



Board of Selectmen

Date of Meeting: Monday, December 20th, 2021
Time: 6:30 PM – 7:25 PM
Members Present: Chair Matt Mecum; Selectmen Jamie Underwood and Seth Ridinger;
April Steward, Town Administrator; 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.

COA Recognition of Ozzy Sauer's Service:

Matt thanked Ozzy for his years of service to the Town of Boylston and the Council on Aging. Dennis Goguen stated that it has been his privilege to work with Ozzy and it has been an absolute joy to work with him. He has been an advocate for the seniors in town; setting up trips, starting the transportation service with the van. Ozzy thanked everyone for their support. He added that it drives him crazy seeing seniors leave the town because we don't have a senior center and hopes that that someday they will have one in town.

Discussion on non-profits and paying for details: Pushing off to a later meeting

Discussion on Leo Club and helping gather information on senior citizens: Pushing off to a later meeting.

Town Administrators Report to the BOS:

1. ***Camp Harrington:*** Chairman Mecum and I met with Colin Novick, Mike May, and the Chair of Conservation to discuss the outstanding order of conditions on the Camp Harrington property. The former owners are going to be completing items that were include on the notice of intent that was filed with the Conservation Commission, which include grading to a 2:1 slope, removing stumps and tailings, loaming, and seeding. There are a few items the Greater Worcester Land Trust will be going to the Conservation Board to request a waiver on.
 - a. Jamie mentioned that they still have an open order of conditions with the earth removal board as well.
2. ***Longley Hill Road:*** I have received an update on the conditions of Longley Hill Rd and the intersection with Stiles Road. Although this does not fall under the purview of the Board of Selectmen, I want to keep you informed because eventually this will come onto your desk when there is a request to make it a public way. The Conservation Commission and the Planning Board are aware of the issue and are working with the developer.

3. **WooSox:** Representatives from the WooSox organization came in to talk about different ways they could support the community. They do not have a lot of money; however, they do have a big voice and are able to do things such as send players/mascots to opening day for the baseball/softball leagues, and Memorial Day. They are also offering to hold a “Boylston Day” at one of their home games where municipal officials can talk about the community here and portions of ticket sales can benefit scholarship funds and non-profit organizations within the community.
4. **FY23 Budgets:** FY23 budget packets have been sent out to the departments in town. I have already spoken to a few departments that are looking to increase their salary lines to stay competitive with regional communities. The library has requested to come in to speak to the board on Tuesday, January 18th.
5. **BBRSD FY23 Preliminary Budget Presentation:** I attended the BBRSD Budget Presentation last week and I have included that presentation as part of your packet. These are preliminary numbers and will most likely come down as they continue to work their budget.
 - a. April stated a lot of the numbers are being driven by special needs and having to send students out of district for special needs care; can be up to \$150,000 per student.
 - b. Another item that was highlighted through COVID is the need for a lot more social work. Seth added that one ask was for another guidance counselor to bring the total to three guidance counselors at Tahanto. A lot of it is population driven and with more kids they are thinking more teachers.
 - c. Matt asked if they touched on how the new acceptance criteria coming from the state with vocational schools is going to affect them? It’s a giant number in their budget and going forward it seems like that unfortunately isn’t going to be an option for a lot of kids at Tahanto. April responded that they are looking at different ways they can do that type of vocational schooling for the kids. Initially it looks like it will save us money because we won’t have as many kids going to Assabet, but they can go somewhere else, Leominster. Matt stated that he is less concerned with it saving money and more concerned with kids that want to go to a vocational school and have the opportunity. Seth added that one of the other reasons to hiring a guidance counselor was to help manage the upper classmen doing internship programs with local businesses, hoping that would keep more kids in the district instead of going to vocational schools/other schools. Discussion continued on Vocational Schools.
6. **Historical Commission:** I received a letter from the Historical Commission on your behalf. There are concerns expressed about misconceptions of them being closed over the last year and being used less than normal due to COVID restrictions. That is not the case. I have included the letter in your packet.
 - a. April mentioned that Mr. Filgate stated the resources are not available for the Gough House. Seth asked if April spoke with him or just received the letter. April stated that she spoke with him and his impression was that the Board of Selectmen was talking about using his money that he has budget currently to pay for things

and April stated that was not her understanding. Seth stated that in the letter from Mr. Filgate, he mentioned that there was already a fire alarm system in the Gough House and asked if that was already the case. April stated that she believes there may have been one at a certain point in time but does not believe it is still working.

7. ***Kentucky Tornado Relief:*** I am going to be heading to Mayfield, Kentucky on Sunday, December 26th with a group of 12 to help aid in cleanup efforts for families affected by the tornadoes from a few weeks ago. I will be returning on Thursday, December 30th. The Board thanked April for donating her time to give back. Seth stated that he is proud of our Town Administrator for taking her time to do that.

Seth asked if April spoke to the Conservation Commission regarding the update on Longley Hill Road. April stated that the Conservation Commission and Highway Superintendent go up there frequently and have those conversations; everyone is doing what they can right now.

Review/Approve and Sign 2022 Business License Renewals:

Jamie Underwood made a motion to review/approve and sign the 2022 business license renewals as presented, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Board of Selectmen Goals Discussion:

1. *Moral at Town Hall* – Still needs some work. Covid slowed that down in allowing us to get together. Matt stated that he has been trying to stop in each office when he is there to say hello and see how they are doing. We have started Tuesday talks again as well. Open to suggestions. Jamie suggested providing a lunch monthly as an employee appreciation lunch. April added that we did not do a holiday party this year since most people still are uncomfortable being in a room together, but we are hoping to push that out and do something in the spring. Jamie suggested it not being about a holiday, and having it be more random. April added that herself and Jeff are also working on a step program and hopefully that will make people happy to know that they are not only getting a COLA increase but also move up in their grade and get closer to the top.
2. *Subsidized Housing Inventory* – Matt stated that Paul the Town Planner has been working on this as much as he can in his limited hours and long list of tasks to get done. The board did not have an official update. Seth stated that we lost a couple at the Flagg Estate qualified for and gained about 7 at Brookside. As far as finding other properties that are not already on the SHI, Seth is unsure. Matt stated that in general it was understanding where we were because we were not sure. Matt asked April to ask Paul to give an update the next time he gives his report to the Board. April clarified that it was 6 at Elmwood Place that we lost and gained them at Brookside.
3. *Master Plan* – Matt stated that the Master Plan is cruising along, and we are on track. The goal is to be finished in June of 2022. We are down to the nitty gritty and getting into the details of the goals and action items. This is a living document, and we plan to continue to make adjustments and updates.
4. *Accountability with large scale developers* – Holding developers to their order of conditions. Seth stated this is an ongoing thing. Jamie added that setting this as a goal has let other committees and departments be on notice that we are looking out and its not

something that we are just going to let slide by anymore. Matt stated that he isn't sure how your reach this goal and it will be ongoing. Seth stated that this board takes it very seriously and will continue to take it very seriously as long as they are on the board.

5. *Senior Services* – Matt stated that although we have a COA we need to step up on our end and see what we can do. We still need to try and gather all the senior residents contact information. The seniors need some more resources in town, and we need to figure out how we are going to get to them. The next one is health services and those came to light with COVID and that goes hand in hand. If we were to have a senior center or a centralized area to get these resources, it would be very beneficial. Joining the Greater Borough Collaborative on Health has been huge and has brought so much value to the town. We have a lot to do and when we go into this budget season, we need to take a look at what we can do to help. April stated that she spoke with Dennis Goguen about a month ago and he is passionate about getting a senior center. April stated that she is going to reach out to other communities to see what resources they tapped into. She also mentioned having a non-binding referendum question at the next annual town election to see if anyone would be willing to support the town going after a senior center to gauge their responses. It's not going to happen in a year, its something that would happen in the next 3,4, and 5 years. Matt added that the Town and the schools need to collaborate better on Health Services – it affects everyone whether you are a senior or a student. Discussion continued regarding senior services.
6. *Collaboration and communication between various boards* – Still have some work to do there. Tuesday talks are a good start. Jamie stated that he believes the issue is that each board wants to stay autonomous. Matt stated that the point of that goal is to get rid of that statement. April added that the Town Planner has been helping with that since he works across multiple boards. Matt suggested sitting down with Paul and asking him what the best steps would be to continue this process.
7. *Code of Conduct* – Seth stated that he went to a MIIA Training last summer and brought this up shortly after that. Thought it was good to have a uniform code of conduct for Board members. It was highly recommended at that training that all boards should have one. He added that the School Committee recently adopted something similar to that. This is something that who state how board members should interact with one another, the public, department heads, employees at town hall and all other sorts of stuff that you might already know; its highly recommended by MIIA and the attorneys that gave the presentation. Seth stated that he would forward the template to the other board members and it's something that they would like to adopt, then they can discuss it at a future meeting.

Approval of meeting minutes: 10/14/21, 10/15/21, and 10/21/21:

10/15 – Page 2. Paragraph 1. “It was important to the board that their wasn't any appearance of propriety” believes it should have been impropriety.

Jamie Underwood made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of 10/14/2021, 10/15/2021 with the change addressed, and 10/21/2021, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Miscellaneous Comments:

Board of Selectmen Annual Report:

Seth asked the Board who is going to be writing the Board of Selectmen's Annual Report. Jamie and Matt did not offer to so Seth stated that he would do it again this year.

Town-wide Trash on ballot:

Aprils stated that she believes that would be a good first step to see if there is interest before moving forward. Seth added that we should get some information on the financial impact to residents that would go along with that information.

COVID Testing at Fire Department:

Matt asked if there was any FEMA funding available to use to buy at home COVID test kits for residents. April stated that she reached out to Kristen Black but she was out and will touch base with her tomorrow regarding the kits.

At 7:25 PM, on a motion made by Seth Ridinger, the following roll call vote was recorded to go into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** (closed to the public) *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. The Board will not return to open session. Jamie Underwood seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Mack, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

Meeting Materials

Agenda	On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office
Town Administrator’s Report	On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office
October 14 th Draft Meeting Minutes	On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office
October 15 th Draft Meeting Minutes	On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office
October 21 st Draft Meeting Minutes	On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office