

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPT. 3, 2019
MEETING MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM – 7 P.M.**

Present were Chair Andrea Miles, Clerk Christopher Geraghty, member Sarah Etelman, member Bruce Forcier, and Town Administrator Michael J. Sullivan. Vice Chair Jeff Cyr was absent.

CALL TO ORDER

Miles called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Forcier motioned to approve the minutes of Aug. 20, 2019. Etelman second. All in favor

CONSENT AGENDA

Forcier motioned to approve the consent agenda, which consisted of requests by Nichole McClellan for a One-Day Beer and Wine License and a One-Day All Alcohol License on Sept. 20 and Sept. 27, and a request for a One-Day All Alcohol License from Kim Prough on Oct. 18. Geraghty seconded. All in favor.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Sullivan said the town was approached by the Bike/Walk Committee about adopting remote participation. His office researched other communities that have adopted the practice and surveyed them to see how often it is used. Some have voted not to adopt it, others have adopted it but don't use it after board members realized it cannot assist in constituting quorum, and those who have adopted and use it reported to not have any issues. Sullivan said he consulted with town counsel who said in order for the Town of South Hadley to adopt and carry out the practice properly and legally, a number of rooms in which boards and committees meet would need to be outfitted for video and sound requirements. Counsel also said remote participation cannot count toward a quorum.

Forcier said it's important to see facial expressions of other board members during meetings. He doesn't feel remote participation is a good idea.

Etelman agreed and said she has heard of recent issues where meetings that were supposed to be recorded accidentally weren't. She is concerned adopting remote participation, which affords all boards and committees the ability to participate remotely, puts the town in jeopardy. She also offered a potential scenario where enough board members participate remotely that it affects the ability to call quorum and the meeting cannot take place.

Miles said she was concerned with privacy during an executive session., and how a person participating remotely could prove no one else was in a room with them or able to overhear the executive session. She said this request does not appear to be an emergency.

Miles asked for Sullivan to explore a cost analysis if the town were to adopt remote participation. The Selectboard agreed to add the issue of remote participation to a future agenda after some research is done.

COMMUNITY COMPACT

The five-year Community Compact Agreement is up. For the next round, communities are asked to select three categories on which to focus. Previously, South Hadley applied for and received a grant to update its permitting system to ViewPoint Cloud. Choosing three categories on which to focus doesn't prevent the town from applying to other categories should a need arise.

Applications are accepted throughout the year, however, there are certain deadlines to follow. Sullivan said he hopes the public offers the Selectboard ideas for areas in which they'd like to see investment. Categories can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-compact-best-practice-areas>

DPW SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROCESS

Like the former police chief search, the search for a DPW superintendent is a town administrator appointment with ratification from the Selectboard. Sullivan said this is an incredibly critical position. A three-person panel will lead candidate interviews. Deputy Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz and Police Chief Jennifer Gundersen will make up two-thirds of the panel. The third panel member is to be determined.

Sullivan said the key qualities needed are someone who had good managerial skills and great communication skills. Etelman said those two key qualities aren't in the job description and should be added.

Sullivan said he has instituted a weekly meeting with Reidy to discuss the DPW's most pressing issues and current projects. Reidy's last day is Sept. 30.

Sullivan also said the town is looking at various ways to address tree warden services, whether it be regionally, as a contract, purchased service or remain a part-time position.

MAIN STREET PUMP STATION PROJECT

In late August, the town was in the process of upgrading a system at the Waste Water Treatment Plant that was not working properly when a failure occurred at a bypass pump while a contractor was performing the upgrade. The pump station catch basin began to fill to the point where the system was about to send effluent into public and private property. To prevent this, the WWTP notified MassDEP and turned on a valve to have the effluent escape into the Connecticut River. Communities down river were notified and staff went to the local boat ramp to let fisherman know right away.

"Nobody wanted 284,000 gallons of effluent to go into the river," said Sullivan, who called the situation unfortunate and something the town did not take lightly. He said he it is too early to tell if potential fines from DEP for releasing effluent into the Connecticut River can be recovered from the contractor or the contractor's bond. "I can assure you we will pursue everything," he said, adding the town was doing the right thing – upgrading a system working poorly. The upgrade is a half-million-dollar investment for which the town received a federal grant.

Sullivan noted the town separated its water and sanitary sewer system and weather outflows to the river in 2006 or 2008 - far before other surrounding communities. These other communities are still releasing contaminants into the Connecticut River during wet weather events. Some agricultural land in upstream communities is still leaching contaminants into the river from when other types of pesticides were used on the land. He called the situation unfortunate and told the Selectboard, "You were making the investment the right way to protect that river and that shouldn't be forgotten in the conversation."

Miles said the situation could have been much worse.

TA REPORT

DRAFT FALLS URBAN REDEVELOPMENT & RENEWAL PLAN

There will be a public hearing before the Selectboard on Sept. 17 to discuss the draft South Hadley Falls Urban Redevelopment and Renewal Plan. It is part of the required public information campaign leading up to the Nov. 20 Special Town Meeting to discuss the plan. Sullivan noted it is currently a draft plan which needs to follow a certain process. Nothing from the plan is in the works – the Selectboard is not about to take particular buildings and tear them down via eminent domain. He encouraged the public to attend the Sept. 17 hearing.

PVTA VANS

Forcier said he saw the PVTA van that was given to the town. It was in the process of being stripped of decals. Sullivan said the inside is amazing. He is impressed with the van's condition and the maintenance service schedule it received. The van fits 18. Sullivan said if the town would like another, PVTA is willing to give another for free.

FOOD DRIVE KUDOS

Etelman thanked Sullivan and Maher for their efforts in holding the Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation food drive in town hall throughout August. She congratulated the admin duo, town hall staff and residents who contributed. A total of 435 pounds of food were collected for the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Pantry.

ADJOURN

Forcier motioned to adjourn. Etelman seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.