

Select Board Working Session Meeting  
February 15, 2023  
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Glenn, Bill, Katherine  
Others: Eileen Brooks

Meeting called to order at 9:15am.  
Bill announced that the meeting is being recorded.

**Evaluations:** In the past SB ask employees to do self-evaluations, then discuss in a meeting. Highway and Municipal Assistant, Tax Collector, Treasurer, Accountant, and COA assistant should be evaluated. Glenn proposed that we schedule the meetings, sending a memo asking them to be prepared to discuss what support they from us, challenges they have had, and what they see coming in the next year. Prepare a calendar of activities for year – a rough outline of what activities and when they will happen. Step 2: present job description, discuss what works, what doesn't work; revise as needed. Discuss personnel policy; communications going forward, what would work for them. Discuss salary or stipend. Step 3: Set Annual goals and objectives. In future evaluations use the needs improvement, meets, or exceeds expectation for performance and salary consideration based on goals and objectives.

In the future January will be the month for evaluations.

**Discussion of clerical work.** Best scenario would be an assistant town clerk that also does admin assistant and public safety clerk work. Ask Amanda to continue as town clerk who oversees the functions of the assistant town clerk. The Municipal Assistant would oversee other clerical functions.

Another possible solution: Designate specific office hours for public interaction – every day but not necessary 8 hours a day. Assistant town clerk will staff those public hours. Municipal Assistant will have an office that is private so they can focus on their work.

We need to improve communication about roles, hours, what happens when someone is on vacation or out of the office, identify activities that must be taken care of when someone is out. Clearly define who makes what decisions.

**Salaries:** cost of living, market rates (wage band), merit. Merit needs to be done with care – documented exceeding expectations. Stipends versus salary are different and not comparative. Percentages work for salaries, not stipend.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to apply a 5% cost of living increase across the board. Bill seconded. Discussion. Approved unanimously.

**School budget:** general consensus that the budget is reasonable, and administration has done a good job responding to requests to sharpen the pencil. Agreed that the resource officer can be cut. Not a big savings but something to ask for.

10:30am: Chair left the meeting to attend Police Task Force meeting in Bernardston. Katherine chaired the meeting.

**Other budget items:** Building needs and safety is a high priority. Don't know what the AARPA money will be used for - yet! Mold, electric, water drainage, insulation. Expenses at 70% in FY23 budget according to 2/13/23 numbers: SB Diesel account, Town Clerk expense, Grounds Maintenance, Police, Tree Warden expense, Winter maintenance. Discussion of Police over-run which is about \$3,000 – Public Safety Committee has a break-down of these expenses. Discussion of Tree Warden expenses – need to discuss with Bill Brooks what is needed to do more on tree clean-up in town. Fire department and equipment is a high priority. Fire inspector could be a self-funding position, perhaps a revolving fund – Bernardston pays \$35.00 an hour direct to inspector. FRCOG inspections versus local are clearly delineated.

**Special Town Meeting articles:** Solar Bylaw, Stretch Code, Conservation Commission transfer from Free Cash, discontinuance of East Hill and Hunt Hill Roads, Police expense transfer from Free Cash.

**Treasurer:** Susan spoke with John Higgins. Recreation Committee uses tax exempt for their committee purchases but uses John's personal account. Amazon account in town's name is possible, Bernardston has done so and it is not easy but they will share the information. Susan will pursue setting up an account for Leyden which then would be billed directly to the town.

Susan asked: Do all purchases have to go through SB for approval? No, procurement officer or committee chairs manage their own budgets that are double-checked when SB sees the warrant. Treasurer legally has control over all town funds – if there is a bank account that uses town's tax exempt number then treasurer should be on account.

Changes in Fire Department: Susan asked if the fire auxiliary use the tax exempt number since they are not a town committee? Glenn will look into this. Susan needs a letter from SB that fire chief resigned and that he was eligible to be paid through that period. Also a letter should be written to Nik about the SB decision to appoint him as interim officer in charge and stipend he will be paid. Send a copy to Susan. Nik will have to submit a request for payment to Susan but no new information needs to be submitted since he has been paid previously.

COA donations account – Susan is not aware but will check.

Susan asked if we would be willing to change our schedule for receiving the warrants so she can deliver them on the same schedule she has with Bernardston. SB agreed that would be fine, and if that shifts the warrant to the Monday working session that would work better for SB - more time to pay attention and review the warrant.

Susan happy with how things are working overall with the Select Board.

**12:15pm: Jim McGovern Visit**

7 citizens attended: Sara Steinberg, Jim Phinney, Robbie Milner, Emily Yazwinski, Nan Rolstad, Holly Spatcher, Gerry McCarthy

Koby is Jim McGovern's staff person based in Northampton, MA

Jim emphasized that there is a lot of money now from the Federal government that has allocated to the States and there are pots of money within the Federal agencies. The Infrastructure money that came to Massachusetts will not be used for the Bourne and Sagamore bridges – they were funded separately by the Federal government. Citizens and Select Board spoke to the issues of tiny towns – emphasizing that we are different and have unique challenges that even small towns do not face. Public safety: fire and emergency services; education; limited tax base despite high median income; farm viability and impacts on town, and small enterprises to attract or revitalize the town were among the topics discussed.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:30pm Glenn second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katherine DiMatteo