

**Minutes of the
BOXFORD SELECT BOARD
HYBRID VIA ZOOM
Monday, March 25, 2024**

Present: Barbara Jessel, Chuck Costello, Margaret Chow-Menzer, Peter Perkins
Absent: Judi Stickney

Others Present: Town Administrator Matthew Coogan, Collector/Treasurer Ellen Guerin, Steve Merriam, Boxford Elementary School Committee, Masco School Committee Boxford Representatives Joe McLean and Jeff Horrigan, Zoning Board of Appeals Chair Paula Fitzsimmons, Sustainability Committee, Superintendent Mike Harvey, Ross Povenmire, Gary Martin, Peter Delaney, Barry Gorman, Michael White and Minutes Recorder Donna Grieco

5:30 PM Call to Order

Select Board Chair Jessel called the Select Board Meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

5:35 PM Announcements

Real Estate Tax Exemption: Select Board Clerk Chow-Menzer announced that the period for filing Real Estate Tax Exemptions for residents who are eligible for property tax relief is currently ongoing. Some of the programs available include:

- Legally Blind
- Disabled Veterans
- Seniors 65+ years with low to moderate income
- CPA Surcharge Exemption

Anyone interested in applying for an exemption should contact the Assessor's Office at 978-887-6692, Monday – Thursday, from 8:00am - 4:30pm. Applications will be accepted until April 1, 2024, for the current tax year.

Small Repair Grant Trust - Select Board Clerk Chow-Menzer announced that Boxford is pleased to announce its program to provide grants of up to \$7,500 to Boxford seniors of 60 years of age or older and to residents with a permanent disability. The residents must be at or below the moderate-income level of 100% of the local area median income. For more information about the program and to obtain an application, please go to the Town website at www.BoxfordMA.gov/small-repairgrant-trust, the Town Administrator's office, or the COA at 10 Elm St.

The Committee is also seeking a resident of Boxford who might be interested in serving as a trustee. This person does not have to be a board or committee member in Town. If interested, please contact the Town Administrator.

Trash and Recycling Update – Select Board member Perkins announced that on July 1, 2024, the Town of Boxford will begin a new curbside trash and recycling program. While the details of the program are still being finalized, trash stickers will no longer be necessary as of July 1st. Please plan accordingly when purchasing trash stickers in the months to come. Additionally, more details regarding the new curbside trash and recycling program will be made available to residents in the near future. In the meantime, please visit BoxfordMA.gov/WasteStreamTaskForce for more information about the evaluation process

undertaken by the Town's Waste Stream Task Force and details regarding where the proposed program stands currently.

In Memoriam – Select Board member Perkins called for a moment of silence to honor past Boxford Fire Chief John William Mulcahy Sr. who passed away on 3/21/24. Black and purple mourning flags will fly over the fire station in his honor for the next five weeks.

Boxford Community Electricity- Select Board Chair Jessel announced that launching in June, Boxford Community Electricity will be a Town-run program to provide new electricity supply options for all Boxford residents and businesses. Join a community meeting on April 23rd at 7pm at Town Hall and/or virtually to learn more about the program. Virtual access links, other meeting times and program details, will be posted on Boxford Electricity.com.

5:40 PM Meeting with Emergency Response Advisory Committee Chair, Ellen Guerin
Ellen Guerin appeared to inform the Select Board that the ERAC voted unanimously to request that the Selectboard place an article on the Town Meeting warrant seeking funding to hire a consultant to assist the committee in completing its charge. Using the appropriate software, the consultant will be able to cull and analyze all necessary data necessary to determine next steps. The cost, which is on par with such undertakings completed in nearby communities, will be \$50,000 and an RFP will be required.

Draft Warrant Article for May 14, 2024, Town Meeting:

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$50,000 to be expended by the Select Board, with the advice of the Emergency Response Advisory Committee, to engage the consulting services of professional advisors to assist the Emergency Response Advisory Committee's charge to complete a comprehensive analysis on the Town's three-tiered emergency response program, and identify strategies to improve service through efficiencies and reduced emergency response times or take any other action thereon.

On a **MOTION** made by **Perkins**, second by **Costello**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to sponsor and support the article seeking funding to hire a consultant to assist the ERAC committee in completing its charge at the Town Meeting.

5:50 PM Meeting with Treasurer/ Collector, Ellen Guerin

Ellen Guerin appeared to ask the Select Board to consider a vote on estimated useful life of Engine 4 and Engine 6 for debt issuance and to present the Interim Investment Report.

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Chow-Menzer**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to approve Article 14 for the fire truck mini pumper tanker, at the maximum useful life of the department equipment, to be financed in the amount of \$550,000. with the proceeds of the borrowing authorized by a vote of the Town passed May 9, 2023, is hereby determined pursuant to G.L. c44, §7(1).

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Chow-Menzer**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to approve Article 10 for the fire truck pumper tanker, at the maximum useful life of the departmental equipment, to be financed in the amount of \$700,000. with the proceeds of the borrowing authorized by the votes of the Town passed May 10, 2022.

Interim Investment Report – Ellen Guerin provided an interim investment report for the period ending 2/29/24. This report provides information as to what cash the Town has on hand, how it's invested and the returns it provides. It is recommended by Standard and Poor that this report be compiled in order for the Town to maintain a triple A (AAA) credit rating.

6:00 PM Meeting Boxford Elementary School Committee

Three members of the Boxford Elementary School Committee appeared to discuss the Fiscal Year 2025 School Committee budget. They noted that everyone worked hard to bring the total amount down and thanked them for their efforts. The FY2025 Finance Committee Budget will amount to \$14,761,670 (this figure includes the 2.5% Finance Committee Guidelines). They are over budget by 6.04% with an override amount of \$870,235.

CIP Requests -

ES001 Elementary Schools Cole and Spofford School Flooring Replacement Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES002 Elementary Schools Fire Alarm Control Panel Equipment at Harry Lee Cole Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES003 Elementary Schools Spofford School HVAC, Boilers and Control (Design Only) Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES004 Elementary Schools Cole School HVAC, Boilers and Control Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES005 Elementary Schools Cole School Roof Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES006 Elementary Schools Spofford Fire Alarm Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES007 Elementary Schools Cole Lift Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES008 Elementary Schools Cole Floor Maintenance Equipment Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES009 Elementary Schools Spofford Floor Maintenance Equipment Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES010 Elementary Schools Spofford Restrooms Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES011 Elementary Schools Cole Restrooms Facilities Renovation/ Repair Maintain Service
ES012 Elementary Schools Cole School Site Project Facilities Renovation/ Repair Urgent/ Legally Required
ES013 Elementary Schools Spofford School Site Project Facilities Renovation/ Repair Enhancement

Grand Total FY25 \$330,000.

Totals for FY26 \$508,750, FY 27 \$1,684,659, FY28 \$9,265,909, FY 29 \$45,000, for a Five Year Total of \$11,834,318.

6:40 PM Meeting with Masco School Committee, Boxford Representatives

Fiscal Year 2025 budget review – For FY25, the budget being considered for adoption by the School Committee reflects an increase in Operating Expenses of \$918,550. (or 2.3%) and an increase of \$1,306,631. (or 4.1%) in Operating Assessment versus the FY24 Budget.

Assessment by Town

BOXFORD	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	Chg \$	Chg %
Operating Assessment	\$ 10,773,426	\$ 11,131,422	\$ 11,917,575	\$ 12,379,417	\$ 461,842	3.9%
Capital Assessment incl Debt Service	\$ 105,545	\$ (183,169)	\$ 167,451	\$ 147,711	\$ (19,740)	-11.8%
Total Assessment	\$ 10,878,971	\$ 10,948,253	\$ 12,085,026	\$ 12,527,128	\$ 442,102	3.7%

Masconomet Regional School Committee voted at its regular meeting on March 20, 2024 to incur Five Million Dollars (\$5,000,000) in debt for the purpose of paying costs of an owners project manager (OPM) and design services in connection with the Roof, HVAC, & Building Management System construction project at the High School/Middle School Building Complex including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto. This notification satisfies the requirement outlined in M.G.L. c.71 § 16(d) and Section XII of the Regional Agreement. The District has engaged the services of Hilltop Securities Inc. and Locke Lord LLP to advise the District in this process. Locke Lord has prepared the Town Meeting Warrant Article and Motion and Proposition 2 ½ Debt Exclusion Vote language for the Town’s use.

7:20 PM Meeting with Zoning Board of Appeals Chair, Paula Fitzsimmons

The ZBA’s proposed amendment to the Accessory Apartment bylaw (196-13(C)) was presented and discussed with the Select Board for consideration and action at the upcoming Town Meeting. Changes to sections C include the continuance of a special permit for new owners provided certain conditions are met, size constraints on the square footage allowed for accessory apartments, as well as consideration of measurement procedures for determining square footage.

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to refer the amendment in-law zoning by laws to the Accessory Apartment bylaw (196-13(C)), as proposed by the Zoning Board of Appeals, to the Planning Board.

7:35 PM Meeting with Sustainability Committee

Gary Martin of the Sustainability Committee appeared to discuss a Town Meeting Warrant Article, for a Specialized Opt-In Stretch Code.

ARTICLE 24. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town’s Bylaws, Part II: General Legislation, Chapter 164, Stretch Energy Code, by deleting the chapter title in the Table of Contents and replacing it with “Specialized Stretch Energy Code” and deleting the language contained in that chapter in its entirety and replacing it with the following language, for the purpose of regulating the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, pursuant to the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, including future editions, amendments or modifications thereto, with an effective date of January 1, 2025, a copy of which is on file with the Town Clerk, or take any other action relative thereto.

Chapter 164

SPECIALIZED ENERGY CODE

§ 164-1 Definitions

§ 164-2 Purpose

§ 164-3 Applicability
§ 164-4 Stretch Code

§ 164-1 Definitions

International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) – The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is a building energy code created by the International Code Council. It is a model code adopted by many state and municipal governments in the United States for the establishment of minimum design and construction requirements for energy efficiency, and is updated on a three-year cycle. The baseline energy conservation requirements of the MA State Building Code are the IECC with Massachusetts amendments, as approved by the Board of Building Regulations and Standards and published in state regulations as part of 780 CMR.

Specialized Energy Code – Codified by the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, the Specialized Energy Code adds residential and commercial appendices to the Massachusetts Stretch Energy Code, based 3 | P a g e on amendments to the respective net-zero appendices of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) to incorporate the energy efficiency of the Stretch energy code and further reduce the climate impacts of buildings built to this code, with the goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from the buildings sector no later than 2050.

Stretch Energy Code - Codified by the combination of 225 CMR 22 and 23, not including Appendices RC and CC, the Stretch Energy Code is a comprehensive set of amendments to the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) seeking to achieve all lifecycle cost-effective energy efficiency in accordance with the Green Communities Act of 2008, as well as to reduce the climate impacts of buildings built to this code.

§ 164-2 Purpose

The purpose of 225 CMR 22.00 and 23.00 including Appendices RC and CC, also referred to as the Specialized Energy Code is to provide a more energy efficient and low greenhouse gas emissions alternative to the Stretch Energy Code or the baseline Massachusetts Energy Code, applicable to the relevant sections of the building code for both new construction and existing buildings.

§ 164-3 Applicability

This energy code applies to residential and commercial buildings.

§ 164-4 Specialized Code

The Specialized Code, as codified by the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, including any future editions, amendments, or modifications, is herein incorporated by reference into the Town of Boxford General Bylaws, Chapter 164. The Specialized Code is enforceable by the inspector of buildings or building commissioner.

There were a number of questions to which the Select Board wanted confirmed answers and Mr. Martin will get those answers for them shortly.

8:00 PM Report of the Town Administrator

The Town Administrator asked the Select Board to consider execution of the PEC Agreement. The purpose of this Agreement is to implement changes in health insurance benefits pursuant to M.G.L. c. 32B, § 22; health insurance plans will be offered through the Massachusetts Municipal Insurance Association (MIIA) Health Benefits Trust. The following health insurance plans and contributions will be offered under this agreement:

- Network Blue New England \$500 Deductible with HCCS
- Network Blue Select \$500 Deductible
- Blue Care Elect \$500 Deductible with HCCS

- Medex 2 w/PDP Option 26

Mitigation Plan - The Town will place 25% of the first-year projected savings into a mitigation fund. From this fund, the Town will provide a mitigation reimbursement in the form of a premium holiday. The amount of the premium holiday, as well as when it will be provided, will be determined once the final savings is determined.

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to sign the Memorandum of Agreement between Boxford and the PEC as presented.

Health Insurance Renewal for Active Employees- The Renewal proposal is as follows:

MIIA HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST

Boxford

Renewal Proposal

07/01/2024 - 06/30/2025

MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION RATES				
PRODUCTS		Current	Renewal	
Unified Plan Name for FY2025	COVERAGE	RATES	RATES	CHANGE
Blue Care Elect \$500 Deductible with HCCS	Individual	\$ 1,146.79	\$ 1,189.51	3.73%
	Family	\$ 3,068.51	\$ 3,182.82	
Network Blue NE \$500 Deductible with HCCS	Individual	\$ 970.13	\$ 1,004.16	3.51%
	Family	\$ 2,591.80	\$ 2,682.71	
Network Blue Select \$500 Deductible with HCCS	Individual	\$ 902.25	\$ 873.62	-3.17%
	Family	\$ 2,410.37	\$ 2,333.96	
Dental Blue Freedom High Option	Individual	\$ 44.28	\$ 45.01	1.64%
	Family	\$ 92.12	\$ 93.63	
Dental Blue Enhanced Value	Individual	\$ 35.10	\$ 35.68	1.64%
	Family	\$ 87.30	\$ 88.73	

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** to approve the Renewal of MIIA Health Benefits and to authorize the Chair to sign the Renewal Sheet as presented.

Approval of Temporary Signs, Masco Music Parents Association–

The MMPAE Committee is requesting the approval of signage for Masco Music Parents Association Electronics Fundraising from April 13-April 27.

The signs are 2' wide by 1.5' tall.

They would like to post at the following locations:

1. Spofford Rd. & 133
2. Spofford Rd. & Ipswich
3. Main St. & 133
4. Ipswich Rd. & Georgetown Rd.
5. Main St. & Topsfield Rd.
6. Pond St. & 97

7. Topsfield Rd across from Old Topsfield Entrance
8. Main St. and Ipswich Rd.
9. Corners of the green where Elm, Main, and Topsfield Roads come together
10. In front of Masco
11. In front of the Boxford Library

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the Masco Music Parent's Association sign requests for dates 4/13-4/27 with the exception of #1 and 7 above.

Approval of Temporary Signs, Boxford Garden Club –

Sign request for annual plant sale on May 11, 2024, on Pony Field at The Center at 10 Elm, from 8:30 am- 1:00 pm. The club notified the Historic District Commission of signage in the East and West Villages. In addition, they plan to place signs at key intersections around town one week prior to the sale as follows: Spofford and Ipswich, Main and Ipswich, Pond and Route 97, Main St. and Lawrence Rd., Main St. and Middleton Rd., Masconomet Regional High School, Topsfield Rd./ Highway Exit and Main St. and Lakeshore Rd.

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the Boxford Garden Club sign requests for 5/11/24 with the exception of the Topsfield Rd./Highway Exit location.

Town of Boxford's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF) Award Tracker

Boxford's total ARPA Funds: \$2,490,492. The Town Administrator recommended that the Select Board not spend down all of the remaining funds but rather only fund the following three items:

1. Fire Dept. Rescue Vehicle
2. Replacement of the 2010 Chevy One-Ton Dump Truck
3. DPW Mini Excavator w/ Side Mower

Excess funds could be used for culvert repairs.

On a **MOTION** made by **Perkins**, second by **Costello**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the above mentioned three expenditures using ARPA funds.

Chapter 19 Article XII TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DUTIES

There are four main Chief Officer positions held by the Town Administrator. The only new title is CFO. This Article has been written and reviewed by Town Counsel. The Select Board requested more time to review the document and will finalize the issue at the next meeting.

Update on Boxford Community Electricity (Municipal Aggregation) –

Postcards with informational QR codes will be sent to residents explaining the program. There will be a public information session with Good Energy held on 4/23 and an additional letter will be sent out by Good Energy. Information will also be made available on Boxford's Facebook page and via press releases. The program will begin with the June electric bill.

26 Warrant Articles for May Town Meeting –

The Town Administrator reviewed and discussed each of the 26 Warrant Articles and reminded residents that Town Meeting is to be held at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at Masconomet Regional High School, 20 Endicott Road, Boxford, MA 01921.

8:20 PM Routines

Approval of Minutes of March 11, 2025

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of January 22, 2024, as amended.

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Chow-Menzer**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to adjourn.

Adjourn

Next Meeting – April 1, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M Grieco
Minutes Recorder

Documents either distributed to the Select Board before the meeting in a packet or at the meeting:

Agenda
New Call to Order
Announcement: Real Estate Tax Exemption
Announcement: Small Repair Grant Trust Program
Announcement: Trash Recycling Update
Boxford Community Electric Program Flyer
Memo from Ellen Guerin relative to ERAC Town Warrant Article
Vote of Select Board as to Useful Life of Equipment
Vote of Select Board as to Useful Life of Equipment
Boxford Elementary Schools Budget Analysis and Proposed Operating Budget
Boxford Elementary Schools Capital Improvement Program, FY2025-FY2029
Masco FY25 Budget and Debt Authorization
Masco FY25 Budget Calendar
Letter from Chair of Masco School Committee to Boxford relative to debt notification
Member Town Article and Motion and Ballet Question
Memo from Paula Fitzsimmons relative to Zoning Accessory Apartment bylaw proposed changes
DOER Presentation on Specialized Stretch Energy Code
Draft by-law to adopt Specialized Stretch Energy Code
Memorandum of Agreement between Boxford and the M.G.L.c. 32B, §§ 21/23 Boxford Public Employee Committee to provide Health Insurance Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 32B, §§ 21/22 and supporting documents.
Town of Boxford Actual Renewal and Health Plan Information for Boxford Employees
Town of Boxford Renewal Proposal FY 25
Memo from Masco Music Parents Association relative to fundraising signs approval
Letter from Boxford Village Garden Club relative to Annual Plant Sale signage
Town of Boxford's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF) Award Tracker
Town Administrator Duties
Annual Town Meeting Warrant List
Draft Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2024