on-one with the employee(s) that reports to them and perform their evaluation(s). The process has been going smooth and each manager seems to be very comfortable with the process.
5. **Veteran's Day:** Just a reminder that this Thursday is Veteran's Day and Town Hall will be closed to the public. I would like to say thank you to all the men and women who have proudly served this country.

### **Vote to set Special Town Meeting Date of December 6<sup>th</sup>, with a snow date of December 7<sup>th</sup>**

*Seth Ridinger made a motion to set the Special Town Meeting date of December 6<sup>th</sup>, with a snow date of December 7<sup>th</sup>, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.*

### **Vote to open Town Warrant:**

*Seth Ridinger made a motion to open the warrant for the Special Town Meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.*

**STM Warrant:** April reviewed the warrant with the Board. (Copy of Warrant in folder in BoS Office)

**Article 1 Discussion:** Matt asked who is responsible for cleaning it up, grading it and so on. He said he has heard a couple times that someone is going to do it, but nothing has happened yet. He is concerned that they are going to vote on this, and it will be ours and then the town is fighting someone about the order of conditions. Seth added that he believed part of the terms of the sale when it was being transferred to the Greater Worcester Land Trust was that someone of those issues were going to be resolved. Jamie stated that its not meeting the criteria set forth for either the Earth Removal Board or Conservation Commission. Jamie stated that it was written in the agreement that covenants would transfer to the new owner. Matt stated that we need to make sure when we go to do the purchase and sale agreement that it states those covenants will be completed by the date that we close. The Board continued to discuss how important it is that we take care of this as they are sure it will be brought up at the Town Meeting.

**Article 2 Discussion:** Police Department Bill needs to be added to this warrant.

**Article 3 Discussion:** No discussion

**Article 4 Discussion:** April has been going back and forth with Senate Council regarding the Special Act that the Town put in 2020. They are afraid that if we go through with the Special Act one of the major impacts to the Town would be that if we receive the money in July and it was for Junes salary, it would have to go into free cash because it was appropriated outside of the fiscal, where as if you had an indemnity fund, it wouldn't matter and you could just put it into that fund. The town is looking to have a cleaner process and have it just go into the fund. They are asking so many questions that it is causing herself and Attorney Madaus to hesitate and just go with the local option and pull the Special Act. This is a driver as to why we are over on the Police salary lines because that money is just going into free cash instead of back into their salary lines. Matt stated that it sounds like a good plan to him.

April added that if we decide to put the Police cruiser on the warrant that would be for the sum of \$60,000. She will make sure to get an accurate number from Interim Police Chief Barbato. Matt stated that he would not be comfortable going over \$60,000. Stephen added that Article 2 will require a unanimous vote.

**Vote to close Town Warrant:**

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to close the warrant for the Special Town Meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.*

**Discussion on other Boards/Committees using Town House for meetings:** Seth added this onto the agenda. He went to a Planning Board and Conservation meeting and the room was packed. He wants to open up the Town House to other Boards and Committees to use it for their meetings to be more spread out. Matt stated that people can ask Ali if its available and it shouldn't be an issue. Seth asked for an email to be sent out to other board/committee chairs to make them aware.

**Goal Setting: Discuss process and procedure (template):**

The board discussed the template and if any changes should be made. Seth suggested adding mutual agreeable. Jamie stated that they should keep it simple. Stephen stated that the Board of Selectmen should approve the goals. Matt stated that this year we are trying to have something measurable to discuss next year. April suggested having lines at the end of this sheet for the Board to sign off on. Matt suggested having the Department Head sign it showing that it is mutually agreeable. Jamie stated that he wants to see what they come up with for goals. Matt stated that this round he really wants the Department heads to set goals that they can achieve. We want to get the process down and make sure it is valuable.

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to adopt the template for SMART Goal setting, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.*

**Approval of meeting minutes:** 09/27/2021, 10/06/202, 10/12/2021

09/27/2021: Seth Ridinger:

- Page 3: Vote to appoint Robert Barbato as Interim Police Chief – there was no motion recorded under that.
- Page 3: Vote to sign the proposal for the professional engineering services – opened the public hearing, not meeting.

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of 09/27/21 with the two changes discussed, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.*

*Seth Ridinger made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of 10/06/21 and 10/12/21, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.*

*At 8:16 PM, on a motion made by Jamie Underwood, the following roll call vote was recorded to go into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** (closed to the public)*

**Purpose 1: Per MGL c.30A, §21(a) (3):** To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining – *Boylston Professional Firefighters IAFF Local 5324*, if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares.

**Purpose 2: Per MGL c.30A, §21, (2):** *to discuss strategy with respect to negotiations with nonunion personnel – Police Chief's contract*

**Purpose 3: Per MGL c.30A, §21, (2):** *to discuss strategy with respect to negotiations with nonunion personnel – Building Inspector's contract*

The Board will also be approving Executive Session Meeting Minutes: 08/23/2021.

The Board will not return to open session. *Seth Ridinger seconded.*

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Mack, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

**Meeting Materials**

Agenda

On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office

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