

**Town of Needham  
Board of Selectmen  
Minutes for January 12, 2016  
Powers Hall  
Needham Town Hall**

6:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: No Activity.

7:00 p.m. Call to Order:

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman Maurice P. Handel. Those present were Matthew D. Borrelli, Marianne B. Cooley, Daniel P. Matthews, John A. Bulian, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, and Recording Secretary Mary Hunt.

Mr. Handel announced the matter concerning 27 Charles Street has been withdrawn.

7:00 p.m. Public Hearing - Eversource Energy: 147 Livingston Circle  
Maureen Carroll, Eversource Energy representative appeared before the Board requesting permission to install approximately 10 feet of conduit in Livingston Circle. Ms. Carroll said this work is necessary to provide underground electric service to a new home at 147 Livingston Circle, Needham.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said all paperwork is in order.

Mr. Handel invited public comment. No comments were made.

Mr. Handel asked for Board comment. No comments were made.

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 10 feet of conduit in Livingston Circle. This work is necessary to provide underground electric service to 147 Livingston Circle, Needham.**

**Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved: 5-0.**

7:01 p.m. Public Hearing - Eversource Energy: 86 Livingston Circle  
Maureen Carroll, Eversource Energy representative appeared before the Board requesting permission to install approximately 36 feet of conduit in Livingston Circle. Ms. Carroll said this work is necessary to provide underground electric service to a new home at 86 Livingston Circle, Needham.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said all paperwork is in order.

Mr. Handel invited public comment. No comments were made.

Mr. Handel asked for Board comment. No comments were made.

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 36 feet of conduit in Livingston Circle. This work is necessary to provide underground electric service to 86 Livingston Circle, Needham.  
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved: 5-0.**

7:02 p.m.

Public Hearing - Street Light Consolidation Proposal:

Richard P. Merson, Director of Public Works and Bob Mackie, Senior Associate, BETA Group appeared before the Board to discuss a proposal to consolidate the number of street lights in Needham.

Mr. Handel read a statement clarifying that the purpose of the public hearing is to gather public comment on the subject of street lights in the Town of Needham. He said, unlike most other public hearings, there is no option or proposal for the Board of Selectmen to take any action. He said in the fall of 2015 the Board of Selectmen agreed the Town would study the inventory of more than 3,000 street lights and determine if they met requirements, serve their intended purpose, and are well placed. In addition, he commented, the Town wanted information on the metering status and associated costs. The Board, he said, also agreed there were serious public concerns about lights, safety, and the environment, and that a public hearing would be held to make known the results of the study and gather public input about street lights.

Mr. Merson said Needham has had street lights for many years, and gave a brief background since 2003 when the Annual Town Meeting approved a proposal to purchase street lights from Boston Edison. He said in 2008 funding was sought from the Annual Town Meeting for the conversion of traffic signals to LED lights, as well as an additional study of the inventory of street lights. He commented the Town was also approached in 2008/2009 by Boston Edison with incentive grants to convert street lights from mercury vapor to high pressure sodium vapor. He said the study commenced in 2011 and completed in 2013. He noted while it took some time to complete the study, the inventory and analysis of potential street light elimination is now known.

Bob Mackie, BETA Group presented a Powerpoint presentation focusing on the Scope, Field Data Collection, Data Analysis and Results, Candidate Removal Lights and potential Electrical Costs Savings, and Next Steps. Mr. Mackie said of the total number of street lights (2,860), 431 (15%) have been identified as removal candidates, and an additional 241 (8.4%) have been identified as potential removal candidates. He said removal of unnecessary or redundant fixtures will impact both energy and maintenance costs for the Town.

Mr. Handel reiterated the public hearing is not regarding any motion or action by the Board of Selectmen to remove street lights. He said the Board is merely revealing the information contained in the study and gathering public comment. He

noted the significant amount of correspondence already received by the Board from the public, and the overwhelming majority is against removing street lights due to safety.

Mr. Handel opened the Public Hearing.

Gerald Rovner, 48 Cynthia Road asked if the Police Chief and Fire Chief commented on the recommendations made in the report. He asked about the cost of replacing lights scheduled for removal.

Michael Litchman, 78 Coolidge Avenue asked if the report studied lighting on sidewalks. He suggested the stretch of road between Great Plain Avenue and Wilshire Park on Harris Avenue be better lit as it is very dark under any circumstance.

Gerry Bellomo, 111 Grosvenor Road suggested additional criteria could be used in the study, including removal of lights over a fire hydrant, school zones, and bus routes. He asked if light poles were physically going to be removed.

Dale McCarthy, 72 Stevens Road said she is against the proposal to remove lights, noting Needham has 4 rail stations with a significant amount of pedestrian traffic. She said many residents walk dogs at night and parking near schools need more light. Ms. McCarthy pointed out the See-Click-Fix system used by the Town indicates 90 reports of street light outages in the past 3 months. She asked about LED lights, solar lights, and maintenance costs.

Felicia Mathias, 354 Webster Street said she is concerned about children walking at night from Needham High School.

Tim Newhard, 44 Mayo Avenue asked if BETA Group is associated with BETA Lighting, Inc. He asked about the 400 ft. - 500 ft. spacing of lights, noting most towns use 100 ft. - 400 ft. as the average distance between poles. He wanted to know if tree trimming was part of the study.

Paul Good, 30 Walnut Street said on behalf of the Needham Business Association members felt a decrease in lighting would negatively affect crime and safety. He said the NBA encourages continued lighting around the business district. Mr. Good said it is important Needham maintain a feeling of safety for people walking at night.

Anne Weinstein, 3 Carey Road echoed the sentiment of Mr. Good. She commented about lighting at the corner of Webster Street and Carey Road saying some things that look like obvious efficiencies are not necessarily the case.

Mr. Handel asked Mr. Merson to respond to questions from the speakers.

Mr. Merson said the option of using LED light bulbs is something the Town will continue to study, relative to a town-wide conversion. He said he did not believe the pedestrian portion of the sidewalk that is lit was considered when the criteria for the study were set. Mr. Merson said the plan would be to remove the entire fixture and pole. He said maintenance costs are on a per light basis for the total inventory, and the contract calls for the vendor to fix lights within 30 days of notification, which can be tracked on the See-Click-Fix system.

Mr. Mackie commented on spacing of light fixtures saying 400 ft. - 500ft. continues to provide a pathway for drivers. Mr. Mackie said tree vegetation was not a factor in the study. He said BETA Group is not associated with any light manufacturer. He said the full report has been submitted and is on the Town's website.

Mr. Handel asked for Board comment.

Mr. Bulian thanked residents for attending the public hearing. He said he is not in favor of removing street lights. He said that as part of the Boston metropolitan area which is built-up and residential, people are accustomed and comforted by street lights. He said the study is good, but that he can not support the proposal.

Mr. Borrelli echoed many of Mr. Bulian's comments. He thanked the public for their comments. He said the Town could look into LED lights to save money, not spacing light fixtures farther apart. He said the report is valuable for discussion now and in the future, and asked about the process and cost of adding lights, citing Harris Avenue. He also asked about maintenance of trees around lights.

Mr. Merson said the Town will consider adding lights if there is a valid reason, i.e.: a nearby crosswalk or gap in the service area. Mr. Mackie said the cost is \$350 for equipment, plus \$50 every year thereafter for energy. Mr. Merson said tree trimming has not been considered, but if an inquiry is received the Town would possibly take action through the Parks and Forestry Division.

Ms. Cooley said when the study started there was an anticipation there would be greater savings than shown. She said the information is useful as a first step, but there are other things that could be considered. She said, generally speaking, she would be in favor of the Town supporting the concept of the "dark skies" guidelines.

Mr. Matthews asked about maintenance, removal, and life expectancy of fixtures. He asked about best practices regarding spacing of fixtures in other communities.

Mr. Merson said a vendor maintains the fixtures and that the life expectancy of the fixture is 25 years or more. He said the Town has not talked with other communities regarding the study.

Mr. Handel reiterated the Board has merely reviewed the study, noting the overwhelming opinion from residents is to leave the street lights “as is” in the Town, with the possible exception of removing lights from the payment schedule that are not in use. He noted there could be some circumstances in Needham where a light may be removed, but thought a public process would be necessary to take action. He said he does not foresee any changes being made to street lights.

Ms. Cooley reminded Mr. Handel regarding police comment to the study.

John Schlittler, Chief of Police said there are concerns with removing lights in areas such as the business district, school zones, elderly housing, playgrounds, and parks. He said any action would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine public safety.

Mr. Handel closed the public hearing.

7:55 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:  
**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.**

**APPOINTMENTS: No Appointments were made at this meeting.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. **Accept a \$250 donation from Maryruth & Richard Perras made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund Committee.**
2. **Approve a 2016 Weekday Entertainment License for New Garden located at 40 Chestnut Place, Needham.**
3. **Approve a 2016 Sunday Entertainment Licenses for Sai Restaurant, Inc. d/b/a Masala Art located at 990 Great Plain Avenue, Needham and Zucchini Gold, LLC d/b/a The Rice Barn located at 1037 Great Plain Avenue, Needham.**
- 4.\* **Accept a \$200 donation made to the Needham Health Department’s Gift of Warmth fund from Mary Clare McEnery Siegel, a Needham resident.**
5. **Approve minutes from November 10, 2015 and November 24, 2015.**
- 6.\* **Approve a request from the Needham Track Club to hold “The Great Bear Run” road race on Sunday, May 15, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the grounds of the Pollard Middle School. The route has been approved by the following departments, DPW, Police, Fire and Park and Recreation.**
- 7.\* **Approve road race event form from Hilary Ryan of The Charles River Center, to hold its 5K race and 1 mile walk in Needham on September 25, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The route of the race has been approved by the following departments: DPW, Police, Fire and Park and Recreation.**
- 8.\* **Water & Sewer Abatement Order #1210**
- 9.\* **Accept a \$300 donation made to the Needham Health Department’s Traveling Meals Program from Amy Sherman, a resident of Canton, MA.**
- 10.\* **Approve Executive Session minutes from November 10, 2015 and December 22, 2015 and Open Session minutes from December 22, 2015.**

11. **Accept a \$500 donation made to the Park and Recreation Commission’s Gift Fund from Viewpoint Creative. The company did a brief video shooting in the Town Forest and made the donation for trail improvements.**
12. **Grant permission for the following residents to hold block parties:**

Name	Address	Party Location	Party Date	Party Rain Date	Party Time
Lisa Vergara	21 Greenwood Ave.	Greenwood Ave.	7/16/16	7/17/16	1pm-10pm

**Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

7:55 p.m. Downtown Improvement Project - Phase 1:  
 Richard P. Merson, Director of Public Works and Bob Mackie, Senior Associate, BETA Group appeared before the Board to discuss the design of the proposed Downtown Improvement Project - Phase 1.

Mr. Merson said the Downtown Improvement Project has been in the works for some time. He said the current design was built on the recommendation of the Downtown Streetscape Working Group and comments provided by the Board of Selectmen at previous meetings. He commented design will be finalized and construction planned for summer 2016.

Mr. Mackie presented a Powerpoint presentation about the design of the proposed Downtown Improvement Project - Phase 1. He discussed the Town Center Streetscape Plan and showed renderings of the Town Common/Great Plain Avenue. He said proper timing of the traffic signals is the key element of Phase 1 and said much conversation centered on the edge of the Town Common, flagpole, memorial, and amenities. He commented on handicapped parking in front of the Town Common.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on the number of bollards and their use in lighting crosswalks. She said 2 granite columns under the flagpole could be used for memorial plaques and that the Town will be seeking input from the Veterans community. She said an important feature is that the diagonal crosswalks allow for diagonal crossing, particularly at Dedham Avenue. Mr. Mackie discussed the possibility of a fountain on the island at the corner of Great Plain Avenue and Dedham Avenue, and other design elements.

Mr. Handel asked for Board comment.

Mr. Bulian asked if there were any concerns regarding snow plowing at the flush edge of the Town Common.

Mr. Merson said snow plowing is always a challenge, as curbing would normally stop a vehicle from going on to the sidewalk, but said it is a manageable risk with the plow operator.

Mr. Borrelli suggested a design more reflective of Needham rather than a compass in the area in front of the memorial. He said perhaps the seal of Needham could be used. He said he liked the idea of the fountain in the island at the corner of Great Plain Avenue and Dedham Avenue.

Ms. Fitzpatrick noted a meeting will be held on February 23, 2016 with business and property owners in the downtown to discuss construction.

Ms. Cooley said she like the design and will be interested in seeing sidewalk elements. She commented it is nice to have public art in the design. She commented on uplighting at the entrances to the Common and asked if there is a plan for turning the lights off.

Mr. Mackie said turning of lights off has not yet been considered.

Mr. Matthews asked if current technology of pavers in the crosswalks will hold up under the traffic and weather. Mr. Mackie said yes. Mr. Matthews asked about snow removal and safety. Mr. Merson commented the technique of snow removal will be different in areas such as the Town Common where improvements have been made. He said it is an evolving process.

Mr. Handel noted many groups came together to produce a design that will make a difference in the quality of the downtown area and enhance the business district.

8:15 p.m. Annual Audit Presentation:  
Scott C. McIntire, CPA, Melanson Heath & Company P.C. and Dave Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance updated the Board as to the recently completed audit of the Town's general purpose financial statements for FY2015 and their recommendations.

Mr. Davison said the general finances of the Town are fine. He said year end results are consistent with the last few years and fund balances are what would be expected of a community of similar credit rating.

Mr. McIntire said the audit is a timely produced financial statement and that the books and records of the Town are in good working order for the year ended June 30, 2015. He said key account balances were reconciled on a regular and timely basis with no significant audit adjustments. He said the Town has a net OPEB asset that is actuarially determined and the GASB 68 (net pension liability) is also an actuarially determined liability. Mr. McIntire reviewed the long term perspective financial statements and said the statements are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for local governments in the United States. He

reviewed the Managements Discussion Analysis, and said it is a great resource. He commented on the Long Term Perspective Financial Statements, noting the GASB 68 requirement to record net pension liability on the balance sheet. Mr. McIntire referred to page 18 of the report noting the net pension liability of approximately \$51.3 million. He said a year ago, the figure was not required to be on the face of the balance sheet and that the major swing in the account balance is directly attributable to the requirement to implement and record the net pension liability. He said while it is important to point it out, credit rating agencies and financial institutions have always known most communities have had net pension liabilities. Mr. McIntire referred to page 20 of the report noting the Unassigned Fund Balance as of June 30, 2015 of \$15.2 million (or 12% of operating expenditures) and that it is consistent with prior balance sheets. Mr. McIntire referred to revenues and expenditures on page 22 of the report noting a change in fund balances of approximately \$971,000. He said that is what is driving the increase in fund balances on page 20. He commented on budget vs. actuarial statement on page 24, noting consistent and favorable operating results. He commented on the Enterprise Fund Balances, Contributory Retirement Fund, and the OPEB Trust Fund. Mr. McIntire noted the management letter and recommends the Town resolve some un-cashed checks, improve departmental receipt procedures at the Health Department, and prepare for some new single audit requirements.

Mr. Handel asked for Board comment.

Mr. Borrelli asked how realistic is it to attain the recommendations for the prior and current year.

Mr. Davison said the Treasurer's office is working on the un-cashed checks, the Finance Department will continue training departments to improve departmental receipt procedures, and noted the School Department is preparing for new single audit requirements.

Mr. Handel said the financial side of town life is very complex and Needham has consistently performed well. He thanked Mr. Davison and Mr. McIntire for the audit presentation.

Ms. Fitzpatrick noted Michele Vaillencourt, Town Accountant and Evie Poness, Town Treasurer are in attendance.

8:55 p.m.

ALICE Program - Enhanced Security Procedures:

Dan Gutekanst, Superintendent of Schools, Tom Campbell, Director of Human Resources, Needham Public Schools, and John Schlittler, Chief of Police appeared before the Board to discuss enhanced security procedures planned for the Needham Public Schools.

Dr. Gutekanst said the schools and the Town collaborate on a daily basis, and that school and public safety is the top priority. He said sadly these days more time is being spent thinking about school safety.



Dr. Campbell said school safety is a sobering topic due to the rise in school shootings since 1993. He said the school district has examined the ALICE protocol over the last 18 months and how Needham would respond to a school shooting. Dr. Campbell explained ALICE is an acronym which stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate. He said it is not designed to be sequential. He discussed the current traditional lockdown procedure, in use for many years, saying it no longer provides the maximum amount of safety for students. He said a number of reports from the FBI and Homeland Security indicates these agencies are no longer recommending the traditional lockdown model.

John Schlittler, Chief of Police explained the Town has a quick response, but have realized the action by school staff and administration will have a huge impact on the outcome of a school shooting. He noted active shooter events from 2000-2013 commenting on Columbine, Virginia Tech, and Sandy Hook.

Dr. Campbell discussed Passive & Static to 'Enhanced Lockdown' noting 3 types of responses include freeze, flight, or fight. He said students have been taught to respond to fire and stranger danger, and that now students will be taught how to respond to an active shooter emergency.

Dr. Campbell and Chief Schlitter detailed the ALICE protocol.

Dr. Campbell said ALICE provides classroom educators more options to the traditional huddle, with evacuation being the primary consideration if they can, or to fight back if life is a stake. He said training is beginning with presentations to the School Committee, PTC's, every principal and assistant, and members of the Health and Safety Committee. He said conversations will then be with students, presented in an age appropriate manner. He said by the fall 2016 all schools will have practiced and completed ALICE training with students and staff. He said training will continue throughout the year, much like fire drill training.

Mr. Handel asked if school buses were considered as part of the ALICE training.

Dr. Campbell said yes, and that the district-wide safety committee will, including the Transportation Coordinator, will attend training.

Mr. Handel asked for Board comment.

Mr. Matthews said it is a worrisome topic, but the Town is doing the right thing.

Mr. Borrelli said the conversation is tough and sobering. He said ALICE training is invaluable.

Mr. Bulian noted the training and practice is different for different ages.

Dr. Gutekanst said on February 24, 2016 Chief Schlitter, Dr. Campbell, and Ms. Bibbo, Principal at Pollard Middle School will hold a parent and community information session at 7 p.m. He said information is also available on the school district website.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said she had an opportunity to participate in some of the ALICE training, and that it is an empowering life skill. She encouraged people to attend the session on February 24, 2016.

Dr. Campbell said the Town of Needham will be hosting ALICE training on June 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, not only for Needham schools but for surrounding towns.

The Board thanked Dr. Gutekanst, Dr. Campbell, and Chief Schlittler for their work.

9:15 p.m.

Town Manager:

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager appeared before the Board with 4 items to discuss:

1. Open and Close Special Town Meeting Warrant

Ms. Fitzpatrick reviewed items in the draft Special Town Meeting Warrant dated February 10, 2016. She asked the Board consider choosing a snow date in the event of severe weather, suggesting February 22nd or February 24th. The Board agreed to either date.

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board vote to open and close the warrant for the February 10, 2016 Special Town Meeting, subject to minor technical corrections to be made by the Town Manager, Town Counsel and Bond Counsel.**

**Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

2. Open Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed items contained in the draft Preliminary List of Warrant Articles for the 2016 Annual Town Meeting and asked the Board open the Warrant. She noted the Warrant is scheduled to be closed on February 9, 2016.

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board vote to open the Warrant for the 2016 Annual Town Meeting.**

**Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

3. Solar Kiosk Naming

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board approve the naming of the new kiosk intended to provide the public with information about the solar array at the RTS in honor of Sam (“Solar Sam”) Weihe.**

**Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

Mr. Borrelli thanked David E. Svendsen for attending the meeting and for providing documentation about Mr. Weihe.

4. FY2017 Budget Consultation & Priorities

Ms. Fitzpatrick updated the Board on the FY2017 budget submissions and recommended the Board adopt budget priorities for the year. Among other items, she noted the proposed budget increase in the Emergency Management Program structure. She reminded the Board that the priorities were discussed at the Selectmen's meeting on November 24, 2015.

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board vote to adopt a Fiscal Year 2017 Statement of Operating Budget Priorities.**

**Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

9:25 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. Massachusetts Municipal Association Resolutions

The Board discussed the resolutions proposed for action at the 2016 Annual Business Meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Association and authorized Ms. Fitzpatrick to cast a ballot accordingly.

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board vote to approve the following resolutions and authorize Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager to cast a ballot accordingly at the MMA Annual Business Meeting:**

1. **Proposed Resolution Supporting a Strong and Enduring Local-State Federal Partnership to Protect the Environment**
2. **Proposed Resolution Ensuring a Strong and Enduring Fiscal Partnership Between Cities and Towns and State Government in Fiscal 2017 and Beyond.**

**Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

Mr. Matthews noted as designee, Ms. Fitzpatrick has the authority to vote as she thought was in the best interest of the Town regarding any other matter that might come before meeting. Mr. Handel said Ms. Fitzpatrick has the full confidence of the Board of Selectmen.

2. Committee Reports

No Reports were made.

9:30 p.m. Executive Session: (Exceptions 3 & 6)

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to enter into Executive Session.**

**Exception 3 - To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.**

**Exception 6 - To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. Not to return to open session prior to adjournment.**

**Second: Mr. Borrelli. Mr. Handel polled the Board. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

A list of all documents used at this Board of Selectmen meeting are available at:  
<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID=>

Note: The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.