

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES

Date: July 25, 2023
Time: 10:00 AM
Place: Via Zoom Meeting & Town Hall
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Selectboard Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, Moderator Steve Cohen, Dave Katzenstein, and for part of the meeting Tom Sierau, Janet Swain, Randy Shaw and James Noe.

Present via zoom were Mary McGurn, Eileen Vining, Ben Barrett, Juliette Haas, Doug Mishkin, Joyce Frater, Peg McDonough, Rebecca Turner, Dan Blitzer, Donna Birsch-Gordon, Mercedes Santana, Bob, Chuck Ogden, Frances Nester, Miriam Curnin, Mark Roggen, Elizabeth Wood, Amy Edelman, Brian McGowan, and Susan Bachelder.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the June 27, July 6 and July 11 meetings were accepted with minor edits.

CITIZEN'S TIME:

Dave Katzenstein asked the Board to place on a future agenda consideration of a noise ordinance and regulations for short-term rentals. He explained that he and others who live next to short-term rentals are finding that places are being rented to large groups who are very noisy and are noisy late at night. The Board will place these two issues on the agenda for the August 8 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

The issue over appointees to the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee is irrelevant as the Committee held its last meeting earlier in the week.

There is currently 1 vacancy on the Agricultural Commission, 3 on the Historical Commission and 1 on the Finance Committee. Legal Counsel has said that the Housing Trust Board can be appointed prior to the Attorney General approval. Office Administrator Brazie will draft a notice for the Board's review to send out seeking applicants. Chairman McGurn noted that the Housing Trust Board needed to be carefully vetted.

Mary McGurn has filed a disclosure as required by MGL Chapter 268A, Section 20 declaring that she holds two appointed, paid positions with the Town. The Board, by a vote of 2 in favor and Chairman McGurn recusing, accepted the disclosure, agreed to allow it and will have it filed in the Town Clerk's office.

Chairman McGurn reported that 20 of 24 members of the Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB) voted, 16 in favor, 2 no, 1 abstention and 1 present, on July 18 to merge the Berkshire Hills and Southern Berkshire Regional School Districts and voted on a draft agreement. The issue was not on the agenda for the RSDPB meeting. Once RSDPB gives the 8 town's the official recommendation and agreement, the Towns be required to hold Town Meetings in 30 days. Moderator Steve Cohen will be out of town from mid October to late November. The Chair of the RSDPB has asked if the towns could all get together for a meeting in August. The Board felt this would be a fairly

difficult task to accomplish and also would be a hard meeting to control.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Board discussed the request of Karin Schaeffer, 190 Egremont Plain Road, to make renovations to the building which is the former North Egremont School House and has a preservation restriction placed by the town. The building stopped functioning as a school in the 1980's and was sold in the late 80's by the Town. The preservation restriction placed on the property in 1992, requires the Selectboard to approve any work on the exterior of the building.

Selectboard member Mary Brazie said the Town had received some emails, attached, asking the Selectboard not to approve the suggested renovations, citing historical integrity. Mary Brazie made a motion to approve restoration of existing windows and relocation of other renovated and relocated windows, repair the chimney and make no alteration to the vestibule, in the interest of historical integrity. There was no second to this motion.

Selectboard member Lucinda Vermeulen made a motion to allow the renovations to the building by the new owner of 190 Egremont Plain Road. Chairman George McGurn seconded the motion. In the discussion following, Mary Brazie was asked if she reflected on her opinion, and she said no. Lucinda Vermeulen stated that updating the property with these changes would ensure its relevance in the 21st century and beyond, George McGurn reminded the Board and those present that the vestibule is not original to the building and due to no foundation is threatening the stability of the primary building. Lucinda Vermeulen further moved to approve plans submitted by the new owner to the historical preservation whenever possible. Chairman McGurn seconded that motion. Roll call vote as 2 in favor, 1 opposed (Brazie no, Vermeulen yes, McGurn yes).

Rebecca Turner, Chair of the Egremont Historical Commission, sent a letter to the Board with a recommendation that the addition to the vestibule not be approved in order to maintain the historic integrity of the building (letter attached).

It was noted that the highway employee who requested one week of vacation be compensated for has now filed a grievance which will be taken up on August 8.

There were no interdepartmental transfers to be approved.

Office Administrator Brazie drafted a new Section 12.1 USER FEE of the Mount Washington Fire Services Agreement for review. Finance Committee Chair Laura Allen is working with the Fire Department to come up with an equitable charge for travel time and wear and tear. Based on total town value Mount Washington would be assessed about 13% of the town's fire department costs, including depreciation of equipment. It was noted that of Egremont's total land almost 13% is exempt land while in Mount Washington exempt land is almost 28%.

GRANTS:

The Town has received official notification that it was not awarded a grant to repair the Prospect Lake dam. Chairman McGurn reported that he has already been in contact with officials to let them know there is further damage to the dam due to the recent heavy rains. The grant application can be revisited on the next round, the deadline for which is less than a year away. Peg McDonough is going to follow up to get feedback on how to improve the next application.

Grant Administrator Peg McDonough is meeting with Tighe & Bond to work on applying for an Asset Management grant for the Water Department.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS:

The next board meeting will be August 8 at 10:00am.

It was announced the Town has received an unanticipated but very welcome notification that the state will be resurfacing Route 71 under the Municipal Pavement Program which pays for resurfacing of numbered routes that are town maintained. James Noe was thanked, and congratulated, for his work in obtaining that great news. The scope is limited primarily to pavement resurfacing, but he will ask when he meets with the group in August about some drainage and guardrail work that is needed, as well as whether bike lanes will be planned into the project. The total milage in Egremont is about 3 miles. The work will be completed during FY 24.

Meeting adjourned at 11:29am.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.24/jul25

*The recording of the minutes is posted on the Town's web page at www.egremont-ma.gov for 90 days.
Any attachments noted are on file at Town Hall.*