



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
READING, MA.
RK
2022 JAN 19 AM 10:49

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Select Board

Date: 2022-01-04

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Karen Herrick, Vice Chair Anne Landry, Secretary Mark Dockser, Chris Haley, Carlo Bacci (remote)

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Fidel Maltez and his family; Town department heads Jean Delios, Sharon Angstrom, Greg Burns, Amy Lannon, David Clark, Joe Huggins, Jane Kinsella, Matt Kraunelis and Town Manager Bob LeLacheur;
Others present remotely: Annika Scanlon, David Zeek, Joe Carnahan, Ed Ross. Town Counsel Ivria Fried joined the meeting at 7:20pm

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Bob LeLacheur

Topics of Discussion:

Documents Used:

1995 Ambulance Van
2005 Ford Explorer
Conservation Restriction - Riley signed (00185062xC6DC0) (1)
1SB budget priorities
2L2 SB priorities survey - complete
3BareMeadow
4Valley Farm Land Management Plan FINAL
5RCAC, Sustainability Director, RevB
6RCAC, Sustainability Director, RevC
Budget Letter FY23
1Recorded vote 12.29.21
2Recorded deed 12.29.21

The Board welcomed Fidel Maltez as the next Town Manager, as well as his family. Several welcoming comments were made by those in the room.

Dockser made a motion, seconded by Haley: **Move that the Select Board approve and execute an employment contract with Fidel Maltez, for the position of Town Manager, on such terms and conditions contained in the contract distributed to the Board for review and discussion at its meeting tonight, conditioned on his successful completion of CORI/SORI check and a medical examination, and to authorize Jackie LaVerde to use the Select Board member's digital signatures to sign said contract as may be needed. The Board approved the motion 5-0 by a roll call vote.**

The Board and Maltez signed the contract, and gave it to LeLacheur.

Liaison Reports

Dockser gave an update from the ad hoc RECALC (Reading Center for Active Living Committee), sharing that the committee has a good mix of people and interests. The group met 2x in December and made recommendations for the statement of work for the consultant. It was also noted that a member resigned and there was an opening.

Landry mentioned the Board of Health mask mandate discussion, expected to result in a formal vote in two nights at their next meeting.

Haley noted that the School Committee voted 6-0 to expand the METCO program by 40 students.

Bacci asked why the delay from the BOH to consult Town Counsel on the mask mandate, and LeLacheur said that was an important step in the process to make sure the wording was exact. Bacci also mentioned the CPDC/Chute Street ongoing hearing, and the Pleasant Street Center mask mandate.

Herrick noted there was an upcoming ZBA meeting to discuss 40R, and mentioned the RMLD tour on 1/20 at 7:30am.

LeLacheur welcomed Maltez; noted the significant increase in covid-19 in the community and the resulting impact on town vendors and employees, especially noting delays in trash/recycling. He also noted the remote Community Gardens meeting on Wednesday night; he also gave a detailed overview of the expected mask mandate and related parts of the pending BOH decision, including urging Boards and Committees to shift to fully remote night meetings, as well as steps taken by the Town Manager for employee and customer safety at Town Hall in mid-December.

Public Comment – none

Consent Agenda

Special Election polling location
Declare items as surplus
113 Arcadia Ave Conservation Restriction

Dockser shared the following motions, but the complete reading of them was dispensed with by a motion by Haley and seconded by Landry, and approved unanimously by roll call vote:

Move that the Board designate the RMHS Field House to be the polling location for the Special Election on Tuesday January 25, 2022 for the Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational Technical High School building project.

Move that the Board declare the following material as surplus per Select Board Policy Article 1.6.8 Surplus Property: (1) 1995 Fire department Ford Ambulance Cutvan; and (2) 2005 Fire department Ford Explorer.

Move to approve the acceptance of a Conservation Restriction from Kevin and Kristen Riley to the Town of Reading acting by and through its Conservation Commission, over a portion of land located at 113 Arcadia Avenue and to authorize Town Counsel to record said restriction and take any action related and necessary thereto.

Herrick asked about the Conservation Restriction, and Scanlon noted that there had been a variety of revisions and approvals and now it was ready for the Select Board. Herrick asked

what permission was sought originally – was it lower taxes – and Scanlon did not recall the reason.

On a motion by Dockser, seconded by Herrick, the Board approved the Consent Agenda by a unanimous 5-0 roll call vote.

Open Meeting Law Complaints

Fried noted that the Attorney General's Office called off the mediation session, since complainant Walt Tuvell would not agree to the meeting terms. Therefore, the Board needs to respond by January 19th, and that Town Counsel could prepare draft responses for the Board's January 18th meeting. Haley noted that attacks against Atty Fried the AG's office, the mediator, the School Superintendent, himself and his family have been uncalled for, and he was willing to work this out in mediation. Herrick was also disappointed that mediation did not work, but glad the Board tried it. The Board agreed with the suggestion from Town Counsel about January 18th.

Fried noted that Select Board members acted reasonably in the process per the AG's Office. Bacci asked when is it harassment and Fried replied that there was no clear answer to that. She noted that she has met with Town staff to discuss options regarding public records requests. Haley said that it was OK for him to be attacked, that was part of being a public official, but he regretted that his family had been included, and lamented the fact this was costing the Town money. Herrick agreed, and that it would be good to get this matter behind us. Dockser agreed that it was not right for volunteers and their families to be harangued.

Common District Meeting House

This agenda item could not be taken up as planned attendees had to cancel earlier in the day due to illness. Dockser wondered if the Board could get a written update in an effort to open the channel of communication. LeLacheur said an invitation for the Board's next meeting would be attended, using a written summary as a backup plan.

FY23 Budget

LeLacheur reminded the Board that there was about \$62,000 in surplus funds to allocate, although he was trying to make other smaller budget cuts to improve that number. The Board was given 12 items to rank and an option to add more items. Some members ranked those 12 and then 6 additional items were added. Four members ended up ranking those 18 budget items. LeLacheur noted that in the past, budget requests went through town staff in the fall, and were more easily integrated into the budget process. He presented the Board's ranking on the list of 18 budget priorities, with the highest priorities: Health records management (2.5); Town Clerk support (4.5); Health support staff (6.0) and the Housing Production Plan (6.5).

Herrick said there needed to be a better way for Board and Committee budget requests. She suggested a few more budget requests from the Historical Commission, and noted that she was not yet ready to rank these items.

A discussion about recent CONSCOM requests ensued, with a question about the use of revolving funds. Carnahan explained that there was a specific state law used for fees deposited into their revolving fund. Docker wondered if the state budget earmark process might help.

LeLacheur noted the difference between one-time funding requests, which could go to April 2022 Town Meeting as requests, and ongoing operational requests. Haley explained his high ranking of the Office 365 request as being something that would have a widespread positive impact on the entire organization, based on his professional experience.

Dockser wondered if the ARPA funds could pay for some of these priorities. He noted that projects that have a return, such as more hours for the parking enforcement officer, would be a priority for him. He added that someday a Sustainability Director might also fall into this category.

Haley added that there would be a request for parking kiosks, based on the ad hoc PARC group's work to date. This would be a one-time request.

Zeek said that a Sustainability Director would generate money, whereas an Assistant HR Director would provide a service. He cited the Town's past MVP study.

Landry commented that she would like to redo the list as how would I spend \$50,000. Herrick asked why not \$100,000? Haley said the list could be as high as millions, but there was only so much funding available. Herrick noted the Free Cash balance and wondered why it could not be used. She asked Zeek if a full time Sustainability was needed, or could it cost less. Zeek said the hiring could be delayed for 6 months and therefore it would only cost \$45,000. He noted that Andrew and Julie had been very helpful in the Green Communities process, but they were likely too busy to help out with this long-term.

The Board agreed to submit revised rankings to LeLacheur by Sunday night, or Monday morning at the latest.

Meadow Brook Lot 5 Update

Dockser noted the closing on the purchase and a discussion about requesting an easement through existing Meadow Brook land. The Board agreed that a meeting involving the Chairs of the Trails Committee, the Town Forest Committee, and Dockser as the Board's liaison would be a logical next step. Anne wondered if that would be brought back to the Board in Open or Executive session, since it involved negotiations.

Future Agendas

Landry wanted to make sure an agenda item was added to discuss the Bob/Fidel transition.

Haley reminded the Board that FINCOM was waiting for the Board to appoint two Select Board members to their ARPA subcommittee, as the other five members had been appointed.

LeLacheur asked the Board to add Juneteenth to the Personnel Policies ahead of the formal review next spring. That would allow him to meet with the Town Unions to formally address the issue. Four of the unions in 24/7 departments had a financial impact, the other four would result in more time off. He also noted that Executive Session minutes for the Town Manager hiring process were ready for approval in an Executive Session, and then could be released. He noted the screening committees work would not become public.

Bacci asked about land we own, especially the Zanni parcel. LeLacheur replied that he would provide the Board information on 'large buildable lots', tentatively set for the early February meeting.

Minutes

The Board made some minor changes to the draft Minutes.

Dockser moved to approve the Minutes for December 7, December 14, and December 15 as amended, and for December 8 as written, seconded by Bacci and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

At 9:17pm, Dockser moved to adjourn, seconded by Haley, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Secretary