

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD
Meeting of Monday, March 15, 2021

The Select Board participated in this meeting remotely utilizing Zoom in accordance with the Governor's March 12, 2020 Order suspending provisions of Open Meeting Law and to promote public health and social distancing.

Board Members present: Linda Alexson, Chair; Dr. Tammy Jones, Vice Chair; Kerry Mackin; Nishan Mootafian; William Whitmore

Also present: Anthony Marino, Town Manager; Eileen Page, Recording Secretary

- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to enter Executive Session. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried 4-0 via roll call. Ms. Mackin was not present.*

The Select Board entered Executive Session at 6:30 PM.

The Select Board returned from Executive Session at 7:04 PM.

With a quorum present, Ms. Alexson called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

Welcome/Announcements

The Tri-Board Chairs, Mr. Marino, and Dr. Brian Blake (Superintendent) will hold a phone conference on Tuesday, March 16 at 12:00 PM.

The Finance Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 16 at 7:30 PM to discuss the strategic planning report.

The Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, March 16 at 7:00 PM.

The Public Safety Facility Committee will meet on Thursday, March 18 at 7:00 PM.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will meet on Thursday, March 18 to discuss both the Pleasant Street and Essex Pastures 40B projects.

Citizen Queries

Gary Champion (3 Palomino Way) asked if the Select Board is obligated to respond to citizen queries within a particular time frame. Mr. Marino responded that there is not a set time frame, but the Select Board always strives to respond to citizens in a timely manner. Mr. Whitmore added that sometimes "citizen queries" are often just statements, and statements do not always warrant a Select Board response. Mr. Champion argued that there is always an obligation to respond, and if the Select Board feels that a query is inappropriate, they are obligated to let the citizen know. Ms. Alexson asked if there was a particular query raised that Mr. Champion did not receive a response to. Mr. Champion stated that he had previously asked the Select Board to affirm that under Town bylaws, the full text of a regulation must be posted before a hearing is held on said regulation. Mr. Champion stated that the Select Board did not respond to this inquiry.

Boards and Committees

- I. Historical Commission - Tess L. Schutte - Confirm Town Manager Appointment

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to confirm the appointment of Tess Schutte to the Historical Commission. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Green Development Proposal for Wind Turbine

Mark DePasquale (Green Development, Owner) stated that his company is seeking to remove the non-functioning wind turbine and install a new model at no cost to the Town. The installation of a new turbine would also create a long-term Power Purchase Agreement (PPA).

Hannah Morini (Green Development, Director of Business Development) reported that Green Development is currently the leading wind and solar provider in Rhode Island, and works almost exclusively with Vensys turbines, which are highly reliable. The decommissioning process would take about two weeks, and the components of the non-functioning wind turbine would be either recycled or responsibly disposed of. The foundation of the turbine would also be partially demolished.

Dr. Jones stated that she would be traveling to Rhode Island later this month, and would like to visit the Green Development office and turbine sites.

Ms. Mackin asked how soon the replacement could take place. Mr. DePasquale responded that the next shipment of turbines is expected in September 2021.

Mr. Whitmore asked if Green Developments has led any other projects in Massachusetts. Ms. Morini responded that they constructed the turbine in Otis, but the company does not own it.

Ms. Alexson asked if the new turbine would be the same height as the existing one. Mr. DePasquale responded that it would be about 3' taller.

Water Rates Discussion

Jim Engel (Water & Wastewater Subcommittee) reported that the Subcommittee met following the vote by the Commissioners approving water and sewer rates higher than what was recommended. The Subcommittee is concerned that a rate increase may have compromise their ability to pass nearly \$6 million in debt authorization at Annual Town Meeting. The Subcommittee does not feel that there was sufficient reasoning to pass a higher rate than was initially recommended.

Dr. Jones asked how the increase would affect the surplus balance. Vicki Halmen (Water & Wastewater Director) responded that with the original 10% increase for water rates, the FY22 surplus would have been \$638,000; a 13% increase will set the balance at \$953,000. The original 5% increase for sewer rates would have set the FY22 surplus at \$1.34 million; a 10% increase will set the balance at \$1.45 million. Ms. Halmen noted that surplus funds cannot be used at the discretion of the department, as they are appropriated funds.

Mr. Whitmore argued that having a surplus is not a bad thing, and noted that the Subcommittee had previously asked for the implementation of the Capital Asset Replacement (CARE) fund to be added to bills. Mr. Engel responded that the CARE fund has yet to have been recommended or not recommended by the Subcommittee, as current research shows that adding a surcharge does not necessarily dissuade customers from using water; rather, they tend to increase usage because they are being charged an increase regardless of usage.

Ms. Mackin added that she has proposed implementing an ascending block rate structure in the past. Mr. Whitmore agreed with the idea, and suggested it be looked into for spring 2022.

Dr. Jones stated that she believes in “listening to the experts,” and stated that she misunderstood how the rate increases would have been applied.

- *Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved to reconsider the rates previously approved. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Consent Agenda

I. Renewal – Sunday and Weekday Entertainment Licenses – Ipswich Tavern

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Select Board Town Report

The Board reviewed its draft report for Annual Town Meeting.

- *Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved to accept the report for submission. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

New Business

PAVILION BEACH

Ms. Alexson stated that the Board has received multiple requests to provide portable toilets at Pavilion Beach for the 2021 summer season. She stated that the Board will begin discussing plans for the beach in upcoming meetings, including parking regulations and limiting the beach to resident use only. She noted that the park across the street from the beach also has portable toilets. Mr. Marino added that the Conservation Committee has identified environmental concerns regarding portable toilets at Pavilion, but that the Board will discuss the issue at their April 5 meeting.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Mr. Marino informed the Board that Tom Murphy (Town Moderator) has decided that electronic voting will be used at Annual Town Meeting.

Old Business

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY TASK FORCE

Ms. Alexson raised the issue of creating a task force to consider possible uses for the existing Fire and Police buildings should the Public Safety Facility be approved at Fall Town Meeting. This will be on a future agenda.

The next Select Board meeting will be held on March 22.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to adjourn. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

The Select Board adjourned at 8:47 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
03.28.21*