



SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 17, 2024

7:00 PM

ACTON TOWN HALL, ROOM 204
472 MAIN STREET

Present: Jim Snyder-Grant, Fran Arsenault, Dean Charter, Alissa Nicol

Additional Attendees: Assistant Town Manager Thom Begin

Remote: David Martin

I. Regular Business

1. Resident Concerns

none

2. Chair Update/Town Manager Update/Members Minute

Ms. Arsenault announced cooling centers will be open to the public to assist residents during the heatwave at the Memorial Library, Human Services and Senior Center, and the Public Safety Facility with schedule of operations listed on the town website; town offices will be closed on Wednesday, June 19th to observe the Juneteenth federal holiday; thanked Catherine Usoff, Ann Chang and Dan Malloy for their contributions to the Economic Development Committee; acknowledged the Juneteenth workshop held on June 11th in Town Hall and conducted by Nikki Turpin. Mr. Begin announced tax bills will be mailed at the end of the month which will be the first that will include the override and the Assessor's Office is available for assistance for residents who have questions or would like to learn more about the various tax relief programs offered by the Town; on 6/17 the Fire Department held a swearing in ceremony for their newest Firefighter/EMT Darren Locke; July 4th events begin at 7 PM in NARA with fireworks scheduled for 9:30 PM and announced the Town is currently looking for volunteers to assist with the celebration event, asking those interested to reach out to the Recreation Department; the metered parking pilot program has begun at the Maple Street parking lot; Habitat for All workshop hosted by the Planning Division is tomorrow at 7:00 PM in room 204. Mr. Snyder-Grant discussed a public presentation regarding the proposed roundabout at rt 27 and rt 2 offramp with the Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee, addressed the lack of bike lanes planned, would like to see the traffic projections and will be sharing concerns with MassDOT; discussed the Climate Resilience Festival that was held on Saturday. Ms. Nicol encouraged residents to review the Habitat for All postcard sent out and to participate in the survey link; congratulated the Discovery Museum on their recent award of a National Medal from Institute of

Museum and Library Services; the 6th 5-year review of the W.R. Grace property is completed and can be reviewed on the EPA website at epa.gov/superfund/graceacton. Mr. Charter noted the Acton 250 Committee sponsored a virtual house tour with additional tours planned for the future, and all events are recorded - links can be located on the Acton 250 page on the town website; a recent forum was held regarding the 25% design of the sidewalk on River Street and was well attended with good feedback; Acton Lions Club fair concluded Sunday night and was successful and well attended and will allow from the proceeds to donate to various charities.

II. New/Special Business

3. Sewer Commission

- **Approve Sewer Rates for FY2025**

Budget Manager Ellie Anderson presented the proposed sewer rates for FY2025. The projected FY25 operating budget is approximately \$50,000 higher than FY24 which is a 4.59% increase. The proposed sewer rate for FY25 is an increase of 6.5%. The proposed increase will assist repayment of the debt service by FY32, and allow the account to be fully funded in the FY25 operating budget. Mr. Snyder-Grant questioned about income from solar production and if it would assist funding electricity costs for operations, Ms. Anderson noting it being a work in progress, and that the town contractor Woodard & Curran is currently paying the electricity costs of operations with the goal to use the net metered credits from solar productions; questioned about the rate for multi-family homes – Ms. Anderson noted that apartments, condominiums and multi-family fall under the residential rate. Ms. Nicol questioned about the dollar change per month and the school rates – Ms. Anderson clarified that each school building is invoiced separately, and that single family homes are a different classification than commercial, with restaurant usage much higher than retail. **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to approved the sewer rates for FY2025 as presented and approved unanimously 5-0-0 by roll call vote.**

4. Presentation of Asset Management Report and Consider Investigating Alternative Funding Sources for Stormwater

DPW Director Corey York presented an update to the Board on the stormwater asset management plan and the overall realistic cost by reviewing a stormwater drainage system asset management plan. He discussed work that had been done in preparation of this study, including the development of a climate impact report, inspected town culverts, retention basins and storm drains, and performing a risk analysis of likelihood of failure and consequences. Mr. York expressed concern regarding the increasing costs of maintenance and repairs and looking for ways to have a financial plan that would be sustainable and discussed next steps for the stormwater asset management plan funding. He noted some communities have implemented a stormwater utility fee system to assist with the increasing costs of maintenance. Mr. York stated he would like to come back to the Board in the fall to further present a possible stormwater utility fee schedule. Mr. Charter suggested to have the stormwater database available for the Board and public to

review online for consideration during the budget season. Mr. Snyder-Grant questioned how many projects would qualify for federal funding, Mr. York noted there are several different grants that could qualify but should look towards more sustainable funding for the programs. Mr. Snyder-Grant questioned if adjusting projects due to climate change were to be considered, Mr. York assured that is a consideration in approaching future projects. Mr. Martin questioned after the 10 year period if the amount of work is going to be consistent or more work in keeping up with projects, Mr. York feels that the work will be consistent past the initial 10 years, and have explored other communities with rate structures and funding models and would consider moving forward especially with impervious surfaces. Ms. Nicol noted the asset management plan is available on the DPW webpage, expressed her concern about additional fees for residents but would be a better plan than the cost of emergency repairs in the future if there was a catastrophic failure and asked what the current expenditure is per year; Mr. York estimated \$45-50,000 collected from the annual utility fee for commercial and in the operating budget there is a line item for special projects for \$12,000. Ms. Nicol questioned if the DPW would collaborate with the Water Resources Advisory Committee with the data and research they have collected; Mr. York assured they have been in communication.

5. Presentation of Town Meeting Report and Recommendations by the League of Women Voters (LWV) Acton Area

Marilyn Peterson and Alissa Robinson presented their study on Town Meeting attendance report and recommendation on improving Town Meeting attendance and involvement. LWV noted alternatives to open town meeting such as representative town meeting, town council/Mayor, council with mayor and/or manager. Ms. Peterson noted that when childcare or transportation are offered or particular warrant articles are presented that voters deem important, attendance increases and the potential for legislation to enact the availability of remote voting and deliberation at Town Meeting would increase accessibility and attendance. Several suggestions on improving Town Meeting included continuing improving accessibility, running more efficient meetings and continuing public education efforts. LWV recommended reviewing the Wayland approach and other towns advocating for remote town meetings through home rule petitions. LWV will be engaging the community with the findings of their study. Mr. Charter suggested investigating holding remote locations for Town Meeting at the Senior Center due to its accessibility and parking availability. Ms. Robinson noted a recent meeting with the North Andover Moderator indicating they currently hold remote participation at several locations throughout their town via Zoom. Ms. Nicol questioned the number of town meeting representatives that are in attendance such as Lexington, and questioned how the number of representatives are determined if Acton considered moving towards a representative town meeting. The LWV noted there would have to be a charter drawn and it would be set by a certain number of registered voters per precinct. Ms. Nicol commented on looking for a report of the demographics of attendees at Town Meeting including by

precinct. Mr. Martin expressed the importance of allowing deliberations at a Town Meeting, skeptical about Wayland's proposal for remote town meetings requiring the monitoring of large amounts of people on Zoom and requiring each town meeting attendant to have their face present at all times during the meeting platform if that model would be used.

6. Accept Public Input in Advance of Select Board's July 2nd Goal Setting Workshop

Ann Chang – requests all goals include a fiscal impact statement for both monies spent and hidden costs; suggested a complete re-write of Acton Zoning Bylaws; asked the Board and Town to consider the needs of the community in the short and long term when procuring property and consider not placing property into certain protections that would prohibit future reuse.

Judith Aronstein – policy on how the Select Board represent residents and the town at the state level.

Catherine Usoff, Maddy Lane – sent memo to Select Board and read the contents of the letter; enhance favorable economic growth, seek state funding to increase wastewater treatment capacity, change how residents are charged for sewer rates and wastewater connection, identify impediments to encourage growth in the commercial tax base

Ms. Arsenault recommended bringing 5 top goals from each member to the Goal Setting Workshop. Ms. Nicol reminded residents they can email suggested goals up to July 1st to the Select Board and suggested to not limit the number of goals. Mr. Charter recommends limiting the number of goals. Mr. Snyder-Grant agreed and suggests a plan on increasing revenues and decreasing expenses. Mr. Martin suggests 10 short term and 5 long term goals. Mr. Snyder-Grant suggests having time to explain the reasoning behind each member's suggested short and long term goals prior to voting. Ms. Arsenault requested to increase the short term goals to 7-10, and possibly increasing long term goals.

7. Finalize India Participation Day Celebration on August 4th and Discuss Participation

Ms. Nicol, Mr. Charter, Ms. Arsenault and Mr. Martin will be participating as attendees. **Ms. Nicol moved, seconded by Mr. Martin to approve the India Day 2024 proclamation in the meeting packet and approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote**

8. Approve 549 Main Street Conservation Restriction and Next Steps

Matt Mostoller from Acton Water District reviewed the document with Board members and discussed the process after the purchase of the property. The Acton Water District Commissioners approved the documents at their last meeting, the Sudbury Valley Trustees signed the document, and the Conservation Commission will be reviewing and signing at their next meeting, and will then be signed off with the Secretary of Environmental Affairs and recorded at the state level. **Mr. Charter moved, seconded by Mr. Martin to approve the document and amended by Mr. Snyder-Grant to include we the undersigned, being a majority of the Select Board of the Town of Acton, hereby certify that at a public meeting duly held on June 17, 2024, the Select Board voted to approve and accept the foregoing Conservation Restriction from the Water Supply District of Acton to the Town of Acton, acting by and through its Select Board and Conservation Commission, and to Sudbury Valley Trustees, Inc. in the public interest pursuant to Section 32 of Chapter 184 of the Massachusetts General Laws and do hereby accept and approve said Conservation Restriction and delegate the management of the Conservation Restriction on behalf of the Town of Acton to the Conservation Commission, seconded by Mr. Charter and approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote.** Mr. Charter discussed next steps for the payment and will advise CPC of the purchase.

9. Approve Placement of Sign for 549 Main Street Along the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

Mr. Mostoller noted the request that they are required to have signage to share with the general public as a funding partner at one of the key entries along the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and would be installed at the right of way on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and is asking permission to install the sign. The sign will mimic the BFRT signs and also include similar granite markers from the Minuteman march with funding partners listed as well as a link to the AWD and also a map of the property with the trails along the property. Paul Malchody from Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail expressed concern about placement of signs and mentioned that a number have been placed in areas that create safety concerns. He also mentioned that signs should be welcoming and would like to be involved in future discussions regarding the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Mr. Martin questioned the name of the property, Mr. Mostoller noted the Water District Commissioners voted on keeping the name as the property address. **Ms. Nicol moved, seconded by Mr. Charter to approve the placement of the sign for 549 Main Street along the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail as depicted in the photos included in the memo from the Water District Manager and approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote.**

10. Approve Reallocation of \$20,000 in ARPA Funds to Extend the Taxi Pilot Program Through the End of 2024

Mr. Begin presented the request to reallocate ARPA money as it is due to expire to continue the taxi service. Mr. Snyder-Grant questioned about addressing any issue with the providers, Mr. Begin noted that issues are resolved when they arise. **Mr. Charter moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to approve the reallocation of \$20,000 in ARPA funds for program R33 (intended to fund CAT bus) to**

instead use the funding to extend the taxi pilot program through the end of 2024 and approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote.

11. Approve Board and Committee Reappointments

Mr. Charter moved, seconded by Mr. Snyder-Grant to approve Board and Committee appointments with an amendment to withhold Planning Board appointee Sam Bajwa to discuss at a future meeting and approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote.

III. Consent Items

Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to approve consent items 12-20 inclusive and approved 5-0-0

Ms. Nicol moved, seconded by Mr. Charter to adjourn and approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 9:44 PM.

Documents Used

- June 17, 2024 Agenda
- Sewer Rate Presentation
- Sewer Rate Memo Dated June 4, 2024
- Email from Sutanuka Phoenix Dated June 4, 2024
- Email from Sahana Purohit Dated June 6, 2024
- India Day 2024 Proclamation
- Conservation Restriction, 549 Main Street
- Email from Matt Mostoller Dated May 14, 2024
- Board and Committee Reappointment List
- Meeting Minutes, May 20, 2024
- Executive Session Minutes, February 12, 2024
- Farmers Winery Application, 1634 Meadery, LLC
- Donation Memo from Recreation Department for Church of the Good Shepherd Dated May 31, 2024

- Donation Memo from Recreation Department for United Church Congregational of Boxborough Dated June 12, 2024
- Donation Memo from Land Stewardship Coordinator for William Atherton Dated May 16, 2024
- Donation Memo from Veterans'' Services for Frank Widmayer III Dated June 5, 2024
- Committee Recommendation Memo from Volunteer Coordinating Committee Member Fang Yang
- One Day Alcoholic Beverage License Application, Swiss Families & Swiss Society of Boston