



BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 30, 2023

Members Present: Richard W. Brewer, Chair
Steven J. Ouellette, Vice Chair
Shana M. Shufelt
Ann E. Boxler
Manuel Soares, Clerk

Also Present: James Hartnett, Town Administrator

6:00 p.m. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. with the above members present. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Welcome Comments from the Chair

The Chair announced that under the provisions of MGL Chapter 30A, section 20(f) this meeting is being recorded. The Chair noted that the Board will hold an Executive Session at the end of the open meeting, and reported that the next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held on Monday, June 12.

Acknowledgments & Recognitions

The Chair praised the efforts of the Veteran's Service Officer and her helpers for the coordination of the very successful Memorial Day ceremonies. Mr. Ouellette noted that the Highway Department ably assisted the effort by installing flags at various locations.

1. Public Hearing

6:05 PM - request of 62 EBR, LLC for a six-month seasonal trailer permit for recreational purposes to locate a trailer on 62 East Beach Road. The property is shown on Assessor's Map 76A, Lot 67.

Mr. Hartnett indicated that the application filed reflected the same proposal as last year, with no changes in the site plan. He recommended approval of the permit.

MOTION by Ms. Shufelt to approve the six-month seasonal trailer permit for 62 EBR, LLC for 62 East Beach Road. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

2. Licenses/Permits

a. One Day Liquor License Request for the Holy Ghost Club, 179 Sodom Road: June 10, 2023, 2 pm-7 pm – Fundraiser; June 30, 2023, 5 pm-10 pm – Chicken Barbeque

Mr. Hartnett reported no issues with past events at the site, and recommended approval.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the One Day Liquor Licenses for the Holy Ghost Club on June 10 and June 30, 2023. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

3. Appointments and Resignations

a. Request from Chief Pelletier to re-appoint Michelle Donovan and Sarah Zielinski as Full-Time Police Officers, effective May 9, 2023. Mr. Hartnett recommended approval.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the re-appointment of Michelle Donovan and Sarah Zielinski as Full-Time Police Officers, effective May 9, 2023. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

b. Request from the Cemetery Department to appoint David Ancil as a Seasonal Laborer. Mr. Hartnett noted that the applicant was employed as a seasonal laborer in the past, and recommended approval.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the appointment of David Ancil as a Seasonal Laborer for the Cemetery Department, effective June 1, 2023. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

c. Request from Matt Armendo, Board of Health Director to appoint Tabitha Duby and Part Time Animal Control Officer, effective June 1, 2023. Mr. Armendo told the Board that the applicant was a graduate of the veterinary program at BCC, and was serving as a part-time ACO in another community; he recommended the appointment.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the appointment of Tabitha Duby as a part-time Animal Control Officer, effective June 1, 2023. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

d. Request from George Ripley, Library Director to appoint Melissa Ferreira of Westport to the vacant Library Aide I Part-Time position. Mr. Hartnett indicated that the applicant has previous library experience, as well as data entry skills, and recommended approval. Mr. Ripley indicated that the position would be part time, for a maximum of 19 hours per week.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the appointment of Melissa Ferreira as a part-time Library Aide I, effective June 1, 2023. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

e. Request from Kristin Stinson to appoint Carla Vieira as Assistant Town Clerk

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the appointment of Carla Vieira as an Assistant Town Clerk, effective May 31, 2023. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

4. Action Items

a. Request from Matt Armendo, Board of Health Director to post the Transfer Station Attendant II position both in house and outside simultaneously. Mr. Armendo indicated the vacancy needed to be filled as soon as possible; Mr. Hartnett recommended that the simultaneous posting be allowed.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the simultaneous posting of the Transfer Station Attendant II position. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

b. Request from the Westport 4th of July Parade Committee to hold the parade on Tuesday, July 4th, beginning at 10:00am. They are also requesting that the Police Details be funded by the Town as in the past. The president and vice president of the Parade Committee were present to ask the Board for permission to close town roads on Tuesday, July 4th for the annual parade, and ask for a commitment of town funds to pay for the police details on that day. Mr. Hartnett recommended approval of the requests.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the use of town roads on July 4th for the annual parade, and the use of town funds to pay for the police details on that date. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote. Ms. Shufelt expressed the Board's appreciation of the efforts of the new volunteer committee members who have stepped up to organize the annual event.

c. Request from the Council On Aging to accept the following donations: \$100, Richard Dow for Best Use; \$25, Thomas Reitano for Best Use; \$25, Anonymous for Best Use; \$25, Ralph Urban for Best Use; \$25, Melissa Gell for Tech help; \$20, Patricia Herman for Tax Help; \$20, Joanna Roberts for Tax Help; \$10, Hospitality; Totaling \$250.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to accept the donations to the COA as listed. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

d. Request from Elephant Rock Beach Club for a one day exception to the no parking rule on Atlantic Ave for the Family Day Event on July 29, 2023 with a rain date of July 30, 2023. Mr. Hartnett indicated that there were no issues with the event last year, and a police detail was planned by the applicant.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the exception to the no parking rule for Atlantic Avenue, contingent on the implementation of the police department's recommendations for a paid detail. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

e. Request from Theresa Walls of New Bedford for a Hix Bridge Pass for her father, Joseph Furtado, who resides in Westport. Mr. Hartnett explained that the request was filed to allow Ms. Walls to use her car to drive her elderly parent, a Westport resident, to use the town landing; he recommended approval.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve issuing a Hix Bridge Pass to Ms. Walls. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

f. Schedule a Town Election, for the purpose of a \$3,000,000 Proposition 2 ½ override and to approve the Ballot Question wording. Mr. Hartnett indicated that the special election was needed for voter approval of the override question approved at the Annual Town Meeting. He suggested that Tuesday, July 25 was a suitable date for the special election, and noted that the endorsed plan was to seek a \$1 million override for each of the next three years, for a total of \$3.0 million. The ballot question language provided by Town Counsel was included in the meeting package. Several members cited the importance of having the Annual Town Report available to voters before the election; the Chair expressed his optimism that the override effort would be successful.

MOTION by Ms. Shufelt to schedule a special election for Tuesday, July 25, with a single question on the ballot as indicated. Ms. Shufelt read the ballot question provided by legal counsel into the meeting record. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Ballot Question

Shall the Town of Westport be allowed to assess an additional \$3,000,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the operating budgets of the Town and the Public Schools for the fiscal year beginning, July 1, 2023?

5. Discussion

a. Town Beach Life Guard Discussion

Beach Committee Chair Sean Leach and committee member Perry Long were present for the discussion of staffing issues. Mr. Leach noted that the Head Lifeguard and all seven life guards employed last year

would not be returning to town employment this year; he noted that despite a vigorous recruitment campaign, only one applicant for a lifeguard position has been received so far. He suggested the Select Board will need to make a decision soon whether to open the beaches without life guards, or take other recruitment steps. Mr. Leach suggested that opening without life guards would pose safety risks and result in an increase in “bad behavior” at the beaches. He also suggested that a big part of the problem was that the state beaches were offering \$28 per hour to applicants while the town was only offering \$21 per hour. Mr. Hartnett reported the receipt of three more applications, raising the possibility that the beaches could open with reduced staffing. Mr. Long reported on the extensive recruitment efforts, and encouraged use of reduced staffing for peak time coverage of the beaches; he reported that the Horseneck Beach head life guard had offered emergency assistance to the town if needed. Mr. Hartnett felt that beach operations need to be re-structured, with a beach manager added to the staff to supervise operations. The possibility of using non-certified monitors to supervise activities on the beaches, and providing an ATV for periodic police patrols was discussed. The Chair indicated there would be no staffing decisions made at this meeting, and the topic would be revisited at the Board’s next meeting on June 12th.

b. Old High School Municipal Use Study Update

Mr. Hartnett noted that Town Meeting had approved a study of municipal building use, including potential re-use of the old high school property; he was seeking the designation of a board or committee to receive and review the study’s findings. He indicated that a RFP process would be used to conduct the study, with the potential for a contract to be signed this fall. After discussion, there was general consensus that the Long Term Building Committee should receive and review the study report, and that Ms. Boxler could serve as the Select Board’s delegate to that committee. Ms. Shufelt’s suggestion that more volunteers from the community be recruited to serve on the LTBC was also endorsed by the Board.

6. Town Administrator Report

The Town Administrator reported that third quarter Local Receipts were up slightly (3.6 %) from last year, with increases in investment income, licenses, and permits offsetting the slight decrease in motor vehicle excise tax revenue. He also recommended town participation in a regional meeting planned by Halifax Select Board to discuss the MBTA Community Zoning Requirements recently issued by the state.

7. Approve Minutes

a. May 15, 2023

MOTION by Mr. Soares to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2023 meeting as submitted. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

8. Report on Bill Warrant

Ms. Boxler reported no issues with the warrant.

9. Selectmen Liaison Committee Reports & Suggestions for Future Agenda Discussion/Action

Ms. Boxler provided an update on a recent Affordable Housing Trust meeting, where the Trust’s consultant was directed to work with the Long Term Building Committee on updated proposals for a possible housing component to the old high school re-use plan. Ms. Shufelt reported on the Internet Advisory Committee’s efforts to prepare a RFP package for future work; and noted the School Building

Committee's steering committee is working to resolve the final items on the school punch list. Mr. Brewer noted that the Audit Committee reviewed the recent Auditor's report, finding no material weaknesses in financial practices. There was consensus that the Board would meet with the Auditor on June 26th to discuss the report. Mr. Brewer also reported on a recent meeting with the town's energy consultant to discuss a project manager position. Mr. Ouellette reported that work on the Route 6 infrastructure projects is continuing, with the Bike & Walking Path Committee also planning related work on the Route 6 portion of the proposed pathway. Mr. Soares indicated that he spoke with Rep. Schmid about the Route 6 projects, and the legislator has offered to help coordinate meetings with MassDOT on the planning process.

10. Comments and Statements

CPC Chair Betty Slade raised several questions about the town's plans for re-zoning efforts to comply with the state's requirements for MBTA-adjacent communities to provide a minimum of 50 acres for high-density housing near commuter rail lines.

11. Boards/Committees/Commissions Vacancy List

It was noted that the number of vacancies on town boards seems to be falling due to the number of volunteers stepping forward to serve. Residents were urged to volunteer to fill some of the remaining vacancies.

12. Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

None.

13. Executive Session – pursuant to the provisions of MGL c 30A section 21(a), Chair declares an open meeting will have a detrimental effect to:

- a. Discuss strategy with the respect to Collective Bargaining – General Teamsters Local No. 251
- b. Discuss employment agreement for the Director of Council on Aging
- c. Approve April 18, 2023 Minutes

The Chair announced that pursuant to the provisions of MGL c 30A section 21(a), he was declaring that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect on the Board's discussions of the three topics listed, and requested a vote to enter Executive Session, with a return to public session only to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to enter into Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. to discuss the topics (a., b., and c.) listed, with a return to public session to adjourn the meeting. Second by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed on a 5-0 roll call vote: Mr. Soares aye; Mr. Ouellette aye; Mr. Brewer aye; Ms. Shufelt aye; Ms. Boxler aye.

Adjournment

The Board returned to open session at 7:55 p.m. and the Chair called for adjournment.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to adjourn the public meeting at 7:56 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Shufelt. The motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted, Robert Barboza, Recording Clerk

APPROVED:



Manuel Soares, Clerk, Select Board Member

ATTACHMENTS

1PH 62 East Beach
2a Holy Ghost Club
3a WPD Appointments
3b Cemetery - David Anctil
3c 4a Board of Health
3d Library Aide
3e Asst. Town Clerk
4b 4th of July
4c COA Donations
4d ER Beach Club Family Day
4e Hix Bridge Parking Pass
5b Long Term Planning
05152023 Minutes