



SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES December 18, 2023 SLADE BUILDING

Attendance:

Members Present: Jeff Williams – Chair, Katie Young – Vice Chair, Heather Munroe – Clerk, Peter Walker–Member,

Staff Present: Nathan Boudreau – Town Administrator,

Members absent: Kris Pareago,

Additional Attendees: Mike Stoll,

Session opened at: 6:30 pm Chair Williams reminded everyone that the meeting is being recorded.

Open Session: No one here.

Announcements, Communications, Liaison Reports – Vice Chair Young stated Brunch with Santa was a huge success and everyone enjoyed it. On December 10, Santa was on the Fire Truck delivering toys and was enjoyed by all. On Dec. 16th, there were pictures with Santa at the Rec Field and that was well attended. Tonight is the last night for the Light Fight and for people to vote. Winners will be announced tomorrow. Frozen Assets is coming up and people can begin going to get their forms and guess when the shack will go under. Vice Chair Young encouraged all residents to go visit the local businesses as this is the slowest time of year for them.

Town Administrator Performance Evaluation- Chair Williams has already had a meeting with Nate and has spoken with him. This is now a matter of transparency and public information. Chair Williams stated that TA Boudreau's overall score was 84.7 out of 90 based on four select board members who provided the evaluations. Chair Williams said he is very please with Nate in his first year with Hubbardston. Chair Williams feels he presents easy to follow visuals that help residents understand what is going on. Member Walker agreed with what Chair Williams stated. Clerk Munroe stated that TA Boudreau does a great job and works hard. Vice Chair Young stated that this is TA Boudreau's first year and the first year is a learning curve and feels he will continue to grow.

Consent Agenda: Chair Williams read the consent agenda. There were two appointments. Zoe Morris to the Cultural Council as an alternate member expires on 6/30/24. Autumn Brown to Animal Control as an Inspector expiring on 6/30/24. There is the resignation of Jacob Hakola, a DPW employee, effective 12/29/2023. TA Boudreau publicly thanked Jake for his 9 years of service with the Town of Hubbardston and wishes him the best in his future endeavors.

Motion made to accept the Consent Agenda by K. Young. 2nd by P. Walker. Discussion: None. All in favor. Yes – 4. No – 0. Motion Passed.

New Business:

Contract Authorizations – Civic Plus Website Services: TA Boudreau stated that the contract authorization is for Civic Plus, a web service provider and the Town has been with them for about five years. They reached out earlier this month and there is a price increase. Hubbardston's bill will be increased by about \$300.00. TA Boudreau negotiated a 25% discount for the coming year. Civic Plus is also giving the website an upgrade.

Motion made to authorize TA Boudreau to sign the contract for Civic Plus by K. Young, 2nd by P. Walker. Discussion: None. All in favor. Yes – 4. No – 0. Motion Passed.

Host Community Discussion: Chair Williams stated he reviewed the letter that TA Boudreau sent regarding the new changes to the laws and regulations surrounding host community agreements for marijuana establishments from the State Legislature and the Cannabis Control Commission. One of the things that TA Boudreau was presenting was different options that the Select Board may have. TA Boudreau stated that he recommends holding off on doing anything until the state comes out with their guidelines. TA Boudreau stated that he will keep everyone up to date as more information comes in.

Old Business:

TA Report : TA Boudreau stated that he has reached a three year tentative agreement with the Police Union for the 2025-2028 contract cycle. This will be brought to the Select Board in January. This deal provides competitive wage increases while still upholding fiscal responsibility. The first capital improvement committee meeting was held to kick off planning for FY2025. This was a time to review capital requests and prepare for infrastructure improvements in the coming year. TA Boudreau also began a quarterly lunch meeting with the North Worcester Country Manager peers to compare notes on common issues and potential areas for regional partnership. Residents can expect their annual Census verification forms, as well as a recycling survey, and dog license renewal letters in the early part of January. The next community Coffee Conversation will take place on December 26th at 8:30 am at the Stars and Stripes Diner. This month's episode of Hubbardston Headlines features Claudia Povencal, the Director of the Council on Aging for the past 15 years. Work is ramping up on several town projects. TA Boudreau has begun to collaborate with KP Law to secure necessary easements for the Williamsville Bridge replacement project slated for 2025 thanks to a \$5 million dollar state grant. Progress is being made for the easements needed for the Gardner Road Tower Project commercial carrier RFP. On the Municipal Aggregation front, the town is working closely with the consultant to provide a comprehensive program update by Spring 2024. The Town of Hubbardston is seeking photo submissions from community members for the cover of the 2023 Annual Town Report. Amateur and professional photographers are encouraged to submit images that showcase "What Hubbardston means to you", whether it's landscapes, buildings, events, or any scenes that capture the spirit of our town. Up to 3 photographs can be submitted by each entrant along with a short description of the meaning and location of each photo. The Select Board will vote to choose the winning photo during a meeting in February. Submissions deadline is February 1, 2024. TA Boudreau attended many meetings and the information about these meeting can be found in his TA Report online. A comprehensive three month cyber security training was completed by Mary Markowski, Chris Barbera and TA Boudreau.

Hubbardston will be receiving \$229,290 in Fair Share apportionment for FY24 on top of the Chapter 90 monies. There are several active procurement initiatives underway which can be found in the online TA Report. TA Boudreau gave a shout out with sincere appreciation to Building Maintenance Custodian Jim Vincent for his outstanding service and positive attitude. Jim consistently goes above and beyond and it does not go unnoticed.

Policies to Review:

Select Board Rules – Chair Williams strongly encouraged that the Select Board go over the paperwork that TA Boudreau provided regarding Meeting Rules & Conduct, which has to do with Roberts Rules, if they haven't already. This will enlighten you as to what you can do and say at Select Board Meetings. One of the key items that Nate had indicated to Chair Williams that is a concern is the order of items on the agenda including the Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda is not in Roberts Rules nor is breaking any rules by having it. Acting Town Administrator David Nixon, implemented the Consent Agenda to help streamline the process of business at the meetings. This allows you to not have to make a motion for each item. Chair Williams stated that the Select Board basically controls the meetings so that whatever the board agrees to, the board can do. Vice Chair Young stated that the only concern was the Order of Business which is not the way the Select Board is doing it at the meetings now. Vice Chair Young stated that the Select Board should make the Order of Business reflect how the Select Board has the agenda now. TA Boudreau asked if the Consent Agenda is something that the Select Board continues to want. The Select Board agreed that they would like to keep the Consent Agenda on the agenda. Clerk Munroe stated that the Consent Agenda is part of Roberts Rules. These are non-debatable items that the board doesn't anticipate discussion on, although the board can discuss if they wish. This is for consistency and efficiency of the meeting. TA Boudreau stated that he would draft something up so that the board will know exactly what the Meeting Rules and Conduct policy states and what they are agreeing to. Mike Stoll of Lombard Road spoke and stated that there has been some variation in how the business has been conducted with regards to these rules and wanted it clear to him and others as to when the appropriate time for the public to ask questions or share opinions is. Mr. Stoll is of the opinion that it should be after the motion is made because until then, you will know the general issue but until a motion is made you won't know if you have questions or if there are any points you want to make. It seems to Mr. Stoll that that's the way it is written but not sure if it's always been consistent with that and would like that clarified. Chair Williams stated that basically falls to the Chairman. Chair Williams stated that under the rules, he has the right to recognize someone and give them the opportunity to speak and he can limit their time. Mr. Stoll appreciates that the chair has to control meetings, but has differing opinions and some more discussion ensued. TA Boudreau asked to come back to this in the next meeting so he has time to look into it more thoroughly.

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the chair - Chair Williams wanted to thank the Select Board members for all their devotion and hard work that they give to the town and for all the support they give to him. Chair Williams wished them all a Merry Christmas.

Public/Press Comments/Questions – Mike Stoll of Lombard Road stated that he would like to say that the Board took up the flag policy and he noticed that on December 7th the American Flag wasn't at half staff and noticed also that there are flags are not illumined and wants to bring it to their attention.

Motion made to adjourn at 7:46 pm by K. Young. 2nd by P. Walker. Discussion: None. All in favor. Yes – 4. No – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Toni Walker
Executive Assistant