

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Select Board
Tuesday January 23, 2024
Remote Online Meeting (Zoom: 863 7296 7536)
Called to Order at 6:30 p.m.**

Remotely participating were Board members, Chair Laurie Bent, Thomas Palmer, Clerk, and Christopher Houston, member. Also, present were Town Manager Leon A. Gaumond, Jr., Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director Lisa Yanakakis, DPW Director Tom Cullen, and other members of town staff.

Ms. Bent called the remote meeting to order and read the following:

Under current state law public bodies may continue holding hybrid and fully remote meetings, without a quorum of the public body physically present, as long as adequate, alternative access is provided. Information about how to join a hybrid or fully remote hearing will be included in the required Open Meeting Law posting.

Resident Comments: None

Chair Bent announced that the Select Board agenda is a suggested agenda, and that the Select Board does have the ability to take things out of order. The Select Board decided to move up and address first the interview with candidate Alan Day for the Affordable Housing Trust.

Affordable Housing Trust Interview with candidate Alan Day

The Select Board interviewed candidate Alan Day for the Affordable Housing Trust. Mr. Day, a 40-year Weston resident, discussed his interest in serving. While he has not been heavily involved in town government, Mr. Day has an extensive local volunteer background with First Parish church, Boy Scouts, the Council on Aging, the Transfer Station, and more. He believes he is a reliable volunteer who makes sure his efforts are productive.

Professionally, Mr. Day has had significant experience with government housing and human services programs through his university studies and running a business that developed software applications for agencies like the Boston Housing Authority. He has also written successful grant applications.

Select Board members had no additional questions for Mr. Day. Chair Bent advised she could be unbiased in considering his appointment despite her son previously being in Boy Scouts with Mr. Day as Scoutmaster.

MOTION:

Mr. Palmer made a motion to appoint Alan Day to the Affordable Housing Trust for a term expiring June 30, 2025, seconded by Mr. Houston.

Roll call Vote: Mr. Palmer, Mr. Houston, and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

Public Hearing: Presentation of the Draft Fiscal Year 2025 Proposed Budget

Town Manager Leon Gaumond presented the draft FY 2025 budget, providing an overview of expenditures by category, revenues, new budget requests, capital projects, and how the budget

aligns with the Select Board's priorities. The proposed operating budget is \$97,600,000, a 4.99% increase over the current fiscal year. The entire Town budget (including OPEB, the debt and any additional articles the Town Manager is aware of) increases by about 3.18%, or \$110,400,000.

Select Board members discussed aspects of the budget presentation, including:

- The timeline to get the roads program to more of a maintenance phase vs catch-up (estimated 2027-2028)
- The need to look at creating more of a capital reserve for upcoming large projects like water tanks, schools, fire stations
- Appreciation for doing the budget hearing in January this year to allow more time for input by the Finance Committee and others before Town Meeting

Town Manager Gaumond outlined the next steps, which include the Finance Committee reviewing the budget in detail with each department through the end of March before coming back to the Select Board with a final revised budget for the Town Meeting warrant. He noted that the budget will be posted on the town website and encouraged anyone with questions to reach out to him.

MOTION:

No Action Taken

Discussion on Water Tank Sites (Cat Rock, Doublet Hill, Paines Hill) (PP#01)

Chair Bent introduced the water tank siting discussion, emphasizing the need to balance many competing considerations to find optimal locations that are in the overall best interest of the town. Engineers Rob Williamson and Amy Coppers from Wright-Pierce walked through their analysis for each tank locale. Their analysis of the different siting alternatives was based on a matrix of considerations, taking into account impact on abutters, impact on preserved land, engineering concerns, and cost. This matrix was developed based on input from Wright-Pierce as well as Town staff and elected and appointed officials. The analysis and matrix were publicly available on the Town website as of November 2023.

Paines Hill:

For Paines Hill, the matrix analysis led Wright-Pierce to recommend Alternative 1, siting a new tank on a 1.25-acre parcel behind the existing tank. In response to abutter requests, they will explore pushing the tank back 20-40 feet to the east within engineering constraints. Abutters expressed support for moving the tank back as much as possible on the site. The Select Board and abutters agreed that the access road location will be determined later based on more detailed design.

MOTION:

Ms. Bent made a motion to approve the proposed site as described in Alternative 1 in the alternatives analysis conducted by Wright Pierce for the Paines Hill water tank. Seconded by Mr. Palmer.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Palmer, Mr. Houston, and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved Unanimously.**

Cat Rock:

Cat Rock was acknowledged as the most challenging site. Wright-Pierce reviewed their recommended Alternative 1 and a new Alternative 3 proposed by the owner of 111 Bradford Road to locate the tank next to the existing one. The Wright-Pierce engineers explained that Alternative 3 would still require an Article 97 land transfer, likely need zoning variances, significantly impact Cat Rock outlook (despite the abutting landowner's assertions to the contrary), require extensive tree clearing, and cost \$1-1.5 million more to construct due to site constraints and complex logistics. The owner's attorney and engineer disputed many of these points.

Many residents spoke in opposition to Alternative 3, arguing it would destroy the iconic Cat Rock outlook. A couple of residents questioned why the literal top of Cat Rock was ruled out without detailed scoring. Ms. Bent reiterated that was a non-starter due to overwhelming public opposition to impacting that landmark.

Facing the potential of Alternative 1 moving forward, the owner's attorney asked the Board to reconsider Alternative 2, which would put the tank on the owner's land, stating the owner would now be open to discussing that option which is preferable to him over Alternative 1. The scoring of Alternative 2 was debated.

After extensive discussion, Ms. Bent suggested tabling a vote on Cat Rock for 2 weeks to allow Wright-Pierce to more thoroughly analyze Alternative 2, reach out to any other impacted abutters, and have the owner clarify what land arrangements might make Alternative 2 viable as a compromise between Alternative 1 and Alternative 3. The other members agreed to this approach and a special meeting will be scheduled in two weeks on Cat Rock.

MOTION:

No Motion as Select Board agreed to table the item for two weeks.

Doublet Hill:

Wright-Pierce presented a proposed modification of Alternative 2, shifting the tank site to the east along the lower contour of the hills, in response to concerns from abutter Abbas Amiri about visual impacts. Mr. Amiri requested pushing the tank even farther east. The engineers indicated there is some flexibility to shift another 20-25 feet potentially within the established constraints of not expanding the 1.5-acre site or intruding significantly into the hills. The Planning Board requested a shadow study, but Mr. Amiri indicated that was not necessary if the tank is shifted as much as possible.

MOTION:

Chair Bent moved to approve the modification of Alternative 2, called Alternative 2A, for Doublet Hill, defined as the optimal balancing of Article 97, visual impact, and topographical constraints as a minor variation of the presented Alternative 2. Seconded by Mr. Houston.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Palmer, Mr. Houston, and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved Unanimously.**

Consent Agenda

MOTION:

Mr. Palmer moved the Consent Agenda as follows. 2nd by Mr. Houston.

Roll call Vote: Mr. Palmer, Mr. Houston, and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

- Open the May 6, 2024, Annual Town Meeting Warrant for Articles and Citizens' Petitions until March 1, 2024
- Approve Cell Tower Lease renewal with SBA for 180 BPR (PP#07)
- Accept Gifts totaling \$300 as outlined in meeting packet to be applied to the AIC gift fund.
- Accept Gifts totaling \$4200 as outlined in meeting packet to be applied to the Council on Aging

Executive session pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining negotiations with the Library Union ("Purpose 3") ,) G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategies with respect to litigation (Commonwealth of Massachusetts vs. Tresca Brothers Concrete)* and G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in aid requirements ("Purpose 7"), the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g), to approve and review the executive session meeting minutes from May 16, 2023, and September 12, 2023; votes may be taken, and discuss litigation with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts versus Tresca Brothers Concrete.

MOTION: Ms. Bent made a motion to go into Executive Session and announced that the Board would not return to Open Session after the adjournment of the Executive Session. 2nd by Mr. Palmer.

Roll call vote: Mr. Houston, Mr. Palmer, and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

Regular Meeting Adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Thomas Palmer
Clerk