

TOWN OF ACTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

February 28, 2024

6:00pm

MINUTES – PENDING APPROVAL

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Winchell, Jr. called the meeting to order.

2. WARRANTS/BILLS

Signed.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Norwood made a motion to approve the agenda for February 28; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Norwood made a motion to approve the minutes from February 14; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WEEKLY UPDATE

Roux shared the hard copy draft of the Annual Town Report: we will review the report and confirm for printing.

Roux asked the Board for permission to close the Clerks office to regular business unrelated to the election next Tuesday. If someone has an immediate need for something non-election related, we will assist, however we would like to remain election focused. The Select Board agreed to close the Clerks office.

The schedule has been put together for the election: Roux reviewed the schedule.

Notice that nomination papers will be available in the Clerk's Office on March 5: up for Nomination is District 2 Road Commissioner; two School Committee seats (Gardner and Stanton); two select Board seats (the new Select Board seat, and McGurty). They are due back to the Clerk's Office no later than April 12.

The Road Commissioner posted the roads last night. Langley confirmed that he posted the roads last night. Winchell, Jr. advised the post becomes effective 24 hours once posted.

Notice from the Sheriff's Department that the third and final detail was completed on February 23, in the areas of Youngs Ridge Road, Goose Pond Road, Milton Mills Road, and Shapleigh Corner Road. A total of seven vehicles were stopped for speeding: one speed summons and six warnings.

Roux advised with McGurty's advice, she would like to add a tab to the website for community events: for local, free, community events, such as the Super Bowl Sledding party and no cost Easter Egg Hunts. McGurty suggested having a policy in place specifying types of events that could be shared on the community page. Norwood agreed to the community tab, especially events supporting the community. Winchell, Jr. just wants to make sure it doesn't go overboard. Roux suggested a disclaimer indicating the events are not supported by the Town of Acton.

The public hearing for the Flood Plain and Mooring Ordinance will be next Wednesday, March 6.

6. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

A. Code Enforcement / Zoning Questions

Jason Sevigny, CEO: provided part of the body of the ordinance which was amended last year and reviewed the document. Discussion occurred with Sevigny and Winchell, Jr. McGurty questioned if the exceptions permit someone to haul material off. Sevigny confirmed.

B. APAT / New Town Hall Live Feed

Mike Corey, APAT: Corey advised of the implementation of a new streaming service to more efficiently cover meetings, stream them immediately and get them on the internet for consumption as soon as possible. Town Hall Streams was present the other day to set up the new infrastructure. Corey continued: there is a switch in the back and a 30-second delay for the cameras to come on. There is a red light, confirming the camera in on and running.

Townhallstreams.com is the website to view the meetings live. Roux confirmed a link will be added to the town's website to link to the townhallstreams.com website. Corey confirmed. Videos will be archived locally and on YouTube still.

Roux questioned if meetings are scheduled for 3 hours and the meeting goes beyond 3 hours, will it continue to run live past the 3 hours that were scheduled. Corey advised that if the switch is in the on position, the meeting will continue to be recorded, however the live feed will end. The video footage will be pulled from the camera and added to the end of the video. Corey continued, the meeting will, by default, be set to 3 hours. If committees believe the time will be longer, they can notify APAT in advance.

Walsh questioned if the switch is turned off within the 3-hour window, will the time continue once the switch is turned back on or is it simply a 3-hour window. Corey advised it is a 3-hour window, i.e. 9-12pm. McGurty asked about training: Corey advised he has a printout with instructions.

C. Rec Director

Sam Singleton, Rec Director: Baseball is not as prominent as it once was, locally. The Rec Committee would like to send 3rd through 6th grade to Sanford and keep Pre-K-K for T-Ball and 1st and 2nd for Coach Pitch. The cost to go to Sanford will be \$105, versus \$20 for Acton Rec. To keep cost low for the Sanford program, Acton will provide a subsidy of \$85 per child to cover the difference in cost. The cost can be covered by using money for the field drag and uniforms in the budget. This will allow up to 37 kids to participate in the Sanford program.

McGurty requested these types of requests be put in writing to include cost breakdown and budget spending verse savings.

Roux questioned the cost breakdown for swimming, which is also outsourced. Singleton advised parents to pay \$45 and the town pays \$45, a 50/50 split. Norwood questioned why the town wouldn't do a 50/50 split for baseball, like swimming. Singleton advised this is not a 50/50 split due to the short notice, 3 days prior to close of registration. Winchell, Jr. advised this shouldn't affect what the town pays due to the Rec Committee lack of planning. Winchell, Jr. continued, stating this was addressed at a meeting previously to stay on top of registration to make sure the town stays ahead of the season and planning. Winchell, Jr. advised no issue with the town splitting the cost 50/50.

Winchell, Jr. questioned the plan to seed the baseball field. Singleton advised of discussions to use the field at the middle school for baseball. Winchell, Jr. continued that the rec field should not be discontinued because of lack of program use. Singleton advised of water/pooling issues. Winchell continued, indicating those concerns need to be addressed for potential repairs. McGurty also stressed the importance of maintenance of the fields and proper budgeting and care.

Roux advised the total budgeted cost of the drag and uniforms is \$3,200. If the town split the cost 50/50, the price the town would pay is \$52.50 per child. The town could sponsor up to 61 kids to play in Sanford this year.

Singleton advised the Cheering Competition group is currently registered for three competitions. Roux questioned uniforms: for competitive cheer, parents purchase participant uniforms; for regular season cheer, parents are provided participant uniforms for the season. Singleton advised no order has been made for cheer uniforms, due to backorder, but plans on ordering new uniforms as soon as possible.

7. LIAISON UPDATES

McGurty: Municipal Management / Warrant & Finance, APAT, Cemetery

McGurty spent some time on the school budget this week and met with representatives from the school.

Walsh: Fire Department, Transfer Station, Lincoln School

n/a

Norwood: School Department, Conservation / Forest, Mary Grant

Norwood attended the end of basketball and cheer banquet last night.

Winchell: Roads & Road Committee, Recreation Committee

n/a

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. 24-25 Budget Continuation

1) Warrant Articles / Recommendations

Article 8 – reviewed by Sevigny previously.

McGurty made a motion to recommend adoption of Article 8 as written; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

Article 34 – Grants/Donations.

McGurty made a motion to recommend adoption of Article 34 as written; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

Article 35 – Carry forward fund balances and allow balances to be appropriated to the designated departments: APAT, Cemetery, Earned Paid Leave, Forestry and Conservation, Forestry Reserves, and LRAP. Also, to authorize the town to carry forward but not appropriate the following articles: ambulance, capital improvement,

dam capital improvement, fire department capital improvement, and rec capital improvement (ARPA funds to be scratched).

McGurty made a motion to recommend adoption of Article 35 as written and amended; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

Article 36 – to see if the town will vote to transfer the unexpected balance of the FEMA Emergency Disaster Reserve Fund into the Unassigned Fund Balance and terminate the fund.

Walsh made a motion to recommend adoption of Article 36 as read; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

Article 44 – Will Langley pointed out a clerical error, which has been adjusted to reflect the correct amount of \$126,811. See if the town will raise and appropriate \$409,747 for dist. 1 and 2 winter maintenance in sand and salt stockpile.

Norwood made a motion to recommend the adoption of Article 44 as written; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

Article 47 – Culture removed.

McGurty made a motion to recommend adoption of Article 47 as written; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

Article 48 – Community and Social Services

McGurty made a motion to recommend the adoption of Article 48 as written; seconded by Walsh. Two in favor, two abstain from voting, zero opposed.

Roux advised moving forward, Warrant and Finance will meet with the School Committee on Thursday and vote for the school articles, that have been embedded into the Town Warrant Articles. Recommendations will be made, and articles will be re-reviewed as needed. Roux will be present at the meeting.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. FOI Requests

FOI received from Phil Caruso regarding a request for the TD Wealth financial statements for the town from December 2023 and January 2024. This request has been completed.

FOI received from Phil Caruso, requesting Partners Bank statement balances only summary for the town related to savings and/or investments from December 2023 and January 2024. This request will be sent off tomorrow.

B. Abatements

Abatement denial: 142-016: The Assessor reviewed the property in comparison with other sales and feels the property is justified at the value it is currently at.

Winchell, Jr. made a motion to sign the abatement denial from O'Donnell and Associates; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried. Signed.

D. Animal Welfare Contract

Roux provided the updated contract for Animal Welfare: the per capita rate has not changed, the population went up slightly, per the census bureau. The contract went up \$98.

Walsh made a motion to sign the updated contract with the Animal Welfare Society; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried. Signed.

D. Arnold Murray Email

Roux reviewed an email received from Arnold Murray regarding a review of the January 10, 2024, Select Board meeting, proposing a review of the cable franchise fee, which was a fee added to residents' cable bill to fund APAT. As the new system allows full online streaming and channel 26 is obsolete, Murray would like the fee dissolved.

Roux spoke with McGurty and then reached out to Fran Bradley, Director of Government Affairs, who reviewed franchise fee options with Roux.

McGurty advised at the time of implementation of the franchise fee, cable was the only option available to residents and the revenue received from the fee was over \$40,000. This year the revenue is down below \$30,000, as alternate options, such as streaming services, are available. McGurty suggested forgoing the franchise fee and creating an article in the warrant for the residents to vote. Winchell, Jr. agrees and suggests writing the article to abolish the cable franchise fee.

E. Executive Session 405 6 A.1. – Personnel / Treasurer Position

Norwood made a motion to go into Executive Session 405 6 A.1 – Personnel / Treasurer Position; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

Norwood made a motion to come out of Executive Session 405 6 A.1 – Personnel / Treasurer Position at 7:27pm; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

Due to the Treasurer resignation,

McGurty made a motion to appoint Lauren Hazekamp as Treasurer through May 1, 2024, effective immediately; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

Roux advised the deadline for payroll and bills is Monday at 10am. Roux will be sending out a memo. During this transition time, it is important to follow this deadline, as we will be working on Mondays to stay ahead while we fill these open positions.

F. Appointments

McGurty made a motion to elect Bevin Corbin as Election Clerk; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

n/a

Norwood advised of a Save the Date for a Town Clean-up, tentatively for April 27.

11. PENDING

A. Rec. Cancellation Policy

Walsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Website

13. MEMBERS PRESENT: David Winchell, Jr., Tom McGurty, Ed Walsh, Daniel Norwood, Jen Roux

14. ATTENDANCE: Jason Sevigny, Mike Corey, Sam Singleton,

