



Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Select Board

Date: 2024-03-26

Time: 7:30 PM

Building: Reading Public Library

Location: Community Room

Address: 64 Middlesex Avenue

Agenda: Revised

Purpose: General Business

Meeting Called By: Caitlin Nocella on behalf of Vice Chair acting as Chair Mark Dockser

Notices and agendas are to be posted 48 hours in advance of the meetings excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Legal Holidays. Please keep in mind the Town Clerk's hours of operation and make necessary arrangements to be sure your posting is made in an adequate amount of time. A listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting must be on the agenda.

All Meeting Postings must be submitted in typed format; handwritten notices will not be accepted.

Topics of Discussion:

	Zoom Option: Join Zoom Meeting https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87292249895 Meeting ID: 872 9224 9895 Dial by your location <ul style="list-style-type: none">+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)+1 646 518 9805 US (New York) Find your local number: https://us06web.zoom.us/u/keFZZCfhaW	
7:30	Board Discussion and Vote to Reorganize	
7:45	Overview of Meeting	
7:50	Public Comment	
8:00	Select Board Liaison and Town Manager Reports	
8:15	Vote to re-open Town Meeting Warrant and close warrant with new Town Meeting start date	
8:30	Vote to adopt Hazard Mitigation Plan	
9:00	Vote to hold in-person/early voting for Special Election on May 14, 2024	

This Agenda has been prepared in advance and represents a listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. However the agenda does not necessarily include all matters which may be taken up at this meeting.



Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

9:15	Discuss and Vote on Modification to CPA Study Committee membership to include member of Conservation Commission	
9:30	Vote to appoint Select Board member to CPA Study Committee	
9:45	Vote to Appoint Town Accountant to a term July 2024-June 2025	
10:00	Discuss Investigation into Board Conduct	
10:30	Discuss Future Agendas	
10:40	Approve Meeting Minutes	
10:50	Executive Session: Purpose 3: To discuss strategy with respect to Koster v. Town of Reading (Appellate Tax Board (ATB) Docket No. F-350310) and Koster v. Town of Reading (ATB Docket No. F-350371).	

***This agenda was revised on 3/21 to change the location and start time of the meeting to accommodate a larger venue**

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Middlesex, ss. Officer's Return, Town of Reading:

By virtue of this Warrant, I _____, on _____, 2024 notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of Reading, qualified to vote on Town affairs, to meet at the place and at the time specified by posting attested copies of this Town Meeting Warrant, in the following public places within the Town of Reading:

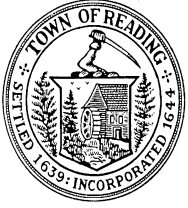
- Precinct 1 J. Warren Killam School, 333 Charles Street
 - Precinct 2 Reading Police Station, 15 Union Street
 - Precinct 3 Reading Municipal Light Department, 230 Ash Street
 - Precinct 4 Joshua Eaton School, 365 Summer Avenue
 - Precinct 5 Reading Public Library, 64 Middlesex Avenue
 - Precinct 6 Barrows School, 16 Edgemont Avenue
 - Precinct 7 Birch Meadow School, 27 Arthur B Lord Drive
 - Precinct 8 Wood End School, 85 Sunset Rock Lane
- Town Hall, 16 Lowell Street

The date of posting being not less than fourteen (14) days prior to April 22, 2024, the date set for Town Meeting in this Warrant.

Constable

A true copy Attest:

Laura Gemme, Town Clerk



TOWN WARRANT

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Middlesex, ss.

To any of the Constables of the Town of Reading, Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Reading, qualified to vote in the Local Elections and Town affairs, to meet at the Reading Memorial High School, 62 Oakland Road, in said Reading on

MONDAY, the TWENTY-SECOND DAY of APRIL A.D., 2024

at seven-thirty o'clock in the evening, at which time and place the following Articles are to be acted upon and determined exclusively by Town Meeting Members in accordance with the provisions of the Reading Home Rule Charter.

ARTICLE 1 The following Town Officers were elected on March 5, 2024

A Moderator for one year;
One member of the Select Board for three years;
Two members of the Board of Library Trustees for three years;
Two members of the Municipal Light Board for three years;
Two members of the School Committee for three years;

Each of Reading's eight (8) precincts elected eight (8) Town Meeting members for a three-year term.

In addition, the following Town Meeting members were elected:

Precinct 1 – One (1) Town Meeting member for a 2-year term
Precinct 2 – One (1) Town Meeting member for a 1-year term
Precinct 3 – Two (2) Town Meeting members for a 1-year term

ARTICLE 2 To hear and act on the reports of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Municipal Light Board, Finance Committee, Bylaw Committee, Town Manager, Town Accountant and any other Town Official, Board or Committee.

Select Board

ARTICLE 3 To choose all other necessary Town Officers and Boards or Committees and determine what instructions shall be given to Town Officers and Boards or Committees, and to see what sum the Town will vote to appropriate by borrowing or transfer from available funds, or otherwise, for the purpose of funding Town Officers and Boards or Committees to carry out the instructions given to them, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 4 To see if the Town will vote to amend the FY 2024-34 Capital Improvements Program as provided for in Section 7-7 of the Reading Home Rule Charter and as previously amended, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 5 To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town's Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year commencing July 1, 2023, as adopted under Article 12 of the Annual Town Meeting of April 24, 2023 and amended under Article 4 of the Subsequent Town Meeting of November 13, 2023; and to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to be added to the amounts appropriated under said Article, as amended, for the operation of the Town and its government, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Finance Committee

ARTICLE 6 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to pay bills remaining unpaid from prior fiscal years for goods and services actually rendered to the Town, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 7 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purpose of funding the irrevocable trust for "Other Post-Employment Benefits Liabilities", or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 8 To see if the Town will vote to transfer funds received from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in payment for development within the Town's 40R Smart Growth Zoning Districts from Free Cash into the Smart Growth Stabilization Fund, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 9 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds, including the reallocation of funds from the Parker Roof Project borrowing authorized under Article 14 of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purpose of installing a new replacement fire alarm panel at Coolidge Middle School, including the costs of installation, consulting services, plans, documents, bidding services and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended under the Town Manager, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Article 10 To see if the Town will vote to take the following actions:

- a) Raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds, including the reallocation of funds from the Parker Roof Project borrowing authorized under Article 14 of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purpose of designing a new floor at the Reading Memorial High School Field House, including the cost of consulting services, plans, documents, cost estimates, bidding services and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager; and
- b) Raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purposes of making improvements, including full replacement of the floor at the Reading Memorial High School Field House, including the costs of installation, construction, consulting services, audits, plans, documents, cost estimates, bidding services and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended by and under the direction of the Town Manager; and, for the purpose of meeting such appropriation, authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum in accordance with G.L. c. 44, §7(1), or any other enabling authority,

or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 11 To see if the Town will vote to (1) establish the limit on the total amount that may be expended from each revolving fund established by Article 9 of the Town of Reading General Bylaw pursuant to Section 53E½ of Chapter 44 of the Massachusetts General Laws for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024; and (2) amend Section 6.5.2 of the General Bylaw, establishing the Inspection Revolving Fund, as shown below, with the deletions being in bold and struck through:

6.5.2 Inspection Revolving Fund

Funds held in the Inspection Revolving Fund shall be used for legal costs, oversight and inspection, plan review, property appraisals and appeals, public services general management, pedestrian safety improvements, records archiving, and other costs related to building, plumbing, wiring, gas, and other permits required for large construction projects and shall be expended by the Town Manager. Receipts credited to this fund shall include building, plumbing, wiring, gas and other permit fees for Johnson Woods, Eaton Lakeview (23-25 Lakeview Avenue and 128 Eaton Street), 258 Main Street, ~~531 Main Street (Chronicle 40R)~~, ~~18-20 Woburn Street (40R)~~, 6-16 Chute Street (Green Tomato), 25 Haven Street (Rite Aid), ~~413 Main Street (McDonald's)~~, ~~431 Main Street (Chase Bank)~~, and 459 Main Street (128 Tire) developments.

Or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 12 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the operation of the Town and its government for Fiscal Year 2025 - beginning July 1, 2024, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Finance Committee

ARTICLE 13 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purpose of developing a zoning plan compliant with the requirements of G. L. c.40A, §3A, so called the "MBTA Communities Act", including the hiring of consultants, the preparation of plan documents, and the distribution of relevant information, and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 14 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to pay the costs of infrastructure improvements to the Haven Street Infrastructure Project, including replacement of roadway, sidewalks, and related improvements, including the payment of any and all other costs incidental and related thereto, said sum to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager; and, for the purpose of meeting such appropriation, authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of

the Select Board, to borrow said sum in accordance with G.L. c. 44, §7(1), or any other enabling authority, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 15 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to grant an easement to the Reading Municipal Light Department to install, construct, reconstruct, repair, replace, add to, inspect, maintain, and operate for the transmission of high and low voltage electric current and for the transmission of intelligence, overhead lines and all necessary equipment and appurtenances thereto, and an underground electric distribution system consisting of lines of buried wires and cables and lines of wires and cables installed in underground conduits, together with all equipment and appurtenances thereto for the transmission of intelligence and for the furnishing of electric service, on a portion of 160 Hopkins Street (Assessor's Parcel 8-0061), or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

ARTICLE 16 To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Section 2-6 of the Reading Home Rule Charter, to declare the seats of certain Town Meeting Members to be vacant and remove certain described persons from their position as Town Meeting Members for failure to take the oath of office within 30 days following the notice of election or for failure to attend one-half or more of the Town Meeting sessions during the previous year, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

and you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting an attested copy thereof in at least one (1) public place in each precinct of the Town not less than fourteen (14) days prior to April 22, 2024, or providing in a manner such as electronic submission, holding for pickup or mailing, an attested copy of said Warrant to each Town Meeting Member.

Hereof fail not and make due return of this Warrant with your doings thereon to the Town Clerk at or before the time appointed for said meeting.

Given under our hands this ___th day of _____, 2024.

Mark L. Dockser, Vice Chair

Karen Gately Herrick, Secretary

Carlo Bacci

Chris Haley

SELECT BOARD OF READING

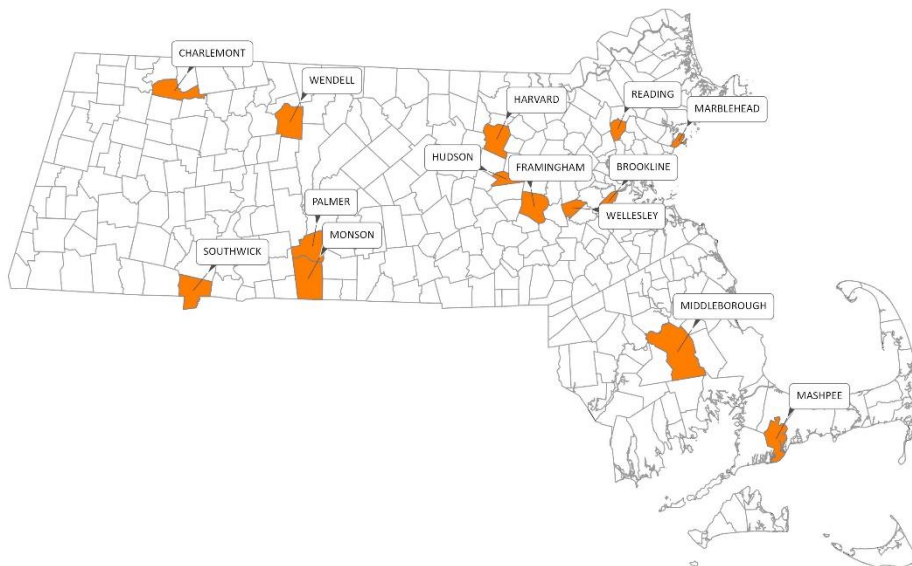
, Constable

Reading's Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2023

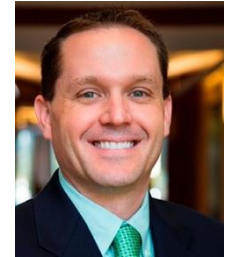
Select Board Presentation

3/26/24

JAMIE CAPLAN CONSULTING LLC



Jamie Caplan, Project Manager



*Darrin Punchard,
Deputy Project
Manager*



*Bill Bohn, Risk Assessment
Lead*



*David Murphy, Mitigation
Specialist*

What is a Hazard Mitigation Plan?

- The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires all municipalities that wish to be eligible to receive Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding for hazard mitigation grants to adopt a local multi-hazard mitigation plan and update this plan in five-year intervals.
- Hazard mitigation planning is a proactive effort to identify long-term strategies and actions that can be taken to reduce the dangers to life and property from natural hazard events such as extreme weather, flooding, tornadoes, wildfire, or infectious diseases.
- The Plan includes risk assessments, hazard mitigation goals and actionable measures.
- FEMA approval, and Town adoption, of our Hazard Mitigation Plan allows the Town to apply for hazard mitigation grant funds.

What are the potential grant opportunities?

- Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities (BRIC) grant program provides funds for hazard mitigation projects.
 - Manchester-by-the-Sea, \$4.48mn to retrofit and restore the culvert system around the Central St Bridge and Sawmill Brook
 - Chelsea & Everett, \$50mn to implement gray and green flood resilience solutions to address coastal flood risks in disadvantaged communities
 - MBTA, \$10mn for flood doors for the Blue Line to the airport
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grants
 - Town of Reading received one to implement our Maillet, Sommes, and Morgan wetland restoration and stormwater storage project

TIMELINE

Reading’s plan was updated from 2022-2023, by the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HPMC), a working group of municipal departments, led by our consulting team. We held two virtual public meetings and presented the Draft plan to the CAC for comments. The plan has already been approved by MEMA & FEMA, adoption by the Select Board is the final step.

	Nov 2022	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Fall 2023	Jan 2024	Mar 2024
Task 1. Convene Local HPMC	Kick-off Mtg	HMPC Mtg			HMPC Mtg	Public Mtg	HMPC Mtg		HMPC & Public Mtg	Public Mtg (CAC)			
Task 2. Update Hazard Profiles													
Task 3. Update Critical Facility Inventory													
Task 4. Update Mitigation Goals													
Task 5. Update Mitigation Actions													
Task 6. Plan Review, Evaluation, and Implementation													
Task 7. Public Review of Draft													
Task 8. Review and Approval											Approved by MEMA	Approved by FEMA	Adopted by Town

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PLAN

- **Chapter 1. Introduction**
 - Changes since the Previous Plan
- **Chapter 2. Planning Area Profile**
 - Population
 - Infrastructure
 - Land Use
- **Chapter 3. Planning Process**
 - Who was involved
 - Studies reviewed
- **Chapter 4. Risk Assessment**
 - Hazard profiles
 - Critical Facilities
 - Summary of Risk
- **Chapter 5. Capability Assessment**
 - Plans, Administration, Finances, Education
 - National Flood Insurance Program
- **Chapter 6. Mitigation Strategy**
 - Goals
 - Mitigation Actions
- **Chapter 7. Plan Implementation and Maintenance**
 - Method and schedule for implementation

HAZARDS FOR READING HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE

Primary Climate Change Interactions	Natural Hazards
Changes in Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flooding (<i>includes dam failure, ice jams</i>)• Drought• Landslide
Rising Temperatures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extreme Temperatures• Wildfires (<i>including brush fires</i>)• Invasive Species• Infectious Disease
Extreme Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hurricanes/Tropical Storms• Severe Winter Storm/Nor'easter• Tornadoes• Other Severe Weather (<i>includes microbursts, thunderstorms, etc.</i>)
Non-Climate Influenced Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earthquake

HAZARD RANKING

Hazards	Probability	Impact	Spatial Extent	Warning Time	Duration	Value	Rank
Severe Winter Storms	4	3	4	1	3	3.3	High
Extreme Temperatures	4	2	4	1	3	3	High
Flood	4	3	2	3	2	3	High
Drought	2	3	4	1	4	2.8	Mod.
Infectious Disease	3	2	4	2	2	2.7	Mod.
Hurricanes/Wind	2	3	4	1	2	2.6	Mod.
Invasive Species	3	2	2	3	4	2.6	Mod.
Other Severe Weather	4	1	4	2	1	2.6	Mod.
Tornadoes	2	4	1	3	1	2.4	Mod.
Wildfires/Brushfires	2	1	3	3	3	2.1	Mod.
Earthquakes	1	1	4	4	1	1.9	Low
Landslide	1	2	1	4	1	1.6	Low

CRITICAL FACILITIES

Municipal
Offices

Fire Stations

Police Station

Schools

Water
Treatment
Facility

Power
Substation

Elderly Housing
and Nursing
Homes

Water Storage
Tanks

Sewer Pump
Stations

Medical
Facilities

Train Station

MITIGATION ACTIONS

- Mitigation actions are a measure, project, plan or activity proposed to reduce current and future vulnerabilities described in the risk assessment.



A RANGE OF MITIGATION ACTIONS



Local Plans and Regulations

- Government authorities, policies, or codes that shape how land and buildings are developed and maintained.



Structure and Infrastructure

- Projects modifying existing infrastructure to remove it from a hazard area, or building new structures in ways that reduce the impacts of hazards.



Natural Systems Protection

- Actions that reduce damage and losses, and that preserve or restore the functions of natural systems.



Education and Awareness Programs

- Sustained programs to teach the public and decision makers about hazard risks and community mitigation programs.

MITIGATION ACTIONS

Action #	Action Title	Priority
1	Enhance public safety team's critical communications abilities	High
2	Update development regulations to require stormwater systems to consider climate projected storm levels	High
3	Publicize emergency communication plans & increase resident coverage	High
4	Upgrade old and undersized drainage culverts and pipes that cause flooding during heavy rain events	High
5	Design & construct flood storage and stormwater infiltration projects on Town-owned land	High
6	Implement stream stabilization, stream restoration, and address sedimentation issues.	High
7	Update critical transportation infrastructure	High
8	Provide full generator coverage at more critical facilities	High
9	Update critical water and sewer infrastructure (including adding backup power)	High
10	Promote Sustainable Building Practices	Medium
11	Incorporate green infrastructure into future Town development projects	Medium
12	Integrate Climate Resilience into all future Plan updates	Medium
13	Identify and pursue opportunities to engage on climate and hazard mitigation	Medium
14	Conduct vulnerability study of critical facilities	Medium
15	Complete an urban heat island study	Medium
16	Implement urban forest management	Low
17	Create tree policy / planting guide	Low
18	Create an invasive species wetland policy	Low
19	Create tree database	Low

TOWN OF READING, MASSACHUSETTS
SELECT BOARD
**A MOTION ADOPTING THE
TOWN OF READING, MA HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE 2023**

WHEREAS the Town of Reading recognizes the threat that natural hazards pose to people and property within the Town of Reading; and

WHEREAS the Town of Reading has prepared a multi-hazard mitigation plan, hereby known as TOWN OF READING, MA HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE 2023 in accordance with federal laws, including the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended; the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended; and the National Dam Safety Program Act, as amended; and

WHEREAS the TOWN OF READING, MA HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE 2023 identifies mitigation goals and actions to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property in the Town of Reading from the impacts of future hazards and disasters; and

WHEREAS adoption by the Town of Reading Select Board demonstrates its commitment to hazard mitigation and achieving the goals outlined in the TOWN OF READING, MA HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE 2023.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF READING, MA, THAT:

Section 1. In accordance with M.G.L. c. 40, the Town of Reading Select Board adopts the TOWN OF READING, MA HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE 2023. While content related to the Town of Reading may require revisions to meet the plan approval requirements, changes occurring after adoption will not require Town of Reading to re-adopt any further iterations of the plan. Subsequent plan updates following the approval period for this plan will require separate adoption resolutions.

ADOPTED by a vote of _____ in favor and _____ against, and _____ abstaining, this _____ day of _____, _____.

By: _____ Mark L. Dockser, Chair

ATTEST: By: _____ Karen Gately Herrick, Vice Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM: By: _____ Laura Gemme, Town Clerk

CPA Study Committee

Move to create a Community Preservation Act Ad Hoc Committee, comprised of 7 voting members and one non-voting member to be appointed by the Select Board, and is charged with facilitating communications with community leaders, Town Administration, Town Meeting Members, the Select Board, local community groups, and the statewide Community Preservation Coalition to share information regarding the opportunities and challenges when adopting the CPA. The Committee will study the need for the CPA and the various methods for adoption and present its findings to the Select Board in time to achieve a town wide vote in the November election including preparation for a special town meeting vote that accommodates the November 5, 2024 election; said committee to sunset on December 31, 2024, unless extended.

Members will be comprised of:

5 ex-officio voting members:

- Select board member
- Recreation member
- Historical Commission member
- Affordable housing trust member
- FINCOM member

And 2 residents who will apply directly to the Select Board with preference given to current or past members of either trails committee, town forest committee or conservation commission.

And 1 non-voting member who shall not count towards quorum who is the Director of Reading Housing Authority

April 9, 2024		Tuesday	
	Overview of Meeting		
	Public Comment		
	Select Board Liaison and Town Manager Reports		
	Arbor Day Proclamation	Chris Cole	
	Community DEI Assesment With School Com & Library Trustees - Amy		
	Discuss & Vote on Bill Russell Committee (BRACE)		
April 22, 2024	ANNUAL TOWN MEETING		
April 25, 2023	ANNUAL TOWN MEETING		
April 29, 2023	ANNUAL TOWN MEETING		
May 2, 2024	ANNUAL TOWN MEETING		
May 7, 2024		Tuesday	
	Discuss creating a Building Committee for the Senior Center Project		
May 21, 2024		Tuesday	
HEARING	Discuss/Vote on FY25 Non-Union Classification & Compensation Schedules		
	Discuss FY25 Water & Sewer Rates		
	Discuss and Vote on Creation of Building Committee for Senior Center project		
June 4, 2024		Tuesday	
HEARING	Discuss and Vote FY25 Water & Sewer Rates		
June 18, 2024		Tuesday	
	Vote on VASC recommendations for Annual board/committee Appointments		
	Vote to declare Surplus Items: Fire Department Ladder Truck	Chief Burns	
July 16, 2024		Tuesday	
August 20, 2024		Tuesday	
September 10, 2024	STATE PRIMARY		
September 17, 2024		Tuesday	
October 8, 2024		Tuesday	
October 29, 2024		Tuesday	
Hearing	Tax Classification		
November 5, 2024	STATE ELECTION		

November 12, 2024	SUBSEQUENT TOWN MEETING		
November 14, 2024	SUBSEQUENT TOWN MEETING		
November 18, 2024	SUBSEQUENT TOWN MEETING		
November 19, 2024		Tuesday	
November 21, 2024	SUBSEQUENT TOWN MEETING		
December 3, 2024		Tuesday	
	Vote to approve Annual Liquor Licenses		
December 4, 2024		Wednesday	
	Department Budget Presentations		
December 10, 2024		Tuesday	
	Department Budget Presentations		
	Recurring Agenda Items		
	Close Warrant: Annual Town Meeting	March	
	Close Warrant: Subsequent Town Meeting	September	
	Appoint Town Accountant	March	Annual
HEARING	Approve Classification & Compensation	May	Annual
	Appointments of Boards & Committees	May/June	Annual
HEARING	Approve Tax Classification	October	Annual
	Approve Licenses	December	Annual
	Arbor Day Proclamation	April	Annual
	Liaison: RCTV members Report		Annual
	Liaison: CAB (RMLD) member Report		Annual
	Liaison: MAPC member Report		Annual
	Liaison: Reading Housing Authority Report		Annual
	Liaison: Reading Ice Arena Report		Annual
	Town Accountant Report		Qtrly
	Economic Development Director		Semi-ann
	Parking/Traffic/Transportation Task Force (PTTTF)		
	Town Board & Committee visits		
	Town Department visits		
	Review Select Board Goals		
	Review Town Manager Goals		February/March

Select Board Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Saturday, January 27, 2024, 9:00 am

Town Hall Select Board Meeting Room
16 Lowell Street

Interview of Town Manager Candidates

Members Present: Chair Jackie McCarthy, Vice Chair Mark Dockser, Secretary Karen Gately Herrick, Carlo Bacci, Chris Haley

Others Present: Community Paradigm Associates Consultant Bernard Lynch, Human Resources Director Sean Donahue, Nancy Docktor (in-person then remote 9:55 am), Tom Mottl (remote), G (remote 9:47 am), Ann Mottl (remote 11:30 am), Barbara (remote 1:20 pm), KK's iphone (remote 1:35 pm), Austinantram (remote 1:38 pm), Resident (remote 1:38 pm), Kim (remote 1:49 pm)

Candidates Interviewed: Clancy Main, Matt Kraunelis, Matt Coogan, Tony Barletta

This meeting was held in-person in the Select Board Meeting Room of Town Hall and remotely via Zoom.

Chair Jackie McCarthy called the meeting to order at 9:07 am. Consultant Bernard Lynch of Community Paradigm Associates, and recruiter for the Town Manager search, reviewed the search and interview process to date, and explained his process for today to ask lead-in questions designed to have a dialogue with each candidate.

Interview Town Manager Candidates:

Clancy Main

Community Paradigm Consultant Bernie Lynch asked the first candidate, Clancy Main, to explain how he got into municipal government and why he would like to come to Reading.

Clancy Main stated that he grew up in North Reading and went to Austin Prep. He is currently the Assistant Town Manager in Billerica, a community of approximately 45,000 residents, 400 employees, and a \$200 million operating budget. He helps the Town Manager with the day-to-day, is the personnel director, and handles personnel negotiations. He has overseen several projects including a fire station, a field complex, historic renovations, a senior center, and a DPW project. He stated that he was excited at the opportunity in Reading because Reading is embarking on projects that Billerica has already done.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main about his leadership style.

Mr. Main stated that he is very introspective and always trying to find ways to do better and be a better manager. He likes to be a team builder, to collaborate, to be there for his employees, and have regular pop-up meetings with department heads.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Main about his leadership in the community.

Mr. Main answered that he spends a lot of time in the community in Billerica, and thinks it is important for administration to be seen in the community. He attends events at the Senior Center, rode a float in the town parade, and will visit the coffee shop frequented by many residents to chat with them there. He enjoys a good relationship with the boards and committees. He tries to be a unifier and do what is best for the community.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main how he ensured collaboration and communication.

Mr. Main cited a time when residents, elected officials, and other board members could not come to a consensus on priorities. He and the Town Manager hatched the idea of a Capital Facilities Committee comprised of eight Chairs from various boards and committees with vested interest. The group was able to bring in a consultant, and ranked needed and wanted projects in tiers. Those chairs were able to get the members from their respective boards and committees on board. Through this process, the town designed a Senior Center and Recreation Center.

Ms. Herrick asked Mr. Main to speak about the funding process and building consensus throughout the community to take on large capital projects when people are concerned about the cost of living.

Mr. Main explained the need to be transparent the whole way, including the cost to build, and future cost to staff and maintain. He noted that Billerica built up a debt stabilization fund, started in 2012, to act as kind of a piggy bank instead of using free cash, so such projects are not a burden on taxpayers.

Mr. Haley noted that Billerica's operating budget is significantly larger than Reading's and asked if a smaller budget would be a hindrance.

Mr. Main explained that Billerica is \$30 million under proposition 2 ½, and could tax the residents an additional \$30 million each year, but exercises fiscal restraint and does not, so as not to burden the taxpayers. They are conservative in the way that they budget. Mr. Main also explained Billerica's tax base is 70% residential, and 30% commercial. He noted that the town tries to drive people to small businesses, and tries to ensure the businesses have a place to go. Commercial space is a mix of new developments and redevelopment.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Main how he envisions working with and supporting Reading's Economic Development Director.

Mr. Main explained that Billerica also has an Economic Development Director and had a conversation with her about what Reading could do to market Reading as the place to be.

Ms. McCarthy asked Mr. Main what his philosophy is on addressing some of the issues surrounding the changes on MBTA Communities.

Mr. Main noted that housing is tough in every community, as people just do not like the prospect of change. He explained that there needs to be a respectful dialog, and explanation that it is an opportunity and good for the community, that change will be slow, and neighborhoods will not be overhauled overnight.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main if Billerica was active in Green Communities.

Mr. Main stated that Billerica was not a Green Community when he started there, but he worked to get the stretch energy code passed, and eventually Billerica was designated a green community. They have received several grants from Green Communities for projects around town.

Ms. Herrick asked Mr. Main about his experience with the Community Preservation Act.

Mr. Main stated that Billerica gets approximately \$1 million per year from CPA. He has seen the funds used on two projects: a historical building renovation to become the cable access studio, and fields for the recreation facility.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main about his financial management, involvement with the budget, and assembling a GFOA budget.

Mr. Main recalled his experience as Chief of Staff to City Council and viewed the budget from the staff and the community perspective. They created a document that gave every department a section to tell their story, their goals, share pictures, and have narratives on how their portion of the budget would be spent. He spends time working with department heads on their capital, and understanding their operations.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main to explain his role in personnel management and collective bargaining.

Mr. Main stated that he spends a lot of time with department heads to figure out language changes and put together an initial plan to offer to the union. He costs the contract, and negotiates along with the Town Manager. He cited recent contract negotiations to solve problems hiring water and sewer operators, and CDL drivers.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main how he handles performance evaluations.

Mr. Main stated that Billerica does not do performance evaluations, though they do give a lot of feedback to department heads.

Mr. Dockser noted that the Select Board conducts performance evaluations of the Town Manager and asked Mr. Main how he felt a performance evaluation of him would work.

Mr. Main stated that he always wants to get better, and is always looking for feedback and constructive criticism.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main how he has demonstrated his commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Mr. Main explained that following an equity issue with an employee, he realized that he can add to the conversation and wants to ensure that everyone feels comfortable being involved and having a voice.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main about his involvement with social media with regards to interacting with citizens, making government more transparent, and communications.

Mr. Main stated that he did his capstone project on social media and local government. He cited his experience with a project that had misinformation circulating about it, so he started a Facebook page and spent time putting information about ongoing projects on it. He also created a newsletter, and did a lot with cable access.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main how he would manage a relationship with the Select Board.

Mr. Main stated that in the early stages of getting to know the Select Board, he may overcommunicate, just to be upfront, and would expect the same from Select Board members. He would always be accessible.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Main how he would be engaged with the community in Reading.

Mr. Main stated that he grew up in North Reading, and currently lives in Derry, NH, but he and his wife want to move back to the area. He noted that having Fridays off is an opportunity to still come in, meet with people in the community, and meet with constituents and address their issues.

Mr. Dockser noted that Reading is looking for someone who will remain in the Town Manager position for a long time and asked Mr. Main how Reading might fit into his plans.

Mr. Main stated that he has spent a lot of time in the Reading community. It means a lot to him, and it is a place he would stay for a very long time. He would like to see projects like Killam through the process. He stated that Reading is a great community with a lot of opportunities, and a lot of challenges. He would like to be a part of the community and bring his family here.

Mr. Bacci asked Mr. Main how he felt about pickleball.

Mr. Main stated that he played pickleball once. He knows Reading is trying to build pickleball courts in Town, and suggested a public-private partnership might be possible with the golf course.

Matt Kraunelis

The second candidate interviewed was Matt Kraunelis, the current Assistant Town Manager, and only internal candidate.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis how he got into municipal government, why he is interested in the Town Manager position, and why he feels he will be successful.

Mr. Kraunelis thanked Mr. Lynch and the Select Board for this opportunity. He recalled his history graduating from Merrimack College and going to law school. He was interested in politics, policy, and government. He spent a few years after college practicing law in the public sector, then ran for City Council, won, and spent six years, reaching the term limit, on the Methuen City Council. He then became Chief of Staff to the Mayor in Methuen. When the Mayor reached his term limit, Mr. Kraunelis went to work for the State Office of Consumer Affairs. After some time there, he wanted to go back into town government, the opportunity as the Reading Director of Administrative Services arose, and he was hired in 2015. He was in the position for seven years before being appointed as Assistant Town Manager, and he is currently the Acting Town Manager. He stated that his passion is public service and wants to stay in public service in Reading.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis about his leadership style, and how his style would enable him to make changes that he deems necessary.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he knows everybody and helped to build the team. Reading has seen a lot of changes over the last few years, and he feels that he can provide stability and keep the team together. He acknowledged that sometimes change is needed, and he meets with employees and department

heads regularly. He considers himself a servant leader, not autocratic, and likes to inspire and guide employees as they do their work.

Mr. Lynch asked how Mr. Kraunelis would assess the Reading organization, where change is needed, and how he would go about it.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he works in Operations and meets with employees and residents every day. He hears things, and hears when things need to change. He likes to lead by example and would demonstrate to department heads and employees how he can adapt and make changes, too. People can be afraid of change, but with communication skills, and ensuring everyone is heard, you can get the job done. For example, with the change in Town Managers, there was uncertainty, but things had to change. He talked and listened to people, letting them know that their opinions were valuable. During the financial crisis in 2008 in Methuen, they had to ask every employee to take a pay cut. It took a lot of work, but they did not have to do any layoffs.

Ms. McCarthy asked how he would approach mentoring and leadership of new, and senior department heads.

Mr. Kraunelis stated they all have different needs, and there is a level of trust you must develop with each of them. He allows them to work in their style, and is there to support when needed. Other department heads need a little more handholding. He makes himself available, troubleshoots when needed, and makes decisions when needed.

Mr. Dockser asked what other ways he would support staff with less experience.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that additional training is always effective, and has worked on training programs that include de-stressing and preventing burn-out. If there are any classes an employee wants to take, he is supportive, and proud whenever one of Reading's employees comes through public leadership and management training. It comes down to training and mentoring to deal with issues head-on.

Mr. Dockser asked how Mr. Kraunelis sees his role with the community outside of employees, such as resident issues, and volunteers.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that one of the benefits of his role as Ombudsman is he meets a lot of citizens, and he has found that they mostly want to be heard. He noted his appreciation for and importance of the many volunteers who take the time to serve on boards on nights and weekends, and that he has a good relationship with all the Boards and Committees. He makes sure that meetings are staffed when needed, and that they are also listened to and heard.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Kraunelis how he sees himself meeting the efforts of the many ongoing activities planned.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that the Town Manager must be a leader in those efforts. He cited the current Killam School Building project, and how he spoke with the Owner's Project Manager and architect to ask what they needed from him, and brought additional staff members onto the project to ensure that all those needs are met. He has also been involved with the feasibility study for ReCALC and keeping it on track. He noted that every time he has asked staff to provide assistance, they have done it. Providing resources is what the Town Manager needs to do.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis about his experience developing a municipal budget, and his philosophy when developing one.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he has worked on both state and municipal budgets. He explained that the process in Reading begins in September and October with Financial Forums with the Finance Committee, and getting guidance on the use of free cash. He has met with division heads to review the budgets historically, and decided whether changes were needed. Department Heads will then review with the Town Manager, which he has helped with as well. The budget he is working on currently is balanced, and he has a great relationship with the Chief Financial Officer and Town Treasurer. Any changes that are needed are made right away.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis about the Finance Committee process and whether he feels it is best practice.

Mr. Kraunelis explained that at the Financial Forum, the Finance Committee will consult with the CFO on the total finances of the Town, and will suggest how much free cash to use to balance the budget. The Finance Committee has priorities and guidelines. He noted that the Town is in a good free cash position most years and free cash use just provides a little support.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis about his background with capital budgeting.

Mr. Kraunelis explained that he did a lot of capital budgeting for Methuen, but not as much in Reading. Technology, which was formerly a division of Administrative Services, has a lot of capital, and he worked collaboratively with the Technology Director.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis about his involvement with project management and managing facilities projects.

Mr. Kraunelis cited his experience with Methuen High School. While he was not the lead on the project, as the Chief of Staff, he handled all the paperwork with the MSBA. In Reading, he is currently working on the Killam School Building Project, with signing authority as Acting Town Manager, and is involved with the ongoing Senior Center feasibility study. He was also involved with the Library project at the end.

Mr. Lynch asked what issues he has seen, and work he has done with the Senior/Community Center.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that the team working on the project has looked at what a lot of other communities have done, and has visited other senior centers. He was involved with the procurement.

Ms. Herrick asked Mr. Kraunelis what he would love to see happen in Reading.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he would love to see the Killam School and Senior Center built. He would love to see more community events, and he is interested in arts and culture. He dedicates much of his spare time to arts in culture in Methuen. In Reading, there is an Arts & Culture plan with a grant to support it. He noted that the payback is big on such events and gives a sense of pride to the community.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis about his personnel management and role in collective bargaining.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he negotiated contracts with the Mayor in Methuen (he noted that the infamous Police contract happened after his time in Methuen). And in Reading, he was part of the team that former Town Manager Fidel Maltez assembled.

Mr. Haley asked Mr. Kraunelis if he has an internal candidate in mind to fill his position if he is appointed as Town Manager.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he can think of several internal individuals who could step into his role, some of whom have MPAs, and some who are working towards them.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Kraunelis what he envisions the role of the Assistant Town Manager should be.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he would be looking for someone who could do the job as it stands now overseeing all divisions of Administrative Services and Public Services.

Ms. McCarthy asked Mr. Kraunelis what he learned working with the State Office of Consumer Affairs, and how it would help him in the role of Town Manager.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he learned a lot about consumer protection and would make sure that consumers were getting the most for their money. In his time there, he reviewed many issues, and went to a lot of hearings regarding regulations.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis about his experience with land use and development, and how he would see his impact on the development of Reading.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he had experience in Methuen. The Economic Development Director left, and he was overseeing the Planning Department as Chief of Staff, and completed an updated Master Plan. In Reading, he also oversees the Planning Division, where there is the 40R Smart Growth District and the ongoing MBTA Communities mandate.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis if Methuen was a Green Community.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that Methuen was a Green Community early on and received an early grant.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis how he has demonstrated a commitment to diversity.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he was on the team that hired Reading's first Director of Equity and Social Justice. He has worked with the Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC) and Reading Embraces Diversity (RED), and hopes to continue working on diversity initiatives.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis about his thoughts on social media.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he believes it is important, as it is a main way many people get their information. Reading's first Facebook started under him, and is currently maintained by two employees.

Mr. Bacci noted that communication about the impact of construction projects on downtown businesses was not handled well and asked Mr. Kraunelis what he would have done differently.

Mr. Kraunelis explained that the Town often did not get notification from utilities until the day of construction. They have been trying to build relationships with utility companies to get more advanced notice. For town contracted work, they try to get the word out as soon as the information is available.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis how he would like to see his relationship with the Select Board if appointed.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he has enjoyed a great relationship with the Board, even before being appointed Acting Town Manager. He does not want the Select Board to be surprised by anything, and would communicate about issues right away. The Select Board sets the policy, and it is the Town Manager's job and staff's job to implement those policies.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Kraunelis about his relationship with the state delegation.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he has a great relationship with the delegation and has known them for a long time. Even as Director of Administrative Services, it has been part of his role to be active with the state government and delegation. He noted that former Town Manager Fidel Maltez did exceedingly well working with the delegation in securing state grants, and he would like to see that continue.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Kraunelis how engaged he is with municipal professional organizations.

Mr. Kraunelis stated that he attends the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Annual Conference. He also attends the monthly Manager's breakfast with a local group of Mayors and Town Managers. He is also a member of the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association, and plans to join the Massachusetts Municipal Managers Association if appointed as Town Manager.

Matt Coogan

The third interview was with candidate Matt Coogan, the current Town Administrator in Boxford.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan to introduce himself and explain why he is interested in Reading.

Mr. Coogan began by thanking the Select Board and the hiring committee. He stated that he felt that Reading has a good partnership between the Schools and Town, and after his experience with the Reading Immersion earlier this week, it feels like a good fit for him. He has worked in local government for approximately eleven years, and noted his background in Planning. He is currently the Town Administrator in Boxford, and while he is not actively looking to leave Boxford, he stated that Reading is one of those great opportunities that comes along that are worth exploring. He stated that he had an accident in 2022 that he wanted to be up front about. He was driving home, lost control, hit a phone poll, and had been drinking. He stated that since then, he has been trying to have accountability for his mistake by going through the process of continuation without a finding.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan what actions he would take in his first 100 days to illustrate his management style.

Mr. Coogan explained that he would get out in the community to meet people, get to know all the Department Heads and Boards and Committees, and work with the Select Board to figure out how they can work together. He stated that his leadership style is based on communication, and sees his management style as managing a team, like an orchestra, and the role of Town Manager is a supporting role, seeing the bigger picture and working with the Select Board to get multiple priorities balanced.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan about his leadership style with the Community as a whole.

Mr. Coogan stated that he likes to be approachable and available to residents. He noted that Boxford does not have a newspaper, so he instituted a newsletter. He also holds bimonthly open office hours, participates in community events, and attends weekly lunches at the Senior Center.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Coogan how he envisioned himself working with Reading's many volunteers.

Mr. Coogan stated that when he started in Boxford, his first 100-day process included attending at least one meeting of every board and committee. He introduced himself and set up time with each Board and Committee Chair to learn what was happening with their board. Beyond boards, there are local athletic organizations, Chamber of Commerce, and other community organizations, that he would reach out to and schedule a meeting to learn about their work.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan about his experience with budget development and his financial management philosophy.

Mr. Coogan stated that this is his sixth season overseeing the budget process. He stated that his philosophy is adhering to the financial policies and best practices of municipal finance. He tries to be proactive for budgets for the next several years.

Mr. Haley asked Mr. Coogan what Boxford's operating budget is, and if he could handle the larger demand with the amount of money that Reading has.

Mr. Coogan stated that the setup for the budget process is similar regardless of how much revenue there is, and the operating budget.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan about capital planning and funding.

Mr. Coogan stated that Boxford had the first draft of the capital plan when he arrived. It is funded with free cash, debt appropriations, Community Preservation Act, and state grant funding and earmarks.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan what his thoughts were on using free cash for the operating budget.

Mr. Coogan stated that it all depends on the system in place. He stated that he thought it was interesting that Reading uses an amount of free cash appropriated every year, and that it could be a slippery slope if it is not well maintained and managed. In Boxford, free cash has become like a stabilization fund in addition to the stabilization fund.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan about Green Communities.

Mr. Coogan stated that Boxford is a Green Community. He also managed Green Communities in Gloucester, Salem, and Newburyport.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan about his experience managing capital projects and facility projects.

Mr. Coogan stated that most recently he has been involved with the process for a new senior/community center, and is currently working on the design of the DPW facility, and electrification of the HVAC system in one of the elementary schools in Boxford. In Newburyport, he was part of the multi-modal parking garage facility project, as well as street light conversions in Gloucester.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan about his background in grant writing.

Mr. Coogan stated that as administrator of Green Communities, it entailed a lot of grant writing. He also was successful in securing MassWorks grants for a bridge replacement, \$3 million for parks, and \$250,000 for the design of a rail trail.

Ms. McCarthy asked Mr. Coogan about his approach to addressing land use and development concerns at the local level, and how to help Boards and Committees work through them.

Mr. Coogan noted the importance of involving stakeholders early in the process, as well as working with developers before they get too far into the process.

Ms. Herrick asked Mr. Coogan what excites him about coming to Reading.

Mr. Coogan stated that given his planning background, he was excited about the development and taking advantage of the amenities in town, such as the train station, balancing the characteristics of the community, projecting what type of housing stock is needed for the next few years, and the new Killam School.

Mr. Lynch asked how the idea for an outdoor dining parklet came about, and the importance of the relationship with small businesses.

Mr. Coogan recalled his experience working for a small business growing up in upstate New York, and noted the challenges that local small businesses have. In graduate school, he worked for a non-profit that did Business Improvement Districts. He also cited his experience with Economic Development in Salem working with businesses to develop business plans to get funding.

Ms. McCarthy asked Mr. Coogan his philosophy on pursuing MBTA Communities, and what that entails with community meetings and Town Meeting.

Mr. Coogan stated that he and the Land Use Director in Boxford were able to secure outside funds to get technical assistance and provide data. They are working to determine what is in the best interest of the town, relying on the regional planning association, and getting grants for technical assistance, which has made the process less concerning for Boxford residents.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Coogan about his leadership with projects like MBTA Communities, Killam School, and Senior/Community Center, and how he envisions his role as Town Manager.

Mr. Coogan stated that he works by timelines, figures out how long it will take and works backwards. He brought in someone from the state to speak with the Planning Board, and had the Land Use Director provide information to Town Meeting. He explained a current situation of dealing with underutilized town buildings, and created a committee that consisted of members of other boards to go through the process.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan about his personnel management, experience with collective bargaining, hiring, retention, and succession.

Mr. Coogan stated that he was the head negotiator in Newburyport and Boxford, has negotiated about ten contracts in roughly six years, and is data driven in negotiations. He cited his process in Boxford to update the compensation plan. For succession planning, he tried to be creative in holding on to institutional knowledge as much as possible.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan about his commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Mr. Coogan stated that a speaker speaking about privilege left a lasting impression on him, and how privilege affects how one is perceived in the community and what doors are open to you. In the aftermath of the George Floyd incident, they created a DEI alliance designed to get people to work together, and help everyone understand what the issues are.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Coogan how he would envision his relationship with the Select Board.

Mr. Coogan stated that his system in Boxford works well. He has bi-weekly meetings with the Chair, makes himself available to members as much as they want, and provides them with as much information as possible. He also stated that he tries his hardest to work with the Select Board Chair to keep meetings to two hours or less.

Mr. Bacci asked Mr. Coogan how he felt about pickleball.

Mr. Coogan stated that he has never played the sport, but understands that it has become the rage.

Mr. Coogan concluded by stating that he has a lot of experience that makes him a dynamic candidate that he thinks the Select Board is looking for, and has a lot of state partners that can help.

Antonio Barletta

Mr. Lynch asked the fourth and final candidate, Antonio “Tony” Barletta, to explain what got him into municipal government, why he is interested in coming to Reading, and why he feels he would be successful in Reading.

Mr. Barletta is the current Town Administrator for Nahant, MA. He thanked Mr. Lynch and the Select Board for providing him with this opportunity. He stated that he lives with his wife and two children in Beverly, and grew up in Nahant. He has a little over six years of experience at the state level and six years at the municipal level. What drew him to the opportunity in Reading is the long-term relationships with prior Town Managers. He noted that Reading has a lot of community pride, and like Nahant, is a mostly residential community. The opportunity for downtown development is something he will not experience in Nahant.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Barletta to explain his management style.

Mr. Barletta explained that he likes to listen and engage, is team-oriented, treats his staff as family, and makes sure that members feel as much as a part of the team as he does.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Barletta how he would illustrate to the Board, the staff, and the community, what they would have with him as Town Manager.

Mr. Barletta noted that the timing is approaching Town Meeting, and MBTA Communities is a challenge that Reading is facing. He would sit down with the Board and staff to understand their priorities. He would do the same externally, by building relationships with the community, state delegation, and businesses in town. He cited his first 100 days in Nahant, where the community was in a shaky financial situation. But he learned of the situation, taught it, and got community support.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Barletta how he sees the role of the Town Manager with the community at large.

Mr. Barletta explained he sees the role of the Town Manager in any community is to keep the surface calm, and to make sure the community feels that the town is working on their behalf, while protecting the Select Board and Department Heads. The Town Manager needs to problem solve in a way that promotes the community's belief in its local government.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Barletta how he plans to work with individuals and groups in the community.

Mr. Barletta stated that being present, being available, and communicating is the foundation of building the relationship with the community, and not just attending community events, but also promoting them, or creating new ones. He would work with the Chamber of Commerce to understand what local small businesses are experiencing, and being responsive to their concerns.

Mr. Lynch asked how he would communicate and build relationships with appointed boards and committees, and with the Schools.

Mr. Barletta noted that boards and committees are comprised of a lot of talented people who dedicate their time. He would be available to them, attend their meetings, and be supportive of them. He stated that in Nahant he has a close relationship with the Superintendent of Schools, and it is important to work with one another to solve any issues that arise.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Barletta how he addressed the financial condition of Nahant, what actions he took to solve the budget problem, and how he addresses the budget process now.

Mr. Barletta explained that the Town of Nahant received a report from the Department of Revenue in 2015 that laid out fiscal concerns. At that time, Nahant's bond rating was potentially at risk, and he wanted to protect the bond rating by increasing stabilization. He increased the stabilization to 5%, and it is on its way to 10%. He prioritized paying down debt, doing things with free cash, and using free cash effectively. Those actions solidified the bond rating, and the town is up over 3000% from when he started there.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Barletta what his capital planning process is, what his goals are and why, and how he would work with the community on their priorities.

Mr. Barletta explained that he starts by doing financial forecasting, coming up with financial policies, filling in the financial plan, working with financial advisors, Town Accountant and Department Heads to understand what the needs are for the next three, five, and ten years. He would approach financial management on community needs to make sure the town's needs come first, then make sure to have a sound financial basis to accomplish those priorities. He would learn what the priorities are, their expected time frame, and how they fit in with the financial forecast of the town.

Mr. Lynch asked what direct experience Mr. Barletta had with large capital projects.

Mr. Barletta stated that Nahant sends its wastewater to Lynn Water & Sewer, but that system had reached its end of life. He began by hiring an engineering firm through the procurement process, and asked them to provide alternative analyses and their costs. Nahant was able to get SRF (State Revolving Fund) funding through the state, worked with consultants, and procured a contractor. He stated that he was involved and made sure that they were meeting the checkpoints. The project was completed last

year, came in on budget at \$8.8 million, but slightly behind schedule due to being on the Lynnway, and having to deal with summer traffic. He worked with the state delegation, City of Lynn, and other state departments to get the job done.

Ms. McCarthy asked Mr. Barletta what he learned from his experiences in securing SRF funding, and how that makes him stronger in securing funding from outside sources.

Mr. Barletta stated that they brought on a contractor with experience with the SRF program and utilized their experience.

Mr. Lynch asked if Nahant is a Green Community.

Mr. Barletta stated that Nahant is a Green Community, though he worked for the Department of Energy Resources at the time Nahant was certified. In his time there, he worked directly with many municipalities on their compliance issues, and worked with the department to develop legislation and increase the Green Communities budget to \$20 million.

Chris Haley noted that Nahant's operating budget is \$15 million, significantly less than Reading's, and asked what kind of advantage Mr. Barletta would have over someone who is managing a larger budget.

Mr. Barletta noted the important things are principles of municipal finance despite the size of the budget, how the budget is managed, understanding where there is flexibility, and where there are limitations. He noted that he has faced many challenges in his career, and felt that his style of being a fast learner would put him in a position to be successful.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Barletta how he would balance meeting the needs, providing the wants, and maintaining the character of the town.

Mr. Barletta explained that first you need to understand what the needs and wants are of the town. For example, Reading must comply with MBTA Communities this year. The state is doing it to counteract the high cost of housing, but Mr. Barletta stated that he believes that municipalities should be able to determine their own zoning. The challenge is accomplishing what the state is requiring, while also satisfying the community's own wants and needs, finding the "sweet spot", and educating the community on how to accomplish it.

Mr. Dockser explained that Reading needs a new Senior Center, and there are only a few available potential locations. He asked Mr. Barletta what experience he has had with Senior Center projects, and how he would view that for Reading with limited land use, and town priorities in general.

Mr. Barletta noted that Nahant has an extremely active Senior Center located within the Town Hall, but it is antiquated, outdated, and undersized. They are currently going through alternatives analysis to determine what it would cost to revamp the kitchen at Town Hall, or move the Council on Aging to the elementary school. They are currently looking at the wants and needs for the Council on Aging, its programs, and the costs of either of those projects to decide which one they want to pursue.

Mr. Lynch asked about Mr. Barletta's personnel management.

Mr. Barletta stated that he entered an unsettled environment in Nahant, as there was high transition with the Town Administrator position. Also, going through the pandemic, many long-term employees who were old enough retired. He was able to rebuild the team with extremely talented people. Because

the staff is so small, everyone must wear many hats, and collaboration is key. Mr. Barletta stated that he is directly involved with collective bargaining, and has negotiated contracts twice with each bargaining unit. He works with the Finance Director to understand what the town can afford for the next few years, and works to understand what will satisfy the bargaining units without burdening the town. He also noted that he has an open-door policy with the bargaining units, to try to resolve issues before having to go through a formal grievance procedure.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Barletta about his commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Mr. Barletta explained that those values were ingrained in him at the state level, especially with the Patrick administration, which included inclusivity trainings and events. He tries to bring those trainings to Nahant.

Mr. Lynch asked about Mr. Barletta's experience with social media.

Mr. Barletta stated that in his time in Nahant, the town instituted a Facebook page, and integrated it into the town's rebuilt website.

Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Barletta how he maintains relationships with the state.

Mr. Barletta cited his history and great relationship with Nahant's State Senator and their staff, Reading's Representative Jones on energy legislation, and Senator Lewis, in his work with DCR.

Mr. Lynch asked how he interacts with his Board of Selectmen in Nahant, and how he would interact with the Reading Select Board.

Mr. Barletta noted that Nahant's Board of Selectmen only has three members, and he has standing one-on-one meetings with each of them every week. He has built communication and trust by making sure they stay informed. At the state level, he found his role to be supportive of the elected officials, let them take a "victory lap" when things are going well, and protect them when things were not going great. He stated that he would do the same in Reading, and make sure that the Select Board is successful.

Mr. Dockser asked how he plans to work through having a larger staff, and not needing to be as much of a "player coach" in Reading.

Mr. Barletta explained that being a "player coach" was more of an asset, as having the experience to work on a lot of technical details with a lot of different departments and categories, gave him the understanding of what staff was talking about, and how to mutually problem solve. As a leader, he would also want to ensure that the team is developing for long-term success.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Barletta how he would help the Select Board set priorities, and make recommendations to guide staff.

Mr. Barletta stated that every Department Head knows what is best for their department and team. But as Town Manager, he would know the larger picture of what the goal is as a community, and put that into perspective to help the Department Head understand the long-term goals and what the team is trying to accomplish.

Mr. Dockser asked Mr. Barletta how comfortable he felt being a mentor to less experienced members of the team.

Mr. Barletta stated that he has benefitted from learning from many different mentors throughout his career, and often finds himself being asked for advice. He believes in helping team members develop themselves, and setting up a team that feels they have equal responsibility and equal investment.

Carlo Bacci asked Mr. Barletta how he felt about pickleball.

Mr. Barletta stated that he has been able to utilize Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to install pickleball courts in Nahant. He noted that the players are a very passionate group, and that the sport has a wide age range of participants.

In his conclusion, Mr. Barletta thanked the Board and Mr. Lynch for an enjoyable interview process, and reiterated that having a stable, long-term relationship is important to both the Town and to himself. He stated that in all his research, and all the people he has spoken with, he has not heard anything negative about Reading. He noted that Reading had a solid foundation, and he would love to be a part of it.

On a motion by Mark Dockser, seconded by Karen Gately Herrick, the Select Board voted unanimously 5-0-0 to adjourn at 3:33 pm.