

**Regular Session Minutes – Bedford, MA Select Board Meeting
Hybrid Participation Meeting (Select Board Meeting Room and Zoom)
January 23, 2023**

PRESENT: Town Manager Sarah Stanton, Chair Emily Mitchell, Clerk Bopha Malone, Shawn Hanegan, Edward Pierce, Margot Fleischman.

ALSO PRESENT: Leanne Petto, Administrative Assistant, Town Manager’s Office; Tony Fields, Planning Director; Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner; Ben Thomas, Finance Committee; Paul Mortenson, Finance Committee; Sue Swanson; Steve Hagan, Planning Board; Jacinda Barbehenn, Planning Board; Amy Lloyd, Planning Board; Nick Howard; Sean Laffey; Mike Rosenberg, *The Bedford Citizen*.

Ms. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

23-15 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

23-16 Board and Committee Interviews

Ms. Mitchell thanked everyone that applied for appointment. Ms. Mitchell reminded appointees that prior to the commencement of their duties, they are required to visit the Town Clerk’s Office to take the oath of office. Appointees may not participate in any votes until they have taken the oath of office. At that time, they will receive a Certificate of Appointment and a copy of Chapter 268A, Section 23, the Conflict of Interest Law, and Chapter 39, Sections 23A-24, the Open Meeting Law. All members are expected to be familiar with and follow the Town’s Civil Discourse Policy while serving. The Select Board suggests that Committees and Board rotate chairs annually.

Committee Interviews:

1. Transportation Advisory Committee—N. Howard, S. Laffey

Ms. Fleischman reviewed the general responsibilities of the Transportation Advisory Committee.

Ms. Mitchell asked both candidates why they want to be appointed to the Transportation Advisory Committee. Mr. Howard commented that he would like to improve communications between the committee and the town. Mr. Laffey commented that he recently moved to Bedford and would like to volunteer in an

impactful way. He is a transportation engineer by trade, which he would like to apply to the committee.

Ms. Mitchell asked what kinds of things the candidates would like the board to accomplish. Mr. Laffey would emphasize communication outreach with the community, to keep the public informed and help them understand the impact that projects will have. Mr. Howard would like to see feedback from previous implementations, bring a broader input to the committee, and mitigate unfavorable opinions.

Mr. Hanegan asked the applicants how they intend on providing outreach to the public. Mr. Laffey commented that it is a team effort on the committee's part, and the best way to engage depends on what parties will be most impacted. He commented that there is value in utilizing the town's website to attract attendees. Mr. Howard would like to explore using mailings and Facebook, especially targeting areas that will be impacted by certain changes.

Ms. Malone asked the applicants to name two issues that they want to address. Mr. Howard responded figuring out ways to improve the reformatory trail intersection, to include temporary speed zones, and to reconfigure left-turn impacts at the Brooksbie Road and Route 4/225 intersection. Mr. Laffey said addressing congestion along the Great Road during commuting hours, by using new transportation data to determine the best solutions that can be implemented, and improving safety and connectivity to the Minuteman Bikeway.

Ms. Fleischman asked the applicants about their approach to responding to the information received from consultants and departments. Mr. Laffey explained that though consultants apply their resources to compile and analyze data, the committee must take that data being proposed and apply local knowledge to determine what would have the greatest benefit. Mr. Howard explained that he is good at thinking outside the box, and would solicit questions to bring a new perspective.

Mr. Pierce asked the applicants if either of them reviewed the Traffic Study for the Great Road that was recently presented to the town. Mr. Howard was present for that meeting, and noted that the light timing could use improvement. He said the suggested changes to turn-only lanes did not reflect how they would impact traffic. Mr. Laffey responded that he was not able to attend the meeting but did look at the traffic study. He noted that sometimes implementing new signals with new technology may not render the best outcome.

Ms. Fleischman responded the committee is so fortunate to have candidates that are so engaged and passionate. She noted that Mr. Laffey's professional experience would be a great skillset to bring to the committee.

Mr. Hanegan agreed that Mr. Laffey's transportation experience provides a unique opportunity. Mr. Howard's contrarian views would also bring a different perspective to the committee.

Ms. Malone was interested in the existing makeup of the board. Ms. Fleishman noted that several of the members have considerable tenure on the committee and in town.

Ms. Fleischman moved that the Select Board appoint Sean Laffey to the Transportation Advisory Committee for a term ending June 30, 2023 and authorize the Town Manager to sign the appointment letter on behalf of the Select Board. Mr. Pierce seconded.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Materials: Nicholas Howard questionnaire; Sean Laffey questionnaire; Memo to the Select Board re: Committee Interviews

23-17 Annual Town Meeting

Planning Director Tony Fields presented on the two-family dwelling zoning article.

Mr. Fields commented that this proposed bylaw developed out of the 2019 housing study. Two-family housing is currently allowed for residences constructed prior to 1945 or vacant lots with 1.5 times the minimum lot area for that particular zoning district. This amendment would apply to existing structures or new two-family structures with restrictions, including a floor-area-ratio (FAR) that does not exceed that of a typical one-family.

Ms. Fleischman thanked the Planning Board for all their work. Her concern is the distinction of pre- and post-1945 dwellings. Mr. Fields responded that 44% of the residential lots in town are non-conforming based on lot size. Two-family zoning is intended to be within the same structure, not for an accessory dwelling unit.

Mr. Pierce noted that the look and feel of Bedford is for single families. He asked if reducing the lot size requirement would allow for increased housing while maintaining the single-family character. What would be the impact on traffic and schools? Mr. Fields noted that earlier zoning changes aimed to slow development, and that some streets

have unique characteristics and that don't necessarily reflect what is in the zoning by-law.

Ms. Malone wanted to confirm that there would be no two-families with an accessory dwelling unit, and asked how to create momentum for creating two-families if this amendment passes. Mr. Fields responded that there would not be any two-families with accessory dwelling units. He noted there are unique housing demands in every community.

Mr. Hanegan asked if there were any predictions as to the desire for two-family housing. Mr. Fields offered to reach out to comparable communities to assess their demand.

Ms. Mitchell noted that the New England housing model is challenging. She appreciated all the hard work and creative ways the Planning Board has implemented recommendations from the housing study.

Ms. Stanton noted that departments were breaking down some of the revolving funds for greater transparency, as well as language for the two-family zoning.

Materials: ATM 2023 – Draft Warrant – 1-10-23.

23-12 Consent Agenda

Regular Session Meeting Minutes: January 9, 2023, and January 17, 2023; Chapter 268A, Section 20(b) Disclosure for Karen Burstein.

Mr. Hanegan moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Malone seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Materials: 01092023 Select Board Meeting Minutes – Draft; 01172023 Select Board Meeting Minutes – Draft; Chapter 268A, Section 20(b) Disclosure – Burstein.

23-19 Town Manager's Report

Ms. Stanton presented the draft of the Bedford Town Meeting survey, including questions about different forms of Town Meeting, challenges with attending Town Meetings, preferences for one long night or two shorter nights, preferences for weeknights or weekends, and thoughts about electronic voting.

Ms. Fleischman asked if the Town Moderator has been included in the development of the questionnaire. Ms. Stanton replied that this is a Select Board Survey, intended to collect feedback about Town Meeting to inform future discussions with the Moderator and other stakeholders.

Mr. Pierce asked how the survey will be distributed. Ms. Stanton responded that it will be available online and in hard copy in select offices.

Mr. Hanegan noted that he would like a comment section added to question 12, so respondents can note the reason for their preference. He also suggested adding average start and end times to question 5.

Ms. Mitchell asked if question 8 could address if individuals prefer overflow rooms. Ms. Stanton responded that overflow rooms are only an option when the main room is at capacity.

Ms. Mitchell asked about the term “accessibility,” and whether it could be defined more clearly. Ms. Stanton offered to add a comment box to allow participants to define what they mean.

Mr. Pierce asked to add a question asking whether a person has attended Town Meeting from an overflow room. Ms. Stanton noted it for inclusion on the survey.

23-20 Liaison Reports

Ms. Mitchell noted that several board members attended the annual MMA Conference.

Mr. Hanegan reported on the Bedford Housing Partnership meeting, where developer Brian DeVellis of the Carlisle Road project presented for a second time. Mr. Hanegan suggested the Select Board draft a list of questions and requested materials for the developer to have ready before presenting to the Select Board for project approval. The Volunteer Coordinating Committee met and discussed applications to the Cultural Council. The Depot Park Advisory Committee met about presenting project funding sources to the Select Board.

Ms. Malone reported that Bedford Arbor Resource Committee will be meeting later in the week.

Ms. Fleischman reported that the Energy and Sustainability Committee is still looking to promote the Energy and Sustainability Manager job vacancy and Community Choice

Aggregation program. The Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) met and discussed net zero stretch codes.

Mr. Pierce had no report.

Ms. Mitchell reported that the Finance Committee met to continue reviewing department budgets.

**Mr. Hanegan moved to adjourn. Ms. Malone seconded.
The motion passed 5-0-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Leanne Petto