

# Select Board Minutes

March 21, 2023

Town of Cohasset

Select Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

41 Highland Ave – Town Hall Auditorium

**Select Board Members Present:** Jack Creighton, Chair  
Jean Healey Dippold  
Corey D. Evans  
Paul Grady  
Diane Kennedy

**Others Participating:** Christopher Senior, Town Manager

Chair Creighton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll Call Vote; Corey Evans-Present, Jean Healey Dippold-Present, Paul Grady-Present, Jack Creighton-Present.

Pledge-Recited.

**Executive Session Exemption #6 – Motion by Select Member Grady to move to Executive Session**

**Exemption #6- To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, and value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body, seconded by Select Member Dippold. Roll Call Vote, All-aye.** Select Member Kennedy arrived at 6:45 p.m. **Motion by Select Member Dippold to come out of Executive Session and back into Open Session, seconded by Select Member Kennedy. Roll call Vote, All-aye. The Board came out Executive Session 7:22 p.m.**

**Public Comment – None.**

**Affordable Housing Trust & CPC-Trust Agreement –** Mr. Senior stated that the Affordable House Trust Committee has not voted on this agreement.

**Major Capital Projects to be presented and proposed financing plan for Annual Town Meeting and Town Election-** Chair Creighton described the major projects that will be discussed.

**Schools -** Craig MacLellan, 8 Rustic Drive, School Committee member and School Facilities Chair, introduced himself, Lance Dial, School Committee Chair and Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent of Cohasset Schools. Mr. Dial, 21 Rocky Lane, asked for a warrant article to consider a Special Stabilization Fund for Cohasset School capital improvements projects. He asked that the Special Stabilization be funded with a fixed dollar amount each year and that the citizens approve these funds through Town Meeting, allowing the schools to spend money on repairs annually. He also explained that the committee conducted an Existing Condition Study that detailed all the necessary repairs for all the schools. Mr. Dial requested \$1.5M per year to be funded into the Special Stabilization fund to ensure the buildings don't get worse. Finance Director Jennifer Mullen explained that each year the school will come forth with projects they want to tackle. The funds will then need to be approved by Town Meeting. Select Member Dippold reviewed past and future school funding requests and allocations. She stated that if they created the Special Stabilization fund, all future requests would be allocated to that fund first but wanted to clarify that even with the new Special Stabilization Fund, the schools may still request funds

from the existing Capital Stabilization fund as needed. Chair Dial explained that the new Special Stabilization fund is in addition to and not replacing the existing funding requests from the Capital Stabilization Fund. **Motion by Select Member Dippold to direct Town Manager Chris Senior with the assistance of Town Council to draft a warrant article for \$1.5M Annual Special Stabilization Fund for School capital needs, seconded by Select Member Kennedy. Roll Call Vote, All-aye.** Mr. MacLellan then explained that the School Facilities Committee is also looking for a Town Meeting article to seek funding for a \$1.5M feasibility study for the Middle High School. He stated that the committee is not asking for any group to approve the funding, but that the community be confronted with the issues and have a discussion at Town Meeting about the merits of the Feasibility Study for the Middle High School. Mr. Dial explained that the feasibility study would provide a roadmap for spending from both the Special Stabilization and Capital Stabilization fund. Select Member Evans felt that two asks from the schools would be difficult and asked the Finance Director if the Feasibility funding could be temporarily added to the Special Stabilization Fund. Brian Host, 29 Heather Drive, Chairman of the Capital Budget Committee stated that he did not agree with the option of coupling the two projects and that neither of these proposals have been voted on by Capital. He felt the taxpayers would not be happy thinking they are funding a maintenance and repair project then finding out there is a feasibility study included. The Board asked Mr. MacLellan and the committee to come back next week with another less costly detailed plan that they feel could be approved at Town Meeting. Mr. MacLellan agreed.

Roads and Sidewalks – Select Member Grady stated that the committee is in a holding pattern until they receive the results of the poll they sent out. As soon as they receive that information, they will set a meeting agenda item to come up with a plan and define financial needs. Brian Host, 29 Heather Drive, Chairman of Capital Budget Committee suggested that the Roads and Sidewalks Committee look at asking for \$800k in a Special Stabilization Fund to cover the \$1M recommended spend each year for roads and sidewalks by Director of Public Works, Brian Joyce. Along with the \$200K the town receives from the state would bring the total to \$1M. **Motion by Select Member Evans to recommend a warrant article for funding the Special Stabilization fund with \$800K each year for Roads and Sidewalks at Annual Town Meeting, seconded by Select Member Grady. Roll Call Vote, All-aye.**

Fields and Recreation – Tim Burnieika, Chair of the Recreation Commission, along with Assistant Town Manager, Michelle Leary presented the proposal. ATM Leary described the Phase 1 renovations, improvements, and design work they are recommending. The total cost of Phase 1 would be approx. \$3.1M. She stated that they would have a public forum to educate the citizens on the proposal before Town Meeting. Select Member Kennedy expressed her concerns about the cost of lighting the fields. Select Member Dippold explained the increased field usage would be beneficial. **Motion by Select Member Dippold to direct Mr. Senior draft a warrant article for the Fields and Recreation Project as described by Ms. Leary up to the price of \$3.154M in debt exclusion, seconded by Select Member Grady. Roll Call Vote, All-aye.**

South Shore Regional Vocational School – Mr. Senior gave an overview of the Amended Regional Agreement. **Motion by Select Member Evans to recommend the warrant article for South Shore Regional Vocational School Amended Regional Agreement to Annual Town Meeting, seconded by Select Member Kennedy. Roll Call Vote, All-aye.**

Veterans Valor Act – Chair Creighton reviewed the article. **Motion by Select Member Evans to recommend the warrant article for the Veterans Valor Act to Annual Town Meeting, seconded by Select Member Grady. Roll Call Vote, All-aye.**

Zoning Bylaw Articles – Chair Creighton recommended waiting to discuss these articles until Chairman of the Zoning Bylaw Committee, Tom Callahan, can attend. He recommended putting this topic on next week's Select Board agenda.

Town Manager Update – Mr. Senior requested that the Community Recognition/Remembrance article be re-added as Warrant Article #1. This was approved at last Town Meeting to recognize retirees, long standing committee members and significant members of the community that had passed in the previous calendar year. He also suggested that the Select Board recognize the passing of Chief Special Warfare Operator Michael T. Ernst. There is a group requesting to name a town square after him at a later date. He stated that the Board does not need a warrant article to do this. Mr. Senior stated that he sent the board an article to be brought to Town Meeting to approve the departure of the Cohasset Police department from Civil Service. **Motion by Select Member Grady to put the Civil Service article on the warrant for Annual Town Meeting, seconded by Select Member Kennedy. Roll Call Vote, All-aye.** He also stated that he attended an MMA meeting where they are deciding whether to extend virtual meetings for two more years. The current rule expires March 31, 2023. Mr. Senior explained that there is growing support in the state legislature for Public Facilities funding similar to the School's MSBA. This would supply funding for Public Safety buildings, Town Halls, etc. Mr. Senior will let the Board know when more information is available.

Select Board Comments- Select Member Grady stated that he was looking forward to working with the Roads and Sidewalk Committee and he believes it will move along quickly. He thanked ATM Leary for her work with the committee. He also asked how the Fire Chief honors were moving. Mr. Senior said it will happen at the April 4<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting. Select Member Kennedy said that she believes the board owes it to the committees to inform them and provide guidance on what they will be voting for at Town Meeting. Select Member Evans explained that the board understands that the articles moving forward to Town Meeting are "needs" not "nice to haves" and that he understands the financial implications to the taxpayers. Select Member Dippold stated that they are struggling because of the amount of money being requested all at once and that many of the issues probably should have been handled previously. We can only give information so that the citizens can make the best decisions possible. Chair Creighton stated that the board and other committees find it difficult to allocate the cost burden but there are things that have to be done. They take it very seriously and the boards and committees are working tirelessly to get through this and make the hard decisions.

**Motion by Select Member Evans to adjourn, seconded by Select Member Grady. Roll Call Vote, All-aye.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Creighton, Chair