Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for January 29, 2019
Needham Town Hall
Select Board's Chamber

6:00 p.m Call to Order:
A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Daniel P. Matthews. Those present were John A. Bulian, Maurice P. Handel, Matthew D. Borrelli, Marianne B. Cooley, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, and Recording Secretary Mary Hunt.

6:00 p.m. Certificate of Appreciation - Abdul Cader Amal MD, PhD., Human Rights Committee:

Mr. Bulian read a Certificate of Appreciation recognizing the six years of membership, input, and guidance of Abdul Cader Amal MD, PhD on the Needham Human Rights Committee.

Motion by Mr. Bulian in recognition of six years of membership on the Needham Human Rights Committee. Your thoughtful input and guidance to this Committee has been invaluable to the Town. We appreciate your dedication to such a worthy cause. Thank you for your service.
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Mr. Handel commented Dr. Abdul works very hard promoting human rights, and the recognition is well deserved.

6:04 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:
Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board accept and approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.

APPOINTMENTS

1.	**Affordable Housing Trust**	**Avery Newton (term expires 6/30/2022)**
2.	**Needham Community Television Development Corporation**	**Michael Fraini (term expires 6/30/2022)**

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Accept the following donations made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: $100 from Timothy Kickham, $500 from Holly and Bruce Johnstone, and $50 from John and Marcia Russo.**
2. **Approve a One Day Special Wines & Malt Beverages License for Martin Goldberg, of Temple Beth Shalom to hold its TBS Comedy Night event on February 2, 2019 from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Temple Beth Shalom, 670 Highland Avenue, Needham.**

3. **Ratify Citation for the Chinese Friends of Needham on the occasion of the 2019 Chinese New Year Celebration.**
4. **Upon the approval of the Personnel Board in accordance with Section 20B(5) of the Town Charter, approve the revised Schedule C rates for part-time, temporary and seasonal positions effective January 1, 2019.**
5. **Approve a request from the Exchange Club of Needham to sponsor 4th of July fireworks on Wednesday, July 3, 2019 and activities on Wednesday, July 3, 2019, and Thursday, July 4, 2019. Activities on the 4th will include a Flag Raising on the Town Common, the Grand Parade, a 5K road race, the Crafts Fair/Flea Market, and athletic competitions for younger children. Coordination of all additional activities will be made with appropriate Town Departments.**
6. **Approve a Special One Day Wine & Malt Beverages Only license for Robert Timmerman of the Needham Knights of Columbus to host its annual SuperBowl Party for Seminarian Support on Sunday, February 3, 2019 from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The event will be held at Needham Knights of Columbus, 1211 Highland Avenue, Needham.**
7. **Approve and sign application for an amendment, Non-Profit Club Change of Officers/Directors for the Village Club, located at 83 Morton Street, Needham and forward to the ABCC for its approval.**
8. **Approve Open Session minutes of December 19, 2018, January 8, 2019 and January 22, 2019.**
9. **Approve a request from Village Club to extend operational hours on February 3, 2019 (Super Bowl Sunday) for the Club (lower) portion only: Last call – 11:00 pm; Members off premises – 11:30 pm; and everyone (bartender) off premises – 12:00 am.**
10. **Accept a $150 donation made to the Needham Aging Services Donation Account from Ellen Knizeski, a resident of Connecticut.**
11. **Approve and sign the liquor compliance letters for the following establishments: Cook Needham, Fuji Steak House, The Farmhouse, The Heights, The Residence Inn, and Needham Wine and Spirits.**

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

6:05 p.m. Public Hearing: Eversource Energy Grant of Location Burnside Road/High Street
Maureen Carroll, Eversource Energy Representative appeared before the Board to discuss a request from Eversource Energy for permission to install approximately 7 feet of conduit in Burnside Road. Ms. Carroll said this work is necessary to relocate the existing overhead electric service to underground electric service for 59 High Street.

Ms. Fitzpatrick indicated all paperwork is in order. However, she noted some work was performed before the Grant of Location was approved.

Mr. Matthews noted the attendance of the builder and homeowner.

He said Grant of Location applications are relatively straight forward, but sometimes contractors start work prior to approval creating problems and potentially preventing homeowners from receiving their Certificate of Occupancy permit.

Mark Wombolt, builder acknowledged the error and said it would not happen again.

Mr. Matthews invited public comment. No comments were heard.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Select Board approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 7 feet of conduit in Burnside Road. This work is necessary to relocate the existing overhead electric service to underground electric service for 59 High Street.
Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0.

6:10 p.m. Ambulance Rates:
Dennis Condon, Chief of the Fire Department, David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance, and Evelyn Poness, Town Treasurer/Collector appeared before the Board with recommendations to change the Town ambulance rates for emergency medical transport services.

Dave Davison said the rates were last changed in June 2017, which was the first time rates were changed in a number of years. At that meeting, the Select Board recommended adjusting rates in smaller percentages, hence discussion tonight. He explained the rate adjustments.

Discussion ensued on the possibility of having one rate, rather than two rates, for travel mileage. Medicare reimbursement rates, medical supplies, ambulances, and labor increases were discussed.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board approve the revised ambulance rates as follows:

Basic Life Support (BLS):	**$1,230.00**
Advanced Life Support (ALS):	**$1,635.00**
Advanced Life Support (ALS-2)	**$2,505.00**
Extra EMT:	**$ 200.00**
Mileage Rate (for travel 5 miles or less):	**$ 15.00/per mile***
Mileage Rate (for travel beyond 5 miles):	**$ 20.00/per mile***

and further that the rates become effective on March 31, 2019.

Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0.

6:19 p.m. Abatement of Ambulance Charges:

Dennis Condon, Chief of the Fire Department, David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance, and Evelyn Poness, Town Treasurer/Collector appeared before the Board to review the request to abate outstanding ambulance charges for the services provided prior to January 1, 2001 totaling $135,508.95 and the outstanding ambulance charges billed for services provided between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2011 totaling $367,332.23

Mr. Davison said discussion concerning abatement of ambulance charges occurred in 2008, when ambulance bills were written off from 2001-2006. He said bills older than 2001 were not included in the original motion for abatement. He also asked the Board to approve abatement of bills, deemed uncollectible/unenforceable for services provided from January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2011. Mr. Davison said discussion for writing off more current charges, also requiring Board approval, will be scheduled in the next few weeks. He again noted there are a number of reasons why 100% of charges cannot be collected, some contractual and/or legal, requiring approval by the Board.

Discussion ensued on collecting monies, billing services, and the cost of emergency services. Mr. Davison said a meeting will be scheduled with the Select Board to seek its guidance and to discuss ways of approaching collections.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board approve the recommendation to abate outstanding ambulance charges billed for services provided prior to January 1, 2001 totaling $135,508.98 and that the Board abate outstanding ambulance charges billed for services provided between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2011 totaling $367,332.23.
Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0.

6:30 p.m. Town Manager:
Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager appeared before the Board with three items to discuss:

1. Rail Trail Grant Application

Ms. Fitzpatrick asked the Board to endorse the Rail Trail Grant application for construction of the Fisher Street Trailhead on the Rail Trail.

Ms. Fitzpatrick noted the attendance of Tad Staley of the Rail Trail Association. It was also noted the Select Board previously endorsed a CPA funding application for the design of the trailhead.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to endorse the application for funding for the construction of the Fisher Street Trailhead on the Rail Trail.
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Mr. Matthews commented the Rail Trail is a great amenity for the Town, and the construction of the Fisher Street Trailhead will make it even more usable.

2. Naming of Facilities - Cogswell Building
   Ms. Fitzpatrick proposed that the Board consider naming the new Central Avenue Storage Building after long time Needham resident Jack Cogswell, who passed away on June 1, 2018. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented that the number of boards and committees and length of service to the Town by Mr. Cogswell is almost without parallel. She particularly noted Mr. Cogswell's passion for matters of Public Works, and his "bubble speech," when he convinced Town Meeting that appropriate investment in roads and public infrastructure was critically necessary and overdue.

   Ms. Fitzpatrick said the Board's naming policy requires that the Board discuss the proposal and vote on it at a subsequent meeting, in case there are any members of the public who wish to weigh in.

   Mr. Matthews said Jack was a great friend to all members of the Board. He said Jack helped the public understand Public Works issues and their importance to the community. He thanked Ms. Fitzpatrick for bringing the idea forward, saying it is a terrific idea. The Board concurred with Mr. Matthews.

   Mr. Matthews said a vote will be taken at a later date, and said comments from the public are welcome.

3. FY2020 Budget Presentation
   Ms. Fitzpatrick presented the proposed annual balanced budget for FY2020. She commented the Town Manager's budget message and budget document will be available on line. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented the word for the budget this year is "flourish," defining Needham as growing and developing in a healthy and/or vigorous way as a result of the particularly favorable environment. She commented the Town is flourishing not only because of the particularly healthy economic environment, but also because of the commitment to planning followed through on by all of the Town Boards and Committees. Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed the budgets "best practices" guiding development of the annual budget.

   A PowerPoint presentation was viewed.

   Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on revenues. She highlighted the Board's plan with respect to reserves, capital facilities, and service delivery improvements. She said the budget plan set by the Board to divert recurring revenue to the debt service stabilization fund, has helped to fund a full-day kindergarten proposal without the need for an override. She commented on the Board's capital facilities plan for eight buildings, in which steady progress is being made. Also noted were service delivery improvements including full-day kindergarten, as well as improvements in public safety, staffing at Rosemary Pool, Health and Human Services, and some administrative services. She concluded the total general fund expenditures proposed for FY2020 is $194 million (up 5.6% from the prior year). Generally speaking, Ms. Fitzpatrick said major changes in the budget from FY2019 to

FY2020 are primarily in the area of town-wide expenses, noting the debt service area is up most significantly at just under 28%. She commented on Town-wide expenses for the year showing OPEB to be flat, employee benefits up 1.8% (which includes increases in head count), retirement funds, as well as other budget drivers including the Fire Department, Public Schools, and the RTS Enterprise Fund which has been rolled into the DPW budget. Ms. Fitzpatrick said Park and Recreation is showing a significant percentage increase because it is a fairly small budget, due to shared staff and the possibility of a longer pool season. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented this is also the first year of the Minuteman High School assessment for the new building, noting a lower enrollment at the school for the next year or two makes everyone's share of the cost higher per pupil. She said future enrollment growth will stabilize Needham's share of the cost with respect to the budget.

Discussion continued on General Fund revenue sources and key budget drivers, and items not recommended for inclusion in this years' budget.

Ms. Fitzpatrick concluded by quoting Will Durant "We are what we repeatedly do, excellence is not an act but a habit." She said relentless focus on the plan put in place has brought the Town to a good position.

Discussion ensued on the monetary amount requested for the hiring of a new Director of Communications, when weighed against other requests not being funded. Ms. Fitzpatrick explained the role of the Director of Communications and how the position will serve all departments, as well as engage with the community.

Mr. Borrelli commented he sees the need, but wants to make sure the monetary request matches with the work load of the job description.

Mr. Matthews said the position must be paid at a professional level because while managers are attempting to get information out, they are working outside of their expertise and taking time away from things they could be doing. He said it is a priority to hire a Director of Communications.

Ms. Cooley commented the skill of digital storytelling is not a skill of some generations. She said the goal is to take the skill and leverage it elsewhere, across all departments.

Mr. Bulian commented that not too long ago, Needham had two functioning newspapers that kept residents up to date, but times have changed. He said the void must be filled.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to recommend approval of the Town Manager's proposed annual budget for FY2020.
Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Mr. Matthews thanked Town staff for their attention to detail and planning, so that revenues now allow for full day kindergarten without having an override, while also expanding public safety, funding the position of Director of Communications, as well as planning for longer term items.

7:20 p.m. Executive Session: Exception 3 - Potential Litigation

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Select Board vote to enter into Executive Session.

Exception 3 - To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

Not to return to open session prior to adjournment.

Second: Mr. Bulian. Mr. Matthews polled the Board. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Mr. Matthews said the Select Board will adjourn so members can attend the Planning Board hearing in progress in Powers Hall.

Note: The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.