

Approved on March 16, 2023

Select Board
March 2, 2023
Via Zoom Remote Conferencing*

Stanley Wysocki
Robert Czekanski

Jenny Jacobsen, Asst. to the Town Admin.
Not Present: Don Lowe, Town Administrator

Mr. Wysocki called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

POLICE CHIEF UPDATES

Introduction of New Officer

Chief Nelson introduced Officer Madolyn Dyke who joins the department as a graduate of Lowell Police Academy. Ms. Dyke has a criminal justice degree from Johnson and Wales and previously worked for the City of Framingham. The Board welcomed Ms. Dyke who was in attendance.

Comfort Dog

Chief Nelson updated the Board on the proposed inclusion of a comfort dog for the department. Officer McCarthy researched and found Boonefield Labradors that will have a litter in June of this year. There will be 4 weeks of onsite training which will hopefully be complete during school vacation. Chief Nelson has a plan for a backup SRO if necessary. Julie Murphy has generously presented a check in the amount of \$10K to cover the cost of the dog. There is no cost to the Town.

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 to approve the implementation of the police comfort dog program. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

Nashoba Regional Building Project Update

Superintendent Kirk Downing and School Committee member representative Amy Cohen were in attendance. Mr. Downing provided a board brief #3 which included a conceptual design which is evolving to reduce the proximity to the wetland buffer zone. There will be tours of the facility on April 1st, April 29th. and September 9th. Mr. Downing explained that public resources cannot be used to communicate the building project. Ms. Cohen noted the form on the building committee page and social media pages for signing up a tour of the facilities to understand the existing building conditions. Mr. Downing reported that the project is on schedule for estimates to come in by May which puts the project on schedule for a September town meeting.

Regional Agreement Amendment Advisory Committee

Committee representatives Brian Boyle and Lorraine Romasco were in attendance and reported on the final version of the regional agreement. Ms. Romasco was satisfied with the outcome on the audit issue. The committee adopted a forensic audit and the school committee will see the results of the audit first. Mr. Boyle explained that all constituents had slightly different objectives. Under Massachusetts General Law, the Commissioner of Education needs to approve the agreement. Mr. Boyle explained that there was a lot of back and forth, which was frustrating at times, but he was comfortable with the end-product.

Mr. Wysocki had concern about the lack of communication between the single representative in contact with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) about the agreement and the towns representatives to the RAAAC. Mr. Wysocki also shared concerns that in section 6 there was a lot of discussion of changing the language and the word prepare was stricken. It appears that the school committee is abdicating their responsibility to scrutinize the district's budget. Mr. Boyle pointed out that Massachusetts General Law states that they have an obligation in determining the budget, not just adopting it. Ms. Romasco pointed out that the school committee is ultimately responsible for the budget. The lack of the word "prepare" does not shift that responsibility.

School Committee Member Amy Cohen noted that the committee gets regular updates as the budget is prepared. The process for gathering feedback from the public at the annual hearing which is scheduled for March 8th, 2023. It is not able to happen until then because the district does not have the revenue streams from the state. Mr. Wysocki

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corrected that his concern is that the school committee is not asking questions of the administration. Ms. Cohen pointed out the superintendent held a meeting with the three finance committees to provide the opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Boyle pointed out that there is language in the agreement that requires the school committee to give due consideration to proposition 2 ½ when adopting a budget.

Mr. Boyle commented that Ms. Romasco was invaluable to the process due to the specificity with which she could speak to the financial improprieties of the past due to her experience.

Transfer Station Pay-As-You-Throw Bag Program

Department of Public Works Director Randy Heglin was present to discuss the draft transition plan for moving toward the date of July 1st. Mr. Heglin focused on the advertising to get the word out. Mr. Wysocki stated that we should set a guideline for how many stickers can be exchanged at one time. Mr. Wysocki has spoken with the Counsel on Aging about the possibility of getting help with the transfer of stickers to bags. Mr. Wysocki commented that the conversion to bags will close the loophole of placing stickers on bags larger than intended. Mr. Czekanski commented that by sticking to a July 1st date to convert stickers the Board is making it most difficult for the people who have been most observant. The Board will discuss the date by which stickers must be turned in at a future meeting. Ms. Jacobsen respectfully requested the Board set a temporary limit for the number of bags that can be turned in at once. Mr. Heglin opined that 20 stickers seemed a reasonable quantity.

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously that until further notice the maximum number of stickers that can be swapped out at one time is twenty. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

Nature's Playground at the Town Common

Parks and Recreation Commission member Erika Mond provided a layout and description of the structures proposed for the Nature's Playground at the Town Common. Ms. Mond asked for permission to put the cargo net back up. Mr. Wysocki commented that the cargo net was installed in lieu of the spider web and was ordered to be taken down. Ms. Mond stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission is not looking for approval but for feedback on the plan before the Commission spends time on the details of the playground. The Board had no specific issues. Mr. Wysocki suggested the specific requests be brought to Mr. Lowe who will bring them to the Board at the appropriate time.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The Board tabled the discussion until after Mr. Lowe's presentation to the Advisory Committee on March 2nd.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Lowe was not in attendance.

SELECT BOARD BUSINESS

Public Service Announcements

Mr. Czekanski reminded the public that the caucus is on Monday March 1st at the Public Library beginning at 7 pm. It is the opportunity to get nominated to run for elected positions for the Town.

Future Agenda Items Discussion

There were none.

Review Amended Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch District Intermunicipal Agreement

The Board tabled the discussion until next meeting.

Acceptance of gifts

Chief Nelson reported that Julie Murphy has provided a generous donation in the amount of \$10K for the comfort dog with one condition that she name the dog.

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On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to accept the donation of \$10,000 from Dennis and Julie Murphy Foundation to fund the department's comfort dog. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

Bills/Payroll Warrants

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to approve the bills/payroll warrants W23-17& w23-17A. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

Minutes

There were no minutes.

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 to adjourn at 8:45 pm. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

Respectfully submitted by J. Jacobsen.