

Select Board Minutes

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

7:00pm

The Select Board Regular Meeting was held virtually in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.c.30A. S.20.

Select Board participants:

Alice von Loesecke, Kara Minar, Stu Sklar, Lucy Wallace, Rich Maiore

Town Department attendees:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, DPW Director Tim Kilhart

Additional participants:

Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council alternate Michelle Girard, CPIC Chair John Seeley, Attorney representing Verizon Christopher Swiniarski, ZBA Chair Chris Tracey

Update on the work of the Nashua, Squannacook & Nissitissit Rivers Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council
Council members Michelle Girard and Lucy Wallace provided a two page summary which included a background, their mission and plans for their 2020 budget. For more information, visit the Wild and Scenic Rivers website: www.wildandscenicnashuarivers.org

Capital Planning & Investment Committee (CPIC) FY22 recommendations

Committee Chair John Seeley reported the committee voted this past Thursday on their recommendations:

Town of Harvard Capital Committee Capital Project Rating Schedule FY 2022									
GRAND TOTAL			\$2,543,500		Alice John Nate SusanM Teresa				
Proj #	Dept	Item	Cost	Total Score:	Rank	Score	Score	Score	Score
1	DPW	Light Duty Dump Truck	\$85,000	66	6	14	14	14	12
2	DPW	Road Construction	\$300,000	81	1	16	12	19	15
3	Fire	Engine 3	\$262,500	81	2	19	11	19	15
4	Fire	Fire Ponds	\$50,000	68	3	10	11	18	15
5	Fire	Repeater	\$30,000	43	11	7	9	16	6
6	PB	Commercial District Dev't	\$300,000	59	8	18	12	11	14
7	SB	Old Library Roof	\$966,000	55	10	12	9	14	11
8	Schools	TBS Card Access	\$100,000	67	5	10	12	15	15
9	Schools	TBS HVAC	\$150,000	68	4	15	16	10	20
10	Schools	TBS Lockers	\$100,000	59	9	13	10	13	14
11	Schools	HES Debt Payment	\$200,000	65	7	17	13	11	15

					CSF	Debt Devens
Proj Dept	Item	Cost Total	\$Rank	Funding Source	\$1,447,50	\$100,000
2 DPW	Road Construction	\$300,000	81	1 CSF	\$300,000	
3 Fire	Engine 3	\$262,500	81	2 CSF	\$262,500	
4 Fire	Fire Ponds	\$50,000	68	3 CSF	\$50,000	
9 Schools	TBS HVAC	\$150,000	68	4 CSF	\$150,000	
8 Schools	TBS Card Access	\$100,000	67	5 CSF	\$100,000	
1 DPW	Light Duty Dump Truck	\$85,000	66	6 CSF	\$85,000	
11 Schools	HES Debt Payment	\$200,000	65	7 CSF	\$200,000	
6 PB	Commercial District Dev'	\$300,000	59	8 CSF	\$300,000	
10 Schools	TBS Lockers	\$100,000	59	9 Devens		\$100,000
7 SB	Old Library Roof	\$966,000	55	10		
5 Fire	Repeater	\$30,000	43	11		

Seeley explained the committee did not vote in support of the old library roof repair. Committee members have concerns over other costly expenses that will be necessary to maintain the building such as an elevator and sprinkler system. They want a true cost to maintain the building and felt other projects were more deserving.

Seeley said the repeater request to improve cell tower is imminent however CPIC was concerned on the timing.

Lucy Wallace asked about utilizing Devens funds for the school projects. Seeley will follow up with the school department on the balance of those funds.

Rich Maiore asked when do we decide to not look forward and handle immediate needs when it comes to the old library building. Seeley said it may be a question for voters but the majority of the CPIC members did not think it made sense to spend so much money on this building especially without a long-term plan for future use. Kara Minar was also surprised and questioned why the roof was not on the CPIC plan prior. Alice von Loesecke explained CPIC has had the roof on the schedule however after a full envelope assessment was completed on the building the scope of the project entirely changed. Stu Sklar agreed with Wallace and Minar and expressed his disappointment about their vote on the old library roof project.

At this time, Rich Maiore exited the meeting. He recused himself from the agenda topic about a cell tower on town.

Public Communication

Chris Tracey, Bolton Road, asked when the damaged automated speed signs will be addressed.

Jim Saalfeld, 18 & 20 Woodchuck Hill Road, asked for transparency from the Select Board. As elected officials beholden to the town they should provide a detailed description as to why they have not put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a cell tower on town land. His understanding is a location on Bolton Road has been

approved at a town meeting but not pursued any further. Saalfeld believes town land should be used to provide better cell service why is it not being pursued more aggressively. He believes the town could generate up to \$75,000 in annual revenue. Saalfeld insinuated a Select Board members family would benefit from a cell tower on Woodchuck Hill Road. Saalfeld requested a detailed account of the town's process thus far.

Town Administrator Tim Bragan warned Saalfeld about making accusations. Saalfeld was adamant the property being investigated for a cell tower is in a trust with one of the beneficiaries being a Select Board member.

Greg Romero, 4 Woodchuck Hill Road, asked for clarity about the cell location on Bolton Road. Was it or was it not approved? He has heard conflicting stories.

Bragan explained the location on Bolton Road was approved in 2006 and in 2013 an RFP was presented but was incorrect and therefore was tabled in 2013.

Romero was disappointed that over the past 6 months Verizon has been in negotiations over the Woodchuck Hill Road site that the Bolton Road location never came up. He noted with the Covid-19 pandemic there is a heightened sensitivity for better cell phone coverage. He strongly encouraged the Select Board to do an RFP to provide better coverage and possibly generate revenue for the town.

Discuss cell tower on town land

Alice von Loesecke appreciates urgency of the concerned residents who have come forward and the honesty of fellow board members to clear up any misconceptions of wrong doing in this process. She took responsibility, as chairperson of the Select Board for the past few years, for not initiating an RFP for a cell tower on town land. With so many areas for the Select Board to focus on obviously a cell tower was not on top of that list. Von Loesecke personally understands the frustration as she too suffers with cell coverage issues in her neighborhood. Bragan explained the Hildreth House site is not as advantageous as the Bolton Road site however any site chosen with most certainly will raise concern from neighbors. He did state when public safety is an issue that provides more leverage.

Attorney representing Verizon Christopher Swiniarski cautioned even if the town decides to issue an RFP it does not mean Verizon will respond. He explained an initial review is done to determine the best locations. He noted when the town was approached about the Bolton Road location but when there was no interest Verizon moved on to other locations. He said the Bolton Road site will likely not replace the need for the site in question on Woodchuck Hill Road. He noted federal law allows carriers to provide service one way or another. He indicated they approached the Maiore family about Woodchuck Hill Road. The Maiore's did not approach them.

ZBA Chair Chris Tracey said there is evidence the Bolton Road site is a viable alternative. Von Loesecke would request a full analysis of the Bolton Road site such as what was done on Woodchuck Hill. All agree it is clear with the current climate proper coverage is necessary.

By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, Wallace – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to proceed with issuing an RFP for improved coverage on the Southside of town using the Bolton Rd site.

Rich Maiore reentered the meeting at this time.

Town Administrator Report

Jared Mullane has officially accepted the position of Finance Director for the Town of Harvard and will officially start on Monday, January 4, 2021.

Harvard has gone from gray to yellow on the state's covid-19 map. This is a result of having 16 cases in less than 14 days. Our move to appointment only took place on the 9th and has gone well.

Devens has two projects moving forward. King Street Properties purchased property on Jackson Rd and is moving forward with developing a bio-manufacturing campus and another development project, Commonwealth Fusion Systems, is looking at the property across from New England Studios. These are two good size projects for the Central Mass area and promising for each of their respective fields.

The House and Senate Ways and means Committee Chairs and the Governor's Budget Office held their Consensus Revenue Hearing earlier today to kick off the FY22 Budget Season.

There will be an upcoming change of manager at Fruitlands. This will be before the Board in January.

The Grapevine has resurrected the potential transfer of their license as well as a possible request for an all alcohol license. These are two separate issues and the transfer would have to happen first.

Any budget questions are due by December 31, 2020 at 12noon. Questions can be submitted before the 31st and that would be greatly appreciated.

Town Report notice went out two weeks ago and Julie has set Monday, January 25, 2021 as the deadline for getting reports to her.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the 12/1 minutes, as presented.

Annual license renewals

By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve annual license renewals as presented subject to all requirements being met.

Recognize resignations

By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to accept resignations of Carolyn Luescher from the Commission on Disabilities and Jason Cole from the Deer Management Sub-Committee and send thank you letters.

Discuss letter of support for Fivesparks to accompany grant application

By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve application to the MCC and endorse letter to Fivesparks.

Select Board Reports

Lucy Wallace announced the DPW buckets of sand for seniors are available to be delivered if you call the Council on Aging.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm

Documents referenced:

Wild & Scenic update – dated 11.23.2020

ZBA letter – dated 12.10.2020

Isotrope letter w/maps – dated 11.17.2020

CPIC recommendations – FY22

Annual License Renewals – calendar year 2021

Carolyn Luescher resignation letter dated 11.23.2020

Jason Cole resignation letter – dated 12.4.2020

Fivesparks support letter for MCC grant- 12.7.2020