

TOWN OF STERLING  
Select Board Meeting  
February 17, 2021

MEETING:	Chair Cranson, called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:31 pm. Roll Call: Chair Cranson – Present. Select member Sonnenberg – Participated remotely. Select member Kilcoyne – Present. Also present were Town Administrator, Kellie Hebert, Operations Manager/Accountant, Fred Aponte and Senior Executive Assistant, Kama Jayne.
Minutes	Select member moved to approve the amended minutes of February 3, 2021. Select Member Sonnenberg 2 <sup>nd</sup> . Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Select Member Kilcoyne Aye. Motion Carried.
Assesement/bud get Discussion	Select member Kilcoyne addressed the issue of increased taxes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of money needed to run the town is established by the budget, which is approved at the Town Meeting.</li><li>• Taxes are the means by which the budget is funded.</li><li>• In order to collect enough money to fund the budget, the assessors decided upon a rate, which is voted at a public meeting.</li><li>• This year, the assessors recommended that the tax rate be decreased by .29 cents per thousand to \$16.52 per thousand dollars of valuation.</li><li>• However, the value of property has increased resulting in a tax increase for most homeowner</li><li>• The Board is ever vigilant about not spending money unnecessarily and will continue to be diligent in their endeavors to keep the tax rate as low as possible.</li></ul>
Budget Discussion for Fy22	The Board discussed the FY22 budget proposals for the Select office/Town Administrator. That proposal includes the following; Town Administrator's Salary: 127,296.00 (4% increase to include contractual terms and 2% COLA) Town Administrator Wages: 61,164.48 (5.06% increase to include longevity compensation and 2% COLA) Town Administrator Expenses: 50,370.00 (.21% decrease) Operation Manager Wages: 48,646.00 (5.04% increase) COA Senior Work-Off Program : 15,000.00 Level Funded Select Board Stipend : 4,500.00 Level Funded Select Board Expenses: 2,500.00 Level Funded Legal Servies : 62,000.00 Level funded Town Planner: 79,559.00 (4.04% increase to include longevity compensation and 2% COLA) Town Planner Expense: 7,600.00 Level Funded Departmental Total: 389,635.48 (3.49% increase) The budget will be discussed in further detail at the Finance Meeting on Saturday, February 27.
Stipend for Town Planner	The Town Administrator has proposed a cost neutral transition plan for the Building Department which includes having the Town Planner act as the temporary Administrative Coordinator for that department. Domenica Tatasciore, has zoning and planning expertise. She is willing to provide managerial and supervisory assistance to the Building Department, in order to facilitate the smooth running operation of that Department, until a permanent building Inspector can be hired. After discussion, Select member Kilcoyne moved to approve a weekly stipend of \$300.00 for the Town Planner to serve as the Interim Department Head and manager of the Building and Zoning Enforcement Department until a permanent

Select Board Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2021

	<p>"Building Commissioner/Inspector of Buildings" is hired, but not to extend beyond June 30, 2021. Select Member Sonnenberg – 2nd . Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Kilcoyne – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion carried.</p>
Update on compost initiative	<p>Blaine Burshad addressed the Board on the compost initiative that is being considered by the group known as Keeping Sterling. The Mass DEP has set a goal to substantially reduce solid wastes that go to landfills. Since food waste accounts for 26% of all residential waste, the DEP has assisted the Keeping Sterling Group in their discovery phase of the feasibility of reestablishing the compost site behind the police station. It is the group's intent to determine the overall costs and interests in creating an operational facility which would produce valuable compost while reducing land fill waste. The group will pursue grants in order to move forward. Thus far, this initiative has cost nothing for the tax payer.</p>
Annual report	<p>Select member Kilcoyne moved to approve the annual report that is set before them. Select member Sonnenberg 2<sup>nd</sup>. Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Kilcoyne – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion carried. The annual report will be submitted to the Town Clerk's office for inclusion in the annual report. The Report will be forwarded to the Clerk's Office.</p>
PH Request to Planning Board regarding naming change	<p>Select member Sonnenberg requested that the Board ask the Planning Board to hold a Public Hearing regarding the Town Meeting warrant article, which would amend the Protective (Zoning) Bylaws and Regulations. She explained that the General bylaws name change was approved by the Attorney General's Office, after a 2/3rds affirmative vote at the Annual Town Meeting. However, in order for the <b>Protective</b> bylaw changes to be approved, it must be voted at Town Meeting and a Public Hearing by the Planning Board is a requirement. Therefore, after discussion, Select Member Kilcoyne moved that a letter be sent to the Planning Board asking them to hold a Public Hearing regarding the proposal to amend the Protective Bylaws by changing "Selectman, Selectmen, Chairman, and Board of Selectmen" to "Select member", Chair and Select Board in the Protective Bylaws and Regulations. Select Member Sonnenberg – 2nd . Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Kilcoyne – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion carried.</p>
TA Report	<p><b>GRANTS:</b> <b>NEW AWARD: District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Grant:</b> The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) announced an award to Sterling for grant assistance for technical planning. The "Planning Ahead for Growth" initiative will provide the Town with technical assistance to develop a streamlined permitting guidebook and to conduct a supplemental study to review Sterling's existing zoning bylaws for any impediments to economic growth. <b>NEW AWARD: DHCD Local Rapid Planning Recovery Technical Assistance Grant:</b> Short-term, actionable project solutions to revitalize business affected by COVID These initiatives will be overseen by the Town Planner.</p>
PSAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Board wishes a speedy recovery for the Town Clerk, Kathy Farrell</li><li>• Officer John Chase will be sworn in at the Police Station on Tuesday, February 23.</li><li>• The Recreation Committee is in the process of interviewing for the Recreation Directorship. They will narrow the choice down to two candidates who will be interviewed by the Select Board.</li><li>• The vaccine initiative for 75+ yrs old residents was an outstanding success. Special thanks to all of the volunteers who phoned the elderly to make their appointments at the Senior center, the Board of Health, the EMTs, Jim Emerton and David Hurlbut, Ann Marie Catalano. And appreciation goes to Liz Pape who created a vaccine plan that was so effective, that it is being used by the Elder Affairs offices.</li></ul>
Adjourn	

## Select Board Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2021

- Well done everyone!
- Nomination papers are available until March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Residents are encouraged to volunteer their time and knowledge and to run for the many positions that are available.
- Hats off to the DPW that has managed to do a great job on keeping the roads safe this winter.

7:51 Select member Kilcoyne moved to adjourn the meeting. Select member Sonnenberg 2<sup>nd</sup>. Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Kilcoyne – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion carried.

Materials: Agenda, Minutes, 61A release, requests from ZBA and Earth Removal for PH, Fiber update, Police request for new employees, Building Department transition plan, Covid info.