



Board of Selectmen

Date of Meeting: Monday, October 23rd, 2023
Time: 5:30 PM – 8:31 PM
Members Present: Chair Jamie Underwood, Selectmen Matt Mecum and Seth Ridinger; April Steward, Town Administrator, Town Counsel Stephen Madaus, and Alison Kennedy, Administrative Assistant

At 5:30 PM Matt Mecum made the motion to go into Executive Session and Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor. The Board will reconvene in open session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (closed to the public):

Per MGL c.30A, §21, (2): To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or contract negotiations with non-union personnel, if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares – Highway Superintendent

Per MGL c.30A, §21 (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.

Per MGL c.30A, §21, (3): To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. – “Mary K. Cutter v. Town of Boylston and Boylston Water District, Civil Action No. 2385CV00178” and “Mary K. Cutter et al. v. Town of Boylston Zoning Board of Appeals, Civil Action No. 2385CV00264.”

At 6:53 PM, Matt Mecum made a motion to adjourn the executive session and return to open session., Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor. Matt: Yes, Seth: Yes, and Jamie: Yes.

Approval of meeting minutes: 03/13/2023, 03/27/23, 09/25/23, 10/12/23

09/25/23 – Master Plan Implementation Committee – Page three. The motion sounded confusing. Relisten and redo.

Seth Ridinger made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 03/13/23, 03/27/23, 09/25/23 with edits, and 10/12/23, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

Certificate of Appreciation of Service: Edith Abelson:

Edith Abelson is a junior at Tahanto High School. She is on the cross country/track team; she enjoys running. Town Clerk, Dawn Porter added that Edith started volunteering at the Town Hall

when she was a sophomore; called herself and asked to volunteer. She has been coming regularly and helped throughout offices in Town Hall. She is always polite, professional, and reliable. Dawn presented Edith flowers and the Board of Selectmen presented Edith with a Certificate of Appreciation for all her hard work and help in the town offices.

Vote to appoint Scott Kneeland as the Facilities Assistant:

Seth Ridinger made a motion to appoint Scott Kneeland as the Facilities Assistant, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

Vote to approve the one-day liquor license request for Keiths Music House Grand Opening – Saturday, October 28th 1:00 PM-4:00 PM:

Seth Ridinger made a motion to approve the one-day liquor license request for Keiths Music House Grand Opening – Saturday, October 28th 1:00 PM-4:00 PM, Matt Mecum second. Voted all in favor.

Vote to approve an entertainment license request for Keiths Music House Grand Opening – Saturday, October 28th 1:00 PM-4:00 PM:

Matt Mecum made a motion to approve an entertainment license request for Keiths Music House Grand Opening – Saturday, October 28th 1:00 PM-4:00 PM, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Department Head Reports – On File in the BoS Office

Town Administrator:

1. WRTA Advisory Board Disabled Commuter Population position: The WRTA has a vacancy in the position of “Disabled Commuter Population” representative. If anyone in town is interested in filling this role, please reach out to the Town Administrator for more information.
2. Senator Kennedy Office Hours: Senator Kennedy has begun to hold office hours here at Town Hall on a monthly basis. She was here on Monday, October 2nd and will be here again on the second Monday of every month from 6:00PM through 7:00 PM. Please take advantage of this opportunity to talk to your State Senator.
3. Senior Center RFQ: The RFQ for the Senior Center Feasibility study has been posted and will remain open until Thursday, November 2nd. So far, there have been thirty-five individuals that have pulled the RFP, eight companies were represented at last week’s site walk through.
4. Human Resources Position: There have been two applicants that submitted resumes for the HR Administrator position. One applicant met the qualifications and after being interviewed was offered the position. Unfortunately, after accepting my offer they received an offer for a FT ATM position and rescinded their acceptance of our offer. I am planning on reposting the AD on the MMA website this week.

Jamie stated he would like this person insured. The Board and April discussed adjusting pay, the hours, etc in order to make this job work for the town. It was suggested looking sharing it with the school, or looking into sharing the role with another town.

5. Hillside Cell Tower RFP: The RFP for the Hillside cell tower is set to be advertised in the Central Register on Wednesday, October 25th. It is important to note that this is a preexisting tower that has been in place since 2005, located on the back side of the Hillside property. The due date for this RFP is Thursday, November 30th.
6. Community One Stop for Growth Grant: I received notice from the Commonwealth that the application FULL-FY24-Boylston-Town of Bo-01243, submitted by Town of Boylston, was not recommended for funding by any of the One Stop programs. I have reached out for feedback and comments about the application and its review.

Building Inspector:

- Cardinal Health is moving into the Northbridge site. Going to be a \$5 million plus renovation.
- 63 units at Trailside is moving along pretty good. Just issued a permit for a clubhouse for the commercial building.

Town Planner:

Planning Board:

At the October 2 meeting, the Planning Board approved the following application:

- 8 Gulf Street Senior Residential Development (SRD)
(Remand from Land Court)

As of this writing, Town Counsel is in the process of drafting the Decision.

On the next agenda:

- Site Plan Review: 211 Mile Hill Road–Summer Star Nature Viewing Barn

Question:

Seth asked how making sure units are affordable plays out, how is it laid out to ensure that the town does receive those units. Paul responded that the Planning Boards preview is pursuant to the senior residential bylaw and the inclusionary zoning bylaw; two affordable units will be required as part of that project. What will happen before permits can get issued on that structure, a deed will need to be restricted. The state has a model and that will need to be recorded before permits are issued.

Matt added the governor also tapped money from interests, he believes its around \$12 million dollars, to be used for municipalities, for the grant matching. Something to look into.

Zoning Board of Appeals:

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) has received the following new applications:

- Request for Finding: 211 Mile Hill Road–Summer Star Nature Viewing Barn

- Variance (Modification): 26 Boulder Way–Lot Reconfiguration

The ZBA will be holding a meeting on November 27 at 6pm.

Grants:

- The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) was the sole respondent to the solicitation to update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which expires next year. We will be convening a kick-off meeting with CMRPC in the next month or so.
- Convened a meeting of the MVP Core Team in order to identify potential projects for the upcoming MVP Action Grant window. I also submitted the Town's annual report to the MVP Central Mass Regional Coordinator (see separate document).
- On October 23, I will be participating in a webinar on Mass Trails funding for accessible trails.

Office/Other:

- On September 29, I participated in a Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors (MAPD) webinar highlighting new Land Use Law cases from the past year.
- On October 5 & 6, I attended the annual Southern New England American Planning Association (SNEAPA) conference, which was held in New Haven, CT this year. I sat in on sessions addressing Solid Waste Management, Housing for an Aging Population, Soil Health & Resilience, Real Estate Market Analysis for Planners, Capacity Building and Succession Planning, Developing Trail Projects, and EDI(Equity-Diversity-Inclusion) Criteria in Private Developments.
- On October 10, I attended the annual Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Associations/Division of Local Services (MARPD/DLS) conference held at Holy Cross. I sat in on sessions addressing Livable Communities and Rural Empowerment.
- On October 18, I spoke with Bernadette DeBlander of DCR's Division of Watershed Protection regarding opening lines of communication and coordination of permitting and compliance review for parcels that are subject to both Boylston and DCR regulations.
- On October 19, I participated in a Zoom call with Town officials and consultants regarding the status of public safety communications antenna(e).

Highway Superintendent:

- Completed catch basin cleaning
- Taking to Tighe and Bond – no longer able to mix sweeping and catch basin debris to use on roadway – this will be an added expense
- Roadside mowing continues
- Backfill on Central Street
- Tree cutting in the center of town
- Ot hole patching on upper School Street and Mill Road
- Working on gas crossings – Central Street
- West Temple Street – Road condition was bad. We chose to grind it. DCR is concerned that it's not paved currently. Looking to have it paved next year. Matt suggested reaching out to our state reps. Rain is causing washouts.
- Attended crisis meeting at Tahanto

- Hosted hoisting training here for West Boylston, Lancaster and some private contractors
- Remaining asphalt on Central Street has been taken care of
- Attended Tahanto evacuation drill and will be doing the same tomorrow at BES
- Cemetery – 2 burials since last meeting
- Wreaths Across America – laying wreaths on the 16th of December

Private Ways: A letter went out to private ways previously that the town would not continue to plow the private roads. No action has been taken on any of the roads that are in dire need of some work to continue plowing. He believes it was stated that if the work was not completed by the 16th, that they would receive a letter from the BoS that the roads would not be plowed this winter. The letter should be sent out as soon as possible as residents need to be put on notice. The board discussed what the letter should address, and it will be drafted and presented to town counsel and put before the board of selectmen for approval at the next meeting. Town Counsel stated that the town does not have an obligation to plow private ways as you cannot use public funds for private property, unless it is voted upon at an Annual Town Meeting.

Police Chief:

September Breakdown:

- 9 Accidents
- 19 Criminal Summons/Arrests
- Conducted 17 Investigations
- Conducted 291 Motor Vehicle Stops
- Dispatch Processed 26 Emergency 911 Calls
- Total Activity was 2,766 calls.
- 9/26/23–10/3/23-Speed trailer was placed at 100 Sewall Street
 - Capturing traffic traveling from School Street to RT 140
 - Total #3,582
 - Average Speed: 23
 - Highest Speed: 53
 - 50th Percentile: 26
 - 85th Percentile: 35
- VS
- 2/14 0900HRS–2/22 0900HRS
 - Capturing traffic traveling from RT 140 to School Street
 - Total # 2,469
 - Average Speed: 27
 - Highest Speed: 56
 - 50th Percentile: 29
 - 85th Percentile: 33
- 9/14/23-Speed signs were delivered and will be installed on Sewall Street sometime this month.
 - September 19—we had a domestic violence incident in the area of Cook Street

- Day shift officers were able to apprehend the suspect who had a fairly violent criminal record.
- Officers have begun their in-service training.
- We completed our firearms training.
- Halloween
 - I would recommend the same hours as last year.
 - 10/31–1700–2000

Discussion on Dog Officer position:

Has spoken with April about it and working with BOH. Have received a lot of calls lately regarding animal control issues. Rutland Police Department handles animal control – our buy in would be \$15,000 (based on house values). April reached out to CMRPC to see if we can get a couple towns together but has not heard back yet.

Fire Chief:

- Staying busy – Sept/Oct was a busy month.
- Two cardiac arrest calls – both lives were saved.
- Radios: taken delivery of all portable and mobile radios. All mobile radios have been installed on apparatus. Still working on programming glitches but he believes everything is squared away.
- Grants: Next round of grants will be out in January/February. Looking at two grants – one to replace the structural turnout gear, and one to replace the tanker. \$700,000 - \$800,000
 - Lot of gear that will be out of date this year.
 - FEMA Grant – As a FEMA grant awardee, we have Civil Rights Requirements we must follow as a town. This is looking at customers coming into town.
 - Policy of Non-Discrimination
- Continuing to replace carbon monoxide and smoke detectors for seniors.
- Evacuation drill at Tahanto – Evacuated to Tower Hill
- ARPA request: We are in need for a mechanical CPR device. We have one in each ambulance, and one is no longer compliant. Requesting the use of ARPA funds to replace device. \$20,000 in price. Put it on the next agenda to be voted on.

Question: Matt read in the paper that some towns are starting to offer additional cancer and eye testing due to the gear use and asked if this is something we should be looking into. Joe responded that its available through the Dept of Fire Services free. They can promote it to their staff.

Howard Drobner from the Finance Committee asked if the two grants for the tanker and turnout gear were grant applications for the full cost? Joe responded that they are the 5% reimbursement grants, so we would be responsible for 5% of the cost.

Discussion on Mass Housing Grant Application for Affordable Housing:

Seth spoke with Attorney Madaus and does not feel that at this current juncture its feasible to apply for the grant since the only real feasible land is up here, and because of the taking, it would preclude us from doing something with it unless we could trade off for another piece of land.

April stated that we did hear back from them, and we did not receive the Hillside Grant. She reached out for feedback and comments but has not heard back yet. They did request a match, it wasn't required, but highly recommended and believe that may be part of the feedback. Seth suggested that we need to start exploring what Hillside could be used for to start meaningfully deciding how this property should be used. April stated herself and the Town Planner have been looking into using leftover funds and maybe tapping into different funds; possibility to do a Hillside Master Plan or go through OneStop when it opens again. Matt suggested speaking to WPI and Clark as well on this project. Paul Dell'Aquila echoed Seth's comments and stated that based on conversations with folks at the state, based on wording in the current documents, until we go through an actual planning process of some kind where we can demonstrate and identify what parcel could be swapped, we need to get there; we were probably a bit premature on that. He suggested getting feedback from this process and see where to go from there. The OneStop grant will open up again in January.

Review and approve Planning Board Clerical Administrator job description changes:

Cleaned up description a little bit. The major change would be that this position would now report to the Town Planner instead of the Town Administrator.

Seth Ridinger made a motion to approve Planning Board Clerical Administrator job description changes as presented to the board, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

Boylston Leash Law Discussion: Resident Robyn Wheel: Move to next meeting. Robyn did not show up.

SRO position discussion:

April mentioned that the School Committee asked if there were any specific items that the board was looking for on information on the SRO position since they are only sending representatives. Matt stated that we need to establish what this position looks like between the Police Department and the schools, establish how it's paid for, and then make a list of action items. Berlin has to buy into this, so we need them on board as well. It's been discussed for over five years now. Currently there is an updated MOU, but the Police Chief stated that they wouldn't be looking to change that as it states the Police Officer wouldn't be used in there as an administrative role. There are a lot of items to discuss; IT, equipment, supplies, working area, and etc. Matt added that there is a large disconnect as to what an SRO is; it's hugely important to have public forums on this to make sure everyone is fully aware of what the role is. The parents of the students are the ones who will want to speak to it. Seth stated that at the end of the day, whoever is responsible for funding this, the school department absolutely needs to have buy in and say what they want; make it clear about the direction they want to go. Secondly, their last budget season was substantial, and they did have a lot of priorities, but this was not reflected in their budget and need to think about that very seriously as they begin their budget this year. April stated that this started around 6 years ago with a different board and Police Chief, and the feedback that was received was they the school was more interested in receiving mental health counselors over an SRO. The Board asked the Chief to come prepared to the next meeting with his vision of what an SRO position is as well as state mandates. Howard Drobner expressed Finance Committee's view and asked what happens if Berlin disagrees; the board responded they wouldn't move forward.

Representatives of the School Committee will be attending the meeting on Monday, November 6th to discuss.

Vote to appoint Kathy Lohnes to the Senior Tax Rebate Committee:

Matt Mecum made a motion to appoint Kathy Lohnes to the Senior Rebate Committee, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Vote to appoint Jack Valleli to the Senior Tax Rebate Committee:

Seth Ridinger made a motion to appoint Jack Valleli to the Senior Tax Rebate Committee, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

Vote to appoint members to the Master Plan Implementation Committee:

- Planning Board Rep: Mark Johnson
- Parks and Recreation: Claudine Underwood
- Conservation Commission: Jeff Walsh
- Historical Commission: Nancy Filgate
- Council on Aging: Dennis Goguen
- School Committee: Meagan Grill
- Finance Committee: Stephanie Miczek

Seth Ridinger made a motion to appoint the members presented to the Master Plan Implementation Committee, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

Vote to continue the use of Boylston's three poll pads, and two newly purchased poll pads, at all 2024 elections (unless specifically disallowed by the State of Massachusetts):

Matt Mecum made a motion to continue the use of Boylston's three poll pads, and two newly purchased poll pads, at all 2024 elections (unless specifically disallowed by the State of Massachusetts), Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Update on fiber project:

Matt stated the fiber project is moving along quite well. Phoenix uses Axis for an engineering firm. Axis has completed all of their field work and have provided initial plans. We are meeting on Thursday with the schools and another party to make sure they are content and then go into construction fairly quickly after that. The Boylston piece will be completed first and then the other two pieces, there is work to be done.

At 8:31 PM, Seth Ridinger made a motion to adjourn, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor. Matt: Yes, Seth: Yes, and Jamie: Yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Kennedy, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

Meeting Materials - On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office

Agenda

Department Head Reports to the BoS

Policy and Notice of Nondiscrimination

Civil Rights Evaluation Tool

Planning Board Clerical Job Description

Motions for Town Clerk Tabulators Equipment

Keiths Music House one day alcohol request

03/13/23 Meeting Minutes – Draft

03/27/23 Meeting Minutes – Draft

09/25/23 Meeting Minutes – Draft

10/12/23 Meeting Minutes – Draft

LHS Invoice for Tabulators