



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### Select Board

Date: 2022-06-28

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 via Zoom, Jackie McCarthy, Karen Herrick

#### **Members - Not Present:**

#### **Others Present:**

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, E.A. Caitlin Nocella, Bill Brown, Nancy Docktor, Julie Mercier, Fire Chief Burns

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Caitlin Nocella

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#### **Topics of Discussion:**

*This meeting was held in person and remote via Zoom.*

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

#### Public Comment

Bill Brown made a comment about military markers at grave sites. The town needs to be notified when a veteran is being buried or else they won't know to place a marker there.

Nancy Docktor made a statement about her disappointment in the VASC process specifically regarding the Board of Health and the policy regarding treatment of incumbents vs. new applicants.

#### Liaison Reports

McCarthy thanked the first responders for their work with the flood at the Pearl Street Residence. She also noted Porchfest was this past weekend and it was great.

Herrick attended Porchfest and Juneteenth. RMLD had their annual report audit which went well. Herrick shared a slide showing the June RMLD PILOT payment and increasing Return on Investment from a 1% increase in kilowatt sales and the new formula approved in 2020. She shared that per Interim GM Greg Phipps natural gas is 130% higher than 2021 and supplies 50% of the electricity in New England. RMLD is allowed to enter longer, more favorable power supply contracts than National Grid which means that natural gas price increases are somewhat mitigated for RMLD customers.

She proposed sending a letter to our legislators to encourage approval of pending green communities regulatory updates, but because it was not on the agenda the board agreed members could send a letter on their own and they can put it on the next agenda to discuss sending as a board. They also agreed that the Town Manager could send one prior to the next meeting.

Bacci commented on Porchfest as well and hoped that maybe in the future it could be more walkable.

Haley noted the School Committee reorganized.

Dockser noted the Town Forest recently had a big conversation surrounding rules and regulations in regards to dogs in the town forest. He also would like to schedule the board's next retreat for the fall.

#### Town Manager Report

Town Manager Maltez noted that our Veterans Agent Kevin Bohmiller has retired and his replacement started on Monday. He noted they will be holding a community meeting regarding development on the Oakland Road property on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### Fire Department Update

Fire Chief Burns gave the board a presentation on the department and its recent happenings. The presentation can be found in the Select Board meeting packet on the town website.

#### Regional Affordable Housing Agreement

Julie Mercier gave the board a short presentation on the changes in the agreement from when they last approved it two years ago.

**Haley moved to approve the Regional Affordable Housing Inter-Municipal Agreement as presented. The motion was seconded by McCarthy and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### ARPA Request – Maillet, Sommes and Morgan Conservation Land

This is a request for \$77,000 to start the design process for these conservation lands.

RAAC has already seen and voted to approve this request.

**Haley moved to approve \$77,000 of ARPA funds for Maillet, Sommes and Morgan Conservation Lands request as presented. The motion was seconded by Herrick and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### ARPA Request – Sanborn Lane

Town Manager Maltez explained a resident is gifting the town some land on Sanborn Lane. It is unbuildable due to wetlands but it needs to be surveyed. This request is for \$8,000 to do this surveying work.

RAAC does not have an official vote on this request but were in support of it.

**Haley moved to approve \$8,000 of ARPA funds for Sanborn Lane request as presented. The motion was seconded by McCarthy and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### Symonds Way Exploratory Committee (SWEC)

The board continued their conversation from last meeting regarding creating an ad-hoc committee to explore potential uses for the town owned land on Symonds Way.

Bacci started off the conversation by noting he is ok with the committee starting their work in December as opposed to right away. The other board members agreed with Bacci. Haley noted he prefers they start sooner but agreed December is fine after Fidel noted he preferred December as opposed to September.

**Haley moved to approve the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee Charge as presented. The motion was seconded by Herrick and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### Board of Health

The Board of Health is requesting to submit special legislation to start the process of changing their board from 3 to 5 members. The board was in support of this change.

**Haley moved to approve the request from the Board of Health to submit Special Legislation to increase the amount of member from 3 to 5 and direct the Town Manager to include a warrant article in November 2022 Town Meeting as necessary with the aid of Town Counsel including language regarding Board of Selectmen/Select Board. The motion was seconded by Bacci and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### Killam School Building Committee

As apart of the MSBA process, the town must create a Killam Building Committee that includes a Select Board member.

Herrick nominated herself with a second from Dockser. Bacci nominated himself with a second from Herrick.

**The board took the following vote for Bacci as the representative:**

**Haley – yes; McCarthy – no; Herrick – no; Dockser – no; Bacci – yes.**

**The board took the following vote for Herrick as the representative:**

**Haley – yes; McCarthy- yes; Herrick -yes; Dockser – yes; Bacci -yes.**

**Haley moved to appoint Herrick as the Select Board member on the Killam School Building Committee. The motion was seconded by Herrick and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### VASC Process

Dockser noted he thought VASC had to interview everyone, incumbents and new applicants. He believes it is good practice and should be the policy if it isn't.

Haley noted the policy does not require them to interview incumbents. He explained he would have still recommended the incumbents over a new applicant either way because he believes past service/experience is important. He noted he does regret the process to a point and did try to reach out the applicant after the meeting.

McCarthy apologized to the applicant and noted they did not do this out of nepotism. McCarthy and Haley agreed to not interview incumbents and focused on filling the vacancies. She noted they should have attempted to interview all incumbent applicants seeking reappointment. She is taking this as a lesson learned as her first time being on VASC.

Town Manager Maltez noted he takes the blame for this as he should have realized process and explained to the new VASC members. He noted he did meet with the applicant in person afterwards. He also noted this was a blanket decision for all boards to not interview incumbents, not just the board of health.

Herrick agreed with Dockser that all incumbents should be interviewed noting that's how it was being done the past couple years since 2020.

Dockser feels they need to change the policy to ensure everyone is interviewed every year. He would like this on a future agenda.

Joe White noted he was the resident who wrote the letter to the newspaper. He feels the Board and Committee selection process is biased towards the incumbents and he wants the policy changed.

Haley noted he will be abstaining from voting on the Housing Authority applicants.

**Haley moved to approve all of the VASC recommendations as presented, except for the Housing Authority Committee. The motion was seconded by Bacci and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

**Haley moved to approve the VASC recommendations for the Housing Authority as presented. The motion was seconded by Herrick and approved with the following roll call vote:**

**Herrick – yes; Dockser- yes; McCarthy – yes; Bacci- yes; Haley – abstain.**

#### Future Agendas

The board discussed future agenda items.

**Haley moved to enter into executive session under Purpose 7, To Comply with Section 22 of the OML – approve and review February 13, 2019, and March 26, 2019 minutes for release and to invite Fidel Maltez, and Caitlin Nocella to attend the meeting, and to not return to open session. The motion was seconded by Bacci and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

*Documents Used:  
2022-06-28 Select Board Packet*