

**Minutes of the
BOXFORD SELECT BOARD
HYBRID VIA ZOOM
Monday, January 8, 2024**

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

Others Present: Town Administrator Matthew Coogan, Katie Colangelo
Lt. Tamara Aghoian, Bob Figelski, Peter Holland, Ross Povenmire, Ron Dole, Ellen Guerin, A.J. Paglia, Eric Wendell, Kathy Zolla, Stephanie Meegan, Gary Martin, Karen Sheridan, Bob Gore, Natasha Grigg, Joe Hill, Wendy Perkins, Al Constan, Carol Hubbard, David Smallman, Al Nierenberg, Rebecca Potts, Liz Murphy, Lisa Donahue, Ted Riter, and 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 all present.

6:35 PM Announcements

Boxford Housing Partnership Meeting– Select Board member **Chow-Menzer** announced that there will be a Boxford Community Housing Needs Workshop which will take place at Town Hall, Meeting Room #1, on JANUARY 20, 2024, at 9 AM. The following will be discussed: Update on the Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Plan Project, Boxford Community Needs Assessment, Community Housing Goals and Strategies and Identifying the Potential for future Housing Development in Boxford.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Select Board member **Perkins** announced that Town offices will be closed on Monday, January 15 in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. There will be no trash/recycling pick up on Monday, January 15th. Pick up will run on a one-day delay for the remainder of the week.

Town of Boxford is Hiring – Select Board member **Costello** announced that the Town of Boxford is hiring for the following positions:

- Administrative Assistant - Inspectional Services and Zoning Board of Appeals
- Full Time Dispatcher – Communications
- Program, Outreach, and Activities Assistant - Council on Aging

For more detailed information about these positions, please visit:

www.boxfordma.gov/employmentopportunities. Please send your cover letter, resume and completed Application for Employment to Leanne Mihalchik (lmihalchik@boxfordma.gov).

6:40 PM Recognition of Years of Service

The Select Board recognized, thanked and awarded certificates to numerous long-time Town of Boxford employees in honor of their employment milestones which ranged from ten to thirty-five years. Photographs were also taken.

10 Years – Katie Colangelo

20 Years – Tamara Aghoian, Pam Blaquiere, Bob Figelski, Peter Holland, Ross Povenmire

25 Years – Ron Dole, Ellen Guerin, A.J. Paglia, Mikey Ricker, Doug Small, Eric Wendell

35 Years – Kathy Zolla

The following employees with over 25 years of service also received honorable mention:

Josh Kennedy, Children's Librarian - 26 years

Kendell Longo, Health Director - 28 years

Kara Fitzpatrick, Sergeant, Police Department - 28 years

Dave Noyes, Foreman, DPW - 31 years

Jim Riter, Police Chief - 33 years

Warren Gould, Director of Communications - 43 years

6:50 PM - Roundtable Discussion with Board and Committee Chairs

Discussion which included:

- Updates from Boards and Committees on Current Issues, Achievements, etc.
- Discussion of possible May 14, 2024, Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Emergency Response & Advisory Committee (ERAC)– Chair Ellen Guerin reported on the committee's first meeting of 12/12/23 where they reviewed the charge to analyze response to emergency call data. Next meeting will be in January. The committee does not anticipate the need to request a Town Meeting warrant article. Select Board Chair Jessel thanked her for her involvement in this committee.

Sustainability Committee – Gary Martin highlighted three projects as follows:

- 1) Boxford Community Electricity (Aggregation Plan)
 - a. The DPU gave preliminary approval to Boxford's Electrical Aggregation Plan. The committee is working with Good Energy to request an RFQ. They will evaluate quotes and recommend whether to launch the aggregation plan or not. If they do recommend it, it would be for either June or November of 2024.
- 2) Spofford Pond School HVAC Electrification Study and Preliminary Design
 - a. Town Administrator Coogan, Select Board Chair Jessel and Gary Martin are working with the School Committee and School Administration to evaluate options presented by the engineering firm, CMTI, in hopes of making the Spofford Pond School more energy efficient, reduce emissions, improve indoor air quality and make classrooms more comfortable. The committee hopes to replace the old gas-fired equipment with quieter, more efficient heat pumps that will also provide air

conditioning to the classrooms.

3) DOER's New Climate Leader Communities Program

- a. Boxford has been awarded nearly \$400K in grants since becoming certified as a Green Community. The new Climate Leader Program, with more stringent requirements, provides more grant funding opportunities. This committee is deciding whether to work towards Climate Leader Certification. If so, the committee will require a Town Meeting warrant article to adopt a Specialized Stretch Code for new construction.

Recycling Committee – Chair Karen Sheridan reported that costs at the drop-off Recycling Center with Republic have doubled for disposing of materials and that there will be a new fee schedule as of 1/6/24. The new fee schedules appear on the Town's website. There will now be a charge to recycle cardboard. If cardboard is placed at curbside into a 32-gallon barrel or placed in recycle bins, residents would not incur a charge. Earth Day will take place on Saturday, April 27th outside Town Hall.

Select Board member Costello asked how the money which is collected at the Recycling Center is handled and was informed that it is deposited at the end of the day as a night deposit into the Recycling Revolving account.

Select Chair Jessel requested that the cardboard info be posted to the website.

Select Board member Perkins asked about various metal costs. He was informed that they are on the fee schedule.

Planning Board – Bob Gore noted that Ross Povenmire is a pleasure to work with and offered him his congratulations. He reported that there is a housing shortage everywhere and Boxford is no different. The Boxford Foundation has conducted some studies and there may be more activity in this realm as the studies try to determine possible solutions. There may be some creative things that Boxford can do in this area.

Land Committee – Natasha Grigg thanked all Boxford public servants. She reported that her committee has no warrant articles required for Town Meeting. They were unable to acquire a parcel of land for possible community housing due to the owner's illness and now, in addition, the probability for 40B zoning would take five years. There is another possible parcel of land adjacent to wetlands that is of interest, and depending on the seller, a sale may or may not take place. This committee is currently in a holding pattern.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Update – Chair Natasha Grigg reported that the CPC is reviewing project applications for funding which may require warrant articles at the Town Meeting. They are for the Johnson Field Playground Project continuation; Community Housing funding for a circuit rider; Stiles Pond Action Committee funding to study and relegate pollution; and finally funding for an environmentally friendly robotic grass mower, a total of four possible warrant articles.

Housing Partnership – Joe Hill thanked the CPC Committee and reported that they may require a warrant article for the Boxford Commons Study which is aimed at providing moderately priced housing for residents. There are a total of 12 units that could potentially be developed on this 13-acre parcel which would require a warrant for their development. The committee is awaiting a financial model from Town Counsel to determine how much money would need to be put down as a deposit on the property. They will also require a Housing Coordinator, a part-time position, to assist in implementing the Housing Production Plan and the work of the Boxford Housing Partnership Committee. The role will be shared with other towns and be under the direction of the Merrimack Valley Planning Committee. The funding is highly supported by Stu Saginor of the CPC. There is also the Boxford Small Repair Grants Trust which will provide up to \$7500 for Boxford seniors and residents with permanent disabilities to make essential modifications to their homes which would allow them to age in place. A draft of this agreement has been submitted for review. Lastly, there were three out of five members appointed in December to this committee. There is now also a rep from the Council on Aging.

Historical Commission/Historic District Commission – Wendy Perkins reported that they are looking to complete an inventory of the whole Town which will require an RFP. They need a consultant and will try again to secure one. As for the Historic District Commission, they have begun upgrading their guidelines, but they will be completed this Spring and found online.

Board of Health – Al Constan offered his congratulations to the award recipients for their milestones in public service. He reported on the following completed issues:

- 1) Willows Project – The Board reviewed and approved the Operation and Maintenance manuals. A site visit was performed of the septic and leach field systems and they found an impressive septic. Based on this visit, a Certificate of Compliance was issued. Operation and maintenance of the well requires an HOA to maintain the water system and leach field and the existence of an operation manual that anyone can pick up and use if something were to go wrong. Homeowners will own the system as it will be deeded to them. The deed will also read that owners must be 50 years of age or older in case of a sale where someone may try to buy or flip any of the properties.
- 2) Online stickers are back in place since the Health Assistant has been hired and they are popular. Online sales amounted to \$12,000 in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Ongoing Projects include:

- Cross committee activities include working with different committees and DEP to repair/replace the Johnson Field Playground.
- A BOH representative serves on the Stiles Pond committee which is looking to determine nutrient flow and do remediation of algae and contaminant cleanup

work.

- There are two BOH representative on the Waste Stream Task Force. The BOH maintains the contract for Town trash collection. They are proposing a contract for Town trash pickup and will present findings on Wednesday. Most likely they will work with an individual vendor who submitted a bid and not have to go through the RFP process. They are looking to lock this up and have the contract signed before the contract ends in June. The contract most likely will be for automated collection and bi-weekly recycling which will save the Town approximately \$500K over 5 years.
- The Board of Health is looking to review regulations on new or replacement utility poles from National Grid. The EAP has allowed chemical treatment of poles in the past. They are now allowing arsenic treated poles to be erected, which were banned twenty years ago. The Board feels that rather than require a 50 ft. set back of these poles, they should now be set back even further to about 100 ft. away from a domestic well. The option for non-treated fiberglass poles costs \$4000 per pole vs. \$400 for an arsenic treated pole. Select Board member Costello remarked that in a hardship situation where someone cannot move their well, a fiberglass pole could be used, at the owner's expense.

Elementary School Committee- Carol Hubbard updated the Select Board on the following ongoing projects:

- The HVAC Study at Spofford Pond School is ongoing and most likely will require a warrant article.
- Another potential warrant article for Town Meeting is the ADA work on the exterior of the Cole School. Paving etc. will be completed over the summer.
- There is general policy work ongoing such as the Food Service Contract which must be renegotiated in January.
- Education programs maintain a literacy focus using new research to help more kids read better.
- The committee is looking at attendance issues including chronic absenteeism.
- In early February, a Saturday Budget Session will be held and include any new requests or anything unexpected. They are anticipating a hefty increase to the school budget this year.
- Various flooring projects will require a warrant article.
- There is a potential need to repair a section of the Cole School roof and a site renovation project; both of which will take place in FY'25.

Boxford Cultural Council (Cultural Art) Committee – Stephanie Meegan reported that the MA Cultural Council which provides funding has upped Boxford's allocation, so no warrant articles will be necessary. Other items of interest included:

- Five art pieces were sold from the Art Exhibit at 10 Elm.
- There will be a Student Art Exhibit on 1/19/24 at 10 Elm from 5-7 pm, which will include ten pieces from the Cole School and ten from the Spofford School. This will also include the Spofford band assemble.
- Seasonal art exhibits will also continue to be displayed at 10 Elm.

- On 1/20 the Cantemus Chamber Chorus will present *Annelies* which is based on "Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl".
- A Boxford coloring book containing 12 recognizable Boxford scenes for 3rd graders (or anyone) has been created and are now being printed.

Topic: Art History and Public Art, programs include:

- There will be an Impressionism and a History of Public Art program taking place.
- Yarning Around MA program entitled "Yarn Bombing"
- Two Crochet workshops will be conducted.
- The theatre presentation entitled *Nun of This and Nun of That* will take place at the COA.

Topic: Nature, programs include:

- The World of Owls- Summer Reading Program
- Boxford Spring Birdwatching Hike (a senior-friendly walk)

Other Upcoming Events:

- New England MA Youth Orchestra rehearsal and concerts
- All Town events including July 4th
- SummerFest
- Apple Festival
- Indigenous People Day in October in Newburyport
- Music with Matt York (performing Willie Nelson) at the COA

There is an email address and Facebook Page for the Boxford Cultural Council.

Conservation Committee – David Smallman thanked Ross Povenmire for his 20 years of service and reported on the committee's ongoing work including 4 culverts, two of which have been approved. There are 2 still holding. Pyebrook Road at Pyebrook Lane, Georgetown Road at Pyebrook, Herrick Road and Pyebrook, and Glendale Rd., two of these roads are starting to fail so we are trying to get them done as soon as possible and ensure that they will all meet stream crossing regulations. These culverts are past their prime. Roads have been widened over the years beyond the width of the culvert but they will all be brought up to date. There was a sidewalk issue needing attention and all departments involved went together to look at the issues and going forward it will be easier to rectify problems if departments work together when warranted and where overlap exists. The committee is also working on two driveways on Main Street and Silvermine Road. This involves two house lots. The committee requested funding from the owner to build a plan. There are two common driveways on two separate lots, currently owned by the same person. The committee has had hearings surrounding the Border to Boston Rail Trail, specifically the section that runs from Georgetown Road in Boxford into Georgetown. It is ADA accessible, notwithstanding some inherent issues that come with accessibility for aged rails, but the committee is working through them to

meet all regulations and concerns of abutters. There is currently one opening on this very busy committee, and Mr. Smallman asked people to apply.

Border to Boston Rail Trail Committee – Al Nierenberg reported that this committee will not require any warrant articles for Town Meeting unless there are permanent easements for the right of way on the rail section just mentioned, Georgetown Road into Georgetown. If there is to be compensation for those easements, then there would be a warrant article. Border to Boston Trail takes a long time to put in, so the section while approved, will be paved and professional looking and done in the next few years. The middle section from Georgetown to the Power Station is in the design phase and will take even longer. The committee is talking about getting the final remaining section of the trail which was to have been built on road, off the road via a bridge over 95, which will not happen for many years. The goal is to attain 100% off road status.

Adaptive Reuse of Buildings Advisory Committee (ARBA) – Becky Potts reported that the ARBA Committee will require a warrant article for rezoning parcels located at 4 Middleton Road and 188 Washington Street to B1 (business district). Another warrant article will be necessary to authorize the Select Board to dispose of these properties either by lease or sale. Property evaluations of 188 Washington Street and 4 Middleton Road will be available next week. A commercial real estate company has approached the committee and offered to complete a free market analysis and hopefully they will have that information available at their next meeting on Wednesday. The Tri-Town School Union currently rents the Aaron Wood building next door to the Cole School from the Town of Boxford. They also occupy space in other towns. The Union is very interested in 4 Middleton Road for office space and the opportunity to have all of their offices under one roof. If they move into 4 Middleton Road, that would then free up the Aaron Wood building for some needed classrooms to accommodate the growing elementary school enrollments in Boxford. There is a \$1 million bond debt on Aaron Wood which would roll out at the same time Boxford needs to do renovations on 4 Middleton Road. This might create an opportunity to roll the bond over into a new bond for that building.

10 Elm Committee – Elizabeth Murphy reported that the committee is working with the COA to discuss building needs. The committee developed a tiered plan for usage and rentals which needs Select Board approval. A successful family event was held with over 70 attendees and BTA/BOLT is also planning an event on 1/25. The committee is happy to entertain requests for programs for all of the Town's demographics.

Recreation Committee – Lisa Donahue noted that the committee is maintaining connections with BAA, BTA BOLT, and Camp Sacajawea. They maintain the tennis and pickle ball courts, and track their usage. They are involved in the Johnson Field Playground Renovation, will review their current bylaws and propose any necessary changes, and going forward will order equipment using the Recreation Committee budget.

Board of Commissioners of Trust Funds – Ted Riter discussed four funds including the Michelle Wilson Fund, and the B.P. Cole Memorial Trust Fund which offers up to \$2000 to Boxford MASCO graduates who have completed high school and plan to attend college or post-secondary, vocational schools, etc. They also have funds for Boxford and Hamilton students, on a case-by-case basis, to attend Boy and Girl Scout Troops and finally, they administer the DARE program. There is also the Matthew Smith Scholarship Fund which thus far has received no requests. The Tri-Centennial Memorial Trust fund has set up a picnic table for bikers to rest. Contact the Board of Commissioners of Trust Funds for more information on any of these programs and for application instructions. The Board meets in late February or March and make their awards in March or April of every year.

Permanent Building Committee – Select Board member Margaret Chow-Menzer reported that they are working on the new schematic design of the DPW facility and that interviews will be held next week to review the top three proposals from the RFP. The committee is also working with the Board of Health and the Recreation Committee relative to the Johnson Field Playground and ensuring there are no issues with DEP and the landfill because of its location. The type of equipment that can be installed will be dependent upon the depth that they can bore holes. The committee is also looking at how to expand the back of the 10 Elm building for picnic use, and to add a fence so people don't accidentally fall into the retention pond. They may need to replace the refrigerator at 10 Elm because the current size is inadequate and are also looking to add a sink to the Great Room because renters will need access to a sink when the other part of the building and the kitchen is closed. The Little Red School House roof is being worked on three days per week by Essex Tech students, and is coming along. The committee is looking at the Boxford Commons irrigation system, which has constantly clogged heads due to a function of a shallow well. As previously discussed, the Tri-Town Council is interested in 4 Middleton Road. Finally, Select Board member Chow-Menzer stated that an RFP for exterior painting of 4 Middleton Road will be required for this Spring since it is important not to allow the building to fall into disrepair.

Library Board of Trustees – Select Board Chair Jessel reported that there has been a resignation from this Board and a new person is required. She thanked John Paul Ryan for his service. There is an effort underway to hire a new Library Director. There are some good applicants; some interviews have already been conducted with one more to be completed. The committee will identify two finalists for second interviews.

Finance Committee – Town Administrator Coogan reported that some of the new Willows growth revenue will be realized this fiscal year. Building permit fees increased and earned interest also increased. The committee set the budget guidelines which states not to exceed a 2 1/2 % increase over FY'24. The Finance Committee School budgets are not yet completed however all budget proposals from other departments have been received, He will provide the budget to the Select Board on 2/12/24. The CIP is on a parallel path and are waiting for capital submissions from MASCO. Select Board member Costello asked if there was information about the restrictions for use of the \$250K received. The Town Administrator stated that it will be used as Chapter 90

funding is intended (for roads, sidewalks, rail trails, etc. He is not sure if education is included herein).

The Select Board thanked all committee members for their participation in the meeting and for their efforts.

8:15 PM - Boxford Liquor License Renewals

The following entities requested liquor license renewals:

- Far Corner Farm Golf Course, Inc.
- Boxford Community Kitchen

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Perkins**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to grant the requested liquor licenses to Far Corner Farm Golf Course and Boxford Community Kitchen upon the condition that the licensees shall in all respects, conform to all of the provisions of the Liquor Control Act, Chapter 138 of the General Laws, as amended and any rules or regulations made thereunder by the licensing authorities. In addition, the licensees must maintain required insurance and meet all requirements by Town Fire and Building inspectors as noted in the Town's inspection reports as enclosed in this packet. The licenses will expire December 31, 2024.

8:25 PM - Report of the Town Administrator

Common Victualler's License Renewal Requests:

- Boxford Community Kitchen
- Benson's Ice Cream

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Chow-Menzer** the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to approve Common Victualler's License # 24-08 to Boxford Community Kitchen located at 7 Elm St and with expiration on 12/31/24.

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Chow-Menzer** the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to approve Common Victualler's License # 24-02 to Benson's Ice Cream located at 181 Washington St. and with expiration of 12/31/24.

Junk License Renewal

David Noyes

On a **MOTION** made by **Stickney**, second by **Perkins** the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to renew a junk license #24-01 to David Noyes, of 212 Main St. with expiration of 12/31/24.

8:30 PM Routines

Approval of Minutes of 12/18/23

On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Stickney**, the Select Board **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of 12/18/23 as amended.

9:00 PM Adjourn

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

Next Meeting – January 22, 2024

Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,
Donna M Grieco
Minutes Recorder

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

Announcement: Boxford Housing Partnership Meeting

Announcement: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Announcement: Town of Boxford is Hiring

Liquor License motion

Victualler's License Boxford Community Kitchen and supporting documentation

Victualler's License Benson's Ice Cream and supporting documentation

Junk License David Noyes and supporting documentation

Building Department December 2023 Report

Draft Minutes: 12/18/2023