



Town Administrator's Report Select Board Meeting for September 25, 2023

Matthew Coogan

Proposal to create an Emergency Response Advisory Committee

Included in the meeting agenda materials for September 25th is a [memo and draft charge for an Emergency Response Advisory Committee](#). It includes the makeup of the committee, lists the committee's tasks and goals, and sets expectations as far as timeline and deliverables based on preliminary research.

No Left Turn Restriction, Kelsey Road

In the Select Board agenda packet is a [proposal from DPW Superintendent Chris Olbrot to install no left turn signs during commuting times onto Kelsey Rd.](#) The Select Board discussed this change in traffic patterns at the August 9th meeting. The goal is to reduce cut through traffic on Kelsey Road during commuting times to improve safety.

Plan for Promotion of Police Sergeants

Chief Riter will attend Monday's meeting to outline his plan to promote three Boxford police officers to the rank of Sergeant. The MA Accreditation process identified the need for 4 supervisory officers in the department. The Town approved the FY24 Police Department budget that included funding 2 new Sergeant positions, in addition to Sgt. Fitzpatrick. With the Lieutenant position now vacant, Chief Riter would like to promote 3 Sergeants rather than filling the Lieutenant position, which would bring the number of Sergeants to 4. The Lieutenant position would remain unfilled, and the responsibilities of that position would be administered by the Sergeants. Chief will explain his plan for promotion, and his plan for promoting one of the Sergeants to Lieutenant at a future date.

Municipal Aggregation – Letter to Legislators

In the Select Board agenda packet is a [draft letter](#) from our consultant Good Energy. It is addressed to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy, and Good Energy is requesting municipalities to sign on. It's in support of bill H.3852, *An Act supporting electrical load aggregation programs in the Commonwealth*. The bill will help streamline the DPU review process for Municipal Aggregation Plans. [Boxford's plan](#) is one of 22 in queue for DPU review. Good Energy recommends the Town sign onto this letter by the Tuesday, September 27th State Senate hearing.

Surplus of Engine One

Select Board members will see a [memo from Fire Chief Brian Geiger](#) requesting the Select Board vote to surplus the 2002 HME/ Ferrara Fire Engine, known as Engine 1. The truck has not run since this past July

due to a failed inspection and variety of other issues. The new Engine 1 is in the final stages of assembly and will be delivered to the Town in October.

Website Upgrade

We have been working with our website provider, CivicPlus, on scoping a redesign and upgrade of the Town website. The website was last updated in 2017. The new website would be hosted on a more versatile platform that is easier to use both on the front and back end, and has a more contemporary look. The one-time cost to upgrade the website is \$13,251, and the annual subscription fee would be \$6,559. The annual subscription for the current website is slightly under \$5,000. We have budgeted enough funds for both the one-time cost and increased annual fees. We expect the new website to be launched around the end of the fiscal year. I am requesting the Board authorize me to contract with CivicPlus for the upgrade of the Town's website.

Review of Health Insurance Plan Design

Assistant Town Administrator Brendan and I have been meeting with the Elementary School Administration to discuss health insurance plans and cost. The last time the Town analyzed plan design and made changes was 10 years ago. Last year, health insurance premiums increased by nearly 10%. We will be attending a MIIA Health Benefits Forum for executives next month and expect to hear double digit increases are expected in the coming years. Health insurance is a substantial portion of the annual operating budget, around 10% for both town and school. I have a contract for services by Cook & Co Insurance group, a health insurance consultant who specializes in municipal group health insurance to advise us on potential design changes to our health insurance offerings. Cook & Co. advised the Town back in 2013 and 2014 and we'd like to bring on Cook & Co to guide us through the process again. We would be able to fund the contract through our health insurance line item. I am requesting the Board authorize me to contract with Cook & Co for group health insurance consulting.

Waste Stream Task Force Update and Resident Survey

This week every address in Town received a postcard with a QR code and information to access the Waste Stream Task Force's [Trash and Recycling Resident survey](#), which is also available on the town website. The survey solicits Boxford residents' current trash and recycling habits, as well as input on the size of potential new, standardized trash and recycling containers and the frequency of collection under a new automated collection program. Paper surveys are available at the COA and Town Hall/ Library as well. Responses are due by the end of September.

Additional information on the work of the Waste Stream Task Force can be found on their [project webpage](#).

Adaptive Reuse of Buildings Advisory (ARBA) Committee

StudioLuz's held a public presentation of their [final report](#) on Wednesday, September 13. The final report includes recommended future uses for 188 Washington Street and 4 Middleton Rd, as well as next steps. The recommendations are based on site visits, community engagement, and a market study. All public documents, including the final report and the market study are posted on the project website, boxfordma.gov/villagecenters. The ARBA Committee's next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 3rd.

Medal of Fidelity Presentation

I attended a very moving ceremony Friday morning at North Andover Town Hall. The Massachusetts National Guard presented the Medal of Fidelity to surviving family members of veterans in North Andover and Boxford who died due to their service-connected disabilities from their service to our country. Included was Karen "Suzy" Feirman of West Boxford, who is the wife of Lance Corporal Frank Feirman, USMC, Purple Heart, Vietnam. Suzy has lived in Boxford for 44 years. We thank Suzy and her family for their sacrifice. Thank you also to our Regional Veterans Service Office Joe LeBlanc for organizing the ceremony.