

# HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

## MINUTES OF MEETING

Town Hall Memorial Room, 577 Bay Road

July 15, 2019

Selectmen Present: Vice Chair Rosemary Kennedy, Shawn Farrell,  
William Olson, and Darcy Dale

Selectmen Absent: Chair Jeff Hubbard

Town Manager: Joe Domelowicz

Vice Chair Rosemary Kennedy called the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting to order at 7 p.m. Chair Jeff Hubbard was absent due to a family emergency. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS & BOARD OPENINGS**

- Board of Health—one opening.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **Selectmen/Town Manager Reports**

Darcy Dale said the Capital Committee (CapCom) is looking to do something with underperforming assets—land that could be sold, swapped, developed, or have some use. Dave Thompson found 75 parcels. The CapCom is also consulting with Energy Manager Vicky Masone on energy initiatives to conserve energy and reduce costs. Ms. Dale said she attended the Council on Aging (COA) meeting. The area of travel for the senior van is being reduced, so it won't include Danvers, Salem, and Peabody. However, they need to look at alternatives because those areas are where many seniors' in-network medical providers are located. The Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) reviewed the KP Law (new Town Counsel) letter of agreement and made some changes to the final language. Ms. Dale said the Town Hall Building Committee's survey showed solid support from the people for Option B, which means leaving the staircase as it is. She said when the staircase is removed, the space created there would need to be taken up by two other staircases and an elevator.

William Olson had no report as he had been away and hadn't attended any meetings.

Shawn Farrell said the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) met July 11 and approved eligibility applications for the Town Hall restoration and a Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) project at 434 and 436 Asbury St. The amount of the grant request for the Town Hall restoration is yet to be determined. The HAHT request was \$200K. [The HAHT expects to contribute \$450K toward the total of \$650K.] A 70% local preference will be given. The CPC plan, which is updated each year, can be found on the website. The CPC closed out four projects and reviewed open grants. Jay Butler was elected to continue as CPC Chair with Robert Preston as Vice Chair. Mr. Farrell took part in the Building Committee and Historic District Commission walk-through to look at the historic features of Town Hall. On the second floor an architectural design change was made so those working in the offices will be able to see the total windows (instead of just a portion of them), also allowing for more light. The Building Committee is proceeding with Option A, which involves removing the grand staircase. The plan will involve a ground-level, ADA-compliant entrance at the back of the building.

Ms. Kennedy said the Chebacco Woods Management Committee ordered two benches that the Department of Public Works (DPW) will install for them. The senior swim is going well. She attended the CapCom meeting and was impressed. She was also impressed and touched by Military History Day at the Patton Homestead.

Town Manager Joe Domelowicz did not give his report as he had just returned from being away. He announced an "All-Water" meeting to discuss the state of the Town's water will be held July 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion post.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- **Approve Minutes from the BOS Executive Session on June 3.**
- **Approve Minutes from the BOS Executive Session on June 17.**
- **Approve Minutes from the BOS Regular Meeting on June 17.**
- **Approve request for burial lot in Hamilton Cemetery.**
- **Extension of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary Task Force to June 30, 2020.**

Ms. Kennedy requested the BOS vote separately on the first item because she was not present on June 3.

### **Decisions:**

Ms. Dale made a motion to approve the June 3 BOS Executive Session minutes. Mr. Olson seconded the motion. The BOS voted (3-0) to approve the motion.

Mr. Farrell made a motion to approve the remaining four Consent Agenda items (excluding the June 3 minutes). Ms. Dale seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the June 17 BOS Regular Meeting and Executive Session

minutes, request for a burial lot in the Hamilton Cemetery, and extension of the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary Task Force to June 30, 2020.

*Note:* The BOS had received a handout supplying background on the Task Force, its charge and membership.

**Budget Transfer/ Decision:**

Mr. Farrell made a motion to open up a previous BOS vote for reconsideration—a vote made at a previous meeting to transfer \$1,500 from the Health Insurance budget to Recreation and Operating Expenses due to utility costs exceeding budget. Ms. Dale seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to open the item for reconsideration.

Mr. Farrell then made a motion that the BOS amend the amount of the transfer from \$1,500 to \$2,500. Mr. Olson seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to amend the amount of the transfer.

**AGENDA**

**Appointment of Board of Assessors Candidate Joseph Shaktman—Vote**

This item was taken out of order.

**Decision:**

Ms. Dale made a motion to approve the appointment of Joseph Shaktman to the Board of Assessors. Mr. Olson seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the motion.

**Non-Zoning Wetlands Protection Bylaw—Discussion of Special Town Meeting (STM) Article**

Ms. Kennedy tabled this item until the next meeting. She had sent her draft of the bylaw (based on the model bylaw the BOS had been given a copy of) to the Conservation Commission (ConCom) for input/comments and wanted to review those. She said the ConCom had agreed to work on the bylaw with her as the learning party. Mr. Domelowicz noted they were closing the warrant to new articles on Aug. 5, but he said they could still finalize language on articles after that.

**Report and Presentation by Fire Chief Ray Brunet**

Chief Brunet gave a thorough list of what he and his department have accomplished since he became Acting Fire Chief: listening to each firefighter's ideas and concerns; reorganizing the office and painting common areas; purging outdated files; assessing equipment and scrapping outdated equipment; streamlining the fire trucks; updating uniforms and gear;

holding the annual fire pump testing that passed with flying colors; testing every stitch of fire hose; continued public outreach; and looking at ambulance service as designated by the Town Manager. Chief Brunet said staffing was always a big concern. He hired a certified instructor to augment training. The Fire Academy will be held in Hamilton for the next three years. He facilitated having a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus compressor at the station so they can fill there. He purchased a washer, extractor, and dryer. He met with Nick Tensen of the FinCom to talk about future needs, managed the budget, responded to calls, and has plans to update policies and procedures.

Mr. Olson applauded Chief Brunet for his strong leadership and for promoting from within, notably the recent appointment of firefighter Kristine Ellis.

Ms. Dale said she was glad Hamilton had a strong chief law and that he is the strong chief. She asked if he had a contract yet. He said it is close.

Mr. Farrell echoed that Chief Brunet is doing a great job and discussed the staffing issues, including hope of hiring another full-time firefighter for during the workday when it is hard getting on-call firefighters. Mr. Farrell inquired if there were a capital plan for replacing some of the fire hose. Chief Brunet said he was able to move some training money over for that purpose.

Ms. Kennedy applauded the idea that prospective new Fire employees were given pre-formal training to ensure they were committed prior to the Town's investing money in uniforms and gear for them. She noted the recent fire at an elderly complex in Wenham. The Chief cited the names of the responders/rescuers.

Mr. Domelowicz said he thought it important to note there were approximately 15 firefighters and two police officers in attendance, including Police Chief Russell Stevens.

#### **Appointment of Ray Brunet as Permanent Fire Chief in Hamilton—Vote**

Ms. Dale made a motion that the BOS appoint Chief Brunet the permanent Fire Chief. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the motion.

#### **Proposal to add 6.6 acres of Patton Homestead to Conservation area—Discussion with Reprtentative from the Conservation Commission**

George Tarr of the ConCom provided some history of this issue. He said in 2016 Town Meeting conveyed 9.1 acres of open space to the ConCom, which had an odd shape and didn't include some wetlands there or the canoe launch. Some on the ConCom had speculated it was a mistake the 6.6 acres weren't included. The issue was brought to the attention of Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett and Mr. Domelowicz by ConCom Coordinator Jim Hankin for the purpose of ensuring public access at the canoe launch. The ConCom would like to have the 6.6 acres added to the 9.1 acres and develop a

wetlands garden, educate the public about the work ConCom does, perhaps dredge around the launch and put in a picnic table (as was suggested by DPW Director Tim Olson), and add to the loop trail around the pond, which is currently very narrow. The question was brought up about whether the ConCom was asking for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the BOS or if they wanted a more formal conveyance, which would involve surveying the land. The BOS and Mr. Tarr discussed that ConCom has jurisdiction over the Town land, but that's not the same as having control.

Mr. [William] Olson asked about a worst-case scenario, which might be that the property is sold before it became conservation land. In signing a MOU, the BOS would show it endorses ConCom's authority. [There has been a recent MOU concerning the area bordering Patton Ridge where there are beech trees with regard to mowing and maintaining.] Mr. Olson clarified that the lines on the map that the BOS had received include the 100-foot buffer line around the pond.

Barbara Hecimovich, 3 Patton Ridge, president of the Patton Ridge Homeowners Association, said the proposed loop trail does go across Patton Ridge property. There is land on the south side of the road that is theirs. She and the BOS and Mr. Tarr discussed easements that allow for access-through to the trail and for emergency vehicles. Mark Johnson gave some history of the two easements and explained where they are located. He was a Selectman when they were negotiated.

Mr. Farrell said the base question comes back to: Does the BOS want to do an MOU with the ConCom or do they want a more permanent arrangement with the ConCom? Unanswered questions are what the cost would be for developing and maintaining the wetlands garden and how that would be handled. Also, would insurance have to change and if so, what would be the cost? Mr. Tarr said the ConCom does have some funds to cover some of the expenses. One would be buying the seed mix.

Mr. Domelowicz asked if the ConCom had voted on the current iteration the BOS had before them. Mr. Tarr said it endorsed it but hadn't taken a vote because they thought the BOS should make its decision first. The BOS discussed that they would like to have all the information by the next meeting to understand who bears what cost and also to run it by Town Counsel.

Virginia Cookson, ConCom member, said they take their job seriously and want to make land usable for people. They'd like for people to be able to walk about the whole pond. She said they weren't asking for money at the moment because they are still thinking on it and working out a plan. She said if the Selectmen decide on an MOU, it is something that can be changed at a later point

Ms. Kennedy asked about available grants. Mr. Domelowicz said there is one through the DCR [Department of Conservation & Recreation], but the Town can't apply until it has an updated recreation plan.

Mr. Johnson, speaking on behalf of the nonprofit Patton Homestead, Inc., said the idea of having guidelines wasn't bad, although they haven't given their opinion yet on a more formal ask. He said they've identified some issues there. Mr. [William] Olson inquired about getting a list of those issues. Mr. Johnson said Director Kayleigh Pare had the list.

David Suminsby, Military Service Day volunteer, was concerned about the possible loss of space as the area there is used for the military demos.

Duke Seaver, 402 Essex St., said he had suggested previously that at Patton Ridge they use water from the well on the property for fighting fires and connect it up to a hydrant there. But he said he heard they filled in the well with cement.

Ms. Kennedy said the BOS needed more time to think about this agenda item. Mr. Farrell said it might be worthwhile for the BOS to conduct a site walk to see the delineation of the property lines. The BOS also would like the ConCom to give them more direction on which option it preferred. Ms. Dale suggested perhaps doing a two-year MOU with a sunset clause. Mr. Tarr said he'd thought about that.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Domelowicz said Wenham's new Town Administrator will start in the position the beginning of August, so they might like to target the end of August or beginning of September for the joint meeting. Wenham had asked the BOS to supply a list of topics for discussion. Some suggested ideas were the new traffic light plan, the school budget, plans for funding OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits), and shared services between the two towns (looking at what they share now and what they might share in the future—for example, IT, HR, ambulance service, COA). Both towns will have the same attorney, so perhaps they might discuss how to have more mediation and less litigation. Other suggested topics were affordable housing, private roads, and connectors between the communities, such as having continuity with bike lanes and sidewalks.

Mr. Domelowicz suggested the BOS pick five or six topics and then ask Wenham to pick four that they would then focus on for the meeting.

Mr. Olson noted one of Wenham's topics at a meeting in April was a review of a Pleasant Pond agreement between the two towns, but Hamilton hasn't discussed this. Ms. Dale noted there's a separate agreement under the Rec Center and they had talked about Pleasant Pond when discussing the budget. She advocated discussing shared services. Other priority topics were the school budget and looking at future water sources. Mr. Domelowicz said he will invite Wenham to the "All-Water" meeting set for July 29.

## **Consideration of Topics for Discussion at Future BOS Meetings**

- A look at the various nonprofits the Town is funding—what is being spent and what is the return on investment.
- Getting the word out that they are raising the pay for the Town Clerk position.
- A debriefing of “All-Water” meeting.
- An update on composting, recycling, and waste reduction.
- Quarterly report from Finance Director Marisa Batista.
- Finalizing contract with KP Law.
- Follow-up on Road Race proposal to benefit affordable housing.
- Transportation for seniors to have rides for medical appointments.
- Engaging KP Law for help with the language for the 550 Highland St. warrant article for STM.
- National Grid check-in.
- Energy aggregation report with Good Energy.

Mr. Olson pointed out Wenham makes a note on its agenda concerning agenda topics. Mr. Domelowicz said Hamilton has a rider printed at the bottom of its agenda form regarding agenda items, saying all topics on the agenda might not be discussed, topics may be brought up or discussed as permitted by law, and topics may be taken out of order.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Farrell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Ms. Dale seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to adjourn.

Prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Date  
 Mary Alice Cookson  
 Minutes Secretary

Attest:

*Darcy Dale* \_\_\_\_\_ 1 08-12-19  
 Darcy Dale Date  
 Board of Selectmen Clerk