





TOWN OF STERLING
Select Board
December 20, 2023

Minutes	<p>Chair Cranson called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:31 pm. Roll Call: Chair Cranson – Present. Select member Smith – Present. Select member Newman – Present. Town Administrator, Bill Caldwell – present. Senior Executive Administrative Assistant, Kama Jayne - present.</p> <p>Select member Newman moved to approve the minutes of December 6, 2023, as written. Select member Smith 2nd. Select member Smith – Aye. Select member Newman – Aye. Chair Cranson – Aye. Motion carried.</p>
Request to Use Town Council	<p>Rich Lane, interim member of the Board of Health, addressed the board as a citizen and requested that Town Council be asked to review the legality of the BOH’s regulation, amended on Dec. 8, 2022, requiring a deep observation hole. He wishes to query town counsel with 5 specific questions.</p> <p> 2023 12 20 Specific BOH Questions for T</p> <p>After discussion, Chair Cranson moved to allow the use of Town Council to determine the legality of the BOH’s regulation requiring deep observation holes. Select member Newman 2nd. Select member Smith – Aye. Select member Newman – Aye. Chair Cranson – Aye. Motion carried.</p>
Capital Com. Appointment	<p>Capital appointments are made between the Finance Committee, the Select Board and the Moderator. Each Board has one vote and the Moderator has one vote. After discussion, select member Newman moved to appoint Mark Gauthier to the Capital Committee. Select member Smith – 2nd. The Select Board vote was unanimous. The moderator, Jennifer Scalise-Mullet has agreed to approve the appointment of Mr. Gauthier to the Capital Committee and the Finance and Capital Committees voted to approve this appointment. Motion carried. Mr. Gauthier’s appointment expires on 6/30/2026.</p>
Wachusett Regional Audit Update	<p>Former select member, John Kilcoyne addressed the Board regarding the Wachusett Regional School District audit. The audit advisory board discussed the financial statement, including the schools’ net position/changes, the current deficiencies in internal control and OPEB. In summary, the key points were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is significant improvement over last year’s operating procedures (as shown by cash reconciliations being completed through August of this year)• The Payroll Department’s personnel related issues have been addressed.• The net position decreased from last year due mostly to pension and OPEB liability increases.• Operating grant awards decreased by \$9 million this year• Assessments increased by 3.4%• There was a general fund decrease of \$196 thousand due to an over-encumbrance of \$340 thousand.• OPEB will remain an issue for all towns.
	<p> 2023 11 13 WRSD  2023 11 3 WRSD  2023 WRSD Financial Statement: Auditors Report.pdf Management Letter.</p>
	<p>The board thanked John for representing the Town of Sterling.</p>

Impact Bargaining

The police union requests that the board consider re-opening the Police contract to adjust the detail rate of pay. The Union wishes to discuss an increase which would more closely align the Sterling detail rate of pay to that in surrounding communities. After consideration, select member Newman moved to enter into impact bargaining regarding detail pay rates. Select member Smith 2nd. Select member Smith – Aye. Select member Newman – Aye. Chair Cranson – Aye. Motion carried. Select member Smith will participate in negotiations with the union.

Conservation Restriction

The board was asked to consider granting a Conservation Restriction for 67 Osgood Road. This is a 44+/- acre parcel of land. (Worcester County Registry of Deed, Book 29332, Page 196) The Grantor is the Vaghini Family Limited Partnership. The Grantee is the Town of Sterling Conservation Commission. The required documents have been signed by the Conservation Commission and John Vaghini. It also requires the signatures of the Select Board, as well as the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs. After due consideration, select member Newman moved to sign the document which grants a conservation restriction for the parcel at 67 Osgood Road. Select member Smith 2nd. Select member Smith – Aye. Select member Newman – Aye. Chair Cranson – Aye. Motion carried.

TA Report

Town Administrator Update

- MVP Grant – expression of interest
- Community Compact Grant
- Weekly check-in with Anne Gobi, Dir. Rural Policy
- RFP for field study under review - January meeting
- New Legislation: CCC rules, special revenue funds, special purpose stabilization fund quantum of votes, insurance proceeds, amortization of disaster deficit.
- Budget update
 - Biggest drivers – Schools, insurance, Worcester Retirement
- Shared Services:
 - Conservation: Current agent leaving. Looking to share services with another town to create FT benefitted position
 - Building Commissioner: Starting discussions with additional towns to explore larger shared services agreement for succession planning and long-term staffing

Project updates:

1. Library Lift/Elevator – Otis for elevator modernization
2. School Security – Received quotes. American Alarm awarded bidder.
3. Storage Building – Exploring options
4. Town Beach – some drainage work complete, tree work
5. 1835 Building Septic – Will need bid documents. Documents sent to owners
6. 1835 – Suspended ceiling downstairs
7. 62/140 engineering – Green International – rotary design
8. Maple Street sidewalks – Contract extension requested to 6/30/2024
9. Downtown revitalization –

PSAs

Adjourn

- a. Design of sidewalks, road crossings, parking, water main, storm water

ARPA Funding – Project	Approved	Balance
SMLD Broadband	\$352,000	\$0
DPW Storage	\$212,000	\$212,000
62/140 Design	\$250,000	\$149,134.25

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Library Lift	\$200,000	\$152,910
Watermain – Campground	\$18,550	\$16,450
Comcast Downtown	\$153,068	\$153,068
Playground – School	\$120,000	\$120,000 (returned state funds)
Building Commissioner Vehicle	\$30,000	\$1,798
Admin expenses	\$2,428.13	
Total	\$1,338,046.13	\$805,360.25
Total to Sterling	2,543,264.44	
Balance Designated to Downtown*	\$1,205,218.31	

Happy holidays to everyone from the board.

At 7:30 select member Newman moved to adjourn. Select member Smith – 2nd. Chairman Cranson – Aye. Select member Smith – Aye. Select member Newman - Aye. Motion Carried.

Materials: agenda, minutes, TA report, volunteer applications, request for agenda item (BOH relevant), audit advisory notes, union letter, conservation restriction request, questions for town counsel