



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### Select Board

Date: 2024-02-27

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:**

Vice Chair Mark Dockser, Chris Haley, Carlo Bacci via Zoom, Karen Herrick via Zoom

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

#### **Others Present:**

Acting Town Manager Matt Kraunelis, Executive Assistant Caitlin Nocella, Genady Pilyavsky, Linda Snow Dockser, John Arena, Tom Wise, Karen Janowski, Carla Nazzaro, Alicia Williams, Vanessa Alvarado, Town Clerk Laura Gemme, Town Counsel Ivria Fried

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Caitlin Nocella

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

Vice Chair acting as Chair Mark Dockser called the meeting to order.

Herrick moved to enter into Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c.30A, s.21(a)(2) to conduct a strategy session in preparation for contract negotiations or to conduct contract negotiations with Matthew Kraunelis, the selected candidate for appointment to the position of Town Manager, to invite Ivria Glass Fried and Executive Assistant Caitlin Nocella into the Executive Session, and to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Haley and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.

The board returned to open session.

#### Vote to Execute Employment Contract for Town Manager

The board noted they are still negotiating the Town Manager Contract with Matt Kraunelis and are not ready to vote tonight.

#### Vice Chair Acting as Chair Comment

Dockser made a statement about the behavior at the last meeting. He explained how Haley launched a personal attack on him. Dockser firmly denied the allegation stating he did nothing inappropriate to influence the discussion or vote on the town manager. He then noted that he denied and was insulted by any allegations to the contrary. He noted the board has a policy about this behavior and he read the policy they all signed and agreed to. He hopes the board can move forward and work together in a productive manner.

Haley noted he spoke with Jackie McCarthy who told him she was threatened with having an Open Meeting Law complaint filed against her and impacting her law license if she didn't change her vote for Town Manager. He noted he will not sit silent and expose the blackmail that happened.

Herrick agreed with Dockser that we need to set a good example for the rest of the community, and we cannot be attacking each other.

Bacci noted we know something bad happened with McCarthy with the way she left the board. He knows it wasn't because of himself or Haley and we need an investigation into what happened so we can move on.

#### Public Comment

Genady Pilyayvsky feels Haley needs to stop using McCarthy as a publicity stunt in his reelection. He also advocated for the CPA study.

Linda Snow Dockser feels volunteering has changed. It is evident why people don't want to volunteer anymore. Volunteers are treated poorly. The town needs to do better and not attack volunteers.

John Arena feels the board needs to identify when wrongs have been done, apologize and move on. He stated the board is doing this town a disservice but not looking into these claims.

Tom Wise noted he is speaking on behalf of myself tonight. He echoes Arena's comments, and the board should look into this. The town is talking about what happened and it needs to be investigated and figure out what happened.

Karen Janowski echoed Arena and Wise's comments. She noted she also spoke with Jackie and something did happen that needs to be investigated.

Carla Nazarro also noted she heard some words from Jackie and is concerned about who is running our town.

Alicia Williams stated she wants to know why Jackie stepped down. She feels the board needs to look into this matter.

Vanessa Alvarado feels this is a political stunt Haley is pulling and she feels bad for Dockser and his family, that he has to go through this.

#### Liaison Reports

Herrick attended the senior center discussion at the Pleasant Street Center and looking forward to working with the designer. This Thursday, the Killam School Building Committee will be meeting to talk about sustainability goals for this building. She was appointed to the Mass Municipal Association Municipal fiscal policy committee.

Haley noted he will have comments during the Community Preservation Act agenda item.

Dockser noted there is a meeting on Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> for a community meeting about the senior center.

#### Town Manager Report

Kraunelis noted the Killam meeting Thursday night that Herrick previously mentioned and the Senior center meeting that Dockser mentioned. He noted he plans to give the final budget to

FINCOM tomorrow and he will send the Select Board a copy as well. FINCOM will begin their budget meetings next week. Early voting has begun this week at Town Hall. He also noted Town Hall has a new art display by local artists in the hallway on the main floor.

#### Vote on Special Election

The board needs to set a special election due to the resignation of Jackie McCarthy.

Town Clerk Laura Gemme noted the ideal date for her coming from a logistical standpoint, would be May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Herrick moved to call a Special Election pursuant to G.L. c.41, §10 to fill a vacancy in the Select Board due to resignation of Jacqueline McCarthy for May 14, 2024. The motion was seconded by Haley and approved with a unanimous toll call vote.

#### VASC

The board needs to vote new members to the Volunteer Appointment Subcommittee

Haley nominated Herrick. Dockser seconded the motion.

Dockser nominated Bacci. Haley seconded the motion.

A roll call vote to appoint Bacci and Herrick to the VASC was approved unanimously.

#### CPA Study Committee

The board discussed the composition of a CPA Study Committee. Haley noted he will participate in discussions but will abstain from voting to avoid any conflicts of interest because of his job.

Herrick Moved 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.

The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with the following roll call vote:

Dockser - yes; Herrick - yes; Bacci - yes; Haley - abstain.

#### Close Warrant

Herrick moved to close the Annual Town Meeting Warrant consisting of 16 Articles to take place on April 22, 2024. The motion was seconded by Haley and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.

#### Minutes

The board edited the minutes from February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Herrick moved to approve the meeting minutes from February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 as amended. The motion was seconded by Haley and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.

#### Executive Session

At 9:54 PM, Herrick Moved to enter into executive session under G. L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to Davenport v. Town of Reading, as the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body, to invite Town Counsel, the [Acting] Town Manager, and the Executive Assistant to the Select Board and Town Manager's office into the executive session, and to adjourn the meeting from executive session. The motion was seconded by Haley and approved with a unanimous roll call vote.