

**Minutes of the
BOXFORD SELECT BOARD
HYBRID VIA ZOOM
Monday, December 4, 2023**

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

Others Present: Town Administrator Matthew Coogan, Al Nierenberg, Attorney Gregg Corbo, Minutes Recorder Donna Grieco,

6:30 PM Call to Order

Select Board Chair Barbara Jessel called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. The roll was read, and all members were present.

6:35 PM Announcements

Boxford Grand Illumination – Select Board member Chow-Menzer announced that the Boxford Historical Society is inviting residents to the Grand illumination which will take place on Sunday, December 17th at 5pm. Beginning with carols at the Congregational Rectory, the procession will wind down Elm St to view lit homes along the way and culminate with the illumination of the Holyoke-French House. Refreshments will follow at the historic house.

Toys for Tots – Select Board member Stickney announced that the Boxford Fire Department is once again participating in the Toys for Tots program. Residents can drop off unopened and unwrapped toys at the East Fire Station, located at 6 Middleton Road, East Boxford, from now through December 8th, Monday - Friday from 8 AM to 4 PM

6:40 PM Appointments

Al Nierenberg, Sustainability Committee

Al Nierenberg appeared and discussed his interest in and qualifications to serve on the Sustainability Committee. The Select Board thanked him for volunteering and voted on his appointment.

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to appoint Al Nierenberg to the Sustainability Committee with a term ending 6/30/24.

6:45 PM Report of the Town Administrator

Request for Reclassification, Administrative Services Manager

There is a warrant article at Town Meeting for the approval of the annual classification and compensation plan. The Town Administrator does not foresee it changing very drastically. if the board supports it, it will probably end up only being a 2% movement of the whole scale. The Town Administrator went on to discuss the position of the Administrative Services Manager/HR Coordinator and a request to change the grade

scale level from grade N5, which was set in 2022, to a grade N8. Select Board member Costello asked the Town Administrator to discuss the jump from N5 to N8. Rationalization for the jump includes the many and varied responsibilities and tasks that this position now encompasses including some management and procurement duties. With the support of the Select Board, the Town Administrator would like to present this request to the Personnel Board and go through the process of reclassifying this position. He will keep the Select Board apprised of the outcome.

Consider Adoption of Policy for Flags Allowed on Town Flagpoles

The Select Board was presented with two drafts of flagpole use policies. They discussed the current long-standing policy of having town flagpoles only fly the American flag, Commonwealth of MA flag and the POW MIA flag.

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board VOTED unanimously to approve the current and basic flag policy of the Town of Boxford as drafted by Town Council.

Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget

The budget document presented to the Finance Committee last week highlighted the following:

- a) Historically new growth over the last few years has been a bit over \$200,000, We are projecting new growth to increase to a little over \$500,000. this year; a result of the new valuations coming from The Willows of Boxford.
- b) Trash revenues are yet to be determined and are dependent upon which fee structure is implemented.
- c) Town leadership feels confident that Town government will be able to deliver a budget within a 2 ½ percent increase over FY'24 even considering stressors such as salary, healthcare costs, technology fees, etc.
- d) Shortly the Town will produce a free cash report.

Insurance Advisory Committee Update

The Committee is scheduled to meet again on December 14th. The Town's Insurance Consultant presented a general overview of the current state of the health insurance industry and compared the Town's current plan to other towns. She spoke about a Benchmark 3 plan which would be the equivalent of Boxford going into the GIC and we talked about the comparison between that program and what our current insurance offers through Blue Cross Blue Shield. The assumption currently is that we won't be switching, but we would look at potentially changes in deductibles or potential copays as well. Next meeting the committee will look at some of those premium costs and what the potential savings could be both from the employee side and the employer side. By the following meeting in January, the Town Administrator will propose that the Select Board enact MA General Laws Chapters 19 through 22 which creates the Public Employee Committee. The Insurance Advisory Committee simply advises the Town on health plans, however, it's the actual Public Employee Committee that completes the negotiation process.

Waste Stream Task Force Update

Select Board member Perkins reported that the task force is making great progress. They have two quotes from Mello and Waste Management trash companies and are awaiting two more. Hopefully they will receive those prior to the next meeting on January 8th. They are also looking into bi-weekly recycling as a cost cutting measure.

Interim Investment Report October 21, 2023

The Interim Investment Report was submitted by Treasurer Ellen Guerin for the Select Board's review. If there are any questions, they can be sent to Ellen directly. She will attend a Select Board meeting if the Board would like to further discuss the report.

7:00 PM Routines

Open Positions Boards/Committees

There are a number of Boards and Committees that still have openings available. They range in the level of time commitment from low to fairly significant. If anyone has an interest in serving on one of the following committees, please let us know:

- a) Community Preservation Committee
- b) Conservation Commission
- c) Council on Aging
- d) Cultural Arts Council
- e) Masconomet Scholarship Committee
- f) Personnel Board
- g) Planning Board
- h) Recreation Committee
- i) ZBA (needs another alternate)

Approval of Minutes of 11/20/23

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Costello**, the Select Board VOTED unanimously by roll call vote to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of 11/20/23 as amended.

7:10 PM Any other business to come before the Board

The Select Board inquired about the on-going cell tower issues. The Town Administrator noted that he is in conversation with a technical person at Verizon and that we have a booster at the East station, and we have a booster at the COA. He will determine who the correct person who does the boosting outside of facilities. He emailed them as recently as today.

7:15 PM Executive Session

Select Board Chair Jessel moved that Select Board enter into Executive Session

On a **MOTION** made by **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 Board of Selectmen, and upon completion of the Executive Session they will not be returning to open session and immediately adjourn without conducting any further business.

Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,
Donna M Grieco
Minutes Recorder

Next Meeting – December 18, 2023

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

Announcement: Gran Illumination

Announcement: Toys for Tots

Supporting Documents: Al Nierenberg, Sustainability Committee

Memo from Town Administrator- Administrative Services Manager Re-classification Request

Memo from Town Administrator- Flag Policy

Memo from Asst. Town Administrator to Finance Committee - FY25 Revenue and Expense Forecast

Memo from Treasurer Guerin to Select Board relative to the Interim Investment Report

List of Open Appointments Boards/Committees

Minutes: 11/2023