Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for January 14, 2020
Needham Town Hall
Select Board's Chamber

6:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: No activity.

7:00 p.m. Call to Order:
A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair John A. Bulian. Those present were Maurice P. Handel, Matthew D. Borrelli, Marianne B. Cooley, Daniel P. Matthews, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, and Recording Secretary Mary Hunt.

7:00 p.m. Joint Meeting with Planning Board:
The Select Board held a meeting with members of the Planning Board including Marty Jacobs, Paul Alpert, Jeanne McKnight, and Ted Owens to recommend a candidate to fill the temporary vacancy on the Planning Board resulting from the resignation of Elizabeth Grimes, through April 14, 2020.

Mr. Handel commented four candidates were considered for the vacancy. He said it was important the vacancy was filled with someone who could "hit the ground running" and therefore recommended Bruce Eisenhut for the short-term position.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Select Board and the Planning Board vote to appoint Bruce Eisenhut to the Planning Board until the next Town Election to be held on April 14, 2020.
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 9-0.

Mr. Matthews said that it is unusual to have a vacancy for a short period of time before a town election, but in this case it makes sense as the Planning Board, for legal reasons, sometimes has to have super majority votes. He noted voters will decide who will fill the position for the full term in the next town election.

7:05 p.m. Public Hearings: Eversource Energy Grant of Locations

Rick Merson, DPW Director spoke with the Board about two Grant of Locations. It was noted that Maureen Carroll, Eversource Energy representative who normally speaks with the Board about GOL's was not in attendance.

1. <u>Fair Oaks Park</u>
   Ms. Fitzpatrick indicated all paperwork is in order.

   Mr. Bulian 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 75 feet of conduit in Fair Oaks Park. This work is necessary to provide underground electric service to 159 Fair Oaks Park.
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Mr. Borrelli said an email was received from an abutter concerning the trees in the berm on Fair Oaks Park. Mr. Merson said as part of the street opening permit process, the Tree Warden will work closely with Eversource regarding the trees and berm.

2. Whitman Road
Ms. Fitzpatrick indicated all paperwork is in order.

Mr. Bulian 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 6 feet of conduit in Whitman Road. This work is necessary to provide underground electric service to 119 Whitman Road, Needham.
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

7:10 p.m. Domestic Violence Action Committee (DVAC) – Book Club
Tiffany Zike, Public Health Nurse, Lt. Belinda Carroll, Needham Police, and Laurie Montanero, DVAC member appeared before the Board to discuss the background of the DVAC, the Book Club, and what the DVAC hopes to accomplish with the book club and future endeavors.

A powerpoint presentation was viewed explaining the history and mission of DVAC. Ms. Zike spoke about the book club reading of "No Visible Bruises" by Rachel Louise Snyder to be held at the Needham Library on January 29, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. She said the event is open to the public.

The Board thanked Ms. Zike, Ms. Carroll, and Ms. Montanero for their work.

7:25 p.m. Emergency Management Update:
Rebecca Ping, Emergency Management Administrator appeared before the Board with an update regarding Needham's Emergency Management program, including current projects, goals, and expectations moving forward.

A powerpoint presentation was viewed. Ms. Ping explained the four phases of Emergency Management include mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. She spoke about the state Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant for development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan and mitigation action items to help the town become a more resilient community in the face of natural disasters. Ms. Ping commented on the MVP workshop attended by many community stakeholders where vulnerabilities were identified and assessed, noting a public listening session will be held to review findings once the program is completed. Ms. Ping spoke about community preparedness, noting community outreach, emergency communications such as "Alert Needham," building specific emergency operations plans, and staff attended training sessions. Ms. Ping concluded with comments on response/recovery plans including training and yearly exercises.

Ms. Cooley asked about the MVP and top results from the workshop. Ms. Ping said there were many ideas and action items to consider, noting water infrastructure, emergency communications, and health outreach and education were the top three ideas to come out of the workshop.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said Ms. Ping has organized the process of Needham's integrated emergency strategy management plan and thanked her for her work.

The Board thanked Ms. Ping for the presentation.

7:34 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:

Motion by Mr. Borrelli that the Select Board vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.

APPOINTMENTS: No Appointments were made at this meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Accept the following donations made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: $500 from C. Bruce Johnstone, $250 from Rotary Club of Needham, $250 from Bradley C. White, $100 from Rose Lewis, and $25 from Eugene Shpitalnik.**
2. **Accept the following donations made to the Needham Health Division's Gift of Warmth Program: $1,000 from the Carter Memorial United Methodist Church; and $300 from Hillcrest Gardens.**
3. **Accept a $300 donation made to the Needham Health Division's Traveling Meals Program from Amy Sherman.**
4. **Accept a $100 donation made to the Needham Health Division's Domestic Violence Action Committee from Ann MacFate.**
5. **Accept the following gifts received by the Needham Public Library for the period of October 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019: Maria E. DiCarli gave the library a $25.00 commission from the sale of her artwork that hung in the Friends' Gallery; The Needham Garden Club donated $30.00 for the purchase of the book, A Way to Garden: Hands on Primer for Every Season, given in memory of Garden Club member Carol Roth; Jayashree Ramakrishnan gave the library a $90.00 commission from the sale of her art work that hung in the Friends' Gallery; Naomi Goldman gave the library the Buffalo puzzle, Chuck Pinsom, Island Time ($13.00); Needham Author Tamar Ossowski donated two copies of her new book, Fractured, A Novel. ($52.00); Grey Osterud gave the library a copy of The Testaments by Margaret Atwood ($28.95); Fitzroy**

Danglad donated $9.00 to the library, as an expression of thanks for the help he received; Dawn Davis gave the Children's Room a copy of her book, Mom As You Are ($16.00); The Library Foundation of Needham granted the library $25,675; The Friends of the Needham Public Library granted the library $37,000; An anonymous donor gave the library $90 in honor of the library staff; and Robert L. Tisdale donated a copy of his book, The Descendants of John Tisdale (1614-1675) Colonial Massachusetts ($199.00).

6. **Approve open session minutes of December 17, 2019.**
7. **Accept a $6,000 donation made to the Needham Health Division's Interface Referral Services program from the Kyle W. Shapiro Foundation.**
8. **Approve the Needham Senior/Disabled Tax Assistance Program flyer.**
9. **Water and Sewer Abatement Order #1285**
10. **Approve a One Day Special Wines & Malt Beverages License for Richard Lunetta, of the Needham Exchange Club, to host its monthly dinner meeting on January 16, 2020 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The event will be held in the Memorial Park Field House, 92 Rosemary Street, Needham.**

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

7:35 p.m. Director of Public Works:

1. Sign Notice of Traffic Regulation – Warren Street

Mr. Merson explained vehicles presently parking on the east side of Warren Street near Great Plain Avenue impede the visibility of vehicles turning on to Warren Street from Great Plain Avenue. He said the proposed regulation will prohibit parking on the east side of Warren Street from the intersection of Great Plain Avenue to 150 feet north of the intersection and thereby increase the visibility of vehicles and make the intersection safer.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to approve and sign the Notice of Traffic Regulation Permit #P20-01-14 for Warren Street, Parking Prohibited, East side, from Great Plain Avenue to 150 feet north of Great Plain Avenue.
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

7:36 p.m. FY2019 Financial Audit:

Scott C. McIntire, CPA, Melanson & Heath Company, Alina Korsak, Audit Manager, Melanson & Heath Company, and Dave Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance appeared before the Board to discuss the recently completed audit of the Town's Financial Statements for fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. Evelyn Poness, Town Collector and Michelle Vaillancourt, Town Accountant were also in attendance.

Mr. Davison said this year's audit went very well, noting four recommendations from the auditors will be addressed over the next year.

Mr. McIntire spoke about the audit process and results, noting the audit went very well. He said the Town's books and records are in good working order, with no significant audit adjustments necessary. He said Needham's financial statements are in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards for local governments.

Mr. McIntire spoke briefly about the Independent Auditor's Report (pg. 1-3), noting audit standards and procedures that were followed. He commented on Management's Discussion and Analysis (pg. 4-20), saying it is a great resource and snapshot of the long and short term prospective financial statements for Needham. Mr. McIntire referred to the balance sheet (pg. 21-22), noting key accounts include net pension liability and net OPEB liability. He commented the pension liability has increased approximately $14 million over the prior year, saying it is important to remember that the financial statements are as of June 30, 2019 and the pension system is on a calendar year basis. He pointed out the pension numbers are essentially as of December 31, 2018, noting the liability went up and is almost all offset as the pension plan did not meet its target earnings for the calendar year. He noted the numbers clearly returned early in 2019 and assumes the liability will come down based on positive earnings. He said the net OPEB liability increased as well, driven by the drop in the discount rate. Mr. McIntire said the pension system, based on the 2018 valuation, is expected to be fully funded by 2031, and the OPEB liability is scheduled to be funded in 2041. He said both plans are very well funded in comparison to other communities in the Commonwealth.

Discussion ensued on expected return on pension liability and OPEB liability.

Mr. McIntire referred to Unassigned Fund Balance (pg. 25) of $19,403,198 saying the number increased approximately $1,600,000 from the prior year and represents about 12.5% of FY2019 expenditures. He referred to the Management's Discussion and Analysis saying it is a resource to understand why some of the account balances may have changed. Mr. McIntire referred to total revenue of $6,821,736, a figure better than anticipated, driven by motor vehicle excise tax collections and property taxes. He commented on expenditures of unspent appropriations of $4,925,676, noting the total is consistent with the prior year. He commented on Other Financing Sources and the decrease in the overall fund balance.

Ms. Korsak commented on recommendations to the Town.

Mr. Borrelli asked Mr. McIntire to elaborate on OPEB and how Needham compares with other communities. Mr. McIntire said Needham is a leader in the Commonwealth with respect to OPEB, suspecting the percentage of funding is higher than most communities. He said the Town has been proactive, particularly in regard to the reduction of the discount rate.

Ms. Cooley asked for an update on the Information Technology study. She said clarification is needed on the Town's risk of ransomware issues and vulnerabilities. Mr. Davison said a presentation was made by the IT Director about a year ago, and that an update could be given in the future.

The Board thanked Mr. McIntire, Ms. Korsak, and Mr. Davison for the discussion.

7:55 p.m. Town Manager:

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager appeared before the Board with four items to discuss:

1. <u>Other Postemployment Benefits Plan (OPEB)</u>

   Ms. Fitzpatrick updated the Board on the most recent OPEB actuarial analysis. She pointed out a few items impacting the total liability in the report. She commented on medicare premiums, an increase in the number of retirees and spouses who took health insurance after retirement, and an investment loss. She noted changes in assumptions in the funding schedule moving forward include changes in the mortality schedule and the assumption of the number of people retiring. Most importantly, she said, is the adoption of a 6.75% discount rate in the funding schedule.

   Discussion ensued on the discount rate.

   Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on key drivers of liability, health insurance premiums, retirement ages, number of participants electing coverage, discount rate, and cost sharing.

2. <u>FY2021 Budget Priorities</u>

   Ms. Fitzpatrick asked the Board to endorse the FY2021 budget priorities.

   Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to endorse the following budget priorities for FY2021: The primary goal of the Select Board in consideration of the operating and capital budgets is the maintenance and optimization of existing Town services. In addition, mindful of the availability of revenue for appropriation, the Board has set the following priorities:

   1. **Support for items that contribute to the achievement of Townwide goals and objectives.**
   2. **Support for a five to ten-year plan for the renovation, reconstruction and/or preservation of the Town's capital assets in the most prudent, realistic, and efficient manner, including continued investment in buildings, infrastructure, and fleet maintenance.**
   3. **Support for initiatives that contribute to financial sustainability, including the maintenance of a debt service plan that balances capital needs with the Town's ability to pay, identification of alternative funding sources for traditional cash capital needs, evaluation of financing alternatives, and alignment of capital and maintenance needs with appropriate funding sources.**
   4. **Support for initiatives aimed at achieving greater coordination and efficiency among Town departments and providing adequate resources to address identified service delivery and general administrative needs of the Town in a cost-effective manner.**
   5. **Support for a funding mechanism for mandated water quality (stormwater) expenses.**

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

3. Open Annual Town Meeting Warrant
   Ms. Fitzpatrick reviewed the preliminary list of warrant articles for the annual Town Meeting and asked the Board to open the warrant. She said the warrant is scheduled to be closed on February 11, 2020.

   Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to open the warrant for the 2020 Annual Town Meeting.
   Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

4. Town Manager's Report
   Ms. Fitzpatrick reported the Town received another Community Compact IT Grant of $23,500. She said the funds will help the Town move forward on its electronic permitting process, which will have a direct public benefit. She thanked Roger McDonald, IT Director for his efforts in securing the grant.

   Ms. Fitzpatrick reported she has been participating in the Commuter Rail Communities Coalition. She said the group includes local partners, members of the legislature, and cities and towns, which was formed to support the MassDOT and MBTA Commuter Rail and consider the question of whether electrification makes sense for the rail system and look at revenues for funding the commuter rail.

8:16 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. Committee Reports
   No Committee Reports were made.

8:17 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting of Tuesday, January 14, 2020.
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting are available at:

http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID=