

**Buckland Select Board
Meeting Minutes
February 23, 2021 5:30 p.m
Meeting Via Zoom**

Appointments

5:30 - MTRSD School Committee Chair, Martha Thurber - FY22 Budget, Capital

Agenda Items

FYBudget Update.

COLA

Lower Ashfield Street Improvement Project, Engineer Selection and Award.

Surplus Property, Tax Title Property.

Employee Evaluation Schedule.

Regional Services.

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Documents to Sign

February 9, 2021 Minutes.

Town Administrator's Time Off.

Open Space & Recreation Plan Letter of Support.

Local Cultural Council Grant Contract.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair 48 Hours in Advance of Meeting.

Select Board Member Concerns.

Town Administrator's Report

Public Comment.

Volunteer Recognition

Announcements

Attendees

Dena Willmore - Select Board Chair

Barry Del Castilho - Select Board Member

Zachary Turner - Select Board Member

Heather Butler - Town Administrator

James Sullivan - Falls Cable

Larry Langford - Finance Committee

Martha Thurber - MTRSD School Committee Chair

Leah Phillips - MTRSD School Committee Member
Greg Lilly - MTRSD School Committee Member
Mary Bolduc - Board's Clerk

Meeting

Meeting opened at 5:30 p.m. by Dena Willmore, Chair.

Appointments

5:30 - MTRSD School Committee Chair Martha Thurber - FY22 Budget, Capital - Ms. Thurber gave a detailed report on the background, process, costs, and recommendations of the Capital Projects Working Group. She emphasized that the group prioritized projects, with a pneumatic heat control for Mohawk at the top of the list. She further stated that the Mohawk Capital Budget has to be approved by all towns in the district. Board discussion followed her presentation with members discussing the costs relative to current low interest rates and the advantage of availing the Town of those rates. Ms Butler asked if Board would like some numbers for the next meeting to illustrate impact on taxes; Mr. Langford expressed that those numbers would also be helpful for the next Finance Committee meeting. Ms Thurber inquired about the closing date for the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Warrant, but Ms. Willmore explained that the Warrant does not include numbers, only the budget name. Ms. Butler pointed out that most towns are considering a June ATM vs one in May. The report of the Capital Projects Working Group is available as an attachment to the agenda for this meeting on the Town of Buckland website.

Agenda Items

FY22 Budget Update - COLA - increases from 1.5% to 2.5% were introduced; Ms. Willmore suggested 2.5%. Mr. Turner moved to approve a 2.5% COLA, seconded by Mr. Del Castilho. Brief Board discussion included the impact of each 0.5% on the budget and a review of what was being offered by neighboring towns of Shelburne, Charlemont, and Ashfield. Vote: Del Castilho, yes; Turner, yes; Willmore, yes.

Ms. Butler reported that FY22 is still a draft budget, but the town is basically looking at level funding. She noted that there are lower receipts because of the pandemic impact on restaurants, and that the tuition and transportation fees for Smith Vocational are still unknown.

Lower Ashfield Street Improvement Project Engineer Selection and Award - Ms. Butler reported on the three bids received. Though not the lowest bid, she proposed awarding the contract to GCG Associates, Inc., noting that they had a slightly lower hourly rate and had done preliminary work establishing relationships with residents and the railroad. Mr. Turner moved to accept the GCG bid, seconded by Mr. Del Castilho. Vote: Del Castilho, yes; Turner, yes; Willmore, yes.

Surplus Property, Tax Title Property - Four properties have been identified, two on Bray Road, one on East Buckland Road, and one on State Street. The Open Space Committee has asked that the State Street property be taken off the list so that river

access from that site can be explored. Brief Board discussion followed on the suitability of that parcel for the purpose of river access. However, Ms. Butler wants to give the committee time to do their due diligence. Mr. Turner moved to declare 3 parcels as surplus (two on Bray Road and one on East Buckland Road). Mr. Del Castilho seconded the motion. Vote: Del Castilho, yes; Turner, yes; Willmore, yes. Ms. Butler would like to wait until the properties can be auctioned in person. Complete descriptions of properties are included in an attachment to this agenda on Town of Buckland website.

Employee Evaluation Schedule - Ms. Butler cited employee evaluations as good for professional development, beneficial for both employee and employer, and informative for Select Board. Ms. Willmore suggested having the personnel committee review current evaluation forms to determine if they should be updated.

Regional Services - Regional Services is a work in progress. Mr. Del Castilho inquired about a shared police chief between Orange and Athol. Ms. Butler explained the circumstances that precipitated that arrangement, and that it was an interim situation with about a three month duration. Brief Board discussion followed regarding Regional Services.

Documents to Sign

February 9, 2021 Minutes - Both Regular and Executive session minutes were reviewed. Mr. Turner moved to accept and sign both, seconded by Ms. Willmore. Vote: Turner, yes; Willmore, yes. (Mr. Del Castilho had left the meeting to attend another, so was not present to vote on this item or for rest of meeting).

Town Administrator's Time Off - Mr. Turner moved to sign, seconded by Ms. Willmore. Vote: Turner, yes; Willmore, yes.

Open Space & Recreation Plan Letter of Support - Mr. Turner moved to allow Chair to sign, seconded by Ms. Willmore. Vote: Turner, yes; Willmore, yes.

Local Cultural Council Grant Contract - Ms. Willmore stated she would entertain a motion authorizing Mr. Turner to sign. Mr Turner so moved, seconded by Ms. Willmore. Vote: Turner, yes; Willmore, yes.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair 48 Hours in Advance of Meeting - N/A

Select Board Member Concerns - N/A

Town Administrator's Report - Report is available as an attached document on the Town of Buckland website, Select Board Agenda for this meeting.


Public Comment - N/A

Volunteer Recognition - Ms. Willmore recognized the Capital Committee for the schools for a job well done on such a monumental task.

Announcements - There were no announcements. With no further business, Mr. Turner moved to adjourn seconded by Ms. Willmore. Vote: Turner, yes; Willmore, yes. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Bolduc, Boards' Clerk, March 9, 2021

Signed:

Dena Willmore  DocuSigned by:
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Barry Del Castillo  DocuSigned by:
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Zachary Turner  DocuSigned by:
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