



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Select Board

Date: 2024-03-12

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, Karen Herrick, Carlo Bacci, Chris Haley

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Town Manager Matt Kraunelis, Executive Assistant Caitlin Nocella, Carl McFadden, Marcel Dubois, Geoffrey Coram, Amanda Haley, Nancy Docktor, Alice Collins, Alan Beaulieu, Vanessa Curry, Linda Snow Dockser, Jesse Arnold, Eileen Litterio, Kevin Lucey, Elinor Actipis, Raymond Boyd, Pat Boyd, David Pinette, Linda Aiello, Lois Bell, Tara Gregory, Carolyn Johnson, Brook Chipman, Lori Hayes, Rita Resca, Mike Shimansky, Vanessa Alvarado, Jesse Arnold, Liz Oehmen, Chris Oehmen, Diana Halsey, John Lippitt, James Bonazoli

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Caitlin Nocella

Topics of Discussion:

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

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 at 7:09 PM.

Execute Town Manager Contract

Herrick Moved to execute the employment agreement with Matthew Kraunelis for the position of Town Manager as presented. The motion was seconded by Haley and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Public Comment

Carl McFadden presented a check to the Town for over \$100K from the Reading Ice Arena for their yearly lease payment.

Marcel Dubois asked for fairness when reorganizing later.

Geoffrey Coram noted he is speaking on behalf of himself tonight; he doesn't see a need for an investigation.

Amanda Haley congratulated Matt on his contract and thanked the town staff and election workers for their work on election day. She also thanked the voters for voting for her husband Chris Haley.

Nancy Docktor explained she heard that residents were not nice to election workers. She feels the board needs to set an example for the town, but their behavior has not been 'model behavior' lately.

Alice Collins feels Dockser is a dedicated volunteer and is the last person she would ever accuse of improper behavior. She is unsure what an investigation would be good for.

Alan Beaulieu explained that the last couple years, the chair and vice chair positions have gone back and forth between Dockser and Herrick. It is time to let Bacci or Haley have a shot.

Vanessa Curry feels it is time to alternate the chair and give Bacci or Haley a turn.

Linda Snow Dockser noted enough is enough. We need to stop terrorizing our volunteers and reach for a higher bar.

Jesse Arnold, noted she is speaking on behalf of herself tonight, feels the board does not have any power to investigate anything.

Eilleen Litterio noted she is concerned over the loss of Jackie McCarthy and feels it is time to put Haley or Bacci in the chair position.

Kevin Lucey agreed with Linda Snow Dockser that we need to reach for a higher bar and treat our volunteers fairly. He feels a new chair needs to be elected tonight and it needs to be someone other than Karen or Mark. He feels the Town deserves better.

Elinor Actipis noted she strongly endorses an investigation into why McCarthy abruptly resigned. She also feels we need a fair selection of officers and it is time for Haley or Bacci to be chair.

Board Reorganization

Dockser started off the discussion noting the board is in uncharted waters with only four board members. He feels if the board cannot decide on a chair tonight, he will not relinquish his role as vice chair.

Haley nominated Bacci as Chair with Herrick as Vice Chair. Herrick seconded this nomination.

Dockser nominated Herrick as Chair with Bacci as Vice Chair. Herrick seconded this nomination.

Dockser called for a 5 minute recess due to disruptions from the audience.

Bacci nominated Haley as Chair. Haley seconded the nomination.

The board then discussed if they would reorganize again after the May 14th special election; which is 3 meetings in between now and then.

Dockser called for another 5 minute recess due to disruptions from the audience and requested the Town Manager call the Police to the building.

Herrick suggested not reorganizing tonight and waiting until the special election to reorganize after when there are 5 members.

Haley noted the board policy states we reorganize after a local election. He doesn't think they should delay this process.

A resident in the room called a point of information and asked if the Select Board policy was to turn over the gavel to the Town Manager to lead the reorganization. Dockser noted it was tradition not policy but noted he was not willing to do that because if the board couldn't decide on a chair, then it would be hard to have meetings with no chair in place.

Bacci gave a statement about why he feels he is suited to be chair.

Herrick then gave a statement about why she would be suited to be a chair or vice chair and is happy to serve in either capacity.

Haley noted he has supported all the chairs and vice chairs in the past. The board needs to move forward and work together to figure this out.

The board took a vote on Bacci Chair, Herrick Vice Chair. It was a 2-2 vote.

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The board took a vote on Haley as Chair. It was a 2-2 vote.

Dockser noted the board is deadlocked and he suggests delaying this vote until after the special election.

Bacci noted this town needs to move forward and does not feel comfortable if they do not take this vote to reorganize tonight. He refuses to do any town business until they figure this out.

James Bonazoli called a point of order. He served on the board for 9 years. His suggestion would be the Town Manager run the board until the board figures out a new Chair and noted this is a disgrace.

Haley noted Herrick is playing politics by wanting to delay this to see what happens at the special election. He noted Dockser and Herrick have been passing the chair position back and forth and it is not fair. He asked why they won't vote for Bacci.

Bacci then asked Dockser and Herrick if they think he is not qualified to be chair. Dockser noted not at this time and Herrick noted she has concerns based on how he runs the SWEC committee.

The board decided to take the same votes again.

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The board took a vote on Haley as Chair. It was a 2-2 vote.

The board is still at a deadlock.

Bacci noted he would consider Bonazoli's idea of Matt running the meetings until the election.

Town Counsel noted he is not a member of the board so he cannot be Chair but the board can delegate the authority to run the meeting to him.

Haley noted there is a policy in place that 2 members can put something on the agenda, we can use that to create an agenda with Matt running the meetings.

Herrick noted she would prefer that Dockser stay acting Chair.

Bacci reiterated he will not vote on any other town business until the board picks a new chair.

Dockser noted he is ok with Matt running the next 3 meetings.

The board continued spirited discussions until 9:01 PM when Bacci started to walk out of the meeting during the motion to adjourn. Dockser made a motion to adjourn with a second from Herrick, with Haley present; the meeting adjourned due to loss of quorum after Haley left the meeting also.