

Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, December 22, 2020
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89093905788>

5:15 p.m. Executive Session: Exception 6 - Acquisition of Real Property
A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Maurice P. Handel. Those present were Matthew D. Borrelli, Marianne B. Cooley, Daniel P. Matthews, John Bulian, and Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board vote to enter into Executive Session.

Exception 6 - To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

5:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: No Activity.

6:00 p.m. Call to Order:
The public portion of the Select Board meeting of December 22, 2020, was convened by Chairman Maurice Handel. In addition to the Select Board, Dave Davison, ATM/Finance, Katie King ATM/Operations, and Recording Secretary Mary Hunt joined the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Handel announced this open meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020 due to the current state of emergency from the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. He noted all public gatherings have been suspended as advised and directed by the Commonwealth. And, as such, suspending the requirement of the open meeting law to have all meetings in a public, accessible, physical location while encouraging and allowing members of all public bodies to participate remotely. Mr. Handel stated the meeting will include public comment and the Needham Select Board and all attendees are convening by Zoom, as posted on the Town's website identifying how the public may join. He said all supporting documents used at this meeting are available on the Town's website www.needhamma.gov.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that this meeting be continued to the Select Board's next scheduled meeting on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, if a technical problem develops that makes it impossible for the Select Board to conduct the meeting in this format.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:02 p.m. Hazard Mitigation Plan:

Kim Donovan, Compliance Coordinator, DPW and Michael Lethin, Emergency Management Administrator presented the Board with the Town's 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan. This Plan was reviewed by the Select Board on June 9, 2020, approved by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency on August 10, 2020, and received Approval Pending Adoption from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on October 9, 2020. If the Plan is formally adopted by the Select Board, FEMA will formally approve the Plan for the next five years, making the Town eligible for FEMA mitigation grants.

Ms. Donovan presented a PowerPoint presentation titled "Needham Hazard Mitigation Plan Adoption," dated December 22, 2020. She commented on the steps already completed, plan approval and adoption, finalizing the Hazard Mitigation Plan, and implementing the plan.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board vote to adopt the Town of Needham's Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

Ms. Fitzpatrick informed the Board that Mr. Lethin was recently called up to serve on active military duty and will be out of the country for some time. She wished him well, and the Board thanked him for his service to the country.

6:13 p.m. Public Hearing: Eversource Energy Grant of Location - George Aggott Road
It was noted that Maureen Carroll, Eversource Energy representative was unable to attend the public hearing. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated the grant of location is straightforward, with no issues, and that all paperwork is in order.

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

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 8 feet of conduit in George Aggott Road. This work is necessary to provide underground electric service to 26 George Aggott Road, Needham.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:15 p.m. COVID-19 Update:
Tim McDonald, Director of Health & Human Services updated the Board regarding the Town's COVID-19 response. Mr. McDonald showed various graphs. It was noted that Governor Baker announced a series of "rollbacks" taking effect December 26, 2020 for a two to three-week period aimed at reducing the number of people allowed to gather inside and outside, or capacity limits for different industries, including restaurants. He stated the number of cases rose significantly since Thanksgiving. Discussion ensued on community risk level, positivity trends by age, and clusters driving transmission. Mr. McDonald noted strict protocols and safety measures in place in Needham schools have really made a difference in safety for students and staff.

Board discussion ensued on the safety of indoor dining, air filtration, and distribution of the vaccine.

Ms. Cooley suggested posting a list of restaurants who made the investment in updating their air filters, as it could be helpful to residents. She congratulated Mr. McDonald on being quoted in the Washington Post regarding Covid-19.

Mr. Matthews commented on mutation of the disease and overreaction. He said the public health response needs to be calm, consistent, and persistent for at least the next five months.

Mr. McDonald commented on virus mutations, saying at this point, there is no evidence the mutation will affect the effectiveness of vaccines. He noted documentation shows the disease appears to be a little more transmissible, but not more lethal. He suggested residents focus on keeping themselves safe.

6:46 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:
Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.

APPOINTMENTS

- 1. Needham Council for Arts and Culture Samantha Hoff (term expires 6/30/2023)
- 2. Needham Council for Arts and Culture Heather Simmons (term expires 6/30/2023)
- 3. Golf Course Advisory Committee Paul Brockmann (term expires 6/30/2023)

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. **Accept the following donations made to the Needham Health Division’s Gift of Warmth Fund: \$100 from Philip & Lynda Coburn, Needham residents; and \$100 from Shahin Solisagafi, a resident of Maryland.**
- 2. **Accept the following donations made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: \$1000 from ND Donuts, LLC and \$500 from the Petrini Corporation.**
- 3. **Water and Sewer Abatement Order #1301.**
- 4. **Accept the following donations made to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Maintenance Donate Fund: \$100 from Mrs. Lena Sostilio, \$25 from Harold & Carol Gershman, \$100 from Joseph Curtin, and \$100 from the LT Manson H. Carter Post 2498 VFW.**
- 5. **Approve Open Session minutes of 11/24/2020, 12/1/2020, & 12/8/2020; and Executive Session minutes of 11/1/2020 & 12/1/2020.**

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:47 p.m. Director of Public Works:
Carys Lustig, Interim Director of Public Works spoke with the Board regarding three items:

1. 2020 Public Water System Award

Ms. Lustig, along with Sean Harrington, Superintendent of Water & Sewer and Steve Cusick, Water Treatment Plant Manager spoke with the Board regarding the 2020 Public Water System Award received by the Town from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Drinking Water Program (MassDEP/DWP) for its excellent compliance in calendar year 2019.

Mr. Cusick thanked staff of the DPW for their work, saying receiving the award was a group effort.

Mr. Harrington said everyone in the department helped in achieving the award, and he thanked the staff for their work.

It was noted the world, as we know it, has been transformed since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the 2020 Public Water System Awards Program is no exception. This year's program was strictly compliance-based; the systems that have had no enforcement or compliance issues for 2019 and the prior five years (which is rather an impressive feat to achieve) are included. Out of 779 community and non-transient non-community systems in the state you are in the top 12.1%.

The Select Board and Ms. Fitzpatrick congratulated the staff of the Department of Public Works on receiving the award and thanked them for their work on behalf of the residents.

2. Tree City USA - 25th Year

Edward Olsen, Superintendent Parks & Forestry told the Board that for the 25th year Needham has been recognized as a Tree City, USA. He said receiving the award was a group effort, and that he is fortunate to have a great staff of certified arborists. He said becoming a certified arborist is a challenge and that Needham is probably one of the only towns in the state that has five certified arborists. Mr. Olsen thanked the Board for their continued support.

The Board thanked Mr. Olsen and staff of the Forestry Division for their hard work, congratulating them on the well-deserved recognition.

3. How the RTS Has Adapted to COVID-19 Protocols

Ms. Lustig, along with Greg Smith, Superintendent of Recycling and Solid Waste updated the Board on ways the RTS has adapted to COVID-19 by putting various protocols in place to keep staff and residents safe at the transfer station. Mr. Smith said major changes include splitting staff into A & B shifts who work alternating weeks, reconfiguring the entrance to direct residents to various locations at the site, putting jersey barriers in place to maintain social distancing, and closing re-use areas, among other things. Mr. Smith said staff has done a fabulous job and he is proud of the employees.

Discussion ensued on the amount of trash and recycling at the RTS, as people are working at home during the pandemic.

The Board thanked Mr. Smith and the RTS staff for their work.

Ms. Fitzpatrick thanked the Select Board for their support while making changes at the RTS. She said it is amazing that during the bleakest months, the RTS has remained open every day to accept residential trash. She noted the current RTS staff are probably the best and most professional group of people ever to work there.

7:11 p.m.

Town Manager:

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager spoke with the Board regarding five items:

1. COVID-19 Expense Update

Mr. Davison, Assistant Town Manager said the amounts expended and paid have been reimbursed by the Commonwealth under the CARES program. He stated the deadline for the CARES program will be extended from December 30, 2020 to December 31, 2021, which he said is helpful for expenses that will happen after December 30, 2020. Mr. Davison said the Town has also prepared a submission for reimbursement from FEMA, noting eligible COVID expenses will be reimbursed at \$0.75 cents on the dollar.

Ms. Fitzpatrick added the School Committee, in conjunction with the Finance Committee are cautiously optimistic that supplemental appropriation will not be needed. She said the potential extension to access allocated CARES funds is very helpful.

2. Budget Priorities

Ms. Fitzpatrick reminded the Board that it reviewed the draft budget priorities at its meeting on November 24, 2020. She recommended the Board approve the proposed budget priorities for the FY2022 Operating and Capital Budgets.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board approve the proposed budget priorities for FY2022 Operating and Capital Budgets.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

3. Approval of FY2021-FY2022 Goals

Ms. Fitzpatrick recommended the Board approve its statement of goals for FY2021-FY2022.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board approve its statement of goals for FY2021-FY2022.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

Ms. Cooley observed that while the Board is focused on COVID-19 and racial equity work, there are people in Town working to accomplish goals in many areas. She said work on normal and typical goals continues on every front.

Mr. Matthews said there are specific goals and targets representing many large projects that have been adjusted due to COVID-19, noting Needham is in a good position for the coming months.

4. Approve the FY2022-FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan

Ms. Fitzpatrick recommended the Board approve the FY2022 - FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan for transmission to the Finance Committee. She commented on spending priorities and funding sources for FY2022, and a potential overage at the Public Safety Complex due to problems associated with groundwater at Station 2, and a higher than estimated cost to demolish the building on the Ridge Hill property. She commented on future anticipated projects and funding sources to be recommended involving several large ticket items not being immediately recommended for funding in May, including the Emery Grover building, the DPW building, and proposed school master plan projects which require more discussion over the next year. Ms. Fitzpatrick noted an updated Facility Financing Plan will be presented to the Select Board in late February 2021.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board approve the FY2022 - FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan for transmittal to the Finance Committee.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

5. CPA Project Requests Review & Endorsement

Ms. Fitzpatrick reviewed funding requests filed with the CPA for consideration including the Town Hall clock restoration, Town Common restoration, Fisher Street trailhead construction, and design funds for sediment removal at the Town reservoir. She asked for a vote to endorse these projects, which are under jurisdiction of the Select Board.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board vote to endorse CPA funding applications for Town Hall Clock Restoration, Town Common Restoration and Beautification, Fisher Street Trailhead Construction, and Town Reservoir Sediment Removal.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

7:26 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. Committee Reports

Ms. Cooley reported the Needham Unites Against Racism Initiative met last night and heard from Dan Gutekanst, Schools Superintendent who discussed the work of the REAL Coalition and about an equity audit shaping their work. She commented on the racial literacy curriculum in the elementary schools, a course at the high school related to having uncomfortable and difficult conversations beginning in 9th grade, and goal setting as part of racial equity. She noted during the tenure of Dr.

Gutekanst, the population of students of color has increased approximately 8% to 22% of the district, while staffing numbers have not changed. Ms. Cooley said the discussion was rich and members were engaged, much of it focused on how NUARI can help build support for the schools as they take on the work, and how are we certain students feel supported, safe, and like they belong. It was noted the next NUARI meetings are scheduled for January 4, January 11, and January 25, 2021, and recordings of all meetings are on the Town's website for viewing.

Mr. Borrelli concurred with Ms. Cooley's comments, noting discussion was robust and people realize how much is being done on many levels throughout Needham Public Schools. He said work will continue into the long term.

Mr. Matthews reported on the recent passing of lifetime resident Anthony Cefalo on November 29, 2020 at the age of 93. He said Mr. Cefalo was active for decades in Needham and participated in much of the positive change in the community. He said Mr. Cefalo stepped up in many different civic activities over the years, noting Mr. Cefalo is responsible for the construction of the Vietnam War Memorial, built at a very difficult time following the war. Mr. Matthews said Mr. Cefalo is part of a generation largely gone, but his advice and example was extensive and solid. He said Mr. Cefalo was a great contributor to the Town and a friend to many, including members of the Select Board.

Mr. Handel noted Mr. Cefalo always thought of the Needham community, saying one of his last acts was the donation of a scraper to the Needham History Center and Museum.

Mr. Borrelli said Mr. Cefalo was a great friend to his father and family, his contributions to Needham were many, and he was also a great friend to the veterans.

7:38 p.m.

Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Borrelli that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting on Tuesday, December 22, 2020.

Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting is available at:

<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID=>