



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Select Board

Date: 2022-05-17

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:**

Mark Dockser, Carlo Bacci, Chris Haley, Jackie McCarthy, Karen Herrick

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Angela Binda, Marianne Downing, Mark Ventura, Shawn Brandt, Carla Nazzaro, Erica Boran, Sarah Leveque, Tonia McGuire, Joanne King, Keri DiNapal, Sarah Hardy, Lori Hayes, Ed Ross, Sherilla Lestrade, Thomse Wise, Joe McDonagh, Stacy Foresman, Sharon Angstrom, Superintendent Dr. Milachewski, Caitlin Nocella

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Caitlin Nocella

Topics of Discussion:

This meeting was held in person and remote via Zoom.

Mark Dockser called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The Select Board called to order at 7:00 PM, followed by the School Committee and RAAC.

Public Comment

Mark Ventura noted he supports the School Departments request for the full \$2 million for a new curriculum.

Jen Coin echoed Mr. Ventura's thoughts.

Sherilla Lestrade speaking as a special ed/ para and also a parent, she also supports the \$2 Million request.

Marianne Downing noted she is speaking as a resident, not a member of the RAAC, when she also agrees with previous comments.

School Department ARPA Request

Superintendent Dr. Milachewski and some of his staff gave the board a presentation of why they are asking for the full \$2 million and what it will go towards.

Tom Wise, School Committee Chair, noted the School Committee voted unanimously to support this. He noted they are very excited for a new curriculum and really need it.

Marianne Downing, RAAC Chair, also noted the committee voted 6-1 to approve this.

Mark Dockser noted he initially was not in support of the full ask of \$2 Million, not because he doesn't think it is needed, but because of the other funding sources available to help support this. There are many asks of the ARPA funds and he reviewed other potential sources of funds for this project. He now believes that ARPA funds represent the best way to fund this necessary program and he now supports the full \$2 Million ask.

Karen Herrick asked Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom to share her thoughts on funding the 4 years and Ms. Angstrom noted the money just needs to be encumbered by December 31, 2024. Karen Herrick confirmed that the School Department will continue to 1) seek additional DESE grants to defray this cost 2) commit that future operational savings will offset this \$2M request and work with State Senator Jason Lewis to seek additional offsets. Superintendent Milachewski agreed that the schools would commit to reducing the need for the entire \$2M of ARPA funds through operational savings and additional grants and noted he has already been in touch with Sen Lewis.

Jackie McCarthy asked a question about the ability of the program to pivot and reassess once we have had more experience with it. Dr. Hardy responded that the program can incorporate feedback and revise curriculum.

Carlo Bacci and Chris Haley both noted they support the full \$2M request.

Chris Haley Move to allocate \$2,000,000 from the ARPA funds for the School Department Curriculum Funding Request. The motion was seconded by Carlo Bacci and approved with a 5-0 vote.

The School Committee and RAAC adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Classification and Compensation Schedule

Chris Haley read the hearing notice.

Town Manager Fidel explained the changes to the schedules.

Chris Haley moved to close the hearing regarding the FY23 Classification and Compensation schedules. Seconded by Carlo Bacci, the motion was approved 5-0 vote.

Chris Haley moved to approve the FY23 Non-Union Classification and Compensation Schedules as presented. The motion was seconded by Karen Herrick and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Water Rates

Town Manager Fidel gave the board a presentation of what the water rates would look like if they used \$650K in ARPA funds which they discussed at their last meeting.

Karen Herrick asked if Town Manager could acquire preliminary MWRA usage and rate estimates in advance in order to better plan for next year. Carlo Bacci noted they will probably need to use free cash next year.

It was noted that RAAC agreed with the Select Board's recommendation and voted unanimously to support using \$650K to offset water rates.

Haley moved to allocate \$650,000 from the ARPA funds towards the Water Enterprise to be used in FY2023. Seconded by Herrick and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Chris Haley read the hearing notice. There was no public discussion in the room or online. Haley moved that the Board close the hearing on setting Water, Sewer and Storm Water rates for FY23. The motion was seconded by McCarthy and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Haley moved to set the FY2023 water rate at \$11.41 per 100 cubic feet with a minimum quarterly bill of \$22.82 effective with the December, 2022 billing. Seconded by Bacci and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Haley moved to set the FY2023 sewer rate at \$10.86 per 100 cubic feet with a minimum quarterly bill of \$21.72 effective with the December, 2022 billing. Seconded by McCarthy and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Haley moved to set the FY2023 Storm Water Rate at \$60 per unit (3210 square feet) per year to be billed quarterly effective with the December, 2022 billing. Seconded by Bacci and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Town Accountant Update

Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom showed the board water, sewer and storm water revenues and expense sheets along with the general fund revenues and expenses. She noted that all items are running on track and she has no real concerns at this time.

National Public Works Week Proclamation

Chris Haley read the proclamation.

Chris Haley moved to approved the National Public Works Week Proclamation as presented. With a second from Karen Herrick the motion passed 5-0.

Flag Policy

The board is discussing a flag policy due to recent requests to hang different flags on the flag pole.

Town Manager Maltez noted he spoke with Town Counsel for their opinion and spoke with other communities about if their flag policies, if they had one.

Boston just had a supreme court case in which an individual sued the City for denying his flag request. The court ruled that Boston violated free speech rights when denying this particular flag but allowing others.

Town Manager Fidel explained if they board allows 1 flag they must allow any other flag requested. It is legal' s opinion and his recommendation to say no to all flags unfortunately.

Marianne Downing noted there is a difference between the town deciding to fly another flag and an individual person asking to fly a flag.

Sherilla Lestrade asked if Woburn's flag policy was reviewed because she believes they have/are flying other flags.

The board agreed to follow Town Counsels recommendation and defer creating a policy and that the safe thing to do at this time is to not allow any other flags on the flag pole.

Pride Month Proclamation

Chris Haley read the Pride Month Proclamation.

Chris Haley moved to approve the Pride Month Proclamation as presented. The motion was seconded by Karen Herrick and approved with a 5-0 vote.

There will be a pride month celebration on June 12th. It will start with a car parade and end with a party on the common. There will also be a rainbow run on June 16th.

Juneteenth Proclamation

Chris Haley read the proclamation.

Chris Haley moved to approve the Juneteenth Proclamation as presented. The motion was seconded by Jackie McCarthy and approved with a 5-0 vote.

There will be a movie night on June 18th at Washington Park to commemorate Juneteenth. The movie they have chosen to show is 'Hidden Figures'.

Intermunicipal Assessing Agreement

Currently, our Assessor Victor Santaniello, is shared with Wakefield with an intermunicipal agreement. Lynnfield would like to join in our agreement. Mr. Santaniello feels he can service another town. This would be savings to us as well as Lynnfield would now pay for a share of the agreement.

A number of members were concerned that Mr. Santaniello would not have the necessary resources to provide services to all three communities. Mr. Santaniello reassured the board members that he believes he will be able to do this.

Haley moved to approve the Intermunicipal Agreement for the Director of Assessing Department as presented. The motion was seconded by Bacci and approved with a 5-0 vote.

RMHS Track Naming Committee

The board agreed Carlo Bacci will be the Select Board representative.

Liaison Reports

Carlo Bacci reported on CPDC.

Chris Haley reported on ARPA and PARC. He also noted the RPD had an open house on Saturday and it was great.

Karen Herrick noted that she joined staff and volunteers during community garden set-up at Mattera Cabin and that they look great.

Jackie McCarthy noted the cultural council has a survey out right now about projects on interest.

Mark Dockser reported on the Council on Aging; they will have survey in September. There is a listening session on June 1st regarding senior center needs at 7 pm at the Reading Public Library.

Town Manager Report

Town Manager Maltez noted the Killam MSBA process requires us to create a School Building Committee which they will need to do soon.

Future Agendas

The board discussed future agenda items.

Minutes

Chris Haley moved to approve the meeting minutes of May 3rd as amended. The motion was seconded by Carlo Bacci and approved with a 5-0 vote.

Chris Haley moved to adjourn at 10:14 PM. The motion was seconded by Carlo Bacci and approved with a 5-0 vote.