

Approved 11.3.21

TOWN OF WENHAM
Wenham Select Board
Meeting of October 5, 2021
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, MGL Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Select Board (SB) was held on Tuesday October 5, 2021 at 6:30pm.

The Governor extended the suspension of certain provisions of the open meeting law that authorizes all members of a public body to continue participating in meetings remotely until April 1, 2022. Please be advised that this open meeting was broadcast live via Zoom.

The Select Board serves as the chief executive body of the Town. The Board's duties include in part appointing the Town Administrator and other board/committee members, developing goals & policies, preparing the town report, the annual budget, & presenting the warrant for Town Meeting. The Board typically meets the first & third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in Town Hall. Select Board meetings are posted on the Town calendar. The Town has a three-member Board elected for three-year terms with one seat up for election each year. The Select Board has a representative on the Veterans Committee, Iron Rail Commission, Wenham Affordable Housing Trust.

Select Board Members: Catherine Harrison (2022) Affordable Housing Trust; Gary Cheeseman (2023) Veterans Committee; Dianne Bucco (2024)

Call to Order - *With a quorum present Ms. Harrison called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and identified the meeting was being recorded and those present:* C. Harrison, Chair; G. Cheeseman, Vice Chair; D. Bucco, Clerk

Also present: Ryan Ferrara, Town Administrator; Catherine Tinsley, Recording Secretary

Public Hearing*

The Select Board of the Town of Wenham, Massachusetts will hold a public hearing on proposed personnel policies revisions regarding the Employee Handbook (for a full list of revisions and draft changes visit wenhamma.gov). The public hearing will be held Tuesday, October 5, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Please Note: Due to the COVID-19 state of emergency, this meeting will be virtual and can be attended by desktop, laptop, tablet or phone by visiting the link posted on wenhamma.gov at least 48 business hours prior to the meeting. Supporting information, including each proposed policy revision, is available at wenhamma.gov. Inquiries or questions may be directed to the Town Administrator's Office by calling 978-468-5520 ext. 2. The public is encouraged to attend and participate.

Vote: The Board voted unanimously by roll call to open the public hearing on Policies at 6:31 pm.

- Ms. Harrison read the public hearing notice as published in the Salem News September 27, 2021

Policies included in the hearing:

Sick Leave Bank – Union

Sick Leave Bank – Non-Union

Employee Social Media Use

Chapter 5-1 Holiday Calendar

Chapter 2 – Recruitment and Selection

Chapter 4-1 – Classification and Salary

Chapter 4-7 Direct Deposit

Chapter 5-6 - Travel and Transportation and Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy from Supplemental Policies

Personnel Evaluation Policy

Revocation of Hiatus Period Compensation for New Hires (for GIC Communities)

Code of Conduct

Anti-discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy

Dierdre Pierotti, Maple Street, was recognized by the Chair. Ms. Pierotti opined the policies being updated from the existing handbook were not quite “there yet” and offered suggested edits and spoke in detail regarding her suggested edits to the Sexual Harassment Policy. Ms. Pierotti will provide her edits to the Town Administrator. The Board accepted Ms. Pierotti's offer to work with the Town Administrator to update the policy.

Kirsten Alexander, Larch Row, questioned if volunteers are covered under the policy or just co-workers as stated in the policy. The Town Administrator will follow up with Town Counsel regarding this question.

The hearing was closed with the intention of still accepting feedback.

Vote: The Board voted unanimously by roll call at 6:55 pm to close the hearing on revisions to the employee handbook.

Approved 11.3.21

- Public Comment – *Public input will be for a total of 10 minutes.* There was none.
- Announcements- Additional information is on the Town's website Wenhamma.gov
 1. Request for Letters of Interest in Board & Committee Openings: updated on the Town's website.
 2. October 21st Government Study Committee (3 to 5 Select Board) - Public Forum; there is a public survey on line.
 3. Special Election for upcoming vacancy for State Representative for the 4th Essex District; November 2 & November 30
 4. Bagged Leaf Pick Up on Saturdays, November 20th and December 11th
 5. Information about current cases and vaccine clinics can be found at www.wenhamma.gov/covid

Reports

- Town Administrator – Ryan Ferrara
 - Position updates: The Executive Assistant position closed Friday; there were 18 applicants. An internal team will be developed to do the interviews. The Town has also received several applications for the Assistant Town Administrator position recently posted.
 - It was Mr. Ferrara's understanding that the request to the School Committee to reopen the Regional School Agreement was going to be on the next School Committee meeting agenda for discussion.
 - Mr. Ferrara was appointed to executive board of the Regional 911 Center and attended his first meeting.
 - The Open Space & Recreation Committee has chosen a consultant and the feasibility for the West Wenham Park is underway.
 - Mr. Ferrara, along with Ms. Bresnahan met with the Historic District Commission and provided an update on the Route 1A project to install two traffic signals. The design is at 90% completion. The Commission will continue to be a part of the process to assure the historic nature of the downtown is maintained. A public hearing will be scheduled in November/December. *
 - Police Chief DiNapoli has been named as the December Cure Champion by the Greater New England Chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes a Research Foundation.
- *Select Board Chair- Ms. Harrison requested the Board be provided with the preliminary update of the Route 1A light project prior to the public hearing.

Consent Agenda – No Consent Items.

New Business

- Appointments:
 - Council on Aging Board: *The Board voted unanimously by roll call to appoint **Karen Anger** to the final year of a three year term on the Council on Aging from October 5, 2021 until June 30, 2022.*
 - Election Officer: *The Board voted unanimously by roll call to appoint **Jay Erhard** to a 1 year term as the Election Warden from October 5, 2021 until June 30, 2022.*
- 2020 Federal Census: Vote, pursuant to MGL C54§6, to affirm the Town of Wenham wishes to remain a one precinct community and hereby requests the Secretary of the Commonwealth prepare a single precinct map on the Town's behalf. Based on the 2020 census, the recommendation is that Wenham remain a one precinct community.
Vote: The Board voted unanimously by roll call, pursuant to MGL C54§6, to affirm the Town of Wenham wishes to remain a one precinct community and hereby requests the Secretary of the Commonwealth prepare a single precinct map on the Town's behalf.

Old Business

- Review of Maple Woods Community Preservation Act (CPA) and Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) grant/loan extension requests and discussion of recommendation regarding next steps
 - Harborlight Letter June 8, 2021
 - AHT Recommendation August 16, 2021
 - Letter (Draft) from R. Ferrara & M. Hoffman to A. DeFranza, Executive Director Harborlight, October 6, 2021
- Mr. Ferrara reviewed Town Counsel has advised the Town a letter of responsive was appropriate to Harborlight's June 8, 2021 request for an extension on the timing of obtaining a building permit and certificate of occupancy as outlined in the CPA grant agreement and the AHT loan agreement for the Maple Woods Project.
- Harborlight was invited by the State to participate in the "mini round of funding" this fall and there is a good chance they will receive the funding to go forward with the project.

The Select Board reviewed the letter drafted by Mr. Ferrara and Ms. Hoffman that continues to offer support for the project and outlines the need for Town Meeting to approve the amendments. *"The appropriation and funds remain set aside for this project and the*

Approved 11.3.21

Select Board commits to submit an article for the April 2, 2022 Annual Town Meeting to revise the condition per your request so the funds may be issued. The Select Board requires all other conditions be met before funds are transferred."

A lengthy discussion followed with Joe Hosler, Wenham Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) Chair, participating.

Ms. Hoffman reviewed the original timeline, the previous amendments made, and how the current request fit into the timeline. Mr. Hosler said the AHT has not had a chance to read the letter but believed an extension was not needed and may impeded the project going forward. He questioned bringing the amendment to town meeting for approval.

It was the position of Town Counsel that town meeting needs to approve the proposed amended extension dates in the 2019 vote; this will be brought to the 2022 town meeting.

The Select Board cannot release funds until all the criteria are met. This action will affirm the funds will be ready for Harborlight with a clear and transparent process.

Mr. Hosler will be forwarded the letter from counsel prior to the next AHT meeting on October 12.

Mr. Ferrara will forward the draft letter to Town Counsel for review prior to the next Select Board meeting on October 19.

- Review and possible vote to approve revised Permitting Coordinator job description
 - Draft Permitting Coordinator 18 hours/ week job description October 5, 2021.

Mr. Ferrara reviewed the updated job description for the Permitting Coordinator that better reflected the job responsibilities for that position.

Vote: The Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the Permitting Coordinator job description dated October 5, 2021.

- Review the prospective hiring process & possible vote to approve revised Assistant Town Administrator job description
 - Town Administrator's Office Assistant Town Administrator job description October 5, 2021

Mr. Ferrara proposed an interview team be formed as part of the hiring process. He questioned if any of the Select Board members wanted to participate in the proposed process. Ms. Bucco will represent the Select Board.

Vote: The Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the Assistant Town Administrator job description (as edited) dated October 5, 2021.

- Review of the Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator position
 - Office of Town Administrator Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator, October 5, 2021

Vote: The Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the amended Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator job description dated October 5, 2021.

- Discussion of plan to replace retiring Department of Public Works (DPW) Director
- Review and possible vote to approve revised Director of Public Works job description
 - Town of Wenham Department of Public Works Director, October 5, 2021

The Current DPW director has given his notice to retire at the end of the 2021 calendar year. Mr. Ferrara spoke on the importance of the Director's position and that there be a smooth transition. He noted this is an opportunity to upgrade the position and think strategically of the towns' future needs for this person to have a background in civil engineering. Mr. Ferrara added education/experience working with the Water Department are important. The Board agreed Mr. Ferrara post the position. Bill Tyack, DPW Director was recognized and thanked for his years of service to the town.

Vote: The Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the Director of Public Works job description date October 5, 2021.

- Discussion regarding the classification and compensation grades for the respective Assistant Town Administrator and Permitting Coordinator positions – No action sought
 - Compensation & Classification System: Town of Wenham Non-Union Employees FY 2022 with Draft Changes Highlighted

Mr. Ferrara noted he wanted the Board to be aware that he confirmed the newly posted positions aligned with the Classification & Comprehensive schedule; there were no proposed changes to the salaries for the posted positions.

The Town is doing an updated Classification & Comprehensive schedule and all positions will be reviewed at that time.

The Board agreed Mr. Ferrara bring this to the Finance & Advisory Committee for input/feedback.

- Review of Draft Town Meeting/Fiscal Year 2023 Budget calendar – No action sought
 - Draft – FY 2021 Town Meeting Master Schedule.

The Board was provided with the FY23 draft budget calendar for review and feedback. The Finance Committee will continue to formalize the calendar; the board was asked to submit meeting date requests. The town will also begin working on a 20-year plan and start to account for all assets. Staff will be assigned to work with the building manager on building capital plans.

The FY23 budget process October 5.

Approved 11.3.21

- Review of the Indigenous Land Acknowledgment presentation from the Select Board September 21, 2021 meeting and potential vote on next steps
 - Draft Proclamation that October 12 be Indigenous People Day in Wenham

Mr. Ferrara noted the declaration was unanimously supported by the Human Rights Committee.

After the declaration is signed it will be posted with the Land Acknowledgement presentation on the town's web site.

The Board offered minor edits to the document.

Mr. Cheeseman reiterated education and support is the best way to support the land acknowledgement.

Vote: The Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve Indigenous Peoples Day Proclamation.

- *Second reading and potential vote on the Personnel Policies:

The following policies were reviewed in the public hearing at the start of the meeting. Ms. Harrison asked for a consensus of the board if there was additional discussion or move to approve.

Ms. Harrison requested a statement be added that identified when the policies should be reviewed and updated again.

Ms. Bresnahan briefly summarized each policy: (approved policies are bolded)*

- a. **Sick Leave Bank** – Union: *Ready for action.*
- b. **Sick Leave Bank** – Non-Union: *Ready for action.*
- c. **Employee Social Media Use** (policy): *Ready for action.*
- d. **Health & Medical Insurance** - Overview update: *Ready for action. (Inadvertently left off the list on the agenda)*
- e. **Chapter 5-1 Holiday Calendar**: *Ready for action.*
- f. Chapter 2 Recruitment and Selection: Held
- g. **Chapter 4-1 Classification & Salary**: *Ready for action.*
- h. **Chapter 4-7 Direct Deposit**: *Ready for action.*
- i. **Chapter 5-6 Travel & Transportation** -Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy from Supplemental Policies: *Ready for action.*
- j. Personnel Evaluation Policy: Held.
- k. **Revocation of Hiatus Period Compensation for New Hires** (for GIC Communities): *Ready for action.*
- l. Code of Conduct: Held.
- m. Anti-discrimination & Sexual Harassment Policy: Held.

Vote: The Select Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve all draft policies as reviewed at the October 5, 2021 public hearing, **except** the following that were held for further review: Chapter 2 Recruitment & Selection; Personnel Evaluation Policy; Code of Conduct; Anti-discrimination & Sexual Harassment Policy as listed under Old Business on the October 5, 2021 meeting agenda:*

- Follow up discussion from September 18, 2021 Select Board Workshop regarding prospective follow up workshop; review and possible vote regarding workshop date, agenda and goals

The Board will provide the Town Administrator with possible dates for the next workshop.

- Adjourn – *The Board voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn at 9:15 pm.*

Respectfully Submitted By

Catherine Tinsley

10.20.21