

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Select Board
Tuesday, April 25, 2023
Remote Online Meeting (Zoom: 863 2202 2075)
Called to Order at 6:00 p.m.**

Remotely participating were Board members, Christopher Houston (arriving late), Harvey Boshart and Laurie Bent. Also present were Town Manager Leon A. Gaumont, Jr., Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director Lisa Yanakakis, Assistant to the Town Manager, Michelle LeBlanc, Sustainability Coordinator Julie Gagen, Chair of Sustainability Committee Katharina Wilkins, Chair of the Planning Board Leslie Glynn, DPW Director Thomas Cullen, Finance Director Susan Kelley, Deputy DPW Director Richard Sullivan, Robert Williamson and Amy Coppers from Wright -Pierce and others.

Mr. Boshart called the remote meeting to order and read the following:

Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, "An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations", authorizes municipal boards to hold fully remote or hybrid meetings through March of 2023. The law does not mandate or prohibit in-person meetings; instead, it allows the Town flexibility in that regard. As required, if a meeting is held fully remotely or as a hybrid meeting, adequate alternative access is provided through a video conferencing link included on the meeting agenda.

Two members of the Select Board were introduced as present: Harvey Boshart and Laurie Bent.

Discussion with Sustainability Coordinator (Update on Climate Action & Resilience Plan & Electric Vehicle Charging Stations)

Ms. Gagen was introduced as the Weston Sustainability Coordinator, who planned to speak about climate change, the current energy market and funding opportunities. She informed the Board that electricity supply rates are increasing by approximately 30% and the cost for waste disposal has also gone up substantially. In December, Massachusetts came out with its most recent climate change assessment which describes the impacts that climate change has on a variety of factors, health, safety, natural resources, as well as risks and hazards for public and private assets. By 2030, Massachusetts will experience a climate more in line with what New York has seen historically. By 2050 storms will increase in intensity and we can expect climate more like Maryland's historical climate. By 2070, we can expect climate similar to historical North Carolina and by 2090, Georgia. As a result, we anticipate a substantial increase in energy costs in the future..

At this point Mr. Houston joined the meeting.

Ms. Gagen also mentioned that Massachusetts has instituted waste disposal bans since 1990. Most recently they have increased commercial food waste bans that took effect this past fall. The Town recently renegotiated its waste disposal contracts for facilities particularly for the schools. That cost has also gone up substantially and is likely to continue to do so. It is suggested that the Town make systemic changes which includes waste diversion, as well as instituting programs such as composting and single stream recycling.

Ms. Gagen informed the Board that in January the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Resources released their updated building energy stretch codes which supports electrification in buildings and vehicles. Massachusetts recently codified legislation that committed to selling all-electric vehicles by 2035.

Ms. Gagen provided the Board a general list of funding sources for sustainability projects. Weston has been active in the Green Communities Grant program which has brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last 10 years. We also have funding from the Mass EVIP program which is supporting the funding for electric vehicle chargers at town hall and police headquarters. We have a Mass DEP Waste Reduction Grant and a Mass Save grant from Eversource. Federal funding may be helpful for the town hall electrification study for a geothermal system. To date, the Weston sustainability coordinators have secured \$933,000 in grant funding and have also seen savings that have come as a result of sustainability programs and projects.

According to the Weston Climate Action Resilience Plan, the Town's target is for 100% renewable energy for municipal operations by 2035 as well as zero greenhouse gas emissions reduction and zero net carbon emissions by 2050. In the category of smart and efficient buildings, the Town is focused on energy usage, such as the town hall electrification study. The Town has received \$168,000 to do building envelope improvements to four of our five schools. We are also working with the Art and Innovation Center to try to mitigate their utility costs. For sustainable resource consumption, we are working on a composting pilot program at Field School and it is leading to a more comprehensive school waste reduction program. The Town continues to look at projects that support sustainable resource consumption at the transfer station, the swap shed, the composting program, recycling, and others. We are working with MAPC to develop a plan to develop infrastructure and convert our fleet over to electric buses and at the same time we are working on installing electric vehicle charging stations. She announced that we recently installed a charging station at Brook School Apartment and there are two more charging stations in progress.

Ms. Bent asked about community outreach and education in reaching our sustainability goals. Ms. Gagen utilizes numerous channels including coordinated communication, work with resident advocacy groups such as Metro West Climate Solutions, Weston Media, as well as blogs and newsletters.

Ms. Gagen announced that she has been discussing Electric Vehicle (EV) issues such as Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, EV charging stations, and EV charging electricity prices with sustainability coordinators, energy managers, and fleet managers from throughout the region. . The market pricing has not solidified. Many communities offer free EV charging. The rate range is between \$0.15 and \$0.35 per kilowatt hour, not including overage fees. The Brook School has put forward an upfront investment of \$25,000 towards the station whereas at the other two stations the investment is not as high. Ms Gagen recommends that Weston set the fee for the Brook School EV charging station at the highest current market rate and see where the Town is after a period of time. Ms. Bent said she would like some additional information on what other EV stations are charging including those privately held. Ms. Wilkins encouraged the Town to try this and see what the results are. Mr. Palmer said he likes this idea and spoke about destination chargers, and high speed chargers. He feels that destination chargers might be appropriate for places of work but high-speed chargers are needed in areas where people are more transient. He asked if the Town was exploring high-speed chargers. Ms. Gagen said not at this time since the grant funds have not been able to be used for such chargers. Mr. Palmer supported 35 cents rates per kilowatt hour as a reasonable rate to start with.

Ms. Chaplin asked if any analysis has been done showing lower winter fuel costs as a result of climate change and environmental impact studies of municipal projects. She specifically mentioned the Route 30 project and the creation of the shared use path and the reduction of trees. Ms. Gagen mentioned the balance between how to develop resilient infrastructure that can mitigate and manage hazards in a changing climate.

Joint meeting with the Conservation Commission regarding Conservation Restrictions for Case Estates Lots 4 & 5

Mr. Berman, Chair of the Conservation Commission called the ConCom meeting to order.

The Conservation Commission and Select Board discussed a proposed memorandum of understanding between both boards for the oversight of proposed conservation restrictions on Parcels 4 & 5 at the Case Estates. Michael Harrity, resident and former Select Board member, provided an overview of the history of the Case Estates purchase, soil remediation, and the plan for the sale of parcels 4 & 5 as well as the need for Conservation Restrictions (CRs) to be placed on a portion of those parcels in order to maintain the "Hillcrest Corridor Viewscape" from Wellesley Street. Mr. Berman inquired about the nature of the historic restrictions present on the current buildings and whether future changes to the current structures would be permissible. Mr. Harrity explained that the buildings will be maintained as-is but there are allowances for expansion or additions to the historic buildings in the rear of the structures. Inside the buildings there is more flexibility offered to the buyers of the parcels.

Mr. Tulloss from ConCom pointed out that the current language regarding the Conservation Restrictions indicates that the "Town" is required to mow the restrictions and that the wording is unclear on whether the Town could hire a contractor in its place. It was in general agreement among the Select Board and the Conservation Commission that the wording needed to be more explicit to make clear that the Memorandum intended to mean all mowing will occur under Town oversight.

Ms. Danforth, resident, requested that the meadow grass restriction on Conservation Restriction A be expanded to allow meadow plants like blueberry or grapes. The Select Board responded that native meadow plants would be allowed so long as they are kept low, and it is understood that the area will be mowed annually under the Town's oversight. Ms. Danforth further inquired about the driveways available and if it were possible to build new ones. Mr. Harrity said it is anticipated that owners will use the existing driveways, but the owner could request a new driveway through the normal town processes for putting in a driveway on a scenic road.

Ms. Glynn, Chair of the Planning Board, inquired about whether grazing would be allowed. Mr. Harrity explained that the Conservation Commission could potentially lease a portion of the Hillcrest Corridor North for grazing.

Motion: Mr. Houston moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Weston Select Board and Weston Conservation Commission for the statement, management and enforcement of the conservation restrictions on Parcels 4 & 5 of the Case Estates property, subject to any amendments as may be consistent with conversations from the joint meeting between the Select Board and Conservation Commission on 4/25/2023 and/or other mutually agreeable changes between the chairs of the Conservation Commission and Select Board. Seconded by Ms. Bent.

Roll call vote: Mr. Boshart, Ms. Bent and Mr. Houston voted in the affirmative. **Approved 3-0.**

Motion: Mr. Butcher moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Weston Select Board and Weston Conservation Commission for the statement, management and enforcement of the conservation restrictions on Parcels 4 & 5 of the Case Estates property, subject to any amendments as may be consistent with conversations from the joint meeting between the Select Board and Conservation Commission on 4/25/2023 and/or other mutually agreeable changes between the chairs of the Conservation Commission and Select Board. Seconded by Ms. Freeman Roth.

Roll call vote: Mr. Berman, Ms. Freeman Roth, Mr. Butcher and Mr. Tullos voted in the affirmative. **Approved 4-0.**

The Conservation Commission left the Select Board meeting to reconvene for their meeting.

Resident Comments

Mr. Houston recognized Mr. Boshart for his six years of service as a member of the Select Board. Those comments were echoed by Ms. Bent and Mr. Gaumond who presented Mr. Boshart with a Weston street sign with his name on it. Mr. Boshart expressed his gratitude for the recognition and thanked the Town for the opportunity to serve.

Presentation of Water Tank Proposal: Finances

Mr. Gaumond introduced Ms. Bent and the project engineers from Wright-Pierce who led the discussion, and also introduced the DPW staff present. Ms. Bent reminded the attendees that there have been two previous forums on the water tanks; this third forum is to discuss the finances of the project and to answer any pertinent questions about the water tank project.

Mr. Williamson stated that the current tanks do not meet standards for service in terms of pressure and volume as the current usable storage volume is inadequate to meet needs for both fire protection and for peak demands. As a result, the operators must run the pumps continuously 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during high demand periods. In addition, the engineers' recommendation is that the Town add an additional 2.5 million gallons of usable volume, at a higher elevation than the current tanks. Ms. Coppers summarized the second forum regarding the siting process and the Article 97 land swap process. She stated that the town will review tank siting with stakeholders to see if alternative tank sites are available while meeting engineering standards, Planning Board concerns, and the Article 97 process.

Ms. Bent announced that the Select Board will be seeking only design funds at the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Williamson estimated that a conservative cost for the tank replacement project is between \$29 to \$35 million in 2026 dollars. The expense is due to current inflationary numbers as well as to supply chain and labor issues. Mr. Houston and Mr. Boshart agreed with the decision to seek design funds at Town Meeting especially given that doing so would not delay the project's timeline.

Ms. Giske asked if the design funds would include funds for geotechnical testing, soil boring testing, and ledge testing. Mr. Williamson indicated that geotechnical services are included in the design fee.

Mr. Hill asked if there would be a municipal bond for the cost of construction. Mr. Gaumond said it might be premature to definitively answer that question but he felt that a 30-40 year borrowing term is probably appropriate. Mr. Williamson also indicated that Wright-Pierce will help identify funding opportunities and grants. Mr. Gaumond commented that the Town will be as aggressive as it can in pursuing grants.

Ms. Glynn from the Planning Board expressed her support for seeking design funds at Town Meeting. She asked how many tanks the Town plans to build at once. Mr. Williamson stated the design fee would be the design for all three tanks to be replaced. She then asked for the breakdown of the \$1 million design fee and whether it includes the MEPA process. Mr. Williamson replied that the cost would be for the design and related costs including geotechnical work, required permitting and design details. Mr. Williamson further indicated that the MEPA permitting costs are approximately

\$210,000. Mr. Gaumont added that the Select Board may need to vote for additional funds through the ARPA relief monies which were granted to the Town; it has been the plan to use some of those funds for the tank project. Ms. Glynn is hoping for a clear explanation of the funds needed to advance the project. Mr. Boshart stated that the majority of the funding for the project is likely to come from the water enterprise fund.

Mr. Levitt asked if the cost of developing and updating existing and new site surveys for the selected sites is included as part of this \$1 million. Mr. Williamson thought that most would be covered and Ms. Coppers added that additional survey work may be required so the additional survey work was included in the estimate.

Mr. MacDowell identified himself as an abutter to the Paines Hill Tank. He asked if we would still need to go back to Town Meeting for the construction funds. Mr. Gaumont responded affirmatively. Mr. MacDowell asked if the Planning Board is to be involved with the landscape screening, etc. Ms. Bent stated that there would be some site walks for the three tank sites and she expects the Planning Board to be involved with the meetings with stakeholders; the Select Board would welcome their input.

Mr. Powell asked if Free Cash can be used for water enterprise projects and whether the funding of the project would be through the water enterprise fund. Ms. Bent suggested there would be a blend between general taxation and water enterprise funds and that blend is yet to be determined. Mr. Powell expressed his opinion that the property owners receiving town water should be the ones responsible for the cost of the tank replacement. Mr. Houston indicated that there is a town-wide value of the project similar to other town amenities like schools, parks, recreation and the transfer station.

Mr. Martin asked if there were any alternative methods to meet the needs of the Town outside of the tank replacement project. Wright Pierce stated the system upgrades they propose would be the best course of action for the Town to pursue.

Ms. Nitsch identified herself as a civil engineer and she asked about the sequencing of the project. She spoke in favor of the project for the good of the entire town.

Ms. Chaplin asked about the redundancy negotiations with MWRA and whether or not the Town intended to bring hydrant service to all parts of Town. Ms. Chaplin further asked whether the fee includes new hydrants in the system to handle the higher pressures. Mr. Cullen responded that we continue to work with MWRA on the redundant connection in Weston but that it would not solve the tank issues the Town is facing. Mr. Williamson indicated that the Town's fire hydrants are designed for the pressure ranges we are looking at. Furthermore, the Town has a maintenance program to replace old hydrants as needed. Mr. Cullen indicated that the Town replaces 15-20 hydrants every year. Ms. Bent reminded everyone that the Town has access to enough water from the MWRA; the Town does, however, need water storage so we can effectively use the water provided..

Mr. Sallay from FinCom asked what the impact on water bills might be when the costs are fully added in and how that might compare with some of our neighboring town water rates. He felt this was important for FinCom to know. Ms. Bent indicate that it will depend on how the funding is split between water enterprise fund and tax money. Mr. Houston thought that information was better calculated once the design is completed.

Mr. King mentioned that the Town should take this opportunity to add new town water lines to the areas of the Town without hydrants currently.

Ms. Eastman asked if Wellesley could be a redundant resource for Weston. Mr. Cullen responded that it was something that the Town is currently working on.

Mr. Polando for the Permanent Building Committee opined that the motion for the design fund article should be worked on as the article mentioned "construction." Mr. Houston said the Select Board would address it in the motion.

Mr. Hill asked if the Town has considered MWRA land as a location for a water tank. Mr. Cullen and Mr. Williamson identified reasons it might not be practical.

Ms. Giske asked if the design funds being sought include bid documents, drawings, and specs. Mr. Williamson responded in the affirmative.

There was a conversation as to when the site visits may occur. Ms. Bent expected that it would be in the next two or three months. Also concerns about the Article 97 process were aired.

Acceptance of State Funds for the Pavement Improvement Program at Rte. 30

Mr. Gaumond announced that he and Mr. Cullen have successfully negotiated with Mass DOT for the improvement of Route 30 on an interim basis while the town and Mass DOT continue their work on the design and the construction of the Rte. 30 TIP project scheduled to begin in 2026. The interim improvement is a \$1.6 million improvement for an interim resurfacing of that road. It complies with the former governor's desire to improve the surface rideability of all numbered routes and municipalities. The Select Board expressed their appreciation for the work on this.

Motion: Mr. Houston moved to authorize the town manager to sign the municipal paving project for the Route 30 project as proposed. Seconded by Ms. Bent.

Roll call vote: Mr. Boshart, Ms. Bent and Mr. Houston voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

Consider position on the Wetlands Bylaw to be presented at ATM

Motion: Ms. Bent moved to support the proposed Wetlands Protection Bylaw at Town Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Houston.

Roll call vote: Mr. Boshart, Ms. Bent and Mr. Houston voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

Discussion on a Charge for proposed Governance Study Commission

Mr. Houston announced he was working on this and would have something formal to present soon. In the meantime, he asked Mr. Boshart if he would be willing to serve in this commission when established. Mr. Boshart agreed and suggested Mr. Harrity as well.

Consent agenda

MOTION: Mr. Houston moved the Consent Agenda as follows. Seconded by Ms. Bent.

Roll call vote: Mr. Boshart, Ms. Bent and Mr. Houston voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

Approve Town Hall summer hours of operation: Monday through Thursday 8am-5pm
and Friday 8am-1:30pm
Approve Dispatch Contract MOU

Motion to adjourn at 9:28 p.m. by Ms. Bent, seconded by Mr. Houston.

Roll call vote: Mr. Boshart, Ms. Bent and Mr. Houston voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

Laurie Bent
Clerk

Note: A copy of all documents, explanatory material, and exhibits presented to and used by the Select Board as part of this meeting are attached to the approved minutes