



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

SELECT BOARD • TOWN HALL
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MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD

June 21, 2022 6:30p.m. Hybrid Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting, Meeting: ID 824 6515 0387 Passcode: 266891 Mobile: 1.646.558.8656

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Jaques, Chair, Ms. Harrison, Mr. Round, Ms. Bilotta, and Mr. Sollosy

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Town Administrator, Mr. Federspiel, Executive Assistant, Debbie Powers

GUESTS: Maryann Wood, Boo Bird P

PRESS:

Ms. Jaques called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Public Comment on items not on the agenda – No public comments this evening.

Chairman's Report-

Ms. Jaques inquired about drought conditions. Mr. Federspiel informed the Select Board that MA is at stage 2. Precipitation is down and the Town should be aware of the situation. Ms. Jaques informed Mr. Federspiel to place an agenda item on the next agenda is discuss drought conditions.

1. Annual Reappointments

Ms. Jaques read off the names of the 1-year reappointments

Ms. Harrison moved to approve the 1-year reappointments; Ms. Bilotta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Jaques read the name of the 2-year reappointment.

Ms. Harrison moved to approve the 2-year reappointment; Ms. Bilotta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Jaques read the names of the 3-year reappointments.

Ms. Harrison moved to approve the 3-year reappointments; Mr. Sollosy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes – May 24, 2022 & June 6, 2022

b. Declare Surplus Property – Ambulance 2

Ms. Harrison moved to approve the May 24, 2022 minutes; Ms. Bilotta seconded the motion. The motion passed with Ms. Bilotta and Mr. Sollosy abstaining.

Ms. Bilotta moved to approve the June 6, 2022 minutes; Mr. Sollosy seconded the motion. The motion passed with Ms. Jaques and Mr. Round abstaining.

Ms. Harrison moved to declare Ambulance 2 as surplus property; Ms. Bilotta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Town Administrator's Report

Ms. Harrison asked when the Board can get together for their retreat/workshop. The members reviewed their calendars and decided on Saturday, July 30th at 9:00 am at Town Hall. Ms. Jaques asked the Board to think of some items that the Board would like to address during this retreat meeting.

4. Common Victualler's License – Boo Bird, 26 Central Street

Ms. Jaques asked if the Board and the virtual attendees if they had any questions about the license. No questions asked.

Mr. Sollosy moved to approve the common victualler's license for Boo Bird at 26 Central Street; Ms. Harrison seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Town Administrator's Report (continued)

Mr. Federspiel updated the Board on the submitted grant proposals to advance the priorities identified in the economic recovery planning that was completed last winter. He indicated that the Town has not been successful but have a couple more being considered. Sue Brown, Town Planner and Sue Croft, Grant/Special Project Coordinator, have been leading this effort. The Town has also recently submitted a grant proposal to study ways we can protect our core village area from bigger storms and sea level rise. If successful, this effort would begin in September. Mr. Federspiel also updated the Board that the Town continues to be in the running for a large FEMA grant for the Central Street culvert project but there is no official word yet. Cost escalations on that project will likely be a challenge.

6. Block Party Request – July 4th – Norwood Avenue, Between Lincoln St & Vine St.

Ms. Metrano addressed the Board to seek permission for a block party on the section of Norwood Ave between Lincoln and Vine Streets for July 4th from 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

Chief Fitzgerald indicated he would prefer to see this take place in the Brook Street/Coach Filed Parking lot which will have already been blocked off for the parade. If it is to be held in the street, the Chief feels that a police detail is needed to prevent cars from trying to get around barricades that would be put up on either end of the portion of Norwood.

Ms. Jaques asked Ms. Metrano what would be used to block the street off. Ms. Metrano answered that she would use what Chief Fitzgerald recommends.

Ms. Harrison asked if Ms. Metrano has checked with all the neighbors. Ms. Metrano said she has dropped flyers off at all houses between Lincoln Street and Vine Street. No one objected of the closing.

Public Comment

Sandy Rogers, 82 Old Essex Road, asked if people would be allowed to walk through the closed off section. Chief Fitzgerald said yes and that he doesn't expect this to be a large event and it can be controlled. He also indicated that the road would still be available for any emergency vehicles.

Andrew Lane, 50 Beach Street, stated this should be granted, it is a small block party to celebrate the 4th of July.

Ms. Harrison moved that Board approve the closure of a section of Norwood Avenue, between Lincoln Street and Vine Street, subject to the condition that the Police Chief recommends a police detail if one is available, that the event run from the hours of 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm and with no amplified music; Ms. Bilotta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Dispatch Update

Ms. Jaques quoted the Oath of Office all committee/board member swear to uphold and from the Massachusetts Selectmen's handbook, which states that the Board needs to make decision based on facts, data and logic even if those decision are unpopular. Ms. Jaques stated that many feel that the non-binding vote should be the single metric for use for the Board's vote. She does not agree with that. The Finance Committee voted unanimously to support going to regional. She addressed the public that comments were open and asked the Board to speak on any concerns that have not been addressed.

Ms. Harrison stated she had a concern if two major incidents were to occur simultaneously, which does not happen often but it could be a life or death situation. The Dispatcher would need to stay on the phone with the medical emergency and simultaneously dispatch medical, police or outside personnel. The Town does not currently have enough depth to handle this type of situation. Generally, the one dispatcher can handle the work load; most of the time there would not be enough call volume to justify having two dispatchers.

Mr. Round stated that this topic has been talked about for the last 10 years. He does not feel this decision is a make-or-break type of situation. Safety is the top concern. The Regional Center has more dispatchers and the active Fire Fighter and Police Officer at the stations are the most important persons who knows the town. Money is a big differential and going to two in-house dispatchers would represent an additional \$200 annually per taxpayer.

Ms. Jaques responded to Mr. Round comment about knowing the town. All regional dispatchers will be using GIS maps. The regional dispatchers have an extensive on-boarding process. She addressed Ms. Harrison's point on the worry about a major incident happening and currently we can't handle that right now. The tax rate would significantly increase if we stay in Town to cover the additional costs.

Mr. Sollosy stated that most police officers live out of town as well as the dispatchers. He stated that the cost was well laid out and the voters were well aware. He feels the Board has a moral and ethical obligation to follow the wishes of the voters. He also stated the metric of Community Policing and having an empty lobby for most of day does not play to that metric.

Ms. Jaques responded to Mr. Sollosy comment about the moral and ethical obligations. The Board needs to do what is the best of the town, not a subsection of the Town. We need to listen to the Police Chief and Fire Chief.

Ms. Bilotta stated after receiving the feedback from the voters, she was searching for a middle ground at the last Select Board meeting, but the options she had proposed were not viable. She addressed the contract and transition/implementation plan for the regional center. She attended the tour and she believed the organization was well run and the savings were real, based on the annual reports. Any information prior to July, 2019 is not relevant because that was when the State took over and cleaned up the operation. After attending the tour, she realized the center is more mature operationally then she initially thought. It became very clear to her that they have established a culture of proactive continuous improvement, which is very mature. She learned that regarding the transition plan, another town will be entering into the South East Regional Center and our Town could leverage lessons learned from that transition. After the walk through, she left with a great deal of confidence that they would serve the citizens of Manchester well. After signing the Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA), the Town joins the Advisory Board right away.

Public Comment:

Sara Mellish, 11 Bennett Street and Chair of the Finance Committee, stated moving to the Regional Center is a no-brainer and the Finance Committee supported that unanimously. The State has a steady stream of income dedicated from the phone bills. The Town is expecting a significant increase in Town expenses coming up including changes in the Police and Fire staffing, potential school override and significant capital outlay projects coming up and in the past have used excess reserves to fund these projects but there is no excess reserves left.

Sandy Rogers, 82 Old Essex Road, stated that a shorter-term would be okay but what about the longer term. There are no plans if the Town would need to get out of the contract. We have no contingency plan, if there are any issues. Six and half years left on current contract, and we should have an alternate plan.

Rick Rogers, 82 Old Essex Road, informed that Board that they need to remember what the Town voted on and they were very educated in why they voted and understood the cost associated with the change. The Town wants to be a small, independent town and to operate on its own.

Ms. Jaques stated that the Select Board should hear from both Chief Fitzgerald and Chief Cleary.

Chief Fitzgerald updated the Select Board on the duties of a dispatcher if the Town would have two dispatchers, which includes answering the business line and 911 line, prepare paperwork, updates the 911 maps and records management system and quality assurance on dispatch calls.

Mr. Round noted that over half of the Towns have gone to a regional 911. The average amount of communities in each regional center is seven so if the Town does not feel it is working out in Middleton, there are other regional operations to consider joining.

Chief Cleary informed the Board that Fire Service do things to standards. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are the standards the department goes by. The Standard 1221 is about a communication center and the goal is to work towards what it states. If the Town is having emergency medical dispatching, there needs to be always two dispatchers on. The standard also states about the safety of the dispatch building which needs to have robust fire alarms, be a sprinkled building, install bullet proof glass and be secure. Standard 1221 also talks about a firefighter mayday situation which needs a dedicated dispatcher to just mayday and rescue on a separate channel. He also addressed redundancies. Middleton has multiple back up systems in place. Our dispatchers are very limited to any upward mobility. Typically, the Town dispatchers would move on to be Police Officers then the Town would need to train new dispatchers.

Andrew Lane, 50 Beach Street, is surprised to hear that a majority of the Select Board is leaning towards regional. Voters were informed and made their choice.

Christina Delisio, 6 Lincoln Avenue, asked Ms. Jaques what information that the Select Board has, that voters did not have to make this decision.

Ms. Jaques answered that the Board has 13 years' worth of information and she misspoke to say that the voters didn't have all the information, everything was there for the voters. The tour of the center is one difference.

Mary Foley, 1 Polasky Drive, asked how many of the regional centers are State run? Ms. Bilotta informed Ms. Foley that there is a map on the state website that shows that information.

Ms. Harrison addressed the difference of a State run center and an aggregation of towns center. The State is using funds from a tax on cell phones to run the center, whereas the towns have to come up with the funds to run their centers.

Mike Rosmarin, 13 Crooked Lane, questioned the term of fiduciary responsibility. It typically means obedience to shareholders, which in the Town would be the voters. He feels that the Select Board came into this meeting pre-determined and not listening to the voters.

Amy Battis, 23 Desmond Road, asked the Select Board if they pursued a public safety communications consultant. She worries about a feasibility study done by the Regional Center and hiring a consultant might be the last due diligence to be more secure in the decision.

Sandy Rogers, 82 Old Essex Road, question about the 2017 feasibility study about joining the regional dispatch with Danvers and Hamilton. A few studies have been done on this topic and it was decided that was not the way to go and asked why we are doing this now.

Mr. Federspiel addressed Ms. Rogers question. He stated that three studies were done. The 2017 study looked at alternative regional options and there was no dollar savings and still offering one dispatcher. The study done to move to the regional center while it was under the sheriff department noted there were many concerns of start up challenges to run a high functioning dispatch. There were drawbacks with both studies that the Select Board chose to not move forward.

Susan Herrington, 0 Woodholm Road, asked for Board consider another Town vote.

Sarah Pierce, 9 Friend Street, asked the Select Board to consider a binding vote on this topic. Stated that it is important to listen to the voters who are paying for the bill.

Ms. Bilotta states that it is hard to see the Town being successful hiring three new employees, train them and have them sit in a very quiet station. Dispatchers are highly trained individuals and if they have the choice to work in a quiet place or work in Middleton where they can use their skills more they are likely to choose Middleton..

Ms. Jaques stated that the Town would need to bring our in-house operation up to the level of the North Shore Regional Center.

Ms. Harrison moved that the Select Board join the regional 911 in Middleton; Ms. Bilotta seconded. Mr. Round, Ms. Bilotta, Ms. Harrison and Ms. Jaques votes yes and Mr. Sollosy votes no.

8. Preliminary Discussion – Board Processes and Information Flow, Schedule Future Agendas for Public Input

Ms. Jaques addressed the Select Board about holding “Office Hours” at Town Hall and the element of transparency. Regarding the Board processes, the Select Board reviewed a flow chart.

Mr. Round noted that it would be better to meet where the people are and to be more visible. He suggested setting up a table on the first Saturday of the month in front of the Post Office. Mr. Sollosy suggested walking your dog to engage with the residents is another good way. The Board needs to get out there and listen to what the residents are saying.

The Board spoke upon Social Media policies. Ms. Bilotta asked Ms. Harrison if the Select Board has a social media policy. Ms. Harrison answered that we don't and that we shouldn't follow social media but she does follow closely and sometimes interjects. She stated that it cannot be managed and the Select Board can get in trouble if we inject too much.

The Select Board discussed how they can be more transparent and inform the residents how decisions are made. Ms. Bilotta suggested that the Board pick a specific topic, outline that topic and set the stage for the residents to let them know the process. The Select Board needs to get the information out there better. She also suggested that the Board revisit the Master Plan and the Implementation Plan.

Ms. Jaques listed the topics for the retreat:

- Transparency defined
- Get out and about
- Summary of topics and current status
- How decisions are made
- Master Plan Implementation Plan

It was discussed that the Select Board should be introduced to all department heads, either by a lunch gathering or in a group meeting setting. The discussion led into the role of the Town Administrator over town employees.

9. Executive Session per MGL. Ch. 30a, Section 21 (A)(2): To Discuss strategy with respect to contract negotiations with non-union personnel.

Ms Harrison moved to adjourn the meeting to Executive Session not to return to open meeting; Mr. Sollosy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Meeting Materials:

List of Appointments
Sample decision making flow-chart
Consent Agenda – as listed
Town Administrator's Report

Upcoming Select Board Meetings:

Tuesday, July 5, 2022
Monday, July 18, 2022