

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: March 29, 2022
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting & Town Hall
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Selectboard members Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, also present . Others present via zoom: Rolfe Tessem, Peg McDonough, Stephanie James, James DiPisa, Mary McGurn, Elisabeth Wood, Oskar Hallig, Richard Burdsall, Pat, Barbara Kalish, Juliette Haas, Rebecca Turner.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the March 9, 15 and 21 meetings were accepted with minor edits.

NEW BUSINESS:

Oskar Hallig expressed his interest in serving on the Cultural Council and gave the Board a short biography. The Board voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Hallig to the Alford-Egremont Cultural Council.

Historical Commission Chair Rebecca Turner has asked Mass Dept of Conservation & Recreation to consider allowing the Town, through the historic curatorship program, to make a park of the Guilder House former garden area. Mary McGurn share on screen photos she has taken of the Guilder House Farm Complex over the years showing it major deterioration which has led to the State's notification of demolition. The photos show the wonderful stone work that is still present, though some areas are in need of repair. The Board fully endorsed the request and supports the Historical Commission. The Egremont Land Trust may lend its support. Any financial considerations will have to come before the Selectboard.

The almost 6.2 acre parcel of land being designated for affordable housing cannot be split off through the Form A process as there is not adequate frontage. A Form A requires 150' of frontage on a public way. The parcel only has about 101' of frontage.

Board of Health Director Juliette Haas reported that effective November 1, 2022 mattresses will be banned from the waste stream and will have to be recycled. The Town can either stop accepting them or set up a mattress collection and recycling program. A container, which holds about 40 mattresses costs \$6,000 and could be paid for out recycling dividend program (RDP) funds. The hauling and disposal charge would be about \$3,000 for a one time haul as the Town would likely only fill the container once a year. The town collected 37 mattresses last year. The Board was split on whether to stop accepting mattresses or set up a collection program. This will be discussed further.

Juliette Haas also reported that if the town subsidizes the costs of Compost Bins by only charging \$25 for a bin that cost the Town \$55 it will get 2 more RDP funds and an additional \$700 on top the \$3,850 the Town receives annually. The bins are made out of 100% recycled material, can be paid for out of the RDP funds the town has accumulated and are NOT bear proof. The Town has to advertise the program. The Board voted 2 in favor, Chairman McGurn abstaining to move forward with this proposal.

Juliette Haas, as Town Clerk, proposed the replacement of the meeting room chairs with padded, folding chairs that are easier to move to make it easier to set up for Town elections. Chairman McGurn asked why the traditional use of the Fire House for elections was being abandoned. During the pandemic elections were held at Town Hall because the Fire Department closed its building to other uses. Vice-Chairman Vermeulen suggested moving the election back to the North Egremont Fire Station. Juliette Haas said that the state required a certain number of days notification in a change to election sites, and that changing also confused voters. Juliette also contended that holding the election at Town Hall was easier for her and, as people had to park at Town Hall to walk to the Fire Station, was also safer and more convenient for voters, though she does understand the disruption to regular business at Town hall. Selectboard member Brazie wondered if the Fire Department would allow it. Juliette will contact both the State and the Fire Chief.

The Human Resources Committee has recommended an across the Board wage increase for most employees of 4.2%. It was noted that the Unions are getting 3.9% but they also get additional pay as a part of the Union agreements. Vice-Chairman Vermeulen noted the tremendous work that goes into this. She is not in favor of across the board increases that do not take into effect performance reviews. She also asked that in future years the Selectboard take a more active role in this. She moved to approve the recommendations. Selectboard member Brazie recused. The Board approved the recommended wage increases by a vote of 2 in favor, one recusal.

The Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Carla Turner to another one-year term as the Inspector of Animals.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Board voted unanimously to authorize the Council on Aging to purchase and plant 10 trees in various locations on Town property.

Vice-Chairman Vermeulen reported that the French Park Dog Park web page has been uploaded with the active registration link. The Committee is still working on the appropriate verbiage for the signs. Enforcement will be enacted through peer pressure. The Committee members are cooperative, sophisticated and appreciative. Chairman McGurn stressed that the Committee has not “taken over” management of the Dog Park as the Selectboard did not delegate its duties and responsibilities. The Committee was formed to work with and advise the Selectboard.

GRANTS:

Peg McDonough reported that the Community Health Inclusion grant work is moving forward with the Committee gathering information on access to Prospect Lake through the Department of Conservation & Recreation and at the “gap”. Information has been obtained regarding the ownership of the “gap” area, a meeting has been held with Department of Conservation & Recreation officials with nothing conclusive being determined. The Committee wishes to hire a surveyor with part of the \$10,000 received. Legal Counsel has been asked to review the information regarding the ownership of the “gap”. The Committee will work to come up with a plan for improved access to the Lake.

The Board discussed a request for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to help defray the costs of the survey needed at Brookvale and Hilltop Roads in South Egremont. As no concrete details are available at this time, it was voted unanimously to not approve the request at this time.

A grant application through the Municipal Fiber Grant Program is being drafted to cover the costs of Wi-fi hotspots in the villages on town owned property, digitization of old town records and broadband to the Water Plant and security cameras. It is possible that the issue of broadband to

Brookvale and Hilltop Road might also be covered under this grant program. More details will be given at the next meeting.

Short recess 11:37 to 11:40am.

Details are still being sought on the Forest Stewardship Grant Program for French Park.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS:

The Board will meet jointly to continue budget review with the Finance Committee tomorrow.

The next regular meeting of the Selectboard will be April 12 at 10am.

Adjournment took place at 11:43am

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.22/mar29

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.