



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### Select Board

Date: 2022-11-15

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 via Zoom

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

#### **Others Present:**

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, E.A. Caitlin Nocella, Michael Coltman, Judy Coltman, Nancy Twomey, Tim Twomey, Ed Hackett, Bryan Hackett, Linda Snow Dockser, Sudeshna Chatterjee

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Executive Assistant 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 noted the cemetery department would love some ARPA money if there is any left.

Tim Twomey wanted to note some concerns about the proposed new baseball field the board is hearing about tonight. His main concerns are parking and access to the field.

#### Liaison Reports

McCarthy thanked the Town Clerks staff for a great election day. She thanked the Veterans Agent and staff for a great Veteran's day celebration. The board of health has an RFP out for consultants to do a community needs assessment. Covid numbers are down and they will continue to do vaccine clinics. VASC had a lot of great candidates.

Haley echoed McCarthy's statement about the VASC. Veteran's Day was a great turnout. He noted his frustrations with the fact that the town spent money and got lawyers involved to ask about a sign on someone's private property which clearly falls under freedom of speech.

Bacci also noted the fantastic Veteran's Day celebration. The historical commissions are still discussing 186 Summer Ave. A new project on Village Street was approved by CPDC. Common District Meeting House is doing work and hopes to open by January.

Herrick attended a DI event at the High School. RMLD has promoted Greg Phipps as the new GM. The School Committee has a new pathways program to expand offerings that fall between tradition high school and vocational schools. The program will match students with local businesses for capstone projects and internships. She attended a joint Historical meeting about 186 Summer Ave. The Pleasant Street Center is doing their annual thanksgiving dinner to which the board is invited to.

Dockser noted the Council on Aging met and is already putting their ARPA money to good use. ReCalc met again in regards to 17 Harden and the needs assessment. Trust Commissioners met to look at a new or revised program for the Reading response assistance system. More discussions taking place on lot 5; they did a tour and scouted out some lot lines. He also mentioned a wonderful Veterans Day celebration.

#### Town Manager's Report

Maltez noted that Town Meeting is off to a great start and they got thru 6 articles night one. He noted he is continuing to meet with our trash contractor to make sure things stay on track as they seem to be at the moment. He did mention they are falling behind with leaf pickup but trash and recycling are on track. He noted there have been several resident complaints about a flag on private property. There is nothing the town can do about that; it is freedom of speech on private property.

#### Public Hearing – Traffic Improvements

Lt. Jones was present to answer any questions. The request is for two stop signs; one on Copeland Ave at Prescott Street and the other on Hillcrest Road at Prescott Street. He noted PTTTF has already reviewed and approved the request.

**Haley moved to close the hearing on the Traffic and Parking regulations. With a second from Bacci the motion approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

**Haley moved to approve Safety Amendment 2022-20 as presented. With a second from Bacci the motion approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

**Haley moved to approve Safety Amendment 2022-21 as presented. With a second from McCarthy the motion approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### Accept Gift – Baseball field at Joshua Eaton

President of Little League Baseball Jose gave a presentation about their gift of a new baseball field at Joshua Eaton. The presentation can be found in the Select Board packet on the town website.

Mike Coltman from the Recreation Committee noted the committee feels this is a great idea and approved opening it. There would only be two games at one time to try and offset parking issues.

Bacci asked about recent incidents Reading Little League and it was noted those behaviors will not be tolerated and they are being taken care of. He also suggested having PTTTF look at parking ideas.

Tim Twomey noted his concerns again about parking and specifically about emergency vehicles not being able to get through when parents park on both sides of the road for games.

Ed Hackett noted he is a neighbor to the new field and also expressed his concerns about safety vehicles being able to access those houses and parking.

**Haley moved to accept the gift of a baseball field at Joshua Eaton from Reading Little League as presented. The motion was seconded by McCarthy and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### Pickleball Discussion

Jenna Fiorente gave the board a presentation about pickleball. The presentation can be found in the Select Board meeting packet on the town website. The board discussed the current interest level in pickleball, the current court locations and some potential new court locations. It was also noted that 8 new courts are already in the Birch Meadow Master plan.

#### Reading Ice Arena Discussion on Lease Renewal

Carl McFadden, the representative to the board from the Reading Ice Arena Board of Directors, spoke about the authority, how it was set up by Nelson Burbank and looking ahead to renewing the lease. He noted the roof needs to be redone soon but they can take on that expense with their 'rainy day fund'.

Herrick had a number of questions about past audits, their website and publicizing more information for the public. She also believes their roof quote is inaccurate. She mentioned RMLD would be interested in putting solar panels on their roof as well.

#### SWEC Representative

The board noted they assumed Bacci would be taking this role because this committee was his idea. **Bacci noted he would love to be the representative and nominated himself. Herrick seconded the motion and it was approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

**Haley then moved to appoint Bacci as the SB Representative on the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee. The motion was seconded by Herrick and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### Discuss Menorah on Town Common

Dockser noted he requested a menorah be placed on the town common to be more inclusive. He explained that lots of neighboring towns already do it and feels there is a lot of interest doing it here. He noted that the menorah is not a religious item.

Haley asked how this is different from flying the pride flag in which they discussed this past summer. He noted he supports putting a menorah up but also feels they are opening a door to any other requests. He also asked if the board should be approving the tree lighting that the Chamber puts on.

Bacci asked how the menorah is not a religious item when it is for Hannukah which is a Jewish holiday. He suggested putting a Christmas tree next to the menorah.

Herrick asked if they put the menorah on the common if that would then change how they handled the pride flag request. She feels the board should discuss tonight but wait and hear public input before voting and vote at the next meeting.

Marianne Downing noted she read the case law about this. She is not sure how a menorah is not considered a religious symbol. She feels the packet should have had more information for the public.

Town Counsel noted it is really important to convey these are not religious symbols but celebrations of the holiday season. The board needs to handle this as 'government speech' meaning the board wants to put the menorah out to make people feel more inclusive. This is not a private request; this is something the board wants to do.

**Haley moved to approve placing a menorah on the town common. The motion was seconded by Bacci and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### Letter of Support for Safe Routes School Grant

Maltez noted there is a grant opportunity that is available every other year.

McCarthy noted they need to do better notifying the neighbors.

**Haley moved to approve submitting a letter of support for Safe Routes to School Grant. The motion was seconded by McCarthy and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### VASC

McCarthy noted they had great candidates for a number of open positions.

Haley noted there was a few candidates for Council on Aging and he explained why the chose who they did for the full positions vs the associates.

**Haley moved to appoint:**

- **Karen Janowski as a member of the Council on Aging, term effective immediately and expiring June 30, 2025**
- **Nancy Tawadros as a member of the Council on Aging, term effective immediately and expiring June 30, 2024**
- **Nancy Ziemplak as an associate member of the Council on Aging, term effective immediately and expiring June 30, 2023**
- **Jean Prato as an associate member of the Council on Aging, term effective immediately and expiring June 30, 2023**
- **Melissa Pucci as a member of the Recreation Committee, term effective immediately and expiring June 30, 2025**
- **Tim Kirwan as an associate member of the Trails Committee, term effective immediately and expiring June 30, 2024**

**The motion was seconded by McCarthy and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

#### Tax Rate Re-Vote

Maltez noted that the board needed to vote a more exact number to ensure the split is where they intended it to be.

**Haley moved that the Select Board adopt a residential factor of .996452 for Fiscal Year 2023. The motion was seconded by McCarthy and approved with the following roll call vote:**

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

#### Future Agendas

The board discussed future agenda items.

#### Minutes

The board edited previous meeting minutes.

**Haley moved to approve the meeting minutes of October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 as amended. The motion was seconded by McCarthy with approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

**Haley moved to approve the meeting minutes of October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 as amended. The motion was seconded by McCarthy with approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**

**Herrick moved to adjourn at 10:34 PM. The motion was seconded by Bacci and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**