

Approved: March 22, 2021

Select Board Meeting: February 22, 2021

Present: Freiman, Ulfelder, Olney, Sullivan Woods, Aufranc

Also Present: Jop, Frigulietti

Warrants approved: none

Meeting Documents:

1. Agenda
2. Draft BOS Calendar
3. Wellesley 2021 Budget Cycle Rollup
4. Budget Guideline
5. Reserves Projections as of 6/30/20
6. Five year capital summary
7. Town Clerk Salary Comparison
8. DPW Supplemental Budget Request
9. Correspondence from Ms. Allen, COA Board Chair
10. Town Volunteer Form: Liz Becker
11. Town Volunteer Form: Salvatore DeFazio
12. Draft SB Minutes: 2/1/21; 2/8/21
13. Draft Proclamations
14. Quarterly Cash Analysis
15. Animal Control Report
16. MWRA Presentation on Tunnel Program Update

1. Call to Order

Ms. Freiman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm online.

Ms. Freiman announced the meeting was being streamed live on Comcast channel 8 and Verizon channel 40 and by Wellesley Media and recorded for subsequent viewing on the cable channels or at wellesleymedia.org.

2. Citizen Speak

None.

3. Announcements

4. Wellesley's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative

Joining the Board: Raul Gonzalez, Senior Planner from Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC); Kelly Axtell, Deputy Town Manager, Lexington; Melissa Interest, Lexington Human Service Director; Rachel Glisper, Needham Director of Human Resources, and Chief Pilecki.

Ms. Olney reviewed the differences in goals for the current meeting versus the previous meeting held on February 19th. She stated that this evening the discussion would focus on strategies to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). She added that racial equity had been defined as “when race could no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved.” Ms. Olney noted that

Wellesley had been researching what other communities had done to address racial equity and reviewed some of the programs that were taking place.

Mr. Gonzalez provided an overview of the MAPC REMAP program and its origins. He stated that MAPC was working with municipalities to enhance their capacities in planning and economic development efforts. He added that part one of the REMAP program had just begun with six communities and focuses on training and self-reflection on racial equity, while part two of the program would focus on the creation of the individual plans for each of the communities. He stated that the selection process was difficult noting that twenty-two applications were received. Mr. Gonzalez reviewed a new program called the Municipal Equity Work Project that would incorporate learning opportunities for communities to share experiences and strategies in their racial equity work. He added that MAPC was trying to expand its geographical region in an effort to speak with additional communities that have more experience in creating equity goals and initiatives.

Ms. Axtell provided an overview and background on the efforts from Lexington and their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) program. She added that the town had engaged a consultant to assist in building a diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment and pathway for next steps. Ms. Axtell stated that the consultant was organizing and presenting trainings for a small team of representative departments, boards, and community members focused on lessons learned from earlier focus groups that were held. She added that a Diversity Advisory Council had been created to address the consultant report to identify any potential missing items or groups that should have a voice in the planning process. She cautioned that community buy-in was essential in order for the initiatives to move forward and for the town to successfully make changes. Ms. Axtell stated that for the FY22 budget a DEI officer was included based on the recommendations from the consultant. Ms. Interest stated that the community groups were involved in the trainings, and noted the Human Rights Committee that had been involved in town for several years had been proactive in advocacy work for residents that had experienced racially charged incidents that did not involve the police.

Ms. Glisper stated that Needham had two current initiatives, a community effort and an internal/employee effort to address issues of racism and bias. She discussed the initiatives for the town to attract a diverse workforce including purchasing an applicant tracking software that had bias-free hiring incorporated into the system. She added that a DEI question was included in each interview panel for every position and the town provided a hiring guidebook with a section devoted to DEI questions. Ms. Glisper stated that working with director of Parks & Recreation, a program was designed for the current METCO students to work at the town pool during the summer. She provided an overview of the Needham Unites Against Racism Initiative (“NUARI”); noting it was an external group with communication channel to the town. She added NUARI had a vision statement and principles and was working with consultant to develop programming. Ms. Glisper noted the work of the town that supported its employees by provided guidance for how to navigate predominantly white spaces and accomplish self-care, while encouraging one another in the workplace. She added that retention of a diverse workforce was critical and included offering programs to show employees they are valued and accomplishments are appreciated.

The Board discussed the programs and ideas presented. Ms. Axtell discussed the challenges of engaging community members not already involved in town government, including having a diversity council that reaches out to the community and brings discussion topics back to the town boards and committees. Ms. Glisper stated that while Needham town government does not have a vision statement, NUARI had accepted one that would direct the group and impact how the town proceeds. Mr. Gonzalez stated that the homework assignment for the REMAP participants had been to create a vision statement and timeline for reaching goals. He acknowledged difficulties in predominantly white towns in recruitment of a diverse workforce and noted various strategies that could be used hiring practices and procedures. The group discussed the potential for regionalizing a DEI Officer much like the West Suburban Veteran’s District

had been shared. Ms. Glisper noted that the proposal had been discussed in Needham and was viewed favorably though no decisions had been made. Ms. Jop added that the idea had been discussed at the last WSVD meeting among the Town Managers and was overall an acceptable prospect. Mr. Gonzalez stated that before combining efforts of one employee, the towns should be reviewed to understand if there were enough commonalities so that the DEI employees would not be overwhelmed with different projects from each town. Ms. Axtell noted that shared DEI services had been discussed in Lexington however, it was determined that they would hire their own officer to direct DEI efforts. Ms. Glisper and Ms. Axtell discussed how their internal and external teams worked as separate entities that remained in communication with one another. Ms. Frigulietti thanked all of the speakers for participating. Ms. Freiman added that even if a regional collaborative was not decided upon, the towns would continue sharing best practices.

Ms. Freiman noted that agenda included a discussion on the adoption of a Board statement on anti-racism and anti-bias. She reviewed the discussion from the previous meeting regarding the statement and noted two drafted statements based on edits from that meeting. The Board discussed the statement, the drafts, and the Tolerance Pledge adopted in 2016. The Board discussed the adoption of a new statement to address issues of racism, and eventually developing a broader statement and program in the future as the Town moves forward on new initiatives regarding civil discourse and anti-racism. Ms. Sullivan Woods stated that HRS does have a group that will support anyone in the town that experiences any act of racism or bias. The Board continued to discuss the drafted statement on anti-racism, noting encouraging comments from the community for adoption.

Upon a motion by Ms. Sullivan Woods and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board was polled and voted (5-0) to approve the Wellesley Select Board Statement on Anti-Racism and Anti-Bias as amended.

Sullivan Woods – Aye

Olney –Aye

Ulfelder – Aye

Freiman – Aye

Aufranc – Aye

5. Annual Town Meeting Preparation

Ms. Strother, Town Finance Director, joined the Board.

Ms. Jop stated the Board will be reopening, amending, and closing the Annual Town Meeting Warrant at its next meeting due to changes in the capital requests that had been previously discussed by the Board. Ms. Strother reviewed the newest budget model noting updates from the State budget. She added that revisions to capital requests and operating budgets assisted in reducing the budget gap. Ms. Strother stated that new growth revenue had been increased, and noted favorable news regarding the health insurance updated rates. She stated that the additional amount of free cash needed to balance the budget was \$1.4million, bringing the total projected use of free cash to balance the budget to approximately \$4million. She noted the significant reduction from traffic and parking revenue and discussed the CARES funding program and expenditures. She added that the School Department continued to assess and maximize the use of federal grants for expenditures related to the pandemic. Ms. Jop stated that the traffic and parking budget continued to be a concern moving forward as there was no expectation of what will be needed from free cash in the next few years as the economy recovered. The Board discussed the models presented and the ability to continue to use CARES funding due to changes in the program, noting the work that had been completed to address budgetary needs.

Ms. Jop stated that the Town Clerk's salary was required to be adopted by the Board each year under Article 6 at ATM. She reviewed the process for addressing the salary through separate reviews with HR as well as surrounding towns, noting that the Clerk's salary was below the median. Ms. Jop provided an overview of the current survey of Clerk salaries in other communities. The Board discussed the salary review and additional survey questions prior to voting on the annual salary.

6. Discuss and Vote Winter Supplemental Budget

Mr. Cohen, DPW Director, joined the meeting.

Ms. Jop reviewed the request for additional funds for the winter budget, noting the additional snow and ice events that depleted the Board's most recent approval. She noted that March could provide for additional storms; and that the appropriation had been accounted for in the budget previously discussed. Mr. Cohen stated the outlook for the upcoming ten days looked promising and hoped this would be the last request. The Board discussed the request and the DPW snow/ice program.

Upon a motion by Ms. Sullivan Woods and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board was polled and voted (5-0) approve the winter supplemental authorization \$300,000 to the Department of Public Works.

Sullivan Woods – Aye

Olney –Aye

Ulfelder – Aye

Freiman – Aye

Aufranc – Aye

7. Appointments

Ms. Jop reviewed the appointment of a new Animal Control Officer as hired by the Police Department to replace Sue Webb. She noted the recommendation from the Council on Aging to fill the two vacancies on the Board. The Board briefly discussed the makeup of the Council on Aging and thanked the retiring Council members.

Upon a motion by Ms. Sullivan Woods and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board was polled and voted (5-0) to appoint Jennifer Smith as Animal Control Officer for a term to expire on June 30, 2021

Sullivan Woods – Aye

Olney –Aye

Ulfelder – Aye

Freiman – Aye

Aufranc – Aye

Upon a motion by Ms. Sullivan Woods and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board was polled and voted (5-0) to appoint Salvatore DeFazio and Elizabeth Becker to the Council on Aging with terms to expire on June 30, 2023.

Sullivan Woods – Aye

Olney –Aye

Ulfelder – Aye

Freiman – Aye

Aufranc – Aye

8. Executive Director's Update

Ms. Jop noted the drafted minutes and amendments had been sent to the Board earlier in the day. She reviewed the anonymous gift received to support Officer Winnie, the Police Department Community Service dog. Ms. Jop stated that Ms. Senhouse, Wellesley's oldest living resident would be celebrating her 110th birthday on February 28th and Mr. Hodges had celebrated his 100th birthday recently. Ms. Sullivan Woods read the proclamations from the Board honoring Ms. Senhouse and Mr. Hodges.

Upon a motion by Ms. Sullivan Woods and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board was polled and voted (5-0) to approve the minutes of February 1, 2021 and February 8, 2021 as amended.

Sullivan Woods – Aye

Olney –Aye

Ulfelder – Aye

Freiman – Aye

Aufranc – Aye

Upon a motion by Ms. Sullivan Woods and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board was polled and voted (5-0) to accept an anonymous donation for \$10,000 to support the Wellesley Police Departments Community Resource Service Dog Winnie.

Sullivan Woods – Aye

Olney –Aye

Ulfelder – Aye

Freiman – Aye

Aufranc – Aye

Upon a motion by Ms. Sullivan Woods and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board was polled and voted (5-0) to approve the proclamations to celebrate Herlda Senhouse and Stanley Hodges birthdays.

Sullivan Woods – Aye

Olney –Aye

Ulfelder – Aye

Freiman – Aye

Aufranc – Aye

9. New Business and Correspondence

Ms. Jop stated that there were two letters, the first was regarding the Town having a seat on the MBTA's Advisory Board and asked for the Board's support in sending the letter. The Board discussed and expressed general support in sending the letter. Ms. Jop stated the second letter was drafted by the Natick Sustainable Energy Coordinator to the Governor commenting on the Administration's Interim Clean Energy and Climate Plan from a regional approach. She added that the SEC supported the letter and asked the Select Board to sign the letter. Ms. Olney noted the revisions that had taken place in drafting the letter and asked that the Board vote at its next meeting.

Ms. Olney stated that the report on the Barton Road redevelopment had been completed and that the team had met with the Housing Authority at its last meeting. She added that the proposal was approximately 300 units of mixed use replacing the current eighty-eight units phased over time without displacing residents. She briefly reviewed the next steps of the process.

10. Executive Session

Ms. Freiman requested a motion that the Board vote to convene in Executive Session for the purposes of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with all unions for health insurance and declared that having such discussions in Open Session would have a detrimental effect on the Town's bargaining position.

At 8:45 pm upon a motion by Ms. Sullivan Woods and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board was polled and voted (5-0) to enter Executive Session under M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(A), exemption #3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with all unions for health insurance as the Chair has declared that having such discussions in Open Session would have a detrimental effect on the Town's bargaining position and to invite Meghan Jop and Amy Frigulietti to join the meeting. Upon the adjournment of executive session, the Board will resume the meeting in open session for the sole purpose of adjourning.

Sullivan Woods – Aye

Olney –Aye

Ulfelder – Aye

Freiman – Aye

Aufranc – Aye

Upon a motion by Ms. Sullivan Woods and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board was polled and voted (5-0) to exit Executive Session and return to Open Session.

Sullivan Woods – Aye

Olney –Aye

Ulfelder – Aye

Freiman – Aye

Aufranc – Aye

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 pm.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2021 at 6:00 pm online.