

Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
August 17, 2021, 5:30 pm  
59 Main Street, Hatfield, MA  
Virtual GoToMeeting

Present: Select Board Chair Diana Szynal and members Edmund Jaworski and Brian Moriarty. Also present were Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Sharon Strezgowski, Treasurer/Collector; Bob Flaherty, Fire Chief; Phil Genovese, DPW Director; Lydia Szych, Town Clerk; Bob Osley, Chair and Member Liz Kugler, Board of Health; Kerry Flaherty; Danielle Stanisewski, Member School Committee; Stephanie Moynihan, Steve Raff and Deb Martin; Kathy Gow of the Hatfield Historical Society; Amy Hahn, Chair, Historical Commission; Meghan Ashman

**CALL TO ORDER** Chair Szynal called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

**PUBLIC FORUM** There was public forum regarding the Board of Health Order mandating masks in school buildings. Danielle Stanisewski, Member School Committee, voiced her opinion that parents should make the decision on whether their child wears a mask and that the numbers don't mandate a mask order. She felt that the School Committee was not given time to vote on a mask mandate. Selectman Moriarty asked Danielle if the School Committee voted one way or the other and she said no. Stephanie Monahan voiced her opinion to the Select Board and she also feels that the Board of Health should not have given the mask order. Kathy Gow wanted to speak about Topic 4 on the Agenda. Chair Szynal informed Ms. Gow that she would have to wait until the topic is addressed during the meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** Chair Szynal recognized the DPW for their work on the Route 5/10 project. Chair Szynal also said there were a number of water breaks recently and that Tony Lastowski and Brandon Daniels did a wonderful job in dealing with them. Chair Szynal also said that Mr. Genovese and whole crew worked hard with cleanup after two storms recently. Chair Szynal and Selectman Moriarty wanted to thank the Police Department, Fire Department and the DPW for doing such a wonderful job. Chair Szynal received an email from Chris Buckland. He is looking for opportunities for students of the National Honor Society to perform community service. Chair Szynal urges Town Departments, if they have a project, they can be in touch with the school or her. Selectman Jaworski reminded townspeople that school is starting soon so drive carefully. Selectman Moriarty thanked the DPW Director, Mr. Genovese, and the Police Department for the new crosswalk signage. The Police updated their website to remind drivers to watch the crosswalk for pedestrians. Please slow down and pay attention near crosswalks. Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator stated that the Council on Aging has reopened with great activities. Chair Szynal said the Council on Aging newsletter is great and wonderful, they have great activities and that GERALYN RODGERS and her staff are doing a great job. Also, Chair Szynal would like an update on the Capawonk construction.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the July 13 regular session and July 13 executive session; July 16 regular session minutes and the July 16 executive session minutes; Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor aye, motion approved. Selectman Moriarty made a

motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 28, August 6, August 6 executive session minutes, Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion, all in favor, aye, minutes approved.

## **POSTED BUSINESS**

Fire Department, Chief Flaherty: Fire Chief Flaherty introduced the Select Board to the new firefighter and EMT, Ricky Ciliberto. Chief Flaherty informed the Board that he is qualified, he is very helpful and working out very well. Chief Flaherty thanked the townspeople for this opportunity. The Select Board welcomed Ricky.

Chief Flaherty presented a letter to the Select Board declaring protective clothing as surplus property. Chief Flaherty said the protective clothing has an expiration date of 10 years as the material starts to degrade. The items will be donated to Beirut. Chief Flaherty informed the Board that the clothing has no monetary value. Selectman Jaworski made motion to declare protective clothing as surplus property, 8-Structural firefighting turnout coats; 4-Structural firefighting turnout pants; and 4-pairs of Structural Firefighting Boots; Selectman Moriarty seconded, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

Chief Flaherty presented to the Select Board the paramedic hourly rate. Chief Flaherty told the Board than when all pay raises went through, this was not on the original list. No employee has received a pay raise since 2020 so it was left off master payroll list. Chief Flaherty would like to bring the paramedics in line with all the others up to \$24.07 per hour. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to accept the paramedic hourly rate of \$24.07, Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor aye, motion approved.

Hearing on Transfer of Liquor License Request from Kenneth Holhut, dba Double B's to Old Mill Enterprises, LLC, William Wooldridge, Manager: CANCELLED

Historical Commission – Memorandum of Understanding Between Town of Hatfield and the Hatfield Historical Society: The Memorandum of Understanding was presented to the Select Board. Chair Szynal suggested that there not a term limit within the Agreement. Chair Szynal said the Memorandum, as presented, does not identify a term limit and the Select Board does not feel comfortable signing the Memorandum until a term limit included. Chair Szynal also requested some language changes be incorporated into the agreement before the Board signs it.

There was discussion between the Select Board, Amy Hahn, Chair, Historical Committee and Kathy Gow, Chair, Historical Society regarding the storage of historical collection items upstairs at Town Hall. After lengthy discussion, there was no action taken by the Select Board. Ms. Hahn told the Board that we need to have the meetings again regarding where the collection will be kept and would like to find a short term solution for the items in Benson's. Chair Szynal would like to defer a decision and if we bring collection back, it won't be viewed as permanent.

15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry: Steve Raff presented before the Select Board to request approval to use Smith Academy Park on August 27<sup>th</sup> from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. to hold a Civil War, living history re-enactment to put up some tents and give a taste of what 1862 was like. He talked with Police Department, Fire Department and DPW to make sure they have all permits and approval. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to grant permission to the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry to use Smith Academy Park on August 27, 2021 from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

Steve Raff also mentioned the “The Perfect Pairing” to be held on September 22<sup>nd</sup> at Black Birch Vineyard from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and you can contact [friendsohatfield@gmail.com](mailto:friendsohatfield@gmail.com) for tickets.

Appointment/Resignations: Appointment to appoint Robert Flaherty to the Recreation Committee, has been tabled.

Selectman Moriarty made a motion to appoint Paul Dostal as Planning Board representative to the Community Preservation Commission, Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor, aye, motion approved

Selectman Moriarty made a motion to appoint Stephanie Slysz as a Planning Board representative to Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

DPW Report: Phil Genovese, DPW Director, presented before the Select Board to discuss personnel changes. Tabled

Phil Genovese, DPW Director informed the Select Board of the three bids for the removal/replacement of the fuel tanks at the highway garage. Mr. Genovese informed the Board because of the bid swing, Mr. Genovese reached out to the low bidder and asked them what they could provide for \$92,000.00 and that company was unable to answer. So the best thing is to reject the bids and re-bid the project. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to reject the bids as presented, Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

Phil Genovese, DPW Director requested the Select Board approve his carryover of vacation time. Mr. Genovese informed the Select Board that his department has been too busy for him to take vacation time. Chair Szynal wants to be sure that the entire carryover is used by the end of October. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve DPW Director Phil Genovese’s carryover of vacation time, Selectman Jaworski seconded but use it by October because next year we don’t want to do this again, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

Town Administrator’s Report: Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator, informed the Board about the Competitive Edge Racing Event to be held in April of 2022. Michael Norton called Ms. Michonski asking for the Board’s permission to have this. Chair Szynal said we need to have discussion with the Police Chief to see if he has concerns.

Ms. Michonski informed the Select Board that every ten years the Select Board must vote to remain one precinct. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to certify that the Town of Hatfield remain a one precinct town, Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator, updated the Select Board on the Town’s Master plan. Ms. Michonski wanted to bring to the Board’s attention that we need to starting thinking about this.

Selectman Moriarty brought up information letters recognizing certain individuals and their hard work. Ms. Michonski received a letter from the Lt. Governor for her hard work with the Community Compact.

Geralyn Rodgers received a congratulations letter from Representative Lindsay Sabadosa for the Senior Center.

Discussion with Board of Health Regarding Mask Mandates in Municipal Buildings: Robert Osley, Chair of the Board of Health informed the Select Board that at the Board of Health's last meeting, August 12, 2021, there were people who were requesting a mask mandate for all school buildings. Danielle Stanisewski said there were mixed feelings on the mask mandate. Chair Osley informed the Board that at the Board of Health meeting there was a great turnout from a variety of school personnel, nurse, superintendent, teacher representatives, school union and school board members. Chair Osley said that since school was starting in one week, it was important to make a decision at that meeting but that they decided not to make any mandates at that time for town businesses and municipal buildings.

There was discussion regarding mask mandates, the schools and the municipal buildings between the Select Board and the Board of Health. Chair Szynal asked the Board of Health to explain to her what the COVID coordinator is doing and how many times a week she checks the MAVEN system. There was discussion about following the metrics. Chair Szynal pointed out to the Board of Health that if the metrics are zero why is a mask mandate ordered for all school buildings? Chair Szynal pointed out that townspeople felt more at ease when Kerry Flaherty was the COVID coordinator and would like to see that reinstated as well as the mask mandate for the schools rescinded. Chair Osley reminded the Select Board that the vaccination rate in elementary school is 0. Chair Osley did point out to the Select Board that there are no funds to pay someone to monitor MAVEN every day. Chair Szynal stated that the Board of Health cannot change their mandate, the school committee can revisit it on Tuesday.

Chief Flaherty spoke to the Board, as the person who is EMT, I ended up with no one contracting COVID. We do not mandate masks. CDC, DESE is recommending masks not mandating them. CDC's guidelines are vaccinated recommending, unvaccinated must mask. Hampshire County is considered low. Chair Szynal stated mandating masks must be made because of metrics - not fear.

Chair Osley further stated that it was an order that the Board of Health put into effect but Chair Szynal said any order should have been made from the numbers, not fear. Chair Szynal asked the Board of Health to have a meeting and reassess their Order and base it on facts and metrics, not how many people showed up at the meeting and give the choice to parents whether their children are masked. Chair Szynal also wants to revisit the COVID coordinator position as she not happy with the COVID coordinator's work and would like to bring Kerry back if she would like to do it. Chair Szynal asked the Board of Health to reconsider the Order and the COVID coordinator position. Chair Osley said the Board will take it under consideration. Chair Szynal said that we need MAVEN to be checked daily.

Selectman Moriarty asked Chair Szynal for permission to address the Board: Selectman Moriarty: I thought it important to address the issue from our last meeting between the Select Board and the Treasurer. It was a heavy discussion during that meeting and thought that townspeople would like to know how it played out. I thought it was important to address our conversation between the Select Board and the Treasurer's office in case townspeople were wondering and wanted to know what the outcome was. Since that meeting, the Town Treasurer, Town accountant, an independent auditor, Town Administrator and I met to discuss the method and procedures for the processing of and accounting for those employees approved for use of town vehicles for commuting and the IRS method of computing taxation of that fringe benefit. It has been worked out and everyone is on board. Ultimately, it is the

process that is the most commonly used by other cities and towns and that the Select Board had suggested first. I also want townspeople to understand that this Board would never, ever do anything inappropriate nor ask any of our employees to do anything that was not right in their duties of their job. That is not who we are as a Board. I was both dismayed and disappointed with some of the comments that were directed at the Select Board from that office. The insinuations towards us are simply not true. And, quite honestly, I took offense to them-hence-my raised voice to those individuals. And here we are, three weeks later, ready to move ahead for our Town and our employees.

Selectman Jaworski made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Selectman Moriarty seconded, all in favor, aye, motion approved, the meeting ended at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully,  
Karen Brodeur  
Executive Assistant