



**Select Board
Minutes
Tuesday, November 5, 2019 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room, Harvard, MA**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Alice von Loesecke in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Select Board members Kara Minar, Rich Maiore, Lucy Wallace and Stu Sklar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro summarized the recent Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB 74 & 75) actuarial valuation of the retiree health care benefits. This included explanation of past liability comparisons and drivers that change liability. She provided a breakdown by department and explained the discount rate referred to in the report is the rate at which future benefit payments are 'brought back' to the present when calculating liabilities; a lower discount rate results in a higher liability. Sobalvarro indicated the good news/bad news is Harvard has a low municipal bond yield rate which is beneficial for funding Town projects it is statutorily used to cover the years in which benefit payments are not covered by the assets. Harvard's declining discount rate is a blended rate of the long-term rate of return through 2035 and then the municipal bond yield rate through 2052. The next valuation will be a complete valuation, tailored to our employees' Date of Hire (DOH), Date of Birth (DOB), wage, department, health plan election/eligibility, retirement system, and our retirees' DOB, health plan election, and retirement system, as of June 30, 2020.

Minutes

On a Wallace/Maiore motion, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 10/8 & 10/22, as presented.

Entertainment License Request – First Night Event

On a Wallace/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve entertainment license for the Friends of the CoA and Lions Club event for 6pm December 31, 2019 to January 1, 2020 at 12:30pm.

Open Space Committee charge

Stu Sklar and Rich Maiore worked together to finalize the charge. They decided to increase the membership from seven to nine and removed the five year action plan. A few minor spelling corrections were made.

On a Wallace/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to adopt Town of Harvard Open Space Committee charge as presented and amended.

Public Communication

Connie Larrabee, 15 Under Pin Hill Rd, addressed parking issues that came up during recent discussions about the proposed Hildreth House Phase II project. She said the current parking area is sufficient and options on how to accommodate additional attendees at CoA events should include ideas such as carpooling and shuttles instead of adding more paved areas.

Ron Ostberg, 41 Warren Ave, distributed a handout on behalf of residents asking the Select Board to intervene in the Complete Streets process to ensure the final product is safe and consistent with the character of the common. The handout offered notes on design, process and remedy.

Billy Salter, 3 Elm Street, suggested the Select Board institute a citizen engagement process to develop a final plan. He obtained a copy of the contract with the state for the Complete Streets grant funding and believes the performance end date allows for flexibility in when the project is started allowing more time to modify the plan.

Nate Finch, 165 Codman Hill Road, has spoken with resident Ron Ostberg, General Store owner Scott Hayward and DPW Director Tim Kilhart. He understands there are different visions however as a father with young children he supports sidewalks in the town center, improvements to the parking lot at the General Store and all efforts to make the town center walkable and safer for all residents. He is sensitive to businesses in the center and does not want this project to adversely affect them. Admittedly he does not have all the answers but is hopeful there is a reasonable solution.

Paul Willard, Still River Road, is aware many questions have arisen about the Complete Streets proposal and process. He would rather wait than do it wrong. Willard acknowledges the town center is important and asks the Select Board to consider reexamining the proposed plan.

Sharon McCarthy, 90 East Bare Hill Road, does not agree with previous speakers that a sidewalk down Still River Road will make the parking lot safer near the General Store or the church. She suggested the sidewalk be installed along the Park & Rec land between the two buildings to improve safety instead of people traversing the parking lot.

Mike Kilian, 25 Candleberry Lane, walked the proposed design and thinks it is terrible. He does not recommend shorter crosswalks and asked for more detail on sidewalk along Ayer Road. He asked how a redesign can be requested prior to execution of contract with the state. Kilian suggested a possible mockup of the plan which would allow residents to understand the proposal better.

Tim Clark, 114 Bolton Road, has participated in many town center committees over the years. He said the proposed plan meets many principals set forth by the Planning Board and general wishes of the town with respect to pedestrians and vehicles however his big beef is with the overall connectivity of walkways. He understands the project financing limits the scope therefore the town is not able to include all the areas in need of improvement. Clark also understands how frustrating it can be when you have worked hard on something and then at the last minute people start to pay attention. He remains hopeful for an outcome that is simple and a good solution.

Trevor Smedley, 25 Depot Road – Harvard, understands the town has agreed to the Complete Streets program. He asks the Select Board to be sensitive to the community feedback and consider all stakeholders.

Carl Sciple, 23 Fairbank Street, said he would rather do nothing then do something wrong. He thinks residents in the neighborhood were not engaged to extent they should have been.

John Martin, 5 Fairbank Street, has lived in the town center for 32 years. He heard the claim from Town Counsel that this project does not require Historical Commission approval. He disagrees and believes a certificate of appropriateness is required.

George Triantaris, 2 Littleton Road, serves as secretary on the Historical Commission. He said the commission discussed this project in length but do not have jurisdiction on placement or design.

Don Green, 90 Oak Hill Road, hopes the Select Board is listening carefully to the concerns being expressed by residents.

Town Administrator Report

Bragan reported on the following items:

- Asked the Select Board to sign easement granted to National Grid at the Special Town Meeting
- The commission on disability approved at the Special Town Meeting will require action at the next meeting

- He distributed a copy of an update Roadway Condition database provided by the DPW Director along with his five year pavement preservation program.
- He reported Gale Associates has determined the old library roof drainage system has significant problems. A recommendation for repairs will be forthcoming.
- The Cannabis Control Commission has requested signature from the town. This indicates they will be provisionally approving the request from Coil Brothers Inc.
- Harvard did not received the Mass Works grant for Slough Road
- The DPW Director informed Bragan the test on well #5 came back absent for coliform and had a plate count of 3. Another test will be done this week.
- He provided results from the Community Aggregation
- He announced Town Hall will be closed the Friday after Thanksgiving and employees will use their PTO time.
- He announced annual license renewals will be coming up for action at the second meeting in December.
- The Moderator is seeking two alternate members on the Finance Committee.

Quarterly budget report

Bragan provided the budget report through the first of October. All department budgets are consistent with expectations at this point in the budget year. He does expect the water department budget to run over due to the issues with water quality requiring additional testing.

Hildreth House Phase II

Von Loesecke reported after the last Select Board meeting the project proposal was examined more closely. Meetings with Permanent Building Committee (PBC) members and the Phase II subcommittee resulted in three main areas of concern; existing building code compliance, no heated connection between buildings and onsite parking. The architect has been asked to provide a cost estimate for them to investigate code compliance of the Hildreth House. Sobalvarro made a point of clarification that the Hildreth House currently is up to code for what it is being used for today. This was satisfied during the first phase of renovations. Sobalvarro asked for corroboration on precisely what the Select Board is requesting from the architects. She noted the current budget for this task has been expended. Von Loesecke said in order to make informed decisions they are seeking a cost estimate from the architects for code requirements that will be triggered for an addition to the Hildreth House or if a heated connection was built. Lucy Wallace appreciates the reasoning and necessity for the current design however a desired outcome would be to at least have the buildings connected. Everyone agreed a communication breakdown occurred between the sub-committee, PBC and the Select Board. A reporting structure will be implemented for future projects to avoid this type of situation from occurring in the future. Maiore was curious if the Council on Aging (CoA) and subcommittee are happy with the current design why are we requesting additional information. Von Loesecke reiterated the importance of understanding the cost implications for the Hildreth House phase II project if additional code compliance is necessary. Subcommittee member Connie Larrabee came forward to express her concern this direction deals the project an impossible hand. She recalls the struggles getting phase I passed. Larrabee is skeptical residents will vote favorably for phase II without full support from the town boards on the plan being proposed. Von Loesecke assured Larrabee the Capital Planning & Investment Committee (CPIC) will be vetting the plan as proposed and the additional information being requested will not delay the process. Subcommittee Chair Guy Oliva also articulated his concerns. He suggested if additional work is triggered those costs could be consider with a separate article. The Select Board members fully expect the town to show support for phase II by passing the article at the Annual Town Meeting.

Select Board Reports

Sklar reported the War Monument Restoration Committee continues their work and will provide an update to the Select Board.

Sklar was pleased with the vote at the Special Town Meeting to extend the Transfer Station hours.

Sklar expects a report on usage from the DPW Director at the second meeting in December.

Von Loesecke reported the CPIC has begun work on their initial questions. She expects the Finance Director to have an updated debt schedule soon.

Von Loesecke reported currently the HES building project is on schedule and budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Documents referenced:

OPEB Overview from MS - dated 11.5.2019

GASB Report – dated 10.15.2019

First Night/Ent w/carry in application – dated 10.22.2019

Open Space Committee charge – dated 11.4.2019

Public Communication – Ron Ostberg handout – dated 11.5.2019

Quarterly Reports – dated 10.16.2019