

**Minutes of the
BOXFORD SELECT BOARD
HYBRID VIA ZOOM
Monday, March 11, 2024
Draft**

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

Others Present: Town Administrator Matthew Coogan, Fire Chief Geiger, DPW Superintendent Chris Olbrot, National Grid Reps, Karen Sheridan, Nick Albina, Nathaniel Hunt, Michael White, Alex Constan, Stefanie Robin Siegel, Asst. Town Administrator Brendan Sweeney, 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

Real Estate Tax Exemption: Select Board member 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.

MBTA Communities Act Public Information Session – Select Board member Stickney announced that an information session sponsored by the Boxford Housing Production Plan Committee, Merrimack Valley Planning Committee, and the Boxford Housing Partnership will be held at Town Hall, Meeting Room #1 on Saturday, March 16th from 9:00 – 10:30 AM. This is a hybrid meeting accessible either in person or via Zoom. Zoom details may be found at www.boxfordma.gov/mbtainfosession.

Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes Are Due – Select Board member Costello announced that motor vehicle excise taxes are due March 18th. For payment instructions, please visit: www.boxfordma.gov/excisetax318

Small Repair Grant Trust - Select Board Chair Jessel 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.

St. Patrick's Day Dinner – Select Board Chair Jessel announced that Masconomet High School is hosting a dinner on Wednesday, March 20th, from 4-6 PM at Masco's Small Cafeteria. Dinner and free raffles will be provided. To sign up call COA @ 978-887-3591.

6:40 PM Public Hearing - National Grid Petition Plan #20863997, for replacement of direct buried cable at Porter Rd and Anna's Way - National Grid Company (North Andover), is seeking permission to construct a line of underground electric conduits, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures under and across the public way herein named Anna's Way and Porter Road– National Grid requests permission to: install approximately 2970 feet of 1- 1C 2 AL 15KV EPR cable, approximately 1434 feet of 4- 3", 51 feet of 2- 3" conduit, 4 heavy- duty handholes and 2 primary pull boxes on Anna's Way & Porter Road, in Boxford.

Select Board Chair Jessel opened the public hearing. National Grid's Petition Plan No. 20863997, dated January 15, 2024, was presented, and discussed. It was stated that residents will be notified, and construction may begin on May 24th and take 3-6 weeks to complete. After some questions surrounding the placement of the trench, Select Board Chair Jessel closed the public hearing.

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Stickney**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to approve the replacement of National Grid's direct buried cable, on Porter Road and Anna's Way (Plan #20863997), as presented by National Grid, and under the direction of the Town Engineer.

6:50 PM Meeting with Waste Stream Task Force

Asst. Town Administrator Sweeney provided an update on the process for a new 5-year Trash and Recycling Contract- The WSTF ultimately decided to enter into an agreement with a new hauler, G. Mello Disposal Corp., which is based locally out of Georgetown. G. Mello's offer was the most advantageous to the Town financially, and their customer service was lauded by their current municipal clients in the region.

The key terms of the agreement between G. Mello and the Town are as follows:

- Base cost of \$583,080 in FY25, which is to increase at a fixed rate of 4% per year.
- Trash disposal fee of \$100/ton, which is to increase at a fixed rate of 4% per year.
- Recycling through a contract between G. Mello and Casella, where the Town's recyclables are taken to Casella's facility and the bill that G. Mello receives is passed along to the Town.

FY25 Trash & Recycling Budget - Boxford will save \$155 K from switching to automated collection trash/recycling collection, with bi-weekly (every other week) recycling. The Town is expected to realize significant savings in FY25 when compared to what the Town is anticipating spending for its current contract with Waste Management in FY24. Even estimated costs in FY29, the last year of the contract, are projected to be less than what the Town is anticipating spending for its current contract with Waste Management in FY24.

Automated Collection and User Fees - The WSTF is making the following recommendations regarding the administration of the program:

- A 64-gallon container should be offered for disposal of trash, with a 96-gallon container offered for bi-weekly disposal of recycling.
- The Town should introduce a user fee to replace the revenue that is currently collected from trash sticker sales. This alternative was recommended instead of absorbing the full cost of the

contract into the tax levy, which likely would have resulted in a significant property tax increase.

- The Town should use Free Cash to purchase the standardized containers required for automated collection. These containers would then become the property of the Town of Boxford and are to remain with specific residences, even if ownership of the residence changes. The estimated cost to purchase the required number of containers is roughly \$360,000.
 - Households will have the ability to request multiple 64-gallon trash containers, for which they will have to pay an additional annual user fee. Any resident that requests multiple trash containers will have to pay a subsequent \$175 per year fee for each additional trash container requested. These containers will also be purchased using the Town's Free Cash, and will also be property of the Town, though the supplemental revenue from the additional user fees will more than cover the cost to the Town to purchase the additional containers.
 - Standardized "overflow bags" will be available for purchase, in the event that a household is not able to fit all of their trash within their standardized containers on any given week. These bags will be available for purchase at Town Hall at a price of \$6/bag.
- The contract will hopefully be executed by 4/1/24. Stickers will continue to be used through June 30, 2024, with the new program set to begin July 1st. All pertinent information will be communicated via a public communication plan.

Asst. Town Administrator Sweeney thanked the Task Force for all of their efforts as did the Select Board. They also thanked Asst. Town Administrator Sweeney for his comprehensive report and diligence.

7:20 PM Meeting with DPW Superintendent/ Town Engineer

FY'24 Department Goal and Objectives:

GOAL 1: Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Infrastructure

GOAL 2: Continue Improvement of Town Recreation Facilities

GOAL 3: Continue Improvement of Town Facilities

Fiscal Year 2025 Department Budget Review - The DPW's budget is level funded with increases accounting for salary adjustments and benefits. FY'24 Adopted budget totaled: \$356,041.00. FY25 Proposed budget total is \$397,782.00.

CIP Department Requests - Department goals for FY'25-29 include: (see project sheets for specific details)

- Replace 2010 Chevrolet One Ton Dump Truck (#28)
- Replace 1988 Ford Tractor
- Mini Excavator with Brush Side Mower attachment
- Replace 2015 Chevrolet 3/4 Ton Dump Truck (#20)
- Dump/Plow Truck (#29)
- Dump/Plow Truck (#24)
- 1.5 Ton Truck with 45' Bucket
- Annual Roadway Reconstruction
- Roadway Network Assessment
- Design and Permitting of Drainage System on Balmoral
- Construction of Ipswich Rd Culvert B-82
- Construction Georgetown Rd Culvert B-129
- Design & Permitting and Construction of Middleton Rd Culvert B-203
- Construction of Culvert near #39 Glendale Road
- Construction of Culvert B-150 (Pye Brook Ln.)
- Construction of Culvert B-93 Herrick Rd.

- Main St. Retaining Wall Assessment and Design
- Relocate and replace DPW Garage (100% Design)
- Endicott Bridge Reconstruction
- Johnson Field Playground
- Lincoln Hall Well and Septic System Design
- Lincoln Hall Ceiling Paint/Exterior Paint
- Police Department Ceiling Repairs
- B2B Rail Trail North Boxford to Georgetown
- B2B Rail Trail Boxford Design
- Stiles Pond Snack Shack Roof
- Lincoln Hall Steps Repair and Exterior Work
- Police Station HVAC Duct Improvements
- HVAC Distribution at West Fire Station
- Lincoln Hall HVAC Package Units
- Lincoln Hall Interior Paint and Floors
- Jim Locke Softball Field Renovations
- Boxford Common Turf Replacement
- Koster Field Revitalization
- Morse Field Design and Revitalization
- New Irrigation Well at Boxford Commons

FY25 CIP total: \$4,305,000.00.

Update on Culverts – With dramatic cost increases of roughly 50-75%, even with various funding sources (MA DOT, Fair Share 2024, ARPA, and Chapter 90) and grants (MVP Grant, Ipswich River Water Shed Alliance), it may not be feasible to complete all projects within 4-5 years. Culverts needing repair include Glendale Road, Georgetown Road, Middleton Road, Herrick Road, Pye Brook Lane and Ipswich Road.

8:00 PM Meeting with Boxford Fire Chief FY2025 Fire Department Goals & Objectives

GOAL 1: Continue to Provide Fire Department Personnel with the Best Techniques, Practices and Training

GOAL 2: Continue to Improve our Emergency Medical Capabilities

GOAL 3: Continue Program to Update the Department's Equipment and Facilities

Fiscal Year 2025 Department Budget Review- FY'25 Proposed budget is \$928,139.00. The Fire Department's FY2025 proposed budget is a level-services budget, with funding increases capturing the increased cost of employee salaries and benefits. Cost increases for Uniforms represents additional members, and increases for Dues & Subscriptions represent an increase by the Essex County Fire Chiefs Association.

CIP Department Requests- \$611,000.00 is requested for FY'25 for the following: (please see project sheets for specific details and Fiscal Years. Items with an asterisk are for FY25)

- *Rescue 1 Replacement (may hold off on this depending on ERAC recommendation)
- *Turnout Gear
- West Fire Station Second Floor Renovations
- *SCBA Air Compressor
- *East Fire Station Kitchen
- Vehicle Stabilizers

- On Duty Car
- New Furniture
- Thermal Imager Camera
- Fire Boats
- Squad 2
- Fire Department Facilities Study
- Storage Shed
- Fire Chief's Vehicle
- Jaws of Life

8:40 PM Report of the Town Administrator

Warrant Articles for May Town Meeting – There are 22 Warrant Articles totaling \$ 46,881,615.00
As Taken From the Town Administrator's Town Warrant Article List they include:

- 1 Receive reports (housekeeping)
- 2 Collective Bargaining Agreement - Police Reserves
- 3 Classification Plan and Compensation Plan
- 4 FY 2025 Operating Budget
- 5 FY25 Budget Override - Elementary Schools
- 6 FY25 Budget Override - Masco
- 7 Revoke Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund
- 8 Annual curbside solid waste collection fee
- 9 Omnibus Capital Article
- IT Hardware
- Automated Trash Collection Bins
- Replace 2010 Chevrolet One Ton Dump Truck
- Mini Excavator with Brush Side Mower attachment
- Design & Permitting of Balmoral Drainage System
- Lincoln Hall Painting
- Lincoln Hall Interior Paint and Flooring
- Police Station Ceiling Repairs
- Boxford Common Irrigation Well
- Fire Department Turnout Gear
- FD SCBA Compressor
- Election Tabulators
- Cole and Spofford Flooring Replacement next phase
- Cole HVAC Electrification Feasibility Study
- Cole School ADA Site Improvements
- 9 Fund Consulting Services for Emergency Response Advisory Committee
- 10 Debt: DPW Facility Design
- 11 Debt: Spofford HVAC Electrification Design
- 12 Masco Capital - \$5M Designer + OPM (Debt Exclusion)
- 13 Masco Capital - Priority 3
- 14 CPC: Annual Budget and Reserves
- 15 CPC: Stiles Pond
- 16 CPC: Johnson Playground
- 17 Property Acquisition (Donation)
- 18 Remove By-Law Computer Advisory Committee
- 19 By-Law: Adoption of Specialized Opt-in Building Code
- 20 By-Law Recreation Committee Amendment
- 21 By-Law: Town Administrator

22 Zoning bylaw: accessory dwelling unit amendment

Aggregation Update – Bids will be in tomorrow. The outlook is favorable as it appears the rates Boxford will receive will beat those of National Grid by \$.05.

Update on Changes to Employee Health Insurance Plans- There will be an agreement in place to be voted on and signed by the Select Board at the next meeting.

Select Board Meeting Schedule - The Town Administrator reviewed a proposed schedule for the remainder of Select Board meetings in 2024 as follows:

- March 25
- April 1
- April 8*, 22
- May 6, 20 (1st and 3rd Monday)
- June 10, 24
- July 8
- August 12
- September 9, 23
- October 7, 21 (1st and 3rd Monday)
- November 4, 18 (1st and 3rd Monday)
- December 2, 16 (1st and 3rd Monday)

*April 8th would be 35 days before May 14th Town Meeting and the Warrant would be finalized at that meeting.

8:55 PM Routines

Appointments – after introductions, background information and interest discussion, the Select Board voted to appoint the following:

Nick Albina, and Nathaniel Hunt, to the Recreation Committee

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Costello**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to appoint Nick Albina and Nathaniel Hunt to the Recreation Committee, with terms ending 6/30/25.

Stefanie Robin Siegel, to the Historic Districts Commission / Historical Commission

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Chow-Menzer**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to appoint Stefanie Robin Siegel as an alternate to the Historic Districts Commission/Historical Commission, with term ending 6/30/26.

Approval of Minutes for Select Board meetings of January 8, 22, and February 26, 2024.

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Costello**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of January 8, 2024, as amended.

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Costello**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes of February 26, 2024, as presented.

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

9:05 PM Adjourn

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

Next Meeting – March 25, 2024, 5:30 PM

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: MBTA Communities Act Public Information Session

Announcement: Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes Are Due

Announcement: Small Repair Grant Trust Program

Announcement: St. Patrick's Dinner

Town of Boxford Public Hearing Notice regarding National Grid's request for permission to construct a line of underground electric conduits, and supporting documents

Memo from Asst. Town Administrator - Report of the Waste Stream Task Force

DPW Budget and CIP Requests with Project Detail Sheets

Letter from Fire Chief Geiger relative to a proposed staff increase plan

Annual Town Meeting Article List

Memo from Town Administrator to select Board relative to proposed schedule for Select Board meetings in 2024

Form submission from: Board / Committee Volunteer Form from Nick Albina

Form submission from: Board / Committee Volunteer Form from Nathaniel Hunt

Letter from Stefanie Robin Siegel relative to serving on the Historic Districts Commission / Historical Commission

Draft Meeting Minutes – January 8, 2024

Draft Meeting Minutes – January 22, 2024

Draft Meeting Minutes – February 26, 2024