

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD  
MINUTES

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 15, 2022  
Time: 9:30am  
Place: In-person and Zoom Meeting  
Egremont

Present in-person were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

The Board voted unanimously in roll call vote to go into executive session as allowed by MGL Chapter 30, Section 21, Paragraph 2 for strategy with respect to employment contract strategy. The Board will hold open session following executive session.

Executive Session ended at 9:59am and open session began at 10am.

Others present: In person: Council on Aging member Georgette Kinney and Administrative Assistant Peg Muskrat and ARPA Administrator Peg McDonough. Via zoom: Mary McGurn, Taylor Mellspaugh, Marj Wexler, Fred Gordon, Rich Edwards, Dough Mishkin, Adam Chait, Mark Shane, Rolfe Tessem, James DiPisa, Judith Goodman, Marion Faytell, Rebecca Turner, Ronnie Sacco, Neal Goff, Andy Weiss and Liz Keen.

MINUTES:

The Board voted unanimously to accept the February 17, February 23, March 1 and March 3, 2002 minutes with minor edits.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

At 10:08 am the pole location hearing was called to order. Fiber Connect has requested permission to place poles on Greenwood Circle and Rowe Road in order to facilitate the build out of fiber for Broadband. No abutters were present. The Board voted unanimously to approve the requests as submitted. Hearing closed at 10:10am.

Technology Committee member Rolfe Tessem updated the Board on the issues involved in the build out of fiber for Broadband on Brookvale and Hilltop Roads in the Jug End Reservation. The MBI agreement with Fiber Connect requires that the build out pass 96% of homes in Egremont, while the operations agreement with the Town requires the build out pass 100% of homes. There is no easy means of obtaining easements through state owned land. Cost for necessary surveys are expensive, as is the cost to either put in overhead lines or underground lines. The Homeowners Association is agreeable to paying additional fees for build out. After some back and forth between Fiber Connect and homeowners in the development it was suggested that the parties hold a meeting of their own as the Town has no jurisdiction.

School Committee member James DiPisa updated the Board on Southern Berkshire Regional School District business. The School budget is still being finalized. There is no transportation contract in place and none of the employee unions have settled agreements. There is some feeling that the Regional School District Planning Board serves no purpose for SBRSD. The mask wearing mandate has been lifted so that masks are now optional. COVID pool testing is still taking place for those involved in extra-curricular activities. A bus is being considered to allow students at the South Egremont School to

attend extra-curricular activities at the main campus. There is a desire to have first grade students back at South Egremont if enrollment allows. The district is partnering with Bard College for early college classes. Internships are being sought for students to participate in vocational education. There will be 45 seniors graduating at Tanglewood this year. Chairman McGurn praised the district for the unique program through Bard College.

#### TOWN OFFICIALS:

Historical Commission Chair Rebecca Turner asked that the Board include on its next agenda a discussion about the demolition of the remaining buildings in the Jug End Reservation and the possibility of the Town having a park in the former Guilder House garden under the Department of Conservation & Recreation Stewardship. The Board agreed to do so.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

The Board voted unanimously to hold the Annual Town Meeting on May 3, 2022 at Catamount Ski Resort, though Chairman McGurn expressed his fondness for the meetings held at French Park. The fee being charged by Catamount Ski Resort is \$200. SBRSD would be charging approximately \$360 for the use of the schools auditorium.

Green Committee member Marj Wexler introduced Taylor Mellspaugh of CMRK, Inc.. Marj recommended to the Board that the Town switch its clothing collection program from the current vendor who only takes clothes and shoes to CMRK as they take all textiles and household items and will pay the town \$.07 per pound. CMRK will not take rugs or mattresses. CMRK partners with Big Brother/Big Sister and can also do household pick ups. The Board voted unanimously by roll call vote to enter into a memorandum of understanding with CMRK.

Housing Committee Chairman Fred Gordon spoke about the draft request for proposal for affordable or “work force” housing on the Town Hall parcel. There was some concern that the RFP did not give details and developers would not know what to propose. The RFP will be sent to Town Counsel for review before being finalized.

The Board agreed to send a letter to several state officials advocating for increased school aid in the FY 23 state budget.

The Board voted unanimously to appoint Richard Burdsall as an associate member to the Historical Commission.

Bylaw Review Committee Chair Mary McGurn presented the Committee’s proposed general bylaw requiring that abutting property owners remove snow & ice from sidewalks abutting their property within 24 hours or be fined \$10 as allowed by statute. The Board voted unanimously to place on the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

The Board approved the request of the Librarian to use 32 hours of compensatory time she accumulated removing the books from the Library for the structural repairs to begin. The comp time will be used on her non-Library open hours so as not to cost the town any funds in paying for a substitute Librarian. There may be some additional comp hours when the Library can move back in.

The Board voted unanimously to add Egremont to the online expression of support for the Drought and Invasive Species bills before the state legislature.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Council on Aging member Georgette Kinney and COA Administrative Assistant Peg Muskrat presented more details regarding a recognition plaque to be placed in Town Hall, the cost of which is about \$2500. The COA will present COA members names to the Selectboard to be added to the plaque but feels they should not be involved in presenting names of other officials or residents.

At 11:40am Selectboard Vice-Chair Lucinda Vermeulen left the meeting.

Georgette continued with details and costs for 10 trees to be planted that would have plaques on them to honor people. The trees, planted are \$4500. Also two 6' benches at a cost of about \$1400. The Kiosks for the Be Seen Be Safe vest will be built by Greenagers and there will be no cost. The Council has obtained pledges for donations and has almost \$12,000 in their donations account so there will be no need for funding from the Town.

Agricultural Commission Chair Liz Keen proposed that a budget item in the amount of \$5,212 to complete and maintain the Pollinator Garden at French Park for the coming year. About half of that would be one time costs and will help to lower maintenance costs going forward. Also the Agricultural Commission would like to increase their expense budget from \$500 to \$800.

Dog Park Committee Chair Ronnie Sacco reported that the Committee is working well together and moving forward. The banking account for donations to pay for the dog waste removal is being transferred, verbage for new signage is being finalized, the Committee is considering selling t-shirts, and the registration page is under design.

#### GRANTS:

##### One Stop For Growth:

ARPA Administrator Peg McDonough reported that the Town received positive feedback for 4 of its 5 expressions of interest to the One Stop for Growth Program. Three are all in the community capacity building program. The strategic plan for the Fire Department received a negative response. There is at least a couple of months before the actual grant applications need to be submitted.

##### American Rescue Program Act:

Peg McDonough reported that there have been no further details on the request from Construct for ARPA funds. Funds to add CivicOptimize to the Webpage build in the amount of \$8,798 were approved. The Optimize program will digitize all applications and forms and allow automatic distribution and other processes saving staff time in doing this work by hand. The program is highly efficient, user friendly, self administered, and will be infinitely helpful to not only town officials but to the public. There is an annual fee of approximately \$7,875. It was agreed that the Chatbot option for the webpage did not garner enthusiasm from the web page team.

##### Municipal Fiber Grant:

Peg McDonough reported that the application is now open and the filing deadline is about a month away. She is still confirming if the Public Wi-Fi in the villages is eligible under this grant program. It is clear that digitization of town records is and that broadband at the Water Plant is also eligible, though the Water Plant broadband is also ARPA eligible and only \$1,000.

#### SELECTMEN ITEMS:

The Board will meet jointly with the Finance Committee on March 21 at 1:30 and the Board's next regular meeting will March 29 at 10:00am.

Meeting adjourned at 12:22pm.

Mary Brazie,  
Office Administrator

minutes.22/mar15

*The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.*