



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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2022 MAR -3 AM 9:34

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Select Board

Date: 2022-02-01

Time: 7:00 PM

Building:

Location:

Address:

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Karen Herrick, Vice Chair Anne Landry, Secretary Mark Dockser, Carlo Bacci, Christopher Haley

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Town Manager Bob LeLacheur, Ed Ross, Annika Scanlon, Fidel Maltez, Jeanne Borawski, Assistant Town Manager Jean Delios, Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom, Bill Brown, Jack, Town Counsel Ivria Fried, Jay, Deputy Police Chief Christine Amendola, DPW Director Jane Kinsella

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Jacquelyn LaVerde

Topics of Discussion:

Documents Used:

OPEB Cities and Towns - 2021
01.22 GF Revenue Summary
01.22 GF Expenses
01.22 Water Revenue Detail
01.22 Water Expense Summary
01.22 Sewer Revenue Detail
01.22 Sewer Expense Summary
01.22 Storm Water Revenue Detail
01.22 Storm Water Expense Summary
MemoSB meeting 2.1.22 (003)
2012-06-19 Board of Selectmen Minutes
OPEB Peer Funding Status Dec 2021
RPT, 10600, Town of Reading - GASB 74_75 as of 6_30_2021
TM review process amendments to policy
DRAFT 4 Reading ARPA Advisory Committee (RAAC) SB
_20190128 SB capital Oakland subcommittee draft Minutes
13064.04 Oakland Road, Reading Geo Report
Sect_5_Inventory 2012 9-24-13 - edited
Town owned parcels without buildings map
Town_owned_parcel_ BL edits plus Kims notes with buildings
Town_owned_parcel_ BL edits plus Kims notes without buildings
2021-10-14 Aerial Site Plan with Trails-rev 2
Access to TF update 2-1-22
PTTTF Recommendation - Winter Parking Ban 2-1-2022



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This meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

Vice Chair Anne Landry called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

SB Liaison & Town Manager Reports:

Mark Dockser stated that the Reading Center for Active Living Committee (ReCalc) has been meeting every couple of weeks. The last meeting was a joint meeting with the Council on Aging and they were able to provide feedback on the needs of a Senior Center/Community Center. The COA will discuss further at their next meeting and bring their comments back to ReCalc. There is also an open seat on ReCalc. A consultant was hired that will reach out to the community and get feedback in time for April Town Meeting.

Mr. Dockser also attended the Commissioner of Trust Funds meeting and noted that due to COVID, some funds that typically get spent were not, so there are slightly larger balances.

Chris Haley attended the School Committee last week where they voted to approve a staggered plan for full day kindergarten, reducing the resident fees in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Mr. Haley announced that there is a virtual public forum of the PARC Committee tomorrow evening where they will discuss on street parking regulations, parking kiosks, and parking garage.

Carlo Bacci stated that he received a request from the Recreation Committee to be on the Board's next agenda to request temporary lights at Coolidge Middle School fields, as Turf 1 at the High School will be offline while it is replaced.

Mr. Bacci also attended the recent CPDC meeting. A highlight has been the Chute Street Last Corner/Green Tomato building, and CPDC still wants it scaled down.

Mr. Bacci was involved in the interview committee for the Director of Equity and Inclusion. The committee narrowed its recommendation to two candidates, and the decision is now in the hands of Library Director Amy Lannon.

Anne Landry stated that the ad hoc Town Manager Search Committee met to approve outstanding minutes and voted to recommend that the Select Board dissolve the screening committee at its discretion.

Town Manager Bob LeLacheur began with a statement he was asked to share by Town Counsel: "A request for the July 12 and the August 10 Executive Session Minutes had been filed under the Public Records Law with the Town Clerk, and we reviewed the minutes and determined that they were not ripe for release. The Town Clerk received a request for the January 18 Executive Session Minutes, as well. Given that the minutes were not final, we determined the notes, to the extent they existed, were also not ripe for release."

Mr. LeLacheur highlighted a few other events. A COVID vaccine clinic will be hosted at the Pleasant Street Center on February 3rd. Thank you to DPW and Facilities for their work to clean up after the winter storm this past weekend.



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Mr. LeLacheur also announced that he will be retiring. When he announced he was leaving, he wanted to give the community the opportunity to find his successor. But filing for retirement is not reversible, and he stated that he was willing to stay on until the community could find a new Town Manager if they did not find one in time. But because it is clear that Mr. Maltez is hitting the ground running, it was safe for him to file for retirement.

Public Comment:

Jeanne Borawski of Johnson Woods Drive, spoke as member of the public. She addressed a comment made at the Select Board meeting on January 18, 2022 that the decision of the Finance Committee to create an ARPA Subcommittee was done in a rushed manner and without consultation with the Select Board. She noted that the Finance Committee has worked carefully and diligently for the last five months and attempted to collaborate with the Select Board including the Financial Forum back in October where feedback was solicited from the attendees.

Consent Agenda:

Vote to Appoint Town Accountant to a term July 2022 to June 2023:

Mark Dockser moved to appoint Sharon Angstrom as Town Accountant for a term July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. Motion seconded by Chris Haley and approved 4-0 by unanimous roll call vote.

Town Accountant Quarterly Update:

Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom thanked the Board for their support, and thanked Mr. LeLacheur for his leadership.

She began her update with a review of Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and compared Reading's contributions with 23 peer communities. Reading's total liability is \$73 million, and has funded 8.3% so far, leaving a \$67 million net liability. The plan is once the pension is fully funded, the funds will be redirected to OPEB. Auditors have praised Reading for its proactive OPEB contributions, as other municipalities have not even begun to fund it. When compared to peer communities, Reading ranked 8th in funding contributions. Ms. Angstrom was asked to find out where Reading ranked in the state.

Revenue and expenses compared to this time last year are well in line to meet projections. Though slightly lower than last year, Ms. Angstrom stated that she is not concerned about any revenue deficits.

Ms. Angstrom then reviewed her memo that outlined some items she wanted to address with the Board. The first item is a request for an allocation of ARPA funds. The Health Department is looking to do a distribution for COVID home testing kits. CARES funding ended October 31st, and the assumption was that ARPA funds would be used to cover COVID related expenses. She requested a transfer of \$250,000, which includes \$80,000 for home test kits, to spend on Public Health and mitigation efforts in the interim until the Board can have meetings to discuss how to spend the ARPA funds.



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She reminded the Board that the water tank BAN that was issued will be coming due in December. The Town Treasurer will need to know by September whether ARPA funds will be used, and if not, will need at least three months to arrange borrowing.

Ms. Angstrom explained that the Town Charter permits the Select Board to provide termination pay to the outgoing Town Manager. The precedent for the previous Town Manager was three months severance pay. She shared that while it is within the Board's discretion to provide the additional pay, it would be helpful to know what they decide by March 1st so she can include it in the Town Meeting warrant.

She also noted that in the ARPA final rules, under loss of revenue, the standard allowance is \$10 million, or a calculation. She performed the calculations and still came up with more than the Town has been awarded, which means the whole grant can be used as loss of revenue, which provides a lot more flexibility in how the grant is used.

Karen Herrick joined the meeting at 7:54 pm.

Discuss/vote to allocate approximately \$80k of the local and county ARPA Grant funds to the purchase of COVID test kits:

Mark Dockser moved to approve allocating \$80,000 of ARPA funds towards the cost of COVID-19 test kits. Motion seconded by Karen Herrick.

Mr. Dockser noted that a big purpose of ARPA funds is to take care of emergency needs and that it makes sense to increase the number and moved to make an amendment to raise the amount to \$500,000. Mr. Bacci agreed a higher amount is warranted, but not more than \$250,000 at this time. Ms. Herrick seconded the motion to amend. Mr. Haley agreed that \$250,000 sounded right to him. Mr. Dockser noted that he would be comfortable with \$250,000. Ms. Landry offered a friendly amendment to change \$500,000 to \$250,000. Motion to amend approved 5-0 by unanimous roll call vote.

The motion to approve allocating ARPA funds towards the cost of COVID-19 test kits and Public Health mitigation was approved as amended by unanimous roll call vote of 5-0.

Vice Chair Anne Landry turned the gavel over to Chair Karen Herrick at 8:06 pm.

Review and Vote to Amend Select Board Policy Section 1.3.3 Process for Evaluating the Town Manager and Section 6.2 Evaluation of the Town Manager:

Town Counsel Ivria Fried reviewed proposed changes to Select Board policy for the Town Manager review. The two things of note include Town Manager goal setting and making the review practices of the policy more consistent with the new Town Manager's contract. The language of the contract gives the Board the flexibility on when the review would happen. The Board discussed the timeframe of setting the Town Manager's goals and agreed that 60 days would be a fair amount of time.

Mark Dockser voted to amend Select Board Policy Section 1.3.3 Process for Evaluating the Town Manager and Section 6.2 Evaluation of the Town Manager as presented by Ms. Fried. Motion seconded by Chris Haley and approved 5-0 by unanimous roll call vote.



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Discuss /vote creation of Ad Hoc ARPA Advisory Committee and committee charge:

Ms. Herrick addressed a misunderstanding in the public regarding the planning process of the proposed committee. She reviewed the discussions held at Financial Forums and at Finance Committee meetings of Nov and December 2021, and the steps taken to this point. She thanked the Finance Committee for all of their planning efforts and their collaboration to date. She then presented the draft of the charge for discussion based on the minutes of the 10/20/2021 Financial Forum and the successful format of the Ad Hoc Town Manager Screening Committee and a template from Lexington. She noted that the charge presented had been reviewed by Town Counsel.

Mr. Dockser reviewed some advisory structures of other communities. He suggested the Board think about how to allocate the funds, and get input from other boards and residents. The structure should be advisory to the Select Board, comprised of the elected boards, and be seven members: two from the Select Board, two from the School Committee, two from the Finance Committee, one from the Library Trustees, as well as guidance from town staff.

The Board reviewed the proposed charge and had a lengthy discussion on the structure, and the number of representatives from each participating board/committee.

Mr. Bacci moved to amend the charge for ARPA to eight members: three from Finance Committee, two from School Committee, two from Select Board, and one from Library Trustees. Motion seconded by Chris Haley. Anne Landry offered a friendly amendment to name members who were already appointed ex-officio, with the one Library Trustee to be appointed.

Further discussion proceeded with whether to name the individuals already appointed to the Finance Committee ARPA Subcommittee by the other Boards. But ultimately it was decided that names would limit the flexibility to have other members of those Boards fill in should roles change. Ms. Herrick moved to amend to remove the names from the charge. Ms. Landry withdrew her friendly amendment to list the names. **The Board voted 3-2 to amend the number of members to eight, with Mr. Haley, Mr. Bacci, and Ms. Landry in favor, and Mr. Dockser and Ms. Herrick opposed.**

The Board discussed further amendments including: administrative support provided by Town Hall staff, and removing "a list of" from the Deliverable section.

Mark Dockser moved to create the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee (RAAC) as amended in the committee charge document circulated at this evening's meeting. Motion seconded by Carlo Bacci and approved 5-0 by unanimous roll call vote.

Discuss/vote to appoint ex-officio and staff members to the Ad Hoc ARPA Advisory Committee:

Ms. Herrick asked members who would like to work with the RAAC. Mr. Dockser and Mr. Haley raised their hands and Ms. Herrick asked them to share why they wanted to be appointed.

Mr. Dockser stated that he has been on the Select Board for three years and is very interested in how we are thinking about capital and using funds. He also has background of being involved in the Town including on the Finance Committee.



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Mr. Haley stated that he felt he could bring fresh ideas and a new perspective, and would like to explore spending some on solar at the schools, while offsetting electrical budgets, and reinvesting that money into teacher pay and full day kindergarten.

Mark Dockser moved to appoint Mark Dockser and Chris Haley as Select Board Ex-Officio members of the Reading ARPA Advisory Committee. Motion seconded by Carlo Bacci and approved 5-0 by unanimous roll call vote.

Discuss recent land purchases and any other town-owned large buildable parcels (Oakland Road, Symonds Way, other):

Mr. LeLacheur reviewed work done by a previous Select Board subcommittee that collected data on all Town-owned parcels. He noted it would be best if the whole Board could discuss what they want together instead of a subgroup. The Board could consider the needs the Town has for land, and the amount and what types of land that the Town owns.

The Board briefly discussed the Oakland Road and Symonds Way parcels, and possible needs including: RMLD potential relocation, Veterans housing, and recreation center.

Board members agreed to continue the discussion with the incoming Town Manager and make it a future agenda item.

Update on Lot #5 access to Town Forest:

Mr. Dockser stated that he met with the Conservation Administrator and the Chairs of the Conservation Commission, Town Forest Committee, and Trails Committee. The group discussed and came to a consensus on the best approach for access to the Town Forest via lot #5. They would like a 10-foot wide trail easement on the edge of Meadowbrook property to access an existing path in the Town Forest. Access to Town Forest via town-owned land in this area is not currently possible due to the access requiring crossing of a year-round 100-foot long pond.

Mr. Dockser noted key changes and benefits, and outlined the next steps including: the Board will need to designate someone to work with Town Counsel and staff to speak with Meadowbrook and request the easement; a survey will need to be done in order to setup a written agreement; the Board will need to develop a plan for the use of Lot #5 itself; a discussion of handicapped accessibility resulted in a suggestion to create an accessible area and part of a trail from Wood End to the Town Forest would be a good opportunity to consider rather than doing this from lot #5.

Board members offered support to Mr. Dockser to continue with the next steps.

Discuss/Vote on Overnight Parking Ban:

The Parking Traffic Transportation Task Force provided a write up of the overnight parking issues. They recommended continuing the enforcement of no on-street parking between 1:00 am and 6:00 am, but in response to recent requests for overnight parking, they proposed a pilot program allowing overnight parking in the 35 spots of the Lincoln Street parking lot. Cars will still need to be moved by 6:00 am. Board members were in favor of trying out the program.



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Deputy Police Chief Christine Amendola noted issues with downtown being built up, and even with the parking ban in effect, many residents are not moving their cars in the morning.

Assistant Town Manager Jean Delios also noted that she is working with the MBTA to see if they will allow overnight parking in the lots they own.

Mark Dockser voted to recommend the changes for the overnight parking ban as proposed, and to hold a Public Hearing on February 15, 2022 at 7:45 pm to finalize changes. Motion seconded by Chris Haley and approved 5-0 by unanimous roll call vote.

Discuss Future Agendas:

Ms. Herrick recommended adding a Public Hearing for overnight parking, and an in depth status update on the Zanni property to include Town Counsel.

Mr. Bacci requested an item for the Recreation Commission to request temporary lights at Coolidge while Turf 1 at the High School is replaced.

Mr. Haley requested a discussion on the parting salary severance for the Town Manager. Ms. Herrick suggested including Town Counsel for that conversation.

Mr. Dockser requested to add VASC to the next agenda.

Approve Meeting Minutes:

The Board reviewed suggested changes submitted by Ms. Herrick.

Mark Dockser moved to approve the meeting minutes of January 18, 2022 as amended. Motion seconded by Karen Herrick and approved 5-0 by unanimous roll call vote.

Mark Dockser moved to adjourn at 10:23 pm. Motion seconded by Karen Herrick and approved 5-0 by unanimous roll call vote.