

**Minutes of the
BOXFORD SELECT BOARD
HYBRID VIA ZOOM
Monday, April 1, 2024**

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

Others Present: Town Administrator Matthew Coogan, Police Chief Riter, Officer and Mrs. Thomas McParland, Fire Chief Geiger, Natalie Grigg, Ross Povenmire, Chris Olbrot, Kerri Lummus, Lisa Donahue, Robin Siegel, Lindsay Chea, and Minutes Recorder Donna Grieco

6:30 PM Call to Order - Select Board Chair Jessel called the Select Board Meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

6:35 PM Announcements

Bare Hill Road Partial Closing/Bridge Repair – Select Board member Costello announced that the closure will begin April 1, 2024, at 7:00 AM. For more information, please visit our website at www.boxfordma.gov/BareHillBridge.

Now Hiring - Boxford Park Program – Select Board member Stickney announced that the Boxford Park Program is hiring staff and interns for the summer of 2024. Applications are now being accepted. To apply please visit www.boxfordma.gov/BPPStaff2024.

Boxford Community Electricity – Select Board member Perkins announced that the Town of Boxford will launch its electricity supply program, Boxford Community Electricity, in June 2024. The Town's primary offering, *Boxford Standard*, will cost less than the current National Grid Residential Basic Service rate, while also providing an additional 10% renewable energy (though future savings cannot be guaranteed). Most residential and small business customers can expect to receive a postcard and notification letter from the Town in early April with full details about the program. You can also learn more at our website, BoxfordElectricity.com, or join us at an upcoming community meeting on April 23, 2024, at 6 pm at Town Hall, in-person, or virtual attendance. Find the virtual link at BoxfordElectricity.com.

6:40 PM Appointments

Reserve Police Officer – Thomas McParland

Chief Riter introduced Thomas McParland, reviewed his extensive background, and requested that the Select Board appoint him as Reserve Police Officer. Mr. McParland also spoke to his credentials, experience and desire to serve.

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Stickney**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to appoint Thomas McParland as Reserve Police Officer with term ending 6/30/25.

6:50 PM Meeting with Chief Geiger

The Chief discussed a staffing plan and request to apply for the SAFER grant to acquire additional firefighters. The Chief would like the Town to hire two additional career firefighters in the next few years. The Federal SAFER (Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grant application has opened. The program funds either new career firefighters or

funds programs or initiatives to retain volunteer or call firefighters. Chief Geiger would like to apply for a grant to fund 2 career call firefighters for 36 months, after which the Town would have to commit to funding these positions. The Chief was asked to consider how the Town could apply and benefit from the call grant program. The Grant application is due April 12th. This matter will be tabled until next week.

7:20 PM Meeting with Community Preservation Committee

The CPC has voted to recommend the projects included in the draft Town Meeting Warrant. Ross Povenmire was in attendance and summarized the projects. He discussed all CPC appropriations and reserves.

Article #14

On a **MOTION** made by **Perkins**, second by **Stickney**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to support Article #14 as presented.

Article #15

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to recommend adoption of Article #15.

Article #16 Johnson Field Playground

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Stickney**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to recommend adoption of Article #16.

Article #17 Boxford Community Irrigation Well

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to recommend adoption of Article #17.

Article #18 Rehabilitation and Preservation of Stiles Pond

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to recommend adoption of Article #18.

7:50 PM Discussion on Town Meeting and Town Election

Discussion May 14, 2024, Town Meeting Warrant Articles- Many of the articles are in their final version and were voted on by the Board, others were tabled. The following are still in the process of being finalized:

Article # 4 Budget: The Finance Committee meets on Tuesday 4/2 to vote on the final budget. Asst. Town Administrator Sweeney has worked to adjust and update the revenue projections, particularly earned interest. The increase in earned interest would allow the Town to fund the Masco assessment within the levy limit without an additional increase in taxes.

Article # 5 Elem. School Override: Funding the Masco assessment within the levy limit is a 3.88% increase. Both the Town and Asst. Town Administrator recommend that the Finance Committee fund the same percentage increase for the Elementary Schools. The Elementary Schools voted their budget last night and cut an additional \$73,000. The final proposed total increase over FY24 is now at 8.04% (they started at 11.36%). Allowing for a larger portion of increase within the levy limit (by adjusting earned interest projections and not more taxes) would bring the Elementary School override down to \$599,170. They originally started at a \$1.2M override.

Article #2 Contract

No vote was taken.

Article #4 Budget

No vote was taken.

Article #5 Elementary School Override

No vote was taken.

Article #6 Trash

No vote was taken as more clarification is necessary.

Article #7 Equipment and Capital Purchases

No vote was taken.

Article #8

No vote was taken.

Article #10 DPW Building

This is still in the process of being finalized. No vote was taken.

Article #11 Spofford School HVAC

Due to a number of factors surrounding the design, size and cost of the building, this article will not be presented at Town Meeting.

NEW Article #11 Masco \$5 million debt for OPM and design

No vote was taken.

Article #21 Specialized Energy Code

No vote taken.

Article # 22 Amend Town Zoning Bylaws for Accessory Apartments

No vote taken.

It was suggested that this article move up on the list and assume #18 or 19 on the list.

Article #23 Citizen's Initiative Petition 5-Year Moratorium on Turf Fields

No vote was taken.

The following were voted upon.

Article #1

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Costello**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to sponsor and support Article #1.

Article #3 Class & Compensation Plan for FY25

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to recommend adoption of Article #3.

Article #9 Transfer of Free Cash for Masco

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Stickney**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to recommend adoption of Article #9.

Article #12 Rescind Stabilization Fund

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to sponsor and support Article #12.

Article #18 Recreation Committee Bylaw Change

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Costello**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to sponsor and support Article #18.

Article #19 Amend Bylaws to strike Computer Management Committee

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Costello**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to sponsor and support Article #19.

Article #20 Amend Town Administrator Bylaw

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to sponsor and support Article #20.

Update on Spofford HVAC Electrification Feasibility Study- If the Spofford HVAC project is not ready to advance at this Town Meeting, it may be advantageous to put design cost for DPW up for vote at this Town Meeting to keep momentum and to avoid having this project compete with a school project. The school's architect consultant CMTA provided the working group cost estimates for 3 electrification scenarios for replacing the HVAC system at Spofford School:

Ground Source Heat Pumps - \$15.2M

Air-Cooled VRF - \$13.2M

Combination 80% Ground Source Heat Pump / 20% Air Source Heat Pumps - \$15.1M

For the three options, CMTA estimated the incentives that would offset costs:

Option 1 \$2,500,000 (Inflation Reduction Act tax credit)

Option 2 \$220,000

Option 3 \$800,000

Everyone in the Zoom meeting was surprised at the cost of the options. CMTA is going to clarify that they captured all the available incentives, including state and Green Communities funding. It appears that the Inflation Reduction Act funds are only available if the Town pursues Option 1.

CMTA also provided an "Option 0" with new gas boilers and air conditioning at \$9.7M. Upon further discussion, it appears that an in-kind option could be around \$1M.

CMTA presented the options to the School Committee last night however, the Committee did not take any action. The working group is meeting on Monday to discuss next steps on how to proceed.

8:45 PM Executive Session

On a **MOTION** made by **Select Board Chair Jessel**, second by **Stickney**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to enter into Executive Session and declared that an Executive Session is necessary since an open public discussion may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating, bargaining or litigating position of the Select Board, and upon completion of the Executive Session to return to open session and immediately adjourn without conducting any further business.

Adjourn

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn.

Next Meeting – April 8, 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 - Bare Hill Road Partial Closing/Bridge Repair

Announcement - Now Hiring - Boxford Park Program

Announcement- Boxford Community Electricity

Resume and supporting documents for Reserve Officer McParland

Memo from Chief Geiger

Proposed CPA Warrant Articles

Draft Warrant May 14, 2024, Town Meeting

Proposed FY25 Revenue & Expense Projection