



Town of West Boylston
140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

Select Board/Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

Date / Time / Location of Meeting
July 12, 2023, 5:30 p.m.
140 Worcester Street
West Boylston, MA 01583
Board Meeting Room 2nd Floor

Members Present:
Kristina Pedone, Chair via Zoom
Patrick J. Crowley, Vice Chair @ 5:40 PM
James Morrissey, Clerk
Marc Frieden
Barur R. Rajeshkumar

Members NOT Present:

Invited Guests:
Jennifer Warren-Dyment, Town Administrator
Faye Zukowski, Municipal Assistant

THIS MEETING WILL ALSO BE HELD VIRTUALLY IN A HYBRID SETTING VIRTUAL MEETING INFORMATION:

To Join Zoom Meeting

- <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87289496812?pwd=QUg2cHBMNmJid0ZlZk9BZTVGbXFzZz09>
- **Meeting ID: 872 8949 6812, Passcode: 01583, Dial by your location: (646) 558-8656 US (New York)**

This meeting will be held in person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend this in person meeting. Please note that while an option for remote attendance and/or participation is being provided as a courtesy to the public, the meeting will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law. Members of the public with particular interest in any specific item on this agenda should make plans for in-person vs. virtual attendance accordingly.

CONVENE MEETING

- Roll call

Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC COMMENT: This fifteen-minute period is an opportunity for the public to address their concerns and questions regarding town operations and programs to the Board. Except in urgent circumstances, any matter presented for consideration by the Board shall not be discussed in detail nor acted upon by the Board at this meeting. A scheduled time on a future agenda may be set at the Board's discretion. Complaints or criticism directed at staff, volunteers, or other town officials shall not be permitted. If we do not have Open Session items to discuss, other agenda items may be brought forward earlier.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

- None anticipated

REVIEW AND VOTE TO APPROVE WARRANTS FOR THE PERIOD COVERING June 22, 2023 THROUGH JUNE 12, 2023: Town Payable Warrants FY2023-52, FY2023-SP04, FY2023-53, FY2023-54, FY2024-01 and FY2024-02; Payroll Warrant FY2023-25, FY2023-26, FY2023-27, and FY2024-01; Sewer Warrant FY 2023-SE35, FY2023-SE36, FY2023-SE37 and FY2024-SE01; School Warrant FY2023-S24, FY2023-S25 and FY2024-S1; MLP FY2023 #28 and MLP FY2024 #1.

***Motion:** Mr. Rajeshkumar moved to approve; Mr. Morrissey seconded.*

All in favor

Approved

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Consider approving Year-End Budget Adjustments in accordance with MGL c. 44, s. 33B(b)**

Ms. Warren-Dymont explained the Finance Committee met and approved all five-Year End Budget Adjustments on Monday July 10th.

-Treasurer Collector \$1,500 from Treasurer/Collector Salaries/Wages 01-145-5100-5100 to Treasurer/Collector Purch Services 01-145-5200-5200

-Police Department \$3,000 from Assessor Salary 01-141-5100-5100 to Police Salary & Wages 01-210-5100-5100

-Building Department \$160 from Building Purchased Services 01-241-5200-5200 to Building Salary & Wages 01-241-5100-5100

-Public Works \$33,000 from Highway Salaries and Wages 01-132-5200-5780 to Highway Road Improvements 01-420-5200-5300

-Library \$1,225 from Library Purchased Service 01-610-5200-5200 to Library Salaries 01-610-5100-5100

***Motion:** Mr. Crowley moved to approve all five transfers as presented; Mr. Morrissey seconded.*

All in favor

Approved

- **Consider accepting Walmart Community Grant of \$4,500 in accordance with MGL c. 44, s.53A**

***Motion:** Mr. Rajeshkumar moved to accept; Mr. Crowley seconded.*

All in favor

Approved

Mr. Freiden asked about the Photo Release and Public Acceptance of Grant Award, Ms. Warren-Dymont stated that is something she will take care of and will issue a public thank you to Walmart.

- **Consider accepting gift of Universal Worldscan Reader Plus (Animal Microchip Reader) from Lori Rist in accordance with MGL c. 44, s.53A ½**

Ms. Pedone explained this is to use for lost pets and scan for microchip. Ms. Pedone would like to send a thank you to Lori Rist for her donation.

***Motion:** Mr. Morrissey moved to accept; Mr. Rajeshkumar seconded.*

All in favor

Approved

- **Discussion and potential vote on time period covered by the Annual Town Report**

Ms. Pedone explained that the report is currently a year to a year and a half behind current times and would like it to be closer to relevance of today. Mr. Frieden stated he is concerned that different departments use different time periods. Ms. Warren-Dymont explained the Annual Town Report can follow fiscal year or calendar year but is required to be available for the Annual Town Meeting in May annually and if not, there is a \$50 fine from the State. She explained that West Boylston has annually completed a fiscal year Annual Town Report. Ms. Warren-Dymont explained the Board can change the terms of the report to a calendar year or change when the report is completed. Mr. Crowley asked how difficult it will be to obtain all the reports from the Departments and Committees at an earlier time of the year, Ms. Warren-Dymont believes many will have their report prepared upon request. Ms. Warren-Dymont stated if the change is to a calendar year, it will require one transitional year which would be a year and a half. Ms. Warren-Dymont stated there could be an issue when it comes to reporting some of the finances if the calendar year report is selected.

***Motion:** Mr. Crowley moved to change the production of the Annual Town Report to the fall and anticipated to be available for Fall Town Meeting; Mr. Frieden seconded.*

All in favor

Approved

- **Consider executing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of West Boylston and the International Association of Firefighters, Local 5054, relative to vacation buyback and carryover for FY23**

Ms. Warren-Dymont explained there was a deviation from the language of the Collective Bargaining Agreement in regards to notification to the Chief for buyback of vacation time. She stated the contract requires notification by staff to the Chief by May 1st of their intent to buyback vacation time. However, Fire staff has routinely waited until the annual memo is sent to all Town employees regarding vacation buyback. She explained this Memorandum of Understanding states that Firefighters who have notified the Chief of either carryover or buyback of vacation time by June 30th will be allowed to do so; that this agreement is not precedent setting; and that the Union will ensure, unless changed in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the May 1st notification will be followed in the future. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if the Union agrees to this Memorandum. Ms. Warren-Dymont stated that this is a request of the Union and reviewed by the Town's Labor Counsel. Mr. Crowley asked if this is something we can implement for the remainder of the contract. Ms. Warren-Dymont stated the Union has some other language they would like to cleanup overall in the next contract negotiation and will most likely be asking to remove this May 1st provision. Ms. Warren-Dymont stated in consideration for this request she verified there is sufficient funds to cover this request or she was going to allow them to carry over if the funding was not available.

***Motion:** Mr. Crowley moved to approve the MOU with Local 5054; Mr. Morrissey seconded.*

All in favor

Approved

- **Discussion and potential vote on the charge and composition of the Solid Waste Advisory Team**

Ms. Pedone requested this item as she sits on the Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT) and they host many events such as cleanup day, regular meetings, and provide information to the Town Administrator. She would like clarification what the charge or duties of this committee is and why there are not positions such as Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk. Ms. Warren-Dyment provided minutes from August 2007, when the Town Administrator sought approval for creation of this committee which was a result of a newspaper article they had read. She explained this committee was formed as an advisory committee on trash and recycling issues. She stated a founding member Elise Wellington came forward with more information on the formation of the committee. Ms. Warren-Dyment read the charge of the committee and explained one of the first major projects that they worked on was the Pay-As-You-Throw Program. She stated she has not seen the Select Board or the Town Administrator request that the SWAT group work or compile research on any items. She would like to see if the Board has anything they would like them to work on. Ms. Pedone stated when she was first on SWAT, she received a lot of complaints about the trash bag quality. She would like the Select Board to task SWAT with some items such as research on textile events, recycling, bag prices or other options, and the upcoming contract for trash disposal. Mr. Crowley stated the bag rates will eventually go way up, Ms. Warren-Dyment stated West Boylston's bag rates are close to, if not the lowest, in the State. She stated there is a strong recommendation from the State Coordinator to raise the bag fees. Mr. Crowley stated years back there was an operational override earmarked for trash and it is now part of the budget. He explained that they did not increase the bag fees in the past due to the offset of the override and trash cost but feels at the end of this contract that will need to change. Ms. Pedone has concern that the town will still need to find funding to cover the disposal cost even with the bag fees and past override. She would like SWAT to organize as a Board and have the Select Board task them items to advise on. She would like them to present recommendations for the upcoming trash contract and evaluate the bag fees and have other options for recycling. Mr. Crowley explained the tipping fees are set but the Town pays for the disposal. Ms. Pedone stated the tipping fees has increased dramatically since the current contract was negotiated and currently the Town has a great rate. Ms. Warren-Dyment stated the market for recycling has also dramatically changed. Mr. Crowley stated the residents would need serious lead time if the town was to decide to opt to totes instead of bags. Ms. Warren-Dyment stated some Towns have a combination program using bags and totes. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if Ms. Warren-Dyment is looking to change the composition of the SWAT, Ms. Warren-Dyment would like to have a Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk and that they re-organize annually. The Board had discussion on the tasks they are looking to task SWAT with and that any research or analysis will all be helpful.

Motion: Mr. Crowley moved to task SWAT to investigate and analyze bag fees and provide recommendation of fees to be considered by the Select Board; recommendations for the upcoming contract renewal; and create a program around textile recycling and in working with the Town Administrator provide the results; Mr. Morrissey seconded.

All in favor

Approved

Motion: Mr. Crowley moved to have SWAT organize annually as a committee to include Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk; Mr. Morrissey seconded.

All in favor

Approved

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Clarify vote taken on August 17, 2022 which appropriated \$400,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to FY23 Retiree Health Insurance**

Ms. Warren-Dyment explained in August of 2022 the Board voted to appropriate \$400,000 in ARPA funds to be used for the FY2023 Retiree Health Insurance and the purpose of the vote was to allow \$400,000 to flow through free cash to be used for four consecutive years towards the FY24, FY25 and FY26 OPEB. She expressed concern with a future Board change the reserved amount may not be utilized as intended by the vote. She stated she considered funding the full \$300,000 at the Fall Town Meeting and not make contributions in FY25 and FY26 but PARS (Public Agency Retirement Services), Manager of the fund, recommended against as it looks better with steady consistent funding. She stated the Town Accountant will need to monitor the in and out of the funds. She is concerned that if the Town has budget difficulties this process of funding OPEB may be lost. She requested the Board ensure that in FY24, FY25 and FY26 that there will be a commitment to have an article in the amount of \$100,000 to fund the OPEB in those years. Ms. Warren-Dyment gave an overview of what OPEB is and the responsibility of the Town. Mr. Crowley gave further explanation and that the Town has been contributing annually. Mr. Rajeshkumar believes that future Board members will support continuing to contribute. Mr. Crowley stated this vote could be undone if budgetary shortfalls happen.

***Motion:** Mr. Crowley moved to ensure that an article is placed on each fall Town Meeting for FY24, FY25 and FY26 if free cash is certified and available, appropriating \$100,000 towards OPEB and if free cash is not certified prior to the fall Town Meeting than an article will be added to the Annual Town Meeting; Mr. Rajeshkumar seconded.*

All in favor

Approved

- **Consider re-voting on Select Board Signatures of Authority for FY2024**

***Motion:** Mr. Crowley moved to have all Board members authorized to sign with only one signature needed; Mr. Morrissey seconded.*

All in favor

Approved

6:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING: Consider amending Policy K-11, “Policy on Hiring”

Mr. Morrissey read the Public Hearing Notice.

Ms. Warren-Dyment introduced Policy K-11, Policy on Hiring, she explained the Town Meeting approved removing the Hiring Policy section from the Bylaw, a policy was created and she realized there was language that needs amending. She explained that the policy states that when bringing on someone new to the organization the starting wage or salary cannot be more than a Step 6 which is the midpoint, but in Section 7 - Promotion it does not allow for the promotion to the Step 6 mid-point. She requested to add to the policy the following language, “However, if this one step-rate increase does not place the employee at a Step Six or above, they may be placed up to a Step Six in the new classification and compensation grade.” Mr. Frieden asked if it stills works with the 5% increase, Ms. Warren-Dyment stated that language will still be there and this allows for more than 5%. Ms. Warren-Dyment explained the plan was changed from a six-step plan to a twelve-step plan in 2020, and this language was not changed to mimic the mid-point as changed for external candidates. Mr. Morrissey clarified

and suggested allowing for Department Heads to place candidates on the Step that they would like with the justification in the request. Mr. Crowley feels this may create animosity among staff if everyone is hired all over the step plan, Mr. Morrissey stated it should not as it is all justified. Ms. Warren-Dyment stated this only applies to a small group, non-contract, and non-union employees. Ms. Warren-Dyment has concerns with relationships with Department Heads and staff, the promotions could be based on good relationships. Mr. Morrissey clarified that this is only in regards to promotion and would like the flexibility. Mr. Frieden would like to have the flexibility without having employees resign to reapply in order to obtain the increase. Ms. Warren-Dyment recommends the Board continue the Public Hearing.

***Motion:** Mr. Crowley moved to continue Public Hearing to July 19th at 7:30 p.m.; Mr. Rajeshkumar seconded.*

All in favor

Approved

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS:

- None

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT (May contain Departmental updates, community reminders and announcements, project updates, etc. No votes will be taken).

1. State Earmark Closeouts: I have submitted the paperwork to close out the two FY 2023 earmarks obtained by our Legislative Delegation. For North Main Street sidewalks, we expended the full \$200,000. For Mixer Field we expended \$59,085 of the \$150,000. This leaves \$90,916 remaining from the original appropriation. Representative O'Day continues to work on a solution so the Town may expend the \$90,916.
2. FY 24 Earmarks: The FY 24 legislative earmarks (\$75,000 in ADA upgrades for municipally-owned buildings and \$150,000 for Pride Park) are still in Conference Committee between the House and the Senate.
3. Capital Request Forms: Capital request forms have been sent out to Department Heads as well as Boards, Committees, and Commissions. I have asked for the request forms to be submitted by August 11th, with the understanding some folks may need additional time to obtain quotes.
4. Veterans Agent Hours: With the beginning of FY24, office hours for the Veteran's Agent have increased. Jacob Webb will be in his office Mondays and Tuesdays from 8AM to 2PM. He is also available by appointment outside of those times. However, due to state training and vacation, he will out of the office until July 26th. Current clients have been notified and he will be checking his email during that time.

MEETINGS INVITATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Bandstand Concerts:**
 - **July 16th Illusions -Music for All (6-8 PM)**
 - **July 23rd Track Down -Classic Rock (6-8 PM)**
- **Outdoor Movie (TBD)- Friday July 21, 2023, at Dusk**
- **Annual Pet Show at the Beaman Memorial Library July 20, 2023, at 6:30 PM**
- **Bocce Ball Instructions at the Senor Center Tuesdays at 5:30 PM**
- **Yard Waste Facility will be open this Friday from 7 AM – 12 PM**

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SELECT BOARD REPORTS:

- Mr. Crowley would like an update on Pride Park and Mixter Field at a future meeting.
- Mr. Crowley announced Celebrations Committee is hosting Fall Fest on October 21st from 11 AM to 5 PM, they are looking for volunteers and more information will be coming soon.
- Mr. Crowley announced Celebrations will be hosting the Annual Tree Lighting and will be held on December 3rd.
- Mr. Crowley announced Walmart donated \$100 for each of the next two movie nights for snacks and encouraged residents to vote online for the movie choices.

Next Select Board Meeting: August 9, 2023

***Motion** Mr. Frieden moved to adjourn 7:02 p.m.; Mr. Morrissey*

All in favor

Approved

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: _____

Faye D. Zukowski, Municipal Assistant

Kristina Pedone, Chair

Patrick J. Crowley, Vice Chair

James Morrissey, Clerk

Marc Frieden

Barur R. Rajeshkumar