

Select Board Minutes  
Monday, January 24, 2022 -6:30 PM

*Meeting to be held by remote participation in accordance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021*

Participating: Tristan J. Laliberte, Scott C. Wrenn, Daniel S. Carpenter, Lionel R. Berthiaume and Sara K. Rufli

Also Participating: Town Manager Julie A. Jacobson and CFO/Asst. Town Manager Ed Kazanovicz

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by the Chair, Tristan J. Laliberte.

Chair Laliberte confirmed that all members participating in the meeting remotely were present and could hear him:

- Daniel Carpenter - Yes
- Lionel Berthiaume - Yes
- Sara Rufli - Yes

The Chair stated that the meeting was being recorded by Auburn Cable Television and all votes to be taken in this meeting will be conducted by roll call vote.

The Board led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearings/Presentations

Continued Public Hearing on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds to Solicit Input from Residents and Businesses on the Use of the Town's ARPA Allocation

At 6:32 P.M. the Select Board voted to re-open the public hearing (Motion made by Mr. Berthiaume; motion seconded by Ms. Rufli) roll call vote: Ms. Rufli, Yes; Mr. Berthiaume, Yes; Mr. Carpenter, Yes; Mr. Wrenn, Yes; Mr. Laliberte, Yes – passed 5 to 0.

Town Manager Julie Jacobson provided a report that gave an overview of the initial session of the public hearing and the public comments offered and corresponding responses. She summarized the process to obtain additional public comments since the public hearing on November 29, 2021.

The Town Manager updated the Board on the U. S. Treasury's Final Rule that was issued on January 6, 2022 implementing the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program under the American Rescue Plan (ARPA). The Final Rule text is extremely lengthy and the Treasury prepared a 44-page summary of its major provisions to accompany it. There are several important and significant changes and clarifications in the Final Rule that town administration is in the process of analyzing. The final rule takes effect on April 1, 2022.

On January 18<sup>th</sup>, Treasury revised its clarification of the Final Rule specific to the revenue loss category. During a recent webinar, Treasury stated that additional guidance documents would be forthcoming over the next few weeks.

The Final Rule will impact and potentially alter Town Administration's recommendations on ARPA expenditures. Town Administration will continue to work with the Select Board to determine ARPA priorities and funding recommendations over the coming weeks and months.

The Board received letters from the Massachusetts Coalition of Police Union Locals 388, 388A and 388B requesting consideration for Premium Pay.

Town Manager Jacobson presented a request under ARPA for a 3<sup>rd</sup> ambulance on a temporary basis during the period of heavy call volume projected annual \$277,000.00. She also asked for funds for a staffing study of the department to have a long-term plan, as well as to authorize another SAFER grant application seeking eight new positions.

Mr. Berthiaume spoke to the Town Manager's comments for the Fire/Rescue Department and he expressed his wish to get started with the 3<sup>rd</sup> ambulance revenue or some offset that supported the department. He also spoke in support of Premium Pay for Police and Fire personnel first responders.

Mr. Laliberte asked if the \$277,000.00 cost was including revenue. Ms. Jacobson replied that it is the actual cost to ARPA to operate the ambulance. She said that the 3<sup>rd</sup> ambulance was to alleviate the increased call volume.

Mr. Laliberte discussed water quality concerns. The Town Manager said that Auburn Water District Superintendent Gregory Woods recommended investments into stormwater programs and maintenance to help improve water quality. Stormwater improvements have to tie back to water quality to be eligible.

Ms. Jacobson spoke about the suggestion for a water treatment facility (\$20 million) and she said that she was told by the Water District that it was not something they were looking at right now.

Mr. Berthiaume asked if the Town could look at doing a study and design now for the Auburn Water District with ARPA funds. Ms. Jacobson responded that two weeks ago the Water District said that it was not something they wanted right now, but she could reach out again to them if the Board wanted.

There were no public comments.

Mr. Carpenter asked about a plan for pipe replacement projects.

The manager said that the administration has had this discussion with the DPW Director. The DPW is recommending one specific area for the pipe replacement project, which would be very expensive.

The Town Manager said that the administration would have to be sure recommendations would be eligible under ARPA and eligible under the Clean Water Act. Town Accountant Tom Zidelis, who was participating remotely, agreed.

Town Manager Jacobson said that funding under the Infrastructure Bill and State Surplus Bill could augment ARPA.

Mr. Berthiaume asked about the status of the \$60,000.00 allocated to Auburn Youth & Family Services. Ms. Jacobson advised that the Scope of Services with the Auburn Youth & Family Services was just completed and will be sent to the Executive Director to sign. Items for food security, counseling services and fuel were among those identified.

Mr. Berthiaume asked how to contact the agency if seniors needed fuel. Mr. Wrenn advised that they should call the AY&FS office during business hours.

Mr. Carpenter raised concern about the needs of seniors while the Senior Center was closed. Ms. Jacobson advised that the Outreach Workers work every day even though the building is closed, linking seniors to programs, etc. Mr. Carpenter asked about funds for seniors.

The Town Manager said that funds would have to go to a disproportionately affected population to be eligible under ARPA, not the general population.

Mr. Zidelis agreed that the Town has to be very careful with respect to reporting requirements.

Mr. Carpenter asked about outreach to seniors in the “Are You OK?” program. Town Manager Jacobson said that the program continues through the Police Department.

Following comments and discussion, Mr. Carpenter made a motion to continue the hearing until March 14, 2022 and include regular posts on-line to secure public input. Mr. Berthiaume seconded the motion and the Board voted by roll call: Ms. Rufli, Yes; Mr. Berthiaume, Yes; Mr. Carpenter, Yes; Mr. Wrenn, Yes; Mr. Laliberte, Yes – passed 5 to 0.

Ms. Jacobson asked the Select Board if they could act at the first February meeting to address Fire/Rescue impacts.

Mr. Carpenter made a motion to authorize up to \$25,000.00 for the study as outlined by the Town Manager for long-term Fire Department staffing. Mr. Berthiaume seconded.

Chair Laliberte said that he would rather not act on matters just brought up tonight, but there is a motion and second on the floor.

Mr. Carpenter said he would withdraw his motion if the Chair wanted to hold the matter until the next meeting.

Mr. Berthiaume then made the motion to authorize up to \$25,000.00 for the study as outlined by the Town Manager for the Fire Department staffing. Mr. Wrenn seconded and the Board voted in favor by roll call: Ms. Rufli, Yes; Mr. Berthiaume, Yes; Mr. Carpenter, Yes; Mr. Wrenn, Yes; Mr. Laliberte, No – passed 4 to 1.

Communications

Commonwealth of Mass. Local Election Districts Review Commission

There was no action required on this item – for the Select Board’s information only.

Select Board General Items

Sub-Committee Recommendation on Town Manager Evaluation Form

Members of the sub-committee, Lionel Berthiaume and Daniel Carpenter, presented and discussed the changes that were being recommended for the Town Manager’s Evaluation Form.

Vote to approve an amendment to the Town Manager’s Employment Contract, Section V. Town Manager Evaluation, Part C, to replace the Performance Evaluation form under Exhibit A of the contract, approved by the Board of Selectmen on April 8, 2013, with the form approved by the Board of Selectmen on January 24, 2022.

The Select Board voted to approve the recommended form (Motion made by Mr. Berthiaume; motion seconded by Mr. Carpenter) roll call vote: Ms. Rufli, Yes; Mr. Berthiaume, Yes; Mr. Carpenter, Yes; Mr. Wrenn, Yes; Mr. Laliberte, Yes – passed 5 to 0.

The Select Board voted to approve an amendment to the Town Manager’s Employment Contract, Section V. Town Manager Evaluation, Part C, to replace the Performance Evaluation form under Exhibit A of the contract, approved by the Board of Selectmen on April 8, 2013, with the form approved by the Board of Selectmen on January 24, 2022 (Motion made by Mr. Carpenter; motion seconded by Mr. Berthiaume ) voted in favor by roll call vote: Ms. Rufli, Yes; Mr. Berthiaume, Yes; Mr. Carpenter, Yes; Mr. Wrenn, Yes; Mr. Laliberte, Yes – passed 5 to 0.

Gift Acceptances in Accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 53A

There were no items.

Proclamations and Recognitions

There were no items

Town Manager Items

Vote to accept and expend \$150,000 from the Mass Department of Environmental Protection for sewer improvements.

The Select Board voted to accept and expend \$150,000.00 from the Mass Department of Environmental Protection for sewer improvements (Motion made by Mr. Berthiaume; motion seconded by Mr. Wrenn) roll call vote: Ms. Rufli, Yes; Mr. Berthiaume, Yes; Mr. Carpenter, Yes; Mr. Wrenn, Yes; Mr. Laliberte, Yes – passed 5 to 0.

Tabled Items

There were no items.

Select Board Member Items

Continued Discussion and Potential Vote on M.G.L. Chapter 53, Section 18 – by Mr. Laliberte

Mr. Carpenter said he was sympathetic to the concept, but was not in favor because he felt that it would be cost-prohibitive and hard to implement. Mr. Wrenn said that the value to the public outweighed the cost. Mr. Berthiaume said that it could create controversy and was too expensive

and he was not in favor of expending money to mail to voters. He thought having information available at voting location was preferable.

Ms. Rufli said that she would be in favor of mailing to voters.

Following the discussion, the Select Board voted to adopt M.G.L. Chapter 53, Section 18 and send a letter from the Select Board signed by the Chair to State Rep. Paul Frost and State Senator Michael Moore to look at the law for potential revisions and updates (Motion made by Mr. Wrenn; motion seconded by Ms. Rufli) roll call vote: Ms. Rufli, Yes; Mr. Berthiaume, Yes; Mr. Carpenter, Yes; Mr. Wrenn, Yes; Mr. Laliberte, Yes – passed 5 to 0.

Mr. Berthiaume stated that he voted in favor in deference to his colleagues even though he did not agree.

Chair Tristan Laliberte asked if there were any corrections or omissions to the minutes of November 22, 2021. There being none, Chair Laliberte accepted the minutes of November 22, 2021 as read.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 P.M. (Motion made by Mr. Carpenter; motion seconded by Mr. Berthiaume) roll call vote: Ms. Rufli, Yes; Mr. Berthiaume, Yes; Mr. Carpenter, Yes; Mr. Wrenn, Yes; Mr. Laliberte, Yes – passed 5 to 0.

Submitted: Sharon A. Kwiatkowski  
Adm. Assistant to Town Manager

The following documents were part of the Select Board's Meeting of January 24, 2022 and are retained in the Executive Office of the Town Manager:

- January 24, 2022 Agenda
- Report by Town Manager on American Rescue Act Plan of 2021 (ARPA) Hearing on November 29, 2021
- Letter from Commonwealth of Massachusetts Local Election Districts Review Commission
- Letter from Fire Chief Stephen Coleman dated January 24, 2022 on Fire/Rescue Staffing Concerns
- Letter from Massachusetts Coalition of Police Unions Locals 388, 388A and 388B dated January 24, 2022 on American Rescue Plan Act/CARES Act Funding
- Select Board Sub-Committee Recommended Changes to the Town Manager Evaluation Form
- Minutes of November 22, 2021