Town of Dunstable Select Board
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

In attendance: Chair Leah Basbanes, Vice Chair Kieran Meehan, Select Board Member Ron Mikol, Town Administrator Jason Silva; Police Chief Erik Hoar; Executive Assistant Sue Fayne

The meeting was called to order at 5 PM by Chair Basbanes.

Charter/Spectrum Franchise Agreement Hearing

The Select Board opened a public hearing on the Charter/Spectrum cable television license renewal. Chair Basbanes read the legal notice for the hearing.

Vice Chair Meehan stated that the agreement was fairly consistent with the previous one, with few changes. He noted that cable companies are facing challenges due to streaming services.

TA Silva explained that the main difference from the last agreement was a longer 10-year term. He stated that the town had been without an agreement for a few years.

Ron Mikol asked about changes to municipal service. TA Silva clarified that only the police station was listed for service.

There was discussion about how many households in town use Charter/Spectrum versus other providers like Verizon. It was estimated that less than 30% of households use Charter/Spectrum.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and **seconded** by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **voted to approve** the cable television renewal license between the Town of Dunstable and Spectrum Northeast, LLC, as presented, for a term of 10 years. **The vote was unanimous.**

Public Comment

Chair Basbanes opened the floor for further public comments not listed on the agenda. With none forthcoming, the discussion moved forward.

Route 113 Speed Limit

Resident Brian Flynn raised concerns about speeding on Route 113, particularly near his property. He had previously contacted the Town about conducting a speed study.

Mr. Flynn discussed data on stopping distances at different speeds and the increased risk of fatalities at higher speeds. He suggested lowering the speed limit could help reduce actual speeds, even if drivers still exceed the limit.

Chair Basbanes expressed concern that lowering the speed limit may not be effective, noting that drivers already exceed the 25 mph limit on her street. She felt enforcement was key but acknowledged the police department's limited resources.

Member Mikol stated the police do regular traffic enforcement and have issued many citations on that stretch of road. Chief Hoar noted the high traffic volume and relatively low number of accidents in that area.

The Board agreed to have the police department place a speed trailer to collect data in that area. They

will review the data at a meeting in 3 weeks and discuss potential next steps.

Appointments to Land Use Committee and Council on Aging

Chair Basbanes informed the board that there were two vacancies to be reviewed - one on the Land Use Committee and the other on the Council on Aging. Candidates were introduced briefly, having expressed interest and willingness to serve.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and **seconded** by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **voted to appoint** Dot Mastakouras to the Land Use Committee for a term to expire on June 30, 2025, and **to appoint** Ron Mayer to the Council on aging, for a term to expire on June 30, 2025. **The vote was unanimous.**
New appointees were advised they need to be sworn in by the Town Clerk.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted as written.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and seconded by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **voted to approve** the meeting minutes from September 24, 2024 and October 8, 2024. **The vote was unanimous.**

Special Town Meeting Warrant

TA Silva presented the draft warrant for the upcoming Special Town Meeting on November 18th. He noted some additions since it was last discussed:

- Articles from the Community Preservation Committee, including funds to update the Open Space and Recreation Plan
- An article for additional funding for the tennis courts at Larter Field due to unexpected excavation costs
- Two citizen petition articles:
    - To require override votes be presented as separate municipal and school ballot questions
    - To require electronic voting at town meetings

The Board discussed potential issues with the citizen petition articles, including lack of cost information for electronic voting and concerns about how the override article would work in practice.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and **seconded** by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **voted to approve** the Special Town Meeting Warrant as presented and to sponsor:

ARTICLE 1 - Unpaid Bills of FY24
ARTICLE 2 – Cell Tower on Water Tank
ARTICLE 3 – High Street Property Conservation Restriction
ARTICLE 4 – Acceptance of Donation of Land – 19 Lowell Street
ARTICLE 5 – Creation of Capital Improvement Program Stabilization Fund

The vote was unanimous.

There was a brief discussion of the potential $20,000 cost plus IT support costs to deploy electronic voting.

Project Agreement on High St. Map 15 Lots 2&3B

TA Silva explained this was for the Kennedy Conservation Restriction project, which had already been

approved. The town will receive $406,870 to support the purchase of the conservation restriction on approximately 29.8 acres.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and **seconded** by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **voted to approve** the Land Acquisition for Natural Diversity Program Project Agreement for acquiring a conservation restriction on approximately 29.8+/- acres located on High Street, Assessors Map 15, Lots 2 and 3B, known as the Kennedy Conservation Restriction, and authorize the Chair to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board. **The vote was unanimous.**

Proclamation of Marion Stoddard Day

The Select Board recognized Marion Stoddard through the observance of October 25, 2024 as Marion Stoddard Day. This entails a day to recognize her contributions and accomplishments , coinciding with an event renaming the Groton Dunstable Middle School South to the Marion Stoddard Middle School.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and **seconded** by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **voted to approve** the proclamation declaring October 25, 2024 Marion Stoddart Day. **The vote was unanimous.**

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated By the Chair

There were no topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair.

Personnel Policy

Sue Fayne presented proposed updates to the town's personnel policy based on work she performed with a team of Town of Dunstable employees. Key changes included:

- Redefining full-time and part-time employee classifications
- Adding language on general conduct and standards
- Clarifying the drug-free workplace policy
- Adding a section on working remotely
- Updating time off policies, including vacation accrual rates
- Changing bereavement leave policy

The Board discussed various aspects of the proposed changes, including:

- Concerns about privacy and reporting structure for medical information
- Clarification needed on pay policies for remote work during emergencies or office closures
- Questions about sick leave buyback policies

Sue mentioned that the team did not put it forward, but potential future considerations based on research done of surrounding municipalities include longevity bonuses and increased life insurance benefits.

The Board agreed to have Sue & TA Silva follow up on some items and bring a revised version back for review at a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue Fayne
Executive Assistant

Approved December 3, 2024