

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD
Meeting of Monday, May 2, 2022

Pursuant to Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Select Board was held on Monday, May 2, 2022, at 7:00 PM in Meeting Room A.

Board Members present: William Whitmore, Vice Chair; Linda Alexson; Sarah Player; Kerry Mackin

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

Not present: Dr. Tammy Jones, Chair

With a quorum present, Mr. Whitmore called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Welcome/Announcements

The Public Safety Building Reuse Working Group will meet on May 5 at 7 PM.

Seasonal water rates went into effect on May 1, and will be reflected on June billings.

Ms. Alexson noted that the Town of Hamilton recently imposed water restrictions, and asked if Ipswich should consider proactively implementing restrictions as well. Ms. Player reported that the Water Subcommittee had discussed the matter at their last meeting.

On May 7, The Crafty Ladies will hold a fair from 9 AM to 2 PM at the high school.

Town Meeting will be held on May 10 at 7 PM in the lower gym at the middle/high school. Electronic voting will be utilized through a new vendor, Meridia.

Ms. Mackin reported that the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has restricted clamming and shellfishing in the Ipswich River Estuary for the summer. Ms. Alexson responded that this is a routine, annual closure, and that the estuary is reopened in October. Ms. Mackin also reported that she recently met with the Massachusetts DEP Commissioner to discuss water management issues.

Mr. Whitmore reported that the dog statue previously displayed on the lawn of Winthrop School has been moved to the lawn of the animal shelter.

Citizen Queries

None.

Board and Committee Appointments

Vacancy Announcements on Ipswich Boards, Committees and Commissions

William Paulitz, reappointment confirmation of Town Manager appointment to Conservation Commission

Barbara Monahan, reappointment to Shade Tree and Beautification Committee

Ms. Alexson reminded residents that there is a current opening on the Shellfish Advisory Board for a commercial permit holder, and two (2) openings on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for a full member and associate member.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to confirm William Paulitz to the Conservation Commission, and reappoint Barbara Monahan to the Shade Tree and Beautification Committee. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Consent Agenda

- I. One Day Wine and Malt License Applications
 - a. Alanna M. Burke of TTOR for Mother's Day Celebration at Appleton Farms on May 8, 2022
 - b. Rob Barossi of TTOR for Guided Hikes and Craft Beer at Appleton Farms on May 27 nd June 11, 17, 24, 2022
 - II. One Day All Alcohol License Application
 - a. Andrew Skillman of Ipswich Masonic Temple for a Celebration of Life on May 7, 2022
- *Vote: Ms. Player moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Approval of Minutes

- I. March 7, 2022
- II. March 21, 2022

Ms. Player asked that the March 7 minutes be amended to show that the Affordable Housing Trust Board meets at 7:30 AM, not 7:30 PM.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the minutes with Ms. Player's edit. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Select Board Member Subcommittee Update

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING REUSE WORKING GROUP

Under New Business, the Working Group will be seeking the appointment of Don Greenough.

At their most recent meeting, the group discussed developing a list of criteria for new use opportunities, and investigating grants.

WATER SUBCOMMITTEE

Senator Bruce Tarr has created a regional task force in response to ongoing water issues.

At their most recent meeting, the Subcommittee reviewed their drought management plan, and discussed the pros and cons of enacting a voluntary water ban as a precaution. Many Committee members expressed concern that early bans dilute the message of true bans, and at this time, does not recommend diverting from the current drought management plan. Ms. Player suggested scheduling a time for the Subcommittee to attend a Select Board meeting to discuss water restrictions more in-depth.

SHADE TREE & BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

The Committee is currently identifying roadway islands available for adoption. Individuals or businesses interested in maintaining an island should contact Gail Surpitski in the DPW office or Janet Craft.

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING COMMITTEE

On May 5, the Committee will meet to interview three (3) potential architects and designers.

PUBLIC HEARING: Amend Traffic Rules and Regulations

“Residents of the Town of Ipswich, please note the Select Board will hold a public hearing in Meeting Room A of Town Hall on Monday, May 2, 2022 at 7:20 PM to make the following amendments to the Traffic Rules and Regulations, Article VII: Operation of Vehicles. Add to Article VII: Operation of Vehicles; Section 4: Stop Signs, Sub-section (d) (271): East Street at North Main Street for westbound traffic. (272): High Street at North Main Street for eastbound traffic.” -Dr. Tammy Jones, Select Board Chair

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to open the Public Hearing. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Police Chief Paul Nikas informed the Board that two (2) years ago, residents began compiling a petition to install a three-way stop sign at North Main Street, East Street, and High Street. He recommended that the signs also feature LED lights to alert drivers to the new change. The lights are not strong enough to disturb abutters.

Ms. Player asked if the installation will result in lost parking spots. Chief Nikas responded that in a survey with the DPW Director, he determined one (1) spot may be lost on the eastbound side headed towards The Neck.

Ms. Alexson asked if implementing the three-way stop could lead to more requests for traffic pattern changes from surrounding streets such as Manning and Mineral. Chief Nikas responded that it was possible, and that each circumstance would have to be evaluated individually. He noted that there have been several near-misses and accidents at this location in particular. The change will be enforced by regular patrols, more heavily saturated at first so that drivers get used to the change.

Mr. Whitmore asked what the speed limit is currently at the location. Chief Nikas responded that it is 25mph, but to go lower would require traffic studies. Ms. Alexson stated that she would like to direct the DPW Director and Chief to begin the process for lowering the speed limit on High Street.

Mr. Whitmore stated that they would also be asking the DPW to review key pedestrian areas where it would make sense to lower speed limits, and also ensure that standup crosswalk signs are consistent throughout town.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ingrid Miles (58 North Main Street) stated that there are several young children in the neighborhood, as well as the House of Peace, which houses handicapped individuals. She noted that her own car has been smashed due to speeding traffic.

Isaac Garcia (3 High Street) stated that he has seen numerous accidents and close calls. He added that decreased visibility by the sun, combined with speed, has led to several accidents.

Carol Sullivan (3 East Street) stated that another factor in accidents was texting and driving. She reported that the telephone pole in front of her house has prevented many vehicles from crashing into her house.

Chris Chapman (Cycle Safe Task Force) reported that the group had voted unanimously in support of this proposal.

Doug Lucey (7 East Street) stated that he now encourages his children to play on Summer Street because it feels safer.

Dwight Thompson (14 East Street) noted that the area is on an incline, and cars are unable to see pedestrians in the crosswalk before they approach. He noted that last week, his wife had stopped to allow pedestrians to cross at the crosswalk, and a truck drove around her.

Rob Donahue (12 High Street) stated that while other neighborhoods may request a three-way stop as well, it was necessary for this area because High Street is a mixed-use neighborhood, with both residents and businesses.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to approve the proposal as presented. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Change of Director Application for Seasonal All Alcohol Liquor Licensee, Ipswich Bay Yacht Club

Mark Prestero (Ipswich Bay Yacht Club, Secretary) stated that officers are elected every two (2) years, and that the liquor license officer is scheduled to be reassigned in 2022.

➤ *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Electric Light Department Budget Review

Jon Blair (ELD Manager) presented the Spring 2022 Annual Report and FY23 operational budget and capital plan. Mr. Blair explained that the ELD budget is different from other municipal department budget in three key ways:

- As an electric generator, Ipswich ELD falls under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which requires national regulation of project codes. This allows the FERC to evaluate what investments are being put into infrastructure nationwide.
- The ELD utilizes accrual accounting instead of cash accounting, and allocates labor across twenty-seven (27) different lines. Investments are capitalized and appreciated accordingly.
- The ELD budget is not approved by Town Meeting, because it is funded entirely by rate payers (not tax payers.) It only requires Select Board approval, as Electric Commissioners.

Noteworthy items in the FY23 budget include no increase in full-time employees and instead strategically utilizes existing staff for new projects; no request for a base rate increase for the first time in five (5) years; and no requests for borrowing for capital projects.

Mr. Whitmore asked for an update on the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project. Mr. Blair explained that almost all water meters have been replaced, and electric meter replacement will begin shortly. He noted that this project is being done out of necessity, as the existing hardware company no longer supports the metering software utilized.

Ms. Mackin noted that solar power is only 1% of Ipswich's portfolio, and that the Town had been approved to install a solar field at the former landfill. Mr. Marino clarified that no such approval had been given.

Mr. Whitmore asked why the labor budget is increasing in FY23. Mr. Blair clarified that the increases are on the capital tab, because all meter conversion labor is being done in-house. Although it appears to be a significant increase, it only increases about 4% year to year.

Ms. Alexson asked how the department will handle power sales, which are expected to double by 2040. Mr. Blair responded that the department will adapt to whatever the needs call for, and will do so by continuing to partner with groups like MMWEC and NEPPA to evaluate power lines, substations, distribution lines, and wire size.

Ms. Alexson asked how many poles will be replaced throughout Town. Mr. Blair responded that Verizon and the ELD co-own all poles, but administratively, the maintenance is split in half, with Verizon maintaining care of poles on the west side of Route 1A, and the ELD maintaining the east side. Verizon contracts their maintenance with Osmos, which has been conducting testing on their poles to evaluate for rot damage.

Ms. Alexson asked if energy audits have been conducted on senior housing. Mr. Blair responded that all audits are now being conducted in-house, and residents can schedule a time for an employee to provide a comprehensive energy efficiency and de-carbonization audit of their home. Ashley Wilson (Accounting Assistant) is currently working with the Ipswich Housing Partnership to set energy efficiency goals.

The Board decided to continue discussion of the budget at their next meeting and schedule a vote for June 6.

Temporary Outdoor Entertainment License, True North Ale Co.

Until the Outdoor Entertainment Working Group has established a permanent policy for outdoor entertainment, businesses must appear before the Board to request a seasonal license.

Gary Rogers (Owner, True North Ale Co.) stated that his brewery has had an indoor entertainment license for five (5) years, and has held outdoor entertainment for two (2) years. He requires managers to monitor noise using a decibel level app, and does not allow subwoofers that boost bass. Music typically ends around 8:30 PM. The requested permit is for outdoor entertainment Tuesdays through Saturdays, from 12 PM to 9 PM. Mr. Rogers added that typically music is only running from 4 PM to 8 PM.

Jackie Kronenberg (6 Essex Road) asked that a vote on the requested permit be postponed, as she believes that Town Counsel has not provided sufficient evidence that True North is not disturbing the peace by providing outdoor entertainment. She also asked that Select Board meetings return to allowing a hybrid option.

Brian Goldsmith (6 Essex Road) stated that he has never experienced any issues with noise from True North Ale, and he only hears it softly if he is out on his back deck.

Brandon Boyd (9 Upper River Road) stated that Town bylaws require noise permits to hold public gatherings. Mr. Marino clarified that the noise bylaw mentioned applies to demolitions and blastings, not outdoor entertainment, and is issued by the building department.

Ms. Mackin proposed a vote postponement.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the permit. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried 3-1, with Ms. Mackin opposed.*

Discuss/Vote Town Manager Search Firm and Interim Town Manager

Mr. Marino's last day will be on May 20 before he becomes the Town Manager of Winthrop. Three (3) companies have submitted bids to lead a candidate search for \$9,980, \$12,000, and \$12,500. The search is anticipated to take 3-4 months. The company will assist in recruiting candidates. Candidates will be screened and interviewed by a committee, and final interviews would be conducted in an open, televised session.

Previously, the Town has used Community Paradigm as their agency. Ms. Alexson noted that their past fee was \$13,000, but current bid is for under \$10,000. Mr. Marino responded that due to Community Paradigm's familiarity with Ipswich, there is less legwork and research necessary. He suggested inviting them to the next meeting to compile a job description and community profile.

In the past, an outside, interim Town Manager was paid \$80 per hour. For the sake of promoting internal staff development and training an outsider, the Board decided to appoint a current employee for an additional stipend of \$800 per week.

- *Vote: Ms. Player moved to hire Community Paradigm to facilitate the Town Manager search for \$9,980. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*
- *Vote: Ms. Player moved to appoint Mary Gallivan as Interim Town Manager for May 21-July 31, and Chief Paul Nikas as Interim Town Manager from August 1 until a permanent Town Manager is hired. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Town Manager Report

Mr. Marino visited Residence at Riverbend to update residents on Town matters.

The Outdoor Entertainment Working Group will meet on May 9 at 6:30 PM in Meeting Room C.

TOWN MEETING

The Finance Committee books for Annual Town Meeting will be mailed to homes this week. The Town Moderator's update is currently airing in ICAM.

The Finance Committee did not vote in favor of the article regarding 161 Topsfield Road, as they feel the Town should keep all options on the table. They suggested taking no action and revisiting the article at Fall Town Meeting.

MARKET STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements on Market Street in the downtown area will be finishing up this week, followed by paving from Kennedy Street down through Market Street, including Fairview Avenue.

Ms. Alexson noted that Heart & Soul Cafe currently has outdoor dining tables on either side of a public bench, and noted that the bench was donated for public use. She asked that either the bench or tables be moved so the public does not feel as though they are in the middle of a restaurant. Mr. Marino stated that he spoke to the cafe about this, and it will be revisited when they come for a temporary outdoor permit.

DOG PARK

Ms. Alexson asked for an update on a potential dog park. Mr. Marino responded that there are a few public parcels available once the Select Board decides where they would like to build it.

New Business

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve Donald Greenough to the Public Safety Reuse Working Group as the Ipswich Housing Partnership representative. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Old Business

TOWN MEETING SPEAKING ASSIGNMENTS

The Board made the following speaking assignments for Town Meeting:

- Article 11: Dr. Jones
- Article 12: Mr. Whitmore
- Article 14: Ms. Player
- Article 18: Ms. Player
- Budget, Consent Calendar, and Finance Committee election: Dr. Jones

Mr. Marino reported that Tom Murphy (Town Manager) would like any Board member opposition to articles to be expressed on the floor as a resident. Ms. Alexson stated that she disagreed with that decision, as any oppositions were made as a Board member.

Miscellaneous & Correspondence

None.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to adjourn. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

The Select Board adjourned at 10:04 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
06.21.22*