

Board of Selectmen Minutes: April 29, 2015 (in the Peg Arnold Room of the Wellesley Free Library)

Present: Searle, Gibbs, Murphy, Freiman, Morgan

Also Present: Larsen, Jop

Minutes Approved: May 4, 2015

Ms. Searle opened the meeting at 1:00 pm.

1. Monday meeting times

Ms. Searle discussed starting some of the Board's regular Monday meetings at 4:00 pm, and the Board agreed to try this approach for certain meetings.

2. Prerequisites and deadlines for Town Meeting

The Board discussed logistical issues with the recently completed Annual Town Meeting; specifically the late timing of the submission of certain budgets and capital project requests, and the fact that funding was requested for certain positions that had not yet been approved by Human Resources.

The Board agreed to establish the following ground rules for future Annual Town Meetings:

- New positions are to be fully vetted by Human Resources by December 1st
- The scope for any capital project must be defined by December 31st
- Operating budget requests are to be submitted by December 31st. Recognizing the scale and complexity of the School Department budget, the Superintendent's proposed budget will suffice for purposes of this submission, and the School Committee's vote on the budget should be held by January 31st.

It was also agreed that any Board that anticipates a higher than usual budget increase for the next year should provide adequate advance warning of such a request, to allow for this to be reflected in the Town-Wide Financial Plan.

3. Timing of Fall 2015 Special Town Meeting

The Board discussed the potential topics for a Fall 2015 Special Town Meeting. It was agreed that any substantive financial action should be deferred until the 2016 Annual Town Meeting, and the focus of the Special Town Meeting should be on the recommendations from the Town Government Study Committee. October 26, 2015 was tentatively set as the start date for the Special Town Meeting.

It was also agreed that the Board should review progress against its work plan sometime after the Special Town Meeting, and to reset the plan, as necessary.

4. FY16 Board Officers

Following a short discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Murphy would serve as Chair for the next fiscal year and Ms. Freiman will serve as Vice Chair. A vote to this effect will be taken at one of the Board's meetings in June.

5. North 40

Tom Harrington, Town Counsel, joined the Board. Mr. Larsen read aloud a memo received earlier in the day from Paul Gabriel, Environmental Partners (the Town's environmental advisor with respect to the North 40 acquisition), which summarized Environmental Partners' assessment of the results of the test pit dug yesterday at the site of the former pump house. Mr. Gabriel's memo characterized the results of the test pit as encouraging given that significant contamination was not found.

Mr. Larsen explained that the level of environmental risk with respect to the former pump house appears to be less than previously feared for the following reasons:

- A source for the "Asphalt Condition" has been found (a pipe from the former pump house), which suggests the material removed by the College is the full extent of that contamination.
- Even though a minimal amount of contamination was found in the Town's test pit, the discovery of a portion of the support cradle for one of the 20,000 gallon tanks suggests the tanks were removed from the pump house and there is not significant contamination elsewhere within the pump house foundation or surrounding area.
- Given the configuration of the main pump house and its position in relation to the former pump house and the pipes connecting the operation to the College's main campus, there does not appear to be a significant risk of extensive contamination emanating from the former pump house.

The Board discussed the possibility of seeking to modify the P&S to exclude the South 6. They also discussed the merits of taking the true North 40 via an eminent domain taking. Following a further discussion, the Board reached a consensus on the following points:

- There is very strong community support for acquiring the property from the College, as evidenced by the high plurality of the Town Meeting vote and the results of the town-wide election.
- The level of unknown environmental risk related to the South 6 does not appear as significant as Environmental Partners initially feared. Environmental Partners' initial estimate of the cost of a cleanup of the pump house area (\$500,000) was developed before the Town dug and examined its test pit in the former pump house foundation. The results of that test pit suggest any clean up costs of the pump house area will be lower than anticipated in that estimate.
- Given the likelihood the Town will pursue further cleanup work in the pump house area post-closing, and given that such work would likely invalidate any environmental insurance covering related risks, there is little merit to seeking such insurance. Furthermore, the Town has little leverage to cause the College to fund the cost of such insurance.
- The merits of gaining ownership control over the entire property, including the South 6, outweigh the risk associated with further environmental issues.
- Post-closing, the Town should plan on undertaking further clean up work in the pump house area, as suggested by Environmental Partners. This work may be performed in conjunction with the Town's future work on the former landfill.

Accordingly, the consensus of the Board is to proceed to close on the acquisition following completion of the remaining due diligence work.

6. FY16 Work Plan

The Board discussed and agreed the Work Plan for the next fiscal year (see separate document). This document summarizes the various projects the Board envisions working on and assigns Board members and staff to each item.

7. Liaison Assignments

Similarly, the Board discussed and agreed the various Liaison Assignments for the next fiscal year (see separate document).

8. Other matters

Topics for debrief with Advisory

The Board briefly discussed the topics to be discussed with the Advisory Committee later this evening. Ms. Searle will report the results of the Board's discussion under agenda item #2 above.

FMD Senior Project Manager

Mr. Larsen summarized the role of the FMD Senior Project Manager, which is to be reviewed by the Human Resources Board next Monday. It was agreed the Board should express its support for the position and Ms. Searle and Mr. Larsen will both attend the HR Board meeting to express this support.

Executive Director / Town Manager Search

Ms. Searle discussed the likely need to conduct a search for the Executive Director's replacement during 2016. Consultant support for this effort will likely be required and it was agreed the Board should tentatively plan to request a small appropriation at the Fall Special Town Meeting to make this possible.

At 5:10 pm the meeting was adjourned.