

HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING

Memorial Room, Town Hall, 577 Bay Road

June 21, 2021

Selectmen Present at Town Hall: Chair William Olson, Jamie Knudsen,
Rosemary Kennedy, and Shawn Farrell

Selectmen Present Online: Darcy Dale

Town Manager: Joe Domelowicz Jr.

**The Board of Selectmen was back to meeting in person following the lifting of Governor Charlie Baker's State of Emergency due to COVID-19 from March 10, 2020 to June 15, 2021. A Zoom component allowing remote participation to this meeting was offered.*

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chair William Olson called the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting to order and took a roll call. Four of the five members were present in the Memorial Room at Town Hall; one member, Darcy Dale, participated via Zoom. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & BOARD OPENINGS

Board and Committee Openings

- Conservation Commission (ConCom)—one opening
- Finance and Advisory Committee—one opening and two associate member openings
- Hamilton Historic District Commission—one opening
- Zoning Board of Appeals—one opening
- Open Space Committee—two openings
- Hamilton Planning Board—one associate member opening

Public Comment

None.

Selectmen/Town Manager (TM) Reports

Ms. Dale reported that progress was being made regarding setting up a sensitivity/anti-bias training for the BOS. Human Resources Director Michellelee Carroll had been in contact with Diversity Workplace Consulting Group regarding a program called "Overcoming Unconscious Bias." The COA held an open house but Ms. Dale was unable to attend. She did attend Hamilton's Juneteenth flag raising at Patton Park. She said it was a good turnout and U.S. Representative Seth Moulton and State Senator Bruce Tarr were in attendance. She said the next issue to work on is ADA-compliance at Town Hall.

Mr. Farrell made no report.

Ms. Kennedy described a med flight training she observed with Fire Chief Ray Brunet and some Hamilton firefighters at Myopia Hunt Club's Schooling Field on June 16 as a great experience. The Master Plan Steering Committee had a meeting on June 10 with the consultant. She said the group was energetic and well-informed, a mixed demographic representative of the Town. At the Steering Committee's next meeting on July 1 they will discuss a mission statement. Ms. Kennedy also commented on the site walk at the Patton Homestead led by George Tarr of the ConCom and thanked Marc Johnson of the Patton Homestead Inc. for his associated tutorial on the Homestead's history.

Mr. Knudsen said he enjoyed taking part in the ConCom site walk. He said the Human Rights Commission (HRC) met last week and that it was good to hear some of their recommendations. He was out of Town and unable to attend the Juneteenth flag raising.

Mr. Olson discussed the Juneteenth event and said he had a chance to talk with Rep. Moulton there. Mr. Olson reported the Planning Board will meet on July 6 and be given a conceptual view of the 40B proposal from Harborlight Community Partners.

Town Manager Joe Domelowicz said they are hiring for a number of positions at Town Hall, which were approved by Town Meeting, including a new Building Commissioner and Health Director. They are also hiring an Assistant to the Town Manager/Community Preservation Coordinator to replace Pat Shannon who left to take a job with the State.

AGENDA:

Acceptance of various gifts for the COA [Council on Aging]—Discussion and Vote

Mr. Domelowicz explained the gifts are financial donations (totaling \$2,100) to support the COA. All money given to the Town is General Fund money unless it is accepted as a gift.

Decision:

Mr. Farrell made a motion that the BOS accept the \$2,100 in various monetary donations to the COA. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Knudsen, and Mr. Olson, (5-0) unanimous.

Amended Conversation Restriction on Bridge Street—Discussion and Vote

A map and plans, which were included in the BOS packet, were displayed onscreen. Attorney Valerie Moore was online representing the Estate of John Gardner, 375 Bridge St. Also present online was Chris LePointe, Director of Land Conservation for Greenbelt, Essex County's Land Trust, which is the holder of the Conservation Restriction (CR). Attorney Moore said the proposed amendment does not impair the conservation values of the restriction, which is to preserve it as open space and protect adjacent wetlands. The point of the amended CR was to allow for utility work (updating of knob-and-tube wiring) to be done on the property because the utility lines cross an area that is part of the CR and the restriction currently doesn't allow for that. The update will also enable internet access, which the property has never had. Mr. LePointe said amendments to a CR are rare and Greenbelt ran this by its officials and it was unanimously recommended as it is servicing a house that is already existing.

Ms. Dale asked if the new utility services will come off of wire that is already buried underground. The reply was that it is a new conduit to be run along the existing wire and National Grid would make a connection at the box at the street. It was unknown whether it will be underground.

Ms. Kennedy asked if it would serve just the house on the property or other structures. Ms. Moore said just the house. Ms. Kennedy said she had some trepidation but read the document carefully and trusts Greenbelt if they agree it in the best interest of the conservation easement. Mr. Farrell asked if National Grid had inspected the conduit and deemed it suitable for what they are doing. Ms. Moore replied yes.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion to approve the amended Conservation Restriction for 375 Bridge St. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion.

Further Discussion:

The BOS will need to sign the document, have their signatures notarized, and send it to Attorney Moore to be recorded. The utility company cannot move forward until the document is received. Town Moderator Bill Bowler, who was present (in-person) at the meeting, volunteered to serve as notary. Ms. Dale said she will go by Town Hall tomorrow to sign the document the others will sign this evening.

Decision (Continued):

A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Knudsen, and Mr. Olson, (5-0) unanimous.

Approve Minutes of a Previous Meeting—Vote

*Minutes requiring a vote: Hamilton Board of Selectmen Minutes of Meeting/ Hamilton BOS & FinCom Minutes of Joint Meeting for May 17, 2021.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion that the BOS approve the May 17, 2021 minutes. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Ms. Dale, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Kennedy, and Mr. Olson, (5-0) unanimous.

Approve Surplus Goods from Council On Aging Storage—Vote

This agenda item was tabled to the next meeting.

Board and Committee Reappointments—Vote

Mr. Olson reported that BOS members had received the liaison positions they requested. If they had not voted for one, he assigned them the one they held last year. He noted that both Ms. Kennedy and Ms. Dale had expressed interest in the Capital Committee (CapCom) and COA. It was jointly decided that Ms. Kennedy would take the COA position and Ms. Dale, the CapCom position. Mr. Olson said he and Mr. Knudsen had each expressed interest in the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC). Mr. Olson agreed to allow Mr. Knudsen to take that position. Both Ms. Dale and Ms. Kennedy will continue to work on the Town Hall Building Committee (THBC). Ms. Dale noted the goal of the THBC is to be creative in finding ways to lower the “ask” for the Town. Mr. Olson and Ms. Kennedy had both expressed interest in the Planning Board. It was decided Mr. Olson will remain the BOS liaison to the Planning Board. Mr. Knudsen will continue in his role as liaison to the HRC. Mr. Farrell will continue in his seat on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC).

Mr. Domelowicz read through the list of individuals who are up for reappointment due to their terms expiring on June 30th and said the following individuals had confirmed they would like to be reappointed to a new three-year term: Chris Currier to the Conservation Commission, David Smith to the Board of Health, Bill Wilson and David Thompson to the Capital Planning Committee, Marnie Crouch and David Smith to the Affordable Housing Trust, and Virginia Cookson to the Chebacco Woods Land Management Committee.

Robert Preston, Shawn Farrell, and Sherry Leonard were on the list as needing reappointment to the Community Preservation Committee, but they are all liaisons from their individual boards and therefore need to first be reappointed by those individual boards.

Mr. Domelowicz continued reading through the list of reappointments: Penny Wingate to the Council On Aging, Rick Mitchell and Chad Smith to the Hamilton Development Committee, Scott Clements and Kristen Weiss to the Hamilton Historic District Commission, Brad Tilly to the H-W Recreation Board, and Bill Burrige, Lori Johnson, and John McWane to the Hamilton Foundation. The latter two (Ms. Johnson and Mr. McWane) need reappointment to complete the remaining two-year balance of their respective three-year terms. They were not able to be reappointed to their normal three-year term in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was noted Mr. Bowler does *not* need to be appointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals because he was already recently appointed, and had agreed to fill that seat through December.

Mr. Farrell brought it to the Board's attention that Katherine Mittelbusher had resigned from the CPC but was still listed as a member. Mr. Olson said he and Jeff Hubbard needed to be removed from the THBC; Mr. Domelowicz said that Committee had sunsetted. Mr. Domelowicz noted the Waste Reduction Committee is in need of being reconfigured. Mr. Farrell said Mr. Currier was on the CPC but had not been attending meetings and Mr. Domelowicz should ask Mr. Currier if he wanted to remain on the CPC.

It was noted that Mr. Olson as BOS Chair has the authority to appoint the BOS liaisons so a vote on the BOS Liaisons was not necessary; however, a vote was needed on the Board and Committee Reappointments.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion to approve the reappointment to three-year terms of all those persons highlighted in yellow on the June 2, 2021 appointment data sheet with the exception of the Hamilton Foundation members [Lori Johnson and John McWane] whose positions were reappointed to two-year terms. **See underlined sections above.* Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Knudsen, and Mr. Olson, (5-0) unanimous.

Mr. Domelowicz credited Mr. Shannon and Town Clerk Carin Kale for their work on assembling the reappointments list. When the Town switched website servers, the old website had been lost so they had to go back and fill in all the blanks.

Special Town Meeting (STM) Dates (10/16 or 10/23)—Discussion

The point of choosing the date now is to be able to set all the deadlines for action items leading up to STM. Oct. 23 was the preferred date.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion that the Special Town Meeting be held on Oct. 23, 2021. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Knudsen, and Mr. Olson, (5-0) unanimous.

Mr. Farrell said they should confirm the date with the high school since the meeting will no longer be held outside in a tent, but rather within the school building.

Mr. Bowler left the meeting. He said he will come to Town Hall tomorrow to notarize the signatures.

Cemetery Fees—Discussion and Vote

Department of Public Works Director Tim Olson was present for this discussion. He said he had looked at the cemetery fees of surrounding towns with the aim of bringing Hamilton in line with the others. The rates haven't changed in Hamilton for about 20 years. He discussed that the burial fee needs to cover the cost of the foreman, equipment operator and laborer and includes overtime pay since burials often happen on weekends and in winter conditions. He reviewed his proposed rates listed on the handout that was included in the packet, which included raising the rate of a single lot from \$450 to \$700; a four-grave lot from \$1,450 to \$2,800; and a cremation from \$450 to \$700.

Mr. [William] Olson asked if the FinCom had been involved in looking at the historical data and approving the rates. Mr. [Tim] Olson said he had reviewed past requests for burial and the information from surrounding towns to try to match up what should be charged.

Mr. Farrell asked about the average number of plots sold each year. Mr. [Tim] Olson was unsure but said he would find out. He said Hamilton's cemetery is the second oldest active cemetery in Massachusetts. He said they added the space for about 500 graves two years ago, but Hamilton will start to run out of space at some point.

Ms. Dale asked if they had looked at what the increase in revenue would be if the fees were increased. Mr. Domelowicz said FinCom had not yet looked at that, but would. Mr. [Tim] Olson said they were at least trying to break even as far as the costs for manpower, which seem to be going up. Mr. Farrell asked what they would do when they ran out of space and said they needed to do some forward-thinking. Ms. Dale noted there is some land at the Patton Estate. Mr. [Tim] Olson said the cemetery surrounds the Pooles' property and said a potential purchase (if the family would allow it) was something they might consider in the future. Mr. Farrell said the extra money if they do raise the rates might help the Town to purchase more property for the cemetery.

Mr. [William] Olson said the BOS could choose to vote on the new rates today or wait two more weeks. Ms. Kennedy said while she understood the need to increase the price of the plots to cover the manpower, she thought the prices were high and wanted more time to consider. Mr. [William] Olson noted the four-grave lot rate wasn't offering any discount over the single lot rate multiplied by 4 and that should be reviewed.

Ms. Kennedy said that they don't know for sure if they are losing money and should think about a more modest increase this year with the idea of revisiting it. Ms. Dale suggested tying increases to inflation each year or every other year. Mr. Farrell asked where the rate information had been obtained and Mr. [Tim] Olson said he had searched online. He said the document was just a draft and he was open to ideas. It was agreed to revisit this agenda item in two weeks and in the meantime, Mr. Domelowicz would forward the rate information to the FinCom for review. Also, it was discussed that the BOS should review the cemetery rates every three years. License fees had been increased fairly recently.

Mr. [Tim] Olson left the meeting.

Regional IMA [Intra-Municipal Agreement] for IT Collaborative—Discussion and Vote

Mr. [William] Olson said this was a continuation of the discussion from the previous BOS meeting. For the first year of the IMA, the BOS would be paying the collaborative to offer a recommendation for IT services and then the BOS could decide each year whether to continue with the collaborative for its services. He said it was important to stay ahead of IT, and that the one-stop shop the current IT employee offers the Town may not last into the future.

Ms. Kennedy said she appreciated the opportunity to look at the IMA more carefully for the past two weeks and thought they should have review time like this when they are looking to make any big changes. She said she felt more comfortable with the proposal now than she previously had. Ms. Dale said she felt the proposal was clear-headed and she felt better collaborating with other towns to make sure that the Town was always covered and always secure. She said they needed to work with the best people they can find. Mr. Farrell brought up that with other communities involved Hamilton will have a better chance for obtaining grants. Mr. Domelowicz said that the IT group had already received a grant. Being part of a region allows each Town to take a leadership role in applying for the grants and to be considered more often. For example, Hamilton can only apply some certain grants every three years, but with the other communities involved, a different community can take the lead each year so they can be applying every year. Mr. Olson said the more they regionalize, the better services they get for less money.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion to approve the regional IMA for the IT Collaborative. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Ms. Dale, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Knudsen, and Mr. Olson, (5-0) unanimous.

Creating Student Liaisons for Town Boards and Committees—Discussion

Mr. [William] Olson said in thinking about Everett’s presentation (E.J. Everett is a student who had addressed the BOS) as well as an email received from a student who voiced an opinion about the Meadowbrook, he was thinking about how important student voices are. He also noted that a student liaison position (non-voting associate member) was written into the charter for the HRC. Mr. Farrell mentioned the School Committee has a student member also. Mr. Olson said this led him to think about having student liaisons for other committees, such as the BOS, and to potentially to work it into the bylaw. Mr. Domelowicz said the BOS can do what it wants for itself and other boards and committees might want to consider it at the BOS’s urging, but wouldn’t be required to. Mr. Olson said he would explore the idea further.

Adjournment

At 8:24 p.m., Ms. Dale made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Knudsen, and Mr. Olson, (5-0) unanimous.

Ms. Dale will be the next person to help set the agenda with Chairman Olson and Mr. Domelowicz.

Prepared by:

Mary Alice Cookson 7-21-2021
Mary Alice Cookson Date
Minutes Secretary

Attest:

Darcy Dale 07-21-2021
Darcy Dale Date
BOS Clerk

Documents Discussed at Meeting:

- Minutes from BOS meeting and Hamilton BOS and FinCom Joint Meeting on May 17, 2021, Mary Alice Cookson
- Email entitled [External] Gardner Conservation Restriction Amendment with attachment: First Amendment to Conservation Restriction
- Email from Rebecca Gardner Campbell to Selectpersons dated June 4 with attached Conservation Restriction and First Amendment
- 2020-3-10_Cemetery Rate Spreadsheet
- June 2021 Appointment Status.