

Select Board Meeting Minutes

August 4, 2021

Present: Mr. Neil Rhein, Chairman; Mr. Michael Trowbridge, Vice-Chair; Mr. Frank DelVecchio, Clerk; Mr. Jess Aptowitz and Mr. Schoonveld. Mr. Kevin Dumas, Town Manager and Mr. Barry LaCasse, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director were also present in meeting room 3A/B at Town Hall.

Guests: State Reps Ted Philips, Adam Scanlon, and Jay Barrows. Senator Paul Feeney attended virtually.
Town Staff guests: Mike Ahern, Mary Sellner, Shaun Burke, Josephine Madrazo, and Katelyn Gonyea

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1. Call To Order Select Board Meeting - Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Neil Rhein, Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:30PM. He then asked those present to state the Pledge of Allegiance. He reminded everyone that the meeting was being broadcast live and taped for future broadcast on Mansfield Cable.

2. Continued Discussion of 50 West Street Property with State Delegation, COA, Parks and Recreation and Town Departments

Assistant Town Manager Barry LaCasse gave a presentation to the Select Board and members of the delegation who were in attendance. He began by reminding the Select Board that previously the Town Manager had announced the availability of an adaptive re-use grant (One stop Grant) for up to \$4 Million and that the Town expects to hear the results of that grant application in October or November. He also noted that earlier this year the Select Board voted to retain this property and not surplus it, giving us clearer direction on what the next steps should be. Mr. LaCasse informed the Select Board that following that decision an internal staff meeting was held to discussed the next steps. He outlined how the project had evolved beginning with the space needs assessment of both the Council on Aging and Parks & Recreation Department, the June 2019 feasibility study, and how the use of this property ties into the newly adopted Master Plan. He continued, the results of the feasibility study had two recommendations/options. One was reconstruction and the other was adaptive reuse. The cost at the time of the study was \$7.7 Million for new construction and approximately \$8.4 Million for adaptive reuse. But in today's climate for building supplies, the estimates are about \$11.2 million for either option. Mr. LaCasse noted that the results of the feasibility study showed that the COA and Parks & Recreation Departments could not both fit on the property, and even though the feasibility study was recommending a new building instead of an adaptive re-use, he thinks it is worth pursuing the \$4 Million One Stop Grant. Mr. LaCasse expressed that at the meeting with staff and board members, we wanted to be sure that everyone was heading in the same direction and that the plans were consistent with the Town's Master Plan. He summarized that the plan achieves four of the goals of the Master Plan. One of the goals was to develop a multi-generation community center near the center of Town (page 30 of the Master Plan). Under the proposed plan this space would be used exclusively by the Council on Aging during the day, but would be available for any event, including Parks & Recreation's, during off hours. And it would also allow for water access to the public, another tie in to the Master Plan, to the ponds in the area of the property. If Parks & Recreation were relocated to 255 Hope Street, it would meet the goal of having Recreation next to the schools. Another goal is an overarching objective to create a cohesive green-way corridor of Mansfield's open spaces and recreation areas. The third goal was to create and improve access to water bodies, which this property has direct access to Kingman and Fulton Ponds. And finally, a recreation facility adjacent to the Library at 255 Hope Street would position the facility near the schools' campus to create the opportunity for enhanced physical activity and wellness via a connected trail network to the schools and other Town destinations. Mr. LaCasse finished by stating, we have done a lot of listening to the goals of the Council on Aging, Parks & Recreation, the recommendation of the feasibility study, goals of the Master Plan and of the Select Board, and we believe we have a viable path forward if we can reach a consensus. For next steps, the project team is looking for a consensus of the Select Board that 50 West Street should be used for the Council on Aging's program requirements, either through adaptive reuse or new construction should we be selected for the One Stop Grant. And the second item needed is a consensus that the Parks & Recreation Department should be relocated from Town Hall to the larger space at 255 Hope Street. Following tonight's meeting, the expectation is that there will be another update to the Select Board once a determination is made on the One Stop Grant.

Mr. Aptowitz asked if there would be costs associated with remodeling the old COA space if adapted for Park & Recreation use. Mr. LaCasse stated that there may be some costs for equipment and furniture. Mr. Ahern stated that approximately \$100,000 would likely be needed for Parks & Recreation to move over to the new building. Mr. Aptowitz asked what would happen if Mansfield did not receive the grant. Would the project be on hold? Mr. LaCasse stated that if we did not get the grant he believes that it is the Town Manager's intention to move forward. Since the costs would be the same to reuse or rebuild we would be able to completely redesign a building of our choosing, if we were to rebuild.

Mr. Trowbridge stated that he is all in favor of this plan for COA to move to 50 West Street and for Parks & Recreation to move to Hope Street. He added, that Park & Recreation would be able to take advantage of the storage garage that is available at 255 Hope Street. Mr. Trowbridge asked for comments from the COA. Josephine Madrazo stated that she and the COA Board are excited about the possibility of having this expanded space for programming which could include activities such as kayaking, canoeing, and an outdoor space for nature programming. She also said there are privacy needs for Social Services that are challenging at the current location. Mr. Trowbridge also asked Ms. Sellner if the Parks & Recreation Commission was in favor of the proposed plan. Ms. Sellner answered yes.

Mr. Rhein asked Ms. Madrazo what the projections are for seniors in Town. Ms. Madrazo said that projections for next year are that there will be approximately 5,000 seniors in Town. Resident Pat Comperchio, who described herself as an active senior, stated that there is not enough space in the current senior center to socialize unless there is some kind of activity. She also stated that she has helped with applying for some fundraising grants, but most of them are for outside programs so a new location with outside areas is needed. Mr. Rhein noted that parking can also be an issue for COA/Library visitors and Ms. Madrazo agreed. Ms. Madrazo stated that she receives frequent complaints about the lack of adequate handicap parking, and that the available parking is too far away.

Mr. DelVecchio stated less than a decade ago we went through a strategic planning process in Town which showed that, while the needs of seniors were important, they were not a priority and now it is time to make them a priority. He thanked the delegation for getting us earmarked for the feasibility study for this project and expressed his appreciation. Mr. DelVecchio asked for the delegation's continued support for funding for this project. He stated that he believes this is a worthwhile project that everyone should focus on. Rep. Barrows responded by stating that the Town has been very fortunate to get grants to improve our downtown and that it looks amazing. He added, his opinion is that the more things you can incorporate into the plan makes you more eligible for the One Stop Grant, and gave examples such as food distribution and preparation. He wondered if other funding sources might be available if there was some kind of kitchen facility that could support the community's needs. He noted that the age demographics of the community are changing and we need to continue to meet the needs of the community. He said, the delegation works well together and will continue to do so, and with a combined voice the effort will be made to get something done for this project. Mr. Trowbridge asked what the timeline was for this funding. Representative Barrows said that he would support a timeline that would move things forward quickly, but sometimes the House of Representatives and the State Senate are not on the same plan, so he does not know how long it will take. Mr. Aptowitz stated that the Town has the ability to move quickly and we have asked our citizens to do a lot over the past few years, such as the financial support for PFAS, and he asked the delegation to support this program. Representative Barrows stated that there is definitely some younger influx in Town and we have some competing priorities because of the aging population. Mr. Schoonveld quipped that available funding be divided equally among the 351 communities in Massachusetts. Mr. Barrows said he and his colleagues will keep asking and pounding to get funding for this project done.

Senator Feeney wanted to thank Mr. Dumas and Mr. LaCasse for their work to help keep them focused on Mansfield's priorities through communication. The Senator said of the federal funding, some goes to the communities directly and then there is this bucket that helps needs such as rental assistance and unemployment balances. He continued, it is not a direct appropriation and that it can be very slow, but that Massachusetts communities may see some additional funding capacity that would fit nicely with the Towns goals and the administration's goals. He expressed that the delegation might be able to bring the stakeholders together to support the multi-generational use of the facilities if it fit in with the Town's goals. He added, the fact that it fits with the Town's Master Plan will be huge when they go to advocate for this funding. Mr. Rhein stated that he hopes that there will be some inter-generation interactions if this project comes together.

Mr. Rhein invited Representative Adam Scanlon and Representative Ted Philips to speak. Representative Philips said it is important to note that they are still trying to wrap their heads around how to define “infrastructure” and they are holding hearings to define the qualifications. He added, they are trying to learn on the fly what things qualify for in each funding bucket. He is optimistic that by the end of the calendar year they will have a better idea of what the qualifications will be. Mr. Schoonveld noted that there are more seniors in Town now than there are kids in school and added that he feels the COA center is too small for the Town’s needs. He stated, keeping seniors in Town help to support our budgets should be a priority, because it is more expensive to educate students than it is to support seniors. Mr. Schoonveld stated that \$11 million would allow the Town to reinvent the whole building. He asked about the layout of rooms and what would be done and when there would be something to share with the public. He asked what the square footage could be. Mr. LaCasse stated that we are relatively locked into the size of the building on that property. Mr. Schoonveld said that the cost of building supplies is coming down and expressed that he felt Mr. Dumas’ team had done a good job of presenting this project and he appreciates the hard work and collaboration.

Mr. Trowbridge asked the Town Planner and Conservation Planner if they foresee any problems or challenges with the building. Mr. Burke said he does not anticipate any problems and outlined the process of going before the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. He added, the permitting would be straightforward and uncomplicated. Ms. Gonyer noted that permitting-wise the Town would be looking a little bit of redesign, and noted that there is an intensive colony of invasive species that should be replanted with native species. She also stated that the Conservation Commission has been discussing waterfront access for some time so this is welcome news.

Mr. Rhein asked for resident questions and comments. Mr. Peter Wiggins gave the Board a historical summary of the current Council on Aging building.

Mr. Dumas thanked the staff and delegation for their work on this project and presence at this meeting.

MOTION: Vote of consensus to use 50 West Street for the Council on Aging’s program requirements either through an adaptive reuse or new construction depending on the One Stop Grant application and consensus to relocate the Parks & Recreation Department from Town Hall to the larger space at 255 Hope Street. (Trowbridge/DelVecchio) VOTE: 5:0

3. Town Manager’s Report

- Fall Special Town Meeting – Mr. Dumas stated that Mr. LaCasse is currently reviewing the Town’s needs for a Special Town Meeting this fall, and looking at a possible date of Thursday, November 4th.
- DPW Construction Update – DPW is working hard on the Mill Street reconstruction. The road has been paved and they are in the process of paving the base driveway aprons, and culvert repair work should begin on August 9th. Then the sidewalk contractor will move from East Street to the Mill Street project. Lopes Construction is schedule to finish the drainage upgrades this week. The crews really struggled with the rain during the month of July and Mr. Dumas expressed his appreciation to the DPW crew for making every effort to continue construction as whether allowed.
- Succession Planning and Staff Announcements – Human Resources will be posting the DPW Director position on Friday. The Police Department has hired a new officer. His name is Brian Hurley. Officer Hurley is a Mansfield resident.
- Miscellaneous Items:
 - Mr. Dumas recognized the Public Safety personnel for their efforts, particularly over the past few days, with all of the activity and incidents which have occurred around town.
 - Mr. Dumas also wanted to thank the DPW staff, in particular the Water Department, for their response to a major incident which resulted in a loss of over nearly one million gallons of water. It took a team effort to deal with the incident so he wanted to mention that the staff did a wonderful job working together and dealing with this major incident.

- Covid – Mr. Dumas stated that the regular Covid updates continue to be posted to the website, and regular conversations are continuing as cases continue to rise in the State and the Nation. They are watching the situation very closely.
- West Nile Virus – A public announcement went out last night indicating that while Mansfield is at low risk, there have been some positive samples in the town. Mr. Dumas reviewed some of the actions listed on the advisory that residents can take during this time to reduce risk. He thanked Amy Donovan Palmer for her work on getting the notice out to the public so quickly.
- MSBA Accelerated Repair plan – There will be a virtual meeting on August 10th and a site visit on August 18th with the Massachusetts School Building Authority to review the plan for Qualters Middle School and Mansfield High School.
- Golf tournament – This will be the last year for Northern Trust tournament and the donation the town receives from the tournament will no longer be available. This year’s tournament will be held in New Jersey, so there will be no further donations.
- Mike Ahern continues to work with consultant Woodard & Curran and work is scheduled to begin next week and is expected to take about a week. The process of closing out with MassDEP will begin following the completion of work.
- PARC Grant – The State Delegation provided a wonderful letter of support for \$100,000 for the Parc Grant for the Plymouth Street playground construction project. On Monday we received notification from PARC Program Supervisor Melissa Cryan, that she would be visiting the project site today. Our team met with her and answered a series of questions and toured the site. It was great to be with her today and we thanked her for her cooperation. The timelines for a determination is somewhere in the October/November timeframe. She notified the team that there were 28 applicants for the grant and we do not know the PARC Grant’s budget yet because they have not received their final allocation from the Commonwealth.
- Business Development Program – The Town Manager has met with a manufacturer in the Cabot Park as they are looking for some possible expansion opportunities to expand their 5-day operation to 7 days as they are struggling with demand and capacity. The Town Manager and his team have been meeting with them to work with them to support their desire to expand and remain in Mansfield. There will be follow-up in September to support their business.
The Town Manager noted that upon the recommendation of the Chairman he has also been in contact with a bio-manufacturer of vaccines. This company is looking for a manufacturing facility and the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager will be following up with them.
- Liquor Licenses – After consultation with our delegation, their understanding is that we would need to demonstrate the need for additional liquor licenses, so the recommendation is to request an extension of the special legislation licenses that the town has right now.
- Fall Festival – Due to workload demands and the new Covid variant we are not going to hold a 2021 event, but look forward to a wonderful event in 2022.

Select Board Questions and Comments on Town Manager’s Report

Regarding the request to retain the special legislation liquor licenses, Mr. Schoonveld asked if the current business climate due to the pandemic could be reason enough to be granted an extension. Mr. Dumas replied that he believed the delegation would agree with that reasoning.

4. Resident Questions and Comments

None

5. Consideration of a Transfer Lodging House License for Park Pond Homes, LLC

The applicant requested that this be moved to the August 18, 2021 agenda.

6. Chair Appointment of Two Select Board Members to the Volunteer Advisory Sub-Committee

Mr. Rhein appointed Mr. Aptowitz and Mr. DelVecchio to serve on the Volunteer Advisory Sub-Committee.

7. Resident Questions and Comments

Peter Wiggins noted that there was a fire truck at the Park & Recreation summer camp spraying the campers with water and it looked like the campers were enjoying it.

8. Review and Approve Consent Agenda

All items on the Consent Agenda may be adopted with a single motion. Any member of the Select Board may request that an item be withdrawn from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration in which case that item will be voted on separately from the remainder of the Consent Agenda. All licenses have been routed through Town Hall Departments and any conditions have been noted below.

a) Vote to Approve Meeting Minutes:

- July 21, 2021

b) Vote to Approve Warrants:

- Town Vendor Warrant No. 22004T in the amount of \$ 745,944.63
- Electric Vendor Warrant No. 22004E in the amount of \$36,383.45
- Town Vendor Warrant No. 22005T in the amount of \$285,632.10
- Electric Vendor Warrant No. 22005E in the amount of \$56,324.26
- School Vendor Warrant No. 22005S in the amount of \$371,531.35

c) Permits and Licenses:

- Consideration of 2021 Water Installers License for PBZ Construction Inc.
- Consideration of Special Events Application for Max Performance

d) Consideration of Proclamations:

Motion: To approve the consent agenda. (DelVecchio/Trowbridge) Vote: 5:0

9. Consideration and Approval of Town Payroll Warrants:

- Town Payroll/Town Medicaid Payroll 22004PT in the amount of \$455,460.98

Motion: To approve Town Payroll/Town Medicaid Payroll 22004PT in the amount of \$455,460.98. (DelVecchio/Trowbridge) Vote: 5:0

- Town Deductions Vendor Payroll 22004TV in the amount of \$150,958.11

Motion: To approve Town Deductions Vendor Payroll 22004TV in the amount of \$150,958.11. (DelVecchio/Trowbridge) Vote: 5:0

- Town Payroll/Town Medicaid Payroll 22005PT in the amount of \$448,820.69

Motion: To approve Town Payroll/ Town Medicaid Payroll 22005PT in the amount of \$448,820.69 (DelVecchio/Trowbridge) Vote 5:0

- Town Deductions Vendor Payroll 22005TV in the amount of \$138,681.12

Motion: To approve Town Deductions Vendor Payroll 22005TV in the amount of \$138,681.12 (DelVecchio/Trowbridge) Vote: 5:0

- School Payroll/School Medicaid Payroll 22005PS in the amount of \$1,399,940.42

Motion: To approve School Payroll/ School Medicaid Payroll 22005PS in the amount of \$1,399,940.42 (DelVecchio/Trowbridge) Vote: 3:2:0 (Trowbridge and DelVecchio abstained from the vote)

- School Deductions Vendor Payroll 22005SV in the amount of \$419,115.35

Motion: To approve School Deductions Vendor Payroll 22005SV in the amount of \$419,115.35 (DelVecchio/Trowbridge) Vote: 5:0

10. Correspondence

- Letter from Comcast – Emergency Connectivity Fund
- Letter from Xfinity of TV Service Changes

Mr. DelVecchio read a summary of the above correspondence items.

11. Select Board Member's Comments and Questions

Mr. Aptowitz stated that things in Town have been extremely busy as the Town staff, especially public safety, have been dealing with a whirlwind of incidents and he wanted to thank them for their efforts. He said, kudos, great job, and keep your head up to the Town's personnel.

Mr. Trowbridge wanted to bring attention to the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Town. He would like to see the Board add consideration of a committee put on a future agenda so planning can begin. The anniversary will occur in 2025.

Mr. DelVecchio reiterated that is good to have the support of our State delegation and that it was good to hear their positive comments about our Town's team. He appreciates everyone's participation and effort and he hopes the PARC grant will come through. He expressed that he wants Kevin and Barry to know that he thinks they are doing a great job.

Mr. Schoonveld asked if Amazon was in full swing yet. Kevin said the building is still under construction and that it would be opening in the fall. Mr. Schoonveld stated that he was taken aback that the two parties involved in the dog hearing, at the previous Select Board meeting, didn't have the same information. He said it made him think about the information we share and what information should be shared. He thinks it would help if the rules were defined in regards to sharing of the Select Board's packet. He thinks it would improve interactions with the public if the packet were available prior to the meeting. Mr. Aptowitz noted that all information presented in a public meeting becomes part of the public record.

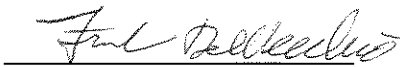
Mr. Rhein noted that he is personally sad to see that the Fall Festival will not be happening. He understands why it doesn't make sense to put time and money into planning only to have it cancelled due to Covid. He agrees with the decision, but it is disappointing. Mr. Rhein asked the Town Manager if there has been any movement in filling the vacant commercial spaces at Station Square. Mr. Dumas said he thought there was one other tenant under agreement and Mr. Trowbridge commented that he had spoken to Marco Crugnale today and there is some new interest and that spaces are starting to fill up. Mr. Rhein offered that he had received a notice in his mother's tax bill that he thought might be useful for Mansfield to distribute something similar. He said he would share it with Kevin, Barry, and the Board. Mr. Rhein stated that there is a wave sweeping the nation called pickleball, and he wondered if there was an opportunity for Mansfield to convert a court for pickleball use. Mr. LaCasse stated that there is already a pickleball court available at Plymouth Street.

12. Any items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting


There were no items.

13. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the August 4, 2021 Select Board Meeting at 7:08 PM. (Trowbridge/Aptowitz) Vote: 5:0



Signature



Date

Minutes prepared by Nancy Griffin