



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Select Board

Date: 2023-11-07

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:**

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

**Members - Not Present:**

**Others Present:**

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Executive Assistant Caitlin Nocella, Director of Equity Albert Pless, Nancy Docktor, DPW Director Chris Cole, Town Clerk Laura Gemme, Bernie Lynch, Fire Chief Greg Burns, HR Director Sean Donahue, Finance Director Sharon Angstrom

**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.*

Chair McCarthy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### Liaison Reports

Bacci noted that today is Bill Brown's 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. SWEC met earlier and they learned the Pickleball Players Association will be withdrawing their citizen's petition for Town Meeting. Recreation met last night and Stephen Cool presented a dog park proposal for Washington Park and the committee was not receptive of that location. RPPA also presented again and they had a robust discussion about that.

Haley noted the Charter Review Committee met last week and went over Articles 1 and 2. They will meet again next week.

Dockser noted the Council on Aging met last week and had a discussion about communicating outbound what the needs of the Senior Center are. We received 6 bids on the RFQ for the Senior Center. The screening committee has narrowed it down to 4 and are interviewing them tomorrow.

Herrick noted our Economic Development Director Ben Cares created a comprehensive guide to doing business in Reading. She attended the Economic Development Summit/ Financial Forum that had an MBTA Communities update and a presentation on the Community Preservation Act. She noted they are aware of the ongoing electrical issues at Reading Woods and RMLD and staff are working with the property owners on a solution.

MSBA Designer Panel met last week and the Killam School received 4 submissions for designer services.

McCarthy noted CPDC met and McDonalds has continued their proposal to the December meeting. There will be a Town Manager Search Public Forum tomorrow night. We are looking for residents at large to serve on the Town Manager Screening Committee, you can apply at the Town Clerks Office. There will be another MBTA Communities discussion at 7 pm at the library tomorrow night. Trails Committee met last week and the flooding at Matera Cabin seems to have subsided. The committee is still working on trail blazing and they are considering applying for a Mass Trails Grant.

#### Introduction of Director of Equity

The Town's new Director of Equity, Albert Pless, introduced himself to the board and gave a brief overview of his position and his goals.

The board expressed how happy they are to have him here in Town and look forward to working with him.

#### Public Comment

Nancy Docktor thanked Jane Kinsella for her work here over the years as she is getting ready to retire. She also looks forward to working with Chris Cole in the future.

#### Introduction of new DPW Director Chris Cole

Incoming DPW Director Chris Cole introduced himself to the board. He was the Assistant DPW Director for many years before being selected as Jane Kinsella's successor.

He then gave the board a quick update on DPW as we prepare for the upcoming winter season.

#### Election Schedule

Town Clerk Laura Gemme was back in front of the board to discuss the election schedule for next year. The board can vote to combine the local election with the State Primary if they wish. If they do not vote, they will stay two separate elections. Gemme expressed her concerns about combining the elections due to confusion for the voters especially when it comes to mail-in ballots.

While the board acknowledged Gemme's concerns they still feel it is best to combine the elections for the convenience of the voters resulting in a higher turnout.

**Herrick moved to combine the Local Election and the Presidential Primary on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 5-0 vote.**

#### Community Paradigm Presentation and Discussion

Bernie Lynch shared with the board the process and timeline for hiring a new Town Manager. He noted it is an aggressive timeline but do-able. The board will need to appoint an interim Town Manager when Maltez assumes his new position in Chelsea on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

#### Town Manager Screening Committee Make-up

The board discussed who they would like to see on the Town Manager Screening Committee. The board agreed the make-up of the last screening committee worked well.

**McCarthy moved to create a 7 member Town Manager screening committee with the following members:**

**2 Select Board members, 2 resident department heads to serve ex-officio, the Town Moderator and up to 2 residents.**

**The motion was seconded by Herrick and approved with a 5-0 vote.**

The board further discussed which two department heads they would like to see on the committee. The board agreed that the Chair should reach out to department heads and speak with them before they vote on appointments. They will vote at their next meeting on which department heads to put on the committee.

The board then discussed which Select Board members to put on the committee. McCarthy, Dockser and Bacci all noted interest.

**Herrick nominated the Chair and Vice Chair to be the Select Board representatives on the Screening Committee. The motion was seconded by Dockser.**

**Haley nominated Bacci and McCarthy to be the Select Board representatives on the Screening Committee. The motion was seconded by Herrick.**

**The board voted on the first motion for Chair and Vice Chair to be the representatives. The motion passed with a 3-2 vote with Bacci and Haley against.**

#### Discussion on Acting Town Manager

McCarthy noted the board needed to start discussions about the appointment of an acting Town Manager for when Maltez leaves at the end of the year.

McCarthy noted that Assistant Town Manager Matt Kraunelis would be a great choice and is her suggestion for the role. The rest of the board agreed. The board will vote on this at their next meeting.

#### Future Agendas

The board discussed future agenda items.

#### Minutes

The board edited the prior meetings minutes.

**Herrick moved to approve the meeting minutes of October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 as amended. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 5-0 vote.**

**Herrick moved that the board go into Executive Session including staff members Fidel Maltez, Greg Burns, Sharon Angstrom, Sean Donahue, and Caitlin Nocella to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and approve contracts for the International Association of Firefighters AFL-CIO. Further the Chair declares that an open meeting could have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the body; and the board will NOT reconvene in open session. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.**