

**RETREAT MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD**  
**THURSDAY, July 13, 2023 6:00 p.m.**  
**SCITUATE MARITIME CENTER – 138 EDWARD FOSTER RD**

In attendance, Maura Curran, Chair; Andrew Goodrich, Vice Chair; Susan Harrison, Clerk; Karen Connolly; Karen Canfield.

Also, in attendance: Jim Boudreau, Town Administrator, Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER/ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA Ms. Curran made a motion at 6:10 p.m. to accept the agenda for July 13, 2023 Second by Ms. Canfield. Voted unanimously (5-0) in favor

Ms. Curran noted the retreat was a regular occurrence until COVID.

**Communications**

Ms. Curran asked Mr. Boudreau for an update on the plan to facilitate communication. Mr. Boudreau responded that he received several items from the Collins Center and consultant firms but nothing seemed to address the needs. He was now requesting a job description for community engagement. He said having a dedicated person to put things out on a daily basis to generate more output from the town as well as pursuing additional ways to reach citizens. Ms. Canfield said crisis management is covered well. Mr. Goodrich stated that town promotion in addition to the internal communication including scanning social media feeds for issues that need to be addressed. Ms. Canfield stated a part-time position is sufficient to assess what we have now and what format/method is the most effective and expand it. Also to interact with departments to get updates pushed out. Ms. Connolly commented that we have the pieces in the place but we just need someone to pull it together. Mr. Boudreau inquired about a QR code across town to encourage participation. Ms. Connolly stated comments from citizens should be encouraged but viewable only internally if possible. Ms. Curran asked that the position be posted by August 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Harrison asked which municipalities do it well. Ms. Canfield responded that the ones that do it well, that are not cities, have an internal person such as Andover and Amherst.

Ms. Canfield moved onto the transparency on projects and other initiatives. Ms. Holt noted that ClearGov has that capability. Mr. Boudreau responded that it is updated at first but then the information becomes stale. Ms. Curran if this was to address internal or external inquiries. Ms. Canfield said both. Mr. Boudreau asked if there is an Excel spreadsheet. Ms. Curran asked if Sharepoint could be implemented as it was a live document that can be obtained by multiple persons. Ms. Curran stated it might be good to have Kevin Cafferty come in month to month with updates on projects similar to the quarterly update provided in the Planning Board meetings.

**2023/2024 Priorities**

Ms. Curran discussed 2023/2024 priorities starting with the Assistant Town Administrator position. Mr. Boudreau noted the vacancy was maintained for budget constraints but there had been a meeting today with Town Counsel, Bob Clark and Nancy about whether a town meeting would be required. He stated Bob would be drafting a job posting in the following week. Ms. Connolly asked if the final position had been decided and Mr. Boudreau responded that it would be Assistant Town Administrator/Director of Planning & Community Development. Ms. Curran commented that it should be posted by August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Curran asked for an update on North Scituate Sewer. Mr. Boudreau said he was reaching out to the new town administrator in Hull to set up a meeting as they are the key. He noted that Hull has an expiring agreement with Cohasset to take flows and it will not be renewed if regional sewer does not move forward and they will give that unused capacity to Hingham. Mr. Boudreau noted that Cohasset cannot expand its wastewater treatment plant which would significantly hamper future needs for sewer. Mr. Boudreau reviewed the different options that had been explored to date. Mr. Boudreau stated it will be going back on the capital plan and Environmental Partners would be coming in to update the Select Board soon. Ms. Canfield asked if we could just move forward internally and Mr. Boudreau responded that it will be on the capital plan in the spring to design the sewer resolution for the North Scituate business district. Mr. Boudreau said we are not reliant on Cohasset but a regional solution would likely provide more funding opportunities. Mr. Goodrich asked why we could not move forward in the fall town meeting and Mr. Boudreau says the numbers would not be ready in time. Ms. Curran stated that could be put on an agenda for a formal vote. Mr. Boudreau noted that once we file the plan, people will start to develop the area. Ms. Curran stated she was having a meeting with the Cohasset Select Board Chair on July 24<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Curran touched on the old Gates action plan. She noted the Grantham Group plan. Mr. Boudreau said they had done a few scenarios that were very choppy and he noted he had asked for other solutions that don't preserve the original building but replicate the façade. Ms. Connolly asked for confirmation that this would not affect the Recreation Department and gymnasium which Mr. Boudreau confirmed. Mr. Boudreau noted the property is zoned for residential so it could not be leased to a business. Ms. Curran noted that the more the town can partner with private entities to mitigate the financial burden on taxpayers. Mr. Boudreau informed members that Corey had received a grant and is seeking a consultant that would provide an independent voice. Ms. Canfield stated that the cost to demolish the building should be equal to the amount that could be dedicated to housing at that site. Ms. Connolly noted the success of the Lawson Green project with CPC funds.

### **Other Concerns**

Ms. Curran asked about the concerns raised about the Lawson Common intersection. Ms. Canfield responded that as part of the senior enter project several solutions were proposed in the traffic study. She noted it was put on hold while waiting to see the impact of the senior center

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and it had been revived during the discussions of the placement of the statue on Lawson Common. Mr. Boudreau said that a traffic engineer would cost about \$10-\$15K. Ms. Canfield said that it had been studied as part of the senior center. Mr. Boudreau stated that First Parish would go into Cudworth with hard turns. Ms. Curran asked to see the traffic study that had been done.

Ms. Connolly commented that now was the opportunity to reconsider town counsel services. Ms. Curran noted that the last RFP was issued around 2015. Mr. Boudreau stated that it was discussed to issue an RFP when the previous town counsel left the firm but the town decided to stay with the new attorney to see how it worked out.

Mr. Boudreau noted the small projects such as CPA projects need a retired engineer or similar occupation to manage the projects from bidding to construction administration which could be supported with CPA administrative funds. He stated he had been discussing this need with Dan Fennelly of CPC including putting funds into projects for that role.

Ms. Curran moved onto Select Board meetings and policies. She noted that the Select Board's agendas are full of entertainment permits and other items while substantive discussion topics get pushed to late in the meeting. Ms. Curran stated she will meet with Lorraine to review agenda items and then prepare a list to be brought forward for a future discussion and vote. Ms. Canfield volunteered to review the existing Select Board policies for an update.

### **Financial Challenges and Outlook**

Ms. Curran shared concerns that the dedication to capital may have imposed on organizational needs. Mr. Boudreau stated that the revenue sharing agreement needed to be examined. He noted that the kindergarten fees and athletic fees had been removed. Ms. Curran said those issues need to be addressed in the revised financial policies. Mr. Boudreau said the financial outlook is not as rosy including requests for additional personnel and that the comps for contracts will have to be addressed. Mr. Goodrich commented that the revenue split needs to be reexamined as school personnel had increased by 31% while the student enrollment has declined by over 200 students.

Mr. Boudreau noted the other issue is the concerns with Capital Planning to move some historically capital items into operational budgets. Ms. Connolly asked if there was an argument for how it was classified now and Mr. Boudreau said yes but the members did not concur with the responses. Ms. Canfield asked if there would be an operational override in the next three to five years. Mr. Boudreau said it was possible prior to that period.

Mr. Goodrich noted the available balances in some of the revolving funds and how it could be better utilized such as wind and solar for electricity costs. Multiple options were discussed. Mr. Goodrich noted the option for a bylaw change on how to dedicate the funds to assist the

operational budget. Mr. Boudreau stated he would be resistant to adding positions as there will be a point in the future when the town needs additional funds.

Ms. Connolly stated that the town has real assets and the DPW does not have the capacity and the Recreation Department is not equipped to resolve the issues related with parks. Ms. Connolly stated that at minimum funds need to be allocated to a landscape architect to start addressing the issues. She stated there is not one source responsible for the issues which lead to problems. Mr. Boudreau said it comes down to resources and that Recreation department is not necessarily the right place. Mr. Goodrich stated there were just too many parks for DPW to reasonably be able to manage so a separate dedicated department could address those issues. Ms. Connolly noted that the issues are not going to go away so it needs to be addressed. Mr. Boudreau commented that it comes down to manpower and we are experiencing difficulty filling existing vacancies.

Mr. Boudreau asked when the Historic Commission would be coming forward with options for Mordecai Lincoln and Ms. Curran said she would schedule

Ms. Canfield made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 pm which was seconded by Ms. Harrison and passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Holt, Recorder

## **Select Board Meeting Minutes for July 13, 2023**

### **SELECT BOARD**

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Maura C. Curran, Chair

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Andrew W. Goodrich, Vice Chair

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Susan J. Harrison, Clerk

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Karen B. Canfield

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Karen E. Connolly