

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – TOWN OF NATICK

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

EDWARD H. DLOTT MEETING ROOM – NATICK TOWN HALL

March 4, 2019

6:00 PM

PRESENT: Chairman Amy K. Mistrot, Vice Chair Susan G. Salamoff, Clerk Michael J. Hickey, Jr., Member Richard P. Jennett, Jr., and Member Jonathan H. Freedman

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Melissa A. Malone and Executive Assistant Trish O'Neil

ABSENT: None.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m., noting that a quorum was present and that the meeting had been duly posted. The Chairman further announced that the meeting was being recorded by Pegasus. The Chairman requested a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss matters [NPOA, Executive Session Minutes, and Electricity Aggregation] with the Chair announcing that discussion of Executive Session matters in Open Session would have a detrimental effect on the Board of Selectmen's negotiating position and the Town's interests. Moved by Mr. Hickey, seconded by Ms. Salamoff, moved to enter into Executive Session and, by a roll call vote, all Board Members voted in favor of the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Hickey	Yes
Ms. Salamoff	Yes
Mr. Freedman	Yes
Ms. Mistrot	Yes
Mr. Jennett	Yes

The Board entered into Executive Session at 6:12 p.m., the Chair announcing that the meeting would return to Open Session at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Open Session reconvened at 7:32 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for those protecting our country.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Jillian Wilson-Martin, Sustainability Coordinator, announced the launch of new program in collaboration between the Council on Aging, the Sustainability Committee and volunteers from Renewable Natick - a grant program to help Natick senior citizens save money and be more comfortable in their home. The program seeks to help seniors participate in the Mass Save Program. Income eligibility applies. Informational sessions scheduled for later this month, and Eversource representatives will be there to explain the Mass Save program. If interested, contact Karen Edwards at (508) 647-6540. Ms. Wilson-Martin also announced that the Town would be procuring electricity through its aggregation program again soon, and will return on March 18th to share the history of the program and outline options moving forward. A public presentation will also be made at the Community Senior Center and the Morse Institute Library, and will be posted on line.

Ted Fields, Senior Planner, provided a brief update on new events that Community and Economic Development Department is assisting with - Natick International Film Festival in 2019, Natick Center Porch Fest, and "For the Love of Natick" – a call for permanent art in Natick Center. Mr. Fields provided an explanation of these initiatives, including timelines.

Anthony Comeau, Water & Sewer Division Supervisor, provided an update on the Town's new "Watersmart" program. Funding was received at a previous Town Meeting, launching natickma.watersmart.com. This is a

web-based portal that collects meter reads and water related information. It provides access to monthly water meter reads and usage history, billing history, and online pay. It also provides instructions on how to find leaks and suggestions about water conservation. An official letter will be sent to residents welcoming them to the program and informing them how to sign up. There is no cost to sign up and is an “opt-in” program. State grant money will be used to help spread the word.

Mr. Hickey read an announcement seeking applicants for the Town Counsel Screening Committee. Interviews scheduled for March 18, 2019

Ms. Malone announced that Mr. Eric Henderson has been hired as the Town’s new Tax Assessor.

Ms. Malone thanked the Department of Public Works for its response to the recent (13”) snowstorm.

RESPONSE TO CITIZEN’S CONCERNS:

Ms. Mistrot recounted that Ms. Corey Spaulding had addressed the Board at a prior meeting (February 19, 2019) regarding PTO donations and requesting that the Audit Advisory Committee (a volunteer committee) come forward so she could ask questions. Ms. Mistrot explained that this is not the purview of the Board. She then read excerpts from a letter sent to Ms. Spaulding in 2017, which were shared at Finance Committee last week and prepared by Cathi Collins, then Finance Committee Vice Chair. Ms. Mistrot indicated that the letter provides cogent information as to how PTO donations are accepted by the Town. During Ms. Spaulding’s appearance on February 25, 2019, she raised unspecified safety concerns in which Chief of Police was involved. This was determined to be related to litigation between Natick Public Schools and Ms. Spaulding, and was resolved by that process so nothing further to investigate.

CITIZENS’ CONCERNS

Ms. Corey Spaulding again raised concerns regarding PTOs, suggesting they were illegally soliciting money because they were not properly registered at the time they were engaged in fund raising activity. Ms. Spaulding inquired who would be in control of that. Ms. Mistrot asked whether Ms. Spaulding was requesting minutes of PTOs. Ms. Spaulding indicated that (prior NPS Superintendent) Dr. Sanchioni had restricted her contact. Ms. Mistrot indicated that the Board would not advocate for Ms. Spaulding in this matter.

Rev Ian Mevorach, minister of the Common Street Spiritual Center, appearing as part of Renewable Natick, a grass roots campaign to bring town to 100% renewable energy future, urged the Board to adopt an aggressive approach to combating climate change, including in the context of its upcoming decision on electricity aggregation. Ms. Mistrot thanked Rev. Mevorach, and invited him to return on March 18, 2019.

Dr. Donna McKenzie: Precinct 3, and Member of the School Committee, shared her appreciation for the job Natick DPW did clearing the streets after the recent snowstorm. She also reminded residents needing snow removal assistance that they can contact the School Department, which has a Superintendent Service Brigade comprised of NPS students willing to volunteer.

Josh Ostroff, in his capacity as a member of the Executive Committee of YES for Natick, announced an event on March 13, 2019 called “Town Budget 101” at the Morse Institute Library at 7:00 p.m. In his personal capacity he also indicated he was here to “stand up for” for Town employees and volunteers in the face of “baseless claims” made by certain individuals. He also expressed concern for time and money spent on such claims.

Corey Spaulding stated that her family has spent more money and resources dealing with the exclusion of herself and her child. She questioned why her child has been excluded. She indicated that she was notified by a Metrowest Daily News reporter that Dr. Nolin had spoken regarding the Spaulding Family, and that she (Ms. Spaulding) was struck by the teachers experiencing emotional distress and portrayed as victims.

APPOINTMENTS

Middlesex Vocational Technical School (Keefe Tech) – Mr. Freedman observed that while these are voluntary appointments, one of the candidates is his wife. He has no financial interest in the matter, but will recuse

himself from the vote and conversation so there is no potential for an appearance of conflict. Mr. Freedman left the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Elizabeth Smith-Freedman, candidate for Keefe Tech appointment, introduced herself. She has been in higher education for 20+ years and is interested in alternate pathways in education, including other options to college. She would like to be a part of that and see what she can do to help spread the word. Ms. Salamoff and Mr. Hickey thought she would great candidate for this role. Mr. Jennett agreed. Ms. Salamoff summarized Ms. Smith-Freedman's educational and professional background. Mr. Hickey moved to appoint Ms. Smith-Freedman to the term expiring June 30, 2020. Ms. Salamoff seconded the motion. 4-0-0 approval.

Ruth Mori, candidate for Keefe Tech appointment, introduced herself. She is a Keefe Tech graduate, and her brother is as well. All three of her kids graduated from vocational school, including two from Keefe. She wants to continue to help support Keefe. Mr. Jennett moved to appoint Ms. Mori to the term expiring June 30, 2021. Mr. Hickey seconded the motion. 4-0- 0 approval.

Cathi Collins: Thanked the two individuals who stepped up for the Keefe Tech board, and the Board of Selectmen for taking this up in expeditious manner. She thinks very highly of Keefe Tech and its people.

Robert Hirsh applied for a position on the Natick Cultural Council (term ending June 30, 2021. He is a six-year resident of Natick, and recently retired. Mr. Jennett moved to appoint Mr. Hirsh, and Ms. Salamoff seconded the motion. 5-0-0 approval.

REQUESTED ACTION

Approve Change in Ownership for Five Guys Burgers and Fries – Moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mr. Jennett, 5-0-0 approval.

Approve Livery License Application - David Grancell - Natick resident. Private luxury limo service. Moved by Ms. Salamoff, seconded by Mr. Jennett, 5-0-0 approval.

Public Hearing (continued from 2/19/19): Eversource Grant of Location-Sunshine Ave/Oak Street for St. Mark Coptic Church, Rectory, & School - The Public Hearing will be continued to the 3/18/19 Selectmen's Meeting.

Approve Request to Occupy a Public Way - Cramer Company - 3/6 and 3/7/19 – Mr. Scott Palmer appeared on behalf of Cramer Company, a creative agency. Seeking to occupy spaces in front of Common Café to shoot a commercial. Discussion of safety and need to coordinate with Lt. Lauzon. Moved by Mr. Jennett, seconded by Ms. Salamoff, 5-0-0 approval.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN UPDATES

Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Update & Board of Selectmen Recommendation:

Ms. Malone updated the Board and the public on health care expenses and revenue projections. Mr. Townsend gave a presentation. Discussion regarding fringe benefits, merit and performance increases, including amount budgeted therefor. Merit increases have been completed for FY 2019. Summary of health care budget and estimated costs for health benefits for FY 20. Ms. Malone explained the variety of plans offered, and that Fallon is the predominant choice. Mr. Chenard working hard to represent Natick's interests at West Suburban Group.

Revenue updates: PAYT bag fee increase – addl revenue of \$242K. Parking: \$40K increase in revenue. Alcoholic Beverage Licenses: \$50K increase in revenue. State Aid: \$312K in additional revenue. Investment income: Bond investment income. On 12/7, we did largest borrowing ever for town to help finance w Natick fire station and KMS -- \$95 million bond offering. So we doubled the amount of money Natick has outstanding. But it provided us with an opportunity to invest bond proceeds. Based on information from

banks, the investment of those bond proceeds along with corresponding timeline we received from construction experts on the KMS and WNFS projects, we can increase investment income to \$1.4 million, increasing net change by \$950K (1x revenue). We are investing the money and as it is being used and needs to be paid to contractors, other monies are reinvested. We have taken into acct arbitrage and continue to work with financial experts to ensure we don't hit that ceiling. Fee increases and state aid gives us approximately \$1.4M of revenue that we have for one-time uses. The largest amount of that \$1.4M is 950K of investment income, which will drop off as projects are completed. So now we have extra room in budget and I would like to propose looking at this as an opportunity to bring communities together to have a 50/50 split so both schools and town can invest on items they need.

Ms. Mistrot inquired as to where savings of \$144K in health care savings is reflected. Mr. Townsend indicated it is not really revenue, but we are just readjusting our estimates. So we will have more to spend. MM: We have not invested yet – we will be investing ASAP. Ms. Mistrot indicated that the schools need to know what they have to work with. Schools have to vote a number Monday and go to Finance Committee on March 12, 2019. Board discussion with Town Administration regarding use of the \$1.4M. Ms. Salamoff asked for clarification as to latest proposed percentage increase for schools? Ms. Malone indicated 4.4% (3.7% on municipal side).

MM: 3.35% was proposed for school. Got health care numbers last week. Now it's 4.4%. This is the public sharing of that estimated new revenue, approx \$1.4 million. RJ: Have there been discussions with schools about this? MM: Yes.

Mr. Freedman expressed concerns regarding use of \$950K nonrecurring revenue. Ms. Malone indicated it gives the community time to plan, but that we are at a crossroads and need to find a way forward.

Mr. Freedman inquired about projections for investment income over the next 2 and 3 of construction. Mr. Townsend explained that we are using a laddering concept for these investments. Most of laddering takes place in first year – 2019 and 2020, so that's where most of it is. It's hard to project what we will have in 2021 – probably about \$300K, but a lot depends on what rates are when we reinvest. Further Q&A regarding investment strategy and use of free cash.

Ms. Mistrot expressed concerns about transparency and trust. With budget as tight as it is, when we throw out \$145K – it's there, it's not there – decisions still have to be made. But half of that is a teacher than can be hired. We have asked NPS to look at their fee structures to see if they can create revenue in their world, and part of that would be what they think is coming through a town appropriation. Ms. Mistrot also expressed concern about being overly cautious on use of free cash.

Henry Haugland, member of the public expressed distress at the conversation, arguing that the Town Administrator pulled a budget number out of the air. Expressed concern for impacts on children.

Cathi Collins, member of the public, questioned whether bond proceeds have been earning interest since December. Expressed concern that questions she raised earlier in the year are still not answered. Indicated that budget decisions need to be made soon, and starting to lose confidence.

Ms. Malone, in response to request for explanation from Ms. Mistrot: Prior to this year, our investment income has been between \$2-300K. We built half a million into prelim budget. Through laddering, we had 9 banks interested with rates to compare to figure out where we could maximize. Between the time we received proceeds and Friday, it was invested and we have been looking to optimize it. It would not have yielded us additional money.

Mr. Hickey asked for clarity from Ms. Malone regarding arrival of bond proceeds and actions to date, including what was shared regarding interest projections.

Lisa Tabenkin, Chair of the School Committee, expressed gratitude for good news on interest income and other revenue updates. Reiterated need for clarity needed with deadlines approaching for NPS budget-related meetings and decisions.

Director of Public Works: Paving Study; Pedestrian Accessibility Study; Unaccepted Roadways - Bylaw Language and Selectmen Policy

Mr. Marsette and Mr. Chenard led the presentation. At the outset, with many members of the public clearing the room following the school budget discussion, Mr. Hickey invited them to stay as Town roadways are an important piece of seeing the Town as a whole.

Mr. Marsette gave paving presentation and explained timing and cycle for updating by staff. Questions about unaccepted roads, magnitude of issue, process for accepting, etc. Mr. Marsette provided explanation of various options.

Mr. Landry, Lincoln St Ext. Concerns with condition of his road. Asked a number of questions about decision making, budget, etc.

Mr. Pancere, 47 Fiske St: Very confused about excise tax. Concerned with condition of his road and surrounding roads.

Ms. Mistrot asked about options for interim repairs/resurfacing.

Mr. Ridge, Fiske St.. Reiterated concerns about condition of his road. Thanked Ms. Mistrot for visiting his neighborhood to view conditions first-hand.

Ms. Malone spoke about excise tax numbers, and how monies are used.

Dr. McKenzie, Bulsar Road (near Fiske St.). Expressed concerns with road conditions.

Mr. McCohen, Fiske St: Concerns with road conditions.

Ms. Mistrot described the issue as a Board policy decision, and a question of what we want to do about it. We have a responsibility to taxpayers. Feels we are not spending enough to maintain the roadways. We will be talking capital articles on March 14, 2019. We have major roadways we are funding now so we are trying to balance everything. Have to think of a way forward to figure out how to balance things and address your concerns but still do all the other things we have to do.

Ms. Salamoff would like to have the Board discuss streets in poor condition and how to pay better attention to them going forward.

Ms. Mistrot indicated that work has been taking place regarding potential language dealing with unaccepted streets. Anticipates further discussion at upcoming meeting(s).

2019 Spring Annual Town Meeting: Review of Warrant Articles

No capital discussion tonight. Meeting on the 14th:

Board discussed which Articles to discuss at future meeting, and to set expectations for presenters (e.g., how much time proponents will have to make presentation).

Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting and Trade Show Recap – Four Selectmen attended (all but Ms. Mistrot). Ms. Salamoff explained that Members attended a myriad of workshops and speeches that were all beneficial to our education as Selectmen to better serve community. Report is posted on Novus.

Age-Friendly Community Status – Ms. Salamoff read statement proposing that Natick seek age friendly status in MA and ask Council on Aging and COA Board to take lead to advise Board of Selectmen on steps needed to become a certified age friendly community. SS moved. Board members raised questions about the status, what it entails, etc. Mr. Freedman indicated he would like to know the pros and cons, requirements, etc. Mr. Hickey moved to request COA and COA Board to educate the BOS on steps involved and details of status. Mr. Jennett seconded the motion. 5-0-0 approval.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Hickey read the Consent Agenda. Moved by Jennett and seconded by Mr. Freedman, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda conditional upon the fulfillment of all recommendations from Town Agencies and/or Departments. 5-0-0 vote.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR NOTES

None.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS

Ms. Salamoff requested that the Board establish a means-tested senior property tax exemption committee at one of our next two meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Jennett, seconded by Mr. Hickey, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the Board of Selectmen's Meeting at 12:08 a.m.

Jonathan H. Freedman., Clerk



March 4, 2019 Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes Approved by the Board of Selectmen on July 22, 2019

All documents used at this Board of Selectmen meeting are available at:

<https://naticktown.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/MeetingView.aspx?MeetingID=636&MinutesMeetingID=56&doctype=Agenda>