

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Select Board
Monday, June 5, 2023
Remote Online Meeting (Zoom 838 0182 7456)
Called to Order at 6:30 p.m.**

Remotely participating were Board members, Chair Christopher Houston, Laurie Bent and Thomas Palmer. Also present were Town Manager Leon A. Gaumond, Jr., Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director Lisa Yanakakis, Assistant to Town Manager, Michelle LeBlanc, Fire Chief Justin Woodside, Zoning Board of Appeals members, Chair Jane Fisher Carlson, Stephen Larocque, and Tristan Colangelo, Planning Board members, Chair Leslie Glynn, Lori Hess and Timothy Shawn Lanier, Historical Commission members, Co-Chair Phyllis Halpern, Henry Stone, and John Thompson. Present via zoom were Weston Pride Organizers, Melanie Larson, Ayson Muzila, and Tecton Architects Director of Public Safety Design, Jeff McElravy.

Executive Session ended and Open Session Started at 7:18 p.m.

Ms. Bent called the remote meeting to order and read the following:
Under current state law public bodies may continue holding hybrid and fully remote meetings, without a quorum of the public body physically present, as long as adequate, alternative access is provided. Information about how to join a hybrid or fully remote hearing will be included in the required Open Meeting Law posting.

Resident Comments:

Ms. Bent stated that two water tank site visits, Paines Hill and Doublet Hill were well attended, and was appreciative of the comments and feedback from those who attended. Ms. Bent noted there was one more water tank site visit scheduled for Cat Rock.

Mr. Houston noted that Weston had a Memorial Day Celebration and wanted to thank Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director Lisa Yanakakis for organizing it and making it come together.

Meet with Weston Pride

Ms. Larson said Weston Pride was founded in June 2021 by Weston residents who felt there was an elevated suicide risk in the community for the LGBTQ population since the COVID pandemic paused social engagements, and many were facing isolation. Ms. Larson stated the Weston community has been open and welcoming.

Ms. Larson stated that Weston Pride is hoping to accomplish a few goals; to have continued support from the Weston community, have Weston Pride expressed on the official Town website, make an official proclamation that June is Pride Month in Weston, and have the town create a Human Rights Group inclusive to the LGBTQ community.

Ms. Muzila said she is happy to see that the Weston Library has a wonderful display of books that support the LGBTQ community, and places of worship around town have signs that show support for the LGBTQ community. Ms. Muzila wanted to note there is a significant higher rate of youth suicide within the LGBTQ community, so it is important that schools continue to provide support for the students in the LGBTQ community. Ms. Muzila stated the Massachusetts Student Rights Law, which states that all public-school systems shall through their curricula, encourage respect for the human and civil rights of all

individuals regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Ms. Muzila noted that, in 1993, Massachusetts established the Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ students. It is an initiative between Mass Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Mass Commission on LGBTQ Youth. Ms. Muzila stated that Weston schools have a Director of Equity in Professional Learning, and she would like to see a Director of Equity on the Town level in the future. Ms. Muzila noted that this past school year Weston schools completed an equity audit and will be examining areas for improvements within the Weston community on education about that process in the next year. Most of Weston school faculty have received professional development training from the Safe Schools Program. Weston schools have the gender and sexuality alliances at the middle school and the high school, which are strong student-run organizations.

Ms. Muzila noted that Weston middle school has a day of silence in which students and faculty can take a vow of silence to represent the silencing of the LGBTQ community. This day spreads awareness of the effects of bullying and harassment of these members. Ms. Muzila would like the Town of Weston and its community members to continue supporting the direction the schools have taken by supporting the LGBTQ community, and by promoting the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Ms. Bent stated this is not an action item; however, she was appreciative of the information Weston Pride provided, and is delighted the Town of Weston is supportive and welcoming to the LGBTQ community. Ms. Bent said she will think further on what was presented and was glad to be aware about the issues raised.

Mr. Houston noted that historically, the Select Board has been very reluctant to issue proclamations of any sort of commemorative month, or week, or day. Mr. Houston suggested the the Select Board might consider taking a position so that silence does not express lack of support for this cause. Mr. Houston noted the Select Board did not have to take action tonight but could take items under advisement and be open to change.

Mr. Palmer stated he appreciates the efforts of Weston Pride, and it makes the Weston community a better place.

Fire Station Working Group Study Presentation (Joint meeting with Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board and Historical Commission)

Ms. Carlson introduced some additional members of the Zoning Board of Appeals present, Stephen Larocque and Tristan Colangelo which qualified as a quorum.

Roll call order: Jane Carlson, Stephen Larocque and Tristan Colangelo all present.

Ms. Glynn introduced additional members of the Planning Board present, Lori Hess, and Timothy Shawn Lanier which qualified as a quorum.

Roll call order: Lori Hess, Shawn Lanier and Leslie Glynn all present.

Ms. Halpern introduced some members of the Historical Commission present, Henry Stone, and John Thompson. The quorum is not met.

Mr. Houston provided a brief explanation for the purpose of the fire station study group was due to the town needing new fire stations. Mr. Houston noted both the downtown (Center Station) fire station and south side's (South Station) fire station are old and too small relative current needs.

Mr. McElravy stated he has over 36 years of experience with designing police and fire stations. Mr. McElravy said Tecton Architects were hired to do a conditions assessment of the existing fire stations and programming to create a list of the spaces that are necessary to house operations not only today but well into the future. They were also tasked with doing some concept diagrams which led to the creation of some site plans, floor plans, elevations, and perspective views of both the Center Station and the South Station. Mr. McElravy presented a few different options of plans to the Select Board.

Mr. McElravy provided a brief history of the fire stations. In 1914, the Center Station was built, and in 1986, an addition was added. In 1967, the South Station was built. Mr. McElravy pointed out that fire apparatus has evolved, so they are larger in height and width. This creates an issue since the fire stations were built using smaller fire truck apparatus dimensions.

Mr. McElravy noted that part of the conditions assessment is recognizing that fire service has evolved with a greater understanding of the health risks associated with firefighting and the risk to firefighters. McElravy noted that when firefighters return from a service call, they can have contaminants from that service call on the vehicles and their gear. When firefighters return to the Station, where they live and work, they bring those contaminants with them. The best current practice is to create a separate area for putting the contaminated gear, away from the rest of the Station where they live and work. . The station would need to have a greater pressurization for quality air control to allow the contamination to stay in the confines of the contaminated area and not flow to the rest of the Station. Mr. McElravy pointed out that there is currently a lack of storage and work and living space at the stations. In addition, systems are outdated. Furthermore, new stations would have to be in compliance with ADA Regulations (i.e., handicapped accessible).

Mr. McElravy continued with his presentation, illustrating the possible options to site the four programmatic functions (Administrative Offices, Primary Response, Training and Secondary Response). The Committee has homed in on Scenario 3, which would locate Administrative Offices and Primary Response functions at Center Station and would locate Training and Secondary Response functions at South Station. Mr. Houston made the point that since we do not have a Fire Station on the North side of Town, keeping the Primary Response function at Center Station makes the most sense for service to all parts of Town, including the North side. Ms Bent summarized the issues by stating that the goal would be to equalize the size of the two stations by having two programmatic functions at each station, while also keeping the Primary Response function in a central location. There was further discussion about the benefits of keeping the Administrative Offices in the center of Town, near Town Hall and other Town resources. Mr. Woodside said he agrees with keeping the primary response at Center Station.

Mr. McElravy demonstrated the tentative floor plans for Central Station and South Station. Mr. Houston asked how long the Town can expect these stations to be serviceable; Mr. McElravy stated they should last us in the range of 25 to 50 years. In response to a question from Mr. Palmer, Mr. McElravy stated its easier to build from the current stations, since finding land to accommodate two new stations would prove difficult. Ms. Yanakakis noted that in constructing the new Police Station a few years ago, a thorough review of available land for public buildings did not reveal any suitable lots and that would be true for this project as well. Mr. McElravy stated that the next step would be to get funding for the design at Fall Town Meeting, then construction funding would be a subsequent request. Mr. McElravy acknowledged the Planning Board, Historical Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals will be involved as this project moves forward.

Greatlands Riverside Project

1.) Consider PACE Request

2.) Review of Park Road changes

Mr. Gaumond stated the Greatlands people are seeking the Select Boards approval to join the PACE Program offered through MassDevelopment. They would like to upgrade the systems in the buildings and finance them through betterment assessments on the tax bills. Mr. Gaumond noted the Town Finance Department has been meeting with MassDevelopment. The Finance Department supports this program and recommends it to the Select Board. Mr. Gaumond noted that this program will not be an ongoing drain of funds on the town.

MOTION: Mr. Palmer moved to approve the vote authorizing the Town of Weston to participate in the Mass. PACE program as described. 2nd by Mr. Houston.

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

Mr. Gaumond stated the Traffic and Sidewalk Committee met May 17th at their Public Hearing and approved the recent plans for Park Road as required by the Planning Board and to be recommended to MassDOT.

MOTION: Mr. Houston moved to approve the Park Road changes as recommended by the Traffic and Sidewalk Committee as part of the Greatlands project. 2nd by Mr. Palmer.

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

Consider action on Citizen Petition from 2023 ATM Article #22

Mr. Gaumond noted that a Citizens' Petition was passed at the May 2023 Annual Town Meeting, which gives the Select Board the ability to refer the matter of a new beer and wine license to the State Legislature as a Special Act modifying the previously adopted Special Act. Mr. Gaumond stated the Select Board needs to authorize him to forward the approved article to the State Legislators and ask it to be filed for their review and deliberation.

Mr. Palmer asked how long the whole process takes. Mr. Gaumond noted it depends on the Legislature, so he was unable to provide a timeframe. Mr. Palmer asked if the Select Board could apply for a couple of Beer and Wine licenses to hold for future approval. Mr. Gaumond stated that another Special Act would be needed to modify the current one, which could be presented at the fall Special Town Meeting if it was something the Select Board felt they would like to pursue. Mr. Gaumond will reach out to Town Counsel to get clarification on Select Board getting additional Beer and Wine Licenses.

The Select Board will not take action at this time, waiting to hear from Town Counsel on the questions they have proposed.

Discussion and action on Governance Committee

Mr. Houston stated a Town Governance Committee has been created in response to the Citizens' Petition from May 2022 Town Meeting that wanted to increase the membership of the Select Board from three to five members. Mr. Houston said the charge for this committee has been drafted after taking into consideration the feedback from other Town Government members. Mr. Houston said the committee would consist of five to seven residents appointed by the Select Board and one of the members will be the Town Moderator. The committee's objectives will be studying the town's form and structure of governance and current practices across all functions and at all levels. The committee will also be tasked

with examining what other towns are doing, conducting other research, gathering input, facilitating public engagement and discussion through surveys and public forums. The committee will also work to identify strengths and weaknesses in what Weston is doing now, comparing it to alternatives and making recommendations to not just the Select Board, but to the town of Weston. The committee would be expected to proceed with a target of completing work so that any recommendations could be considered and acted upon no later than the May 2025 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Houston noted that the Citizens' Petition on increasing the Select Board membership would be one of the items the Town Governance Committee would examine and provide a recommendation on.

Mr. Hastings stated the charge for this new committee looks good and he will be a part of this committee.

MOTION: Mr. Houston moved to approve the Charge for the Town Governance Study Committee. 2nd by Mr. Palmer.

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

Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Palmer moved the Consent Agenda. 2nd by Mr. Houston.

- Move to call the Town Caucus for Monday, March 11, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sears Auditorium of the Weston Town Hall and sign the notice of the Caucus.
- Move to call the Town Election for Saturday, May 4, 2024, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Approve the designated polling places, acting under the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 54, Section 24, in the Town of Weston
- Move to call the Annual Town Meeting for Monday, May 6th 2024 at 7 pm at the Weston High School Auditorium, (Wednesday May 8th and Monday May 13th if needed)
- Approve a request from the Weston Library to accept \$35 from the Weston Garden Club and \$50 from Philly Gold to be applied to the Library General Purposes account.

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

MOTION: Ms. Bent moved to adjourn the meeting. 2nd by Mr. Houston

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

Meeting Adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Thomas Palmer
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