

Select Board
March 18, 2024
Meeting Minutes



Public present: C. DeFalco, T. Cofske, M. Egan, Chief W. Beaudry, J. Ballou, J. Venezia
Members present: M. Kelly, G. Adams, A. Bercovici, P. Vandal

Chair M. Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. All in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. M. Kelly announced that the meeting is being recorded.

Meeting Minutes

MOTION: G. Adams, to accept the meeting minutes from the Select Board meeting from March 11, 2024 minutes.

SECOND: P. Vandal

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

Appointments

Gary Wilson – Animal/Barn Inspector

M. Kelly said he thought the position was appointed by the Board of Health. T. Cofske clarified that it was until the bylaws were changed and the power was given to the Select Board.

MOTION: A. Bercovici, to accept Gary Wilson as Animal/Barn Inspector.

SECOND: G. Adams

Discussion: P. Vandal asked if he currently held that position. M Kelly said he did. T. Cofske added that he is certified through the state.

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

New Business

By Recommendation of the Trail Committee – Bid Award to Kodiak Corporation for the Trolley Trail East Pedestrian Bridge Project IFB2024BTC01 in the Amount of \$132,000.00 for the Final Phase and Completion of Project (Funded by Department of Conservation and Recreation – MassTrails and State Earmark Funds)

A. Bercovici asked when the bridge was being installed. J. Venezia said early April, once the bid was awarded. T. Cofske said Kodiak Corporation was the lowest bid. G. Adams asked if she had reviewed the bid. T. Cofske replied that she had, that the bid package was complete, and noted they had been featured on Contech's website for a similar project. J. Venezia said it was a unanimous vote by the Trail

Committee. A. Bercovici asked how far the trail would now go. J. Venezia said all the way to Holland Road and that the next step would be to extend it to Sturbridge.

MOTION: G. Adams, to award the East Pedestrian Bridge Project IFB2024BTC01 in the Amount of \$132,000.00 for the Final Phase and Completion of Project (Funded by Department of Conservation and Recreation – MassTrails and State Earmark Funds).

SECOND: A. Bercovici

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

Consideration of Financing Options for Municipal Offices Project

The Board discussed financing the municipal offices project between level principal and level debt service. G. Adams said that Treasurer-Collector M. Goodrich recommended level principal for financing and said that over the long run, it would save the town money.

Looking at the tax impact, P. Vandal asked if M. Goodrich based it on an average household value of \$325,000? G. Adams said he believed it was \$350,000. P. Vandal said that it would be a lot of money per household. P. Vandal went on that he understood the town needed to do something, but that it would be an awful lot of money and he hoped the taxpayers understood that. G. Adams said to keep in mind that the project was not being voted on today. The informational meetings are for giving the Building Committee direction and the Special Town Meeting is for the management company to take the project to the next phase. G. Adams added that the first informational meeting would be the next Monday at 6:30 p.m. at the Elementary School. M. Kelly specified that the motion was for support, not for any action to be taken.

MOTION: A. Bercovici, to support level principal for the projected debt service.

SECOND: G. Adams

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

FY2025 Budget Reviews

Select Board

T. Cofske presented the proposed FY2025 Select Board budget to the Board. The ambulance budget was the contract with Action Ambulance and reflected the \$20,000 credit. T. Cofske said she would like to forward the Select Board office budget to the Finance Committee and suggested they address that one first. M. Kelly said it looked like it represented the 4% increase recommended by the Finance Committee with the exception of the Select Board stipend, which put back the money removed in the previous year. The Board deliberated as to whether a motion was needed to accept the office budget, and decided one was not needed. The Board accepted both the ambulance and office budgets.

T. Cofske went on to the Town Hall & Town Report budget. The telephone expense increased by \$2,000 for the coming year, reflecting new lines and increased service fees. The Town Reports were level-

funded. In the past, Town Hall expense had been used for the pest management contract for the Annex but it is a building maintenance expense. T. Cofske said she thought that could be scaled back and would have it figured out for the next meeting. The constable was a 4% increase, per the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Computer maintenance would be circled back to once Tantasqua confirmed it was a solid number and there were no other renewals or licenses to expect in FY2025. The regional planning assessment increased from \$675 to \$692, per Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) assessment notice. Open space planning was level-funded. Code Red increased from last year. The increase is per the contract entered into in 2024. The software PermitPro, for online permitting, increased significantly from \$5,000 to \$6,900. This number only reflects the two-thirds share coming out of the Select Board budget, the remaining third comes from the Flea Market account. Town electric also increased, with online projections showing an increase between 1.8% and 3%. Streetlights increased by 3%. Heating was level-funded.

T. Cofske said she would circle back on the line item placeholders for next Monday's meeting. T. Cofske added that she should have numbers for insurance by next Monday as well. T. Cofske said she was currently working on workers' comp, and that property and liability numbers were in. G. Adams asked about the software discussed with IT. T. Cofske said that came out of the Computer IT account. The Board had no other questions.

2024 Annual Flea Market Owner/Operator License:

Brimfield Barn

Heart-O-The-Mart, LLP

MOTION: A. Bercovici, to issue the 2024 Annual Flea Market Owner/Operator License for Brimfield Barn and Heart-O-The-Mart, LLP.

SECOND: P. Vandal

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

ABSTAIN: M. Kelly

Building Commissioner – Recommendation for a Business License Application Process to be Implemented (to Include Review/Sign-Off by Various Boards/Departments)

The Board discussed whether they should table the matter of a business license sign-off or review until the Building Commissioner was in attendance. P. Vandal thought they should discuss it. M. Kelly said personally he would rather see the matter as an article for the Town to approve. G. Adams said he talked with the Town Clerk about the DBA [Doing Business As]. G. Adams went on that he believed the Building Commissioner's concern was that businesses were opening in Town without departments knowing what was going on. G. Adams continued that the Board needed to hear from the Building Commissioner to know where he wanted to go with this matter. G. Adams said that while not opposed to it, he thought this was something that needed to be addressed online and concluded that PermitPro would be a good avenue. PermitPro would let departments see pending licenses and know if they needed to approve anything. M. Kelly said he also spoke with the Town Clerk. DBA licenses are

statutory and not something a town has to accept, it is a state law and applies to everyone. G. Adams said he knew some towns had a sign-off process. P. Vandal asked if any smaller towns did. T. Cofske said a lot of small towns do not have a sign-off for business certificates, the applicant goes to the Town Clerk, produces his ID and pays a fee. A. Bercovici said he did not want there to be an increased cost or burden on someone who wants to open a business. M. Kelly said that he did not want to be attaching fees at this point. P. Vandal said he agreed.

MOTION: G. Adams, to apply for a business certificate in town it needs to be no fee increase but include this as part of the process of an online tracking system so all department heads can see the status of any application, including the applicant.

SECOND: A. Bercovici

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: A. Bercovici, to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: G. Adams

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Christopher DeFalco

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Martin J. Kelly", is written over a horizontal line.

Martin J. Kelly, Chairperson

MEETING MATERIALS:

- Posting 3-14-2024
- Meeting Minutes March 11th
- Nomination of Inspector of Animals
- IFB2024BTC01 Tabulation Form
- Kodiak Corporation bid
- DBA Certificate
- DBA List
- New Town Offices Project – Estimated Tax Burden
- Select Board Budget