

Office of
SELECTMEN
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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2023
MEETING MINUTES
FRANCIS FARM - FRANCIS HALL - 27 FRANCIS FARM ROAD**

Present: Selectman Frederick "Skip" Vadnais, Jr., Selectman Leonard Mills, Jr., Selectman George Solas, Sr., Selectman Robert Johnson II and Assistant to the Selectmen Marisa Medeiros

Absent: Selectman Michael P. Deignan

At 6:04 PM the Board voted to enter into Executive Session *pursuant to MGL CHAPTER 30A, §21 (a) (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; (7) to review and approve Executive Session Minutes: 10/30/2023*

Call to Order at 7:10 PM: The meeting opened with the Board and the public participating in the pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Selectman George Solas requested a moment of silence in memory of Officer Gary McKearney, who served as a patrolman in Rehoboth in '70's and 80's.

Consent Agenda

Warrant:

G. Solas- motion to ratify the Warrant for the week of November 13, 2023 and November 20, 2023. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0

Warrant week for of November 13, 2023: 24-20B Payroll \$172,644.21; 24-19A Withholdings \$41,805.86; 24-19 Warrant \$337,580.50. (Not read)

Warrant for week of November 20, 2023: 24-21B Payroll \$164,953.71; 24-20A Withholdings \$161,174.41; 24-20 Warrant \$5,482,404.77; 24-20R Refund Warrant \$35,259.72; 24-20R1 Refund Warrant \$2,122.41. (Not Read)

G. Solas- motion to approve the Warrant for the week of November 27, 2023: 24-22B Payroll \$127,533.98; 24-21A Withholdings \$42,961.37; 24-21 Warrant \$108,166.16; 24-21V Veterans Warrant \$5,425.24. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Minutes: Regular Minutes: 10/23/2023

On a motion made by Selectman G. Solas and seconded by Selectman R. Jonnson, the Regular Minutes for October 30, 2023 were approved. Vote 4-0.

Executive Minutes for 10/30/2023 were approved and held in Executive Session.

Announcements:

The next scheduled meeting will be held on Monday, December 4, 2023, 7:00 PM at Francis Farm, in the Francis Hall Building.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

License renewals have been sent out. Thank you to those who have already sent them back to the BOS office.

NEW BUSINESS:

Action Item (1): Smoking Policy with the Board of HHS Chair, with possible action

Discussion with the Health & Human Services Chair Dr. Lamb, Dr. Panofsky and Dr. Thayer.

Dr. Lambe summarized the HHS advice, to the Board of Selectmen, that they discussed at the Health & Human Services meeting in October: "The Board of HHS advises the Board of Selectmen to adopt a non-smoking policy for all town buildings and campuses"

Dr. Thayer spoke of his experience strongly recommends a non-smoking policy.

Dr. Panofsky asked if the Selectmen would like to move forward, because the HHS Board has not, yet, flushed out a policy – there are couple of concerns, including enforcement and who would enforce the policy. The HHS is not sure to the degree such a ban can be imposed, and legal counsel/expert advice is needed to answer the questions and concerns of the HHS Board.

Chairman Vadnais clarified the question of the Selectmen supporting the HHS Board to attempt to write a strict and stringent policy, as the law allows on public properties; if there's a consensus, the HHS Board will continue to find answers to the Francis Farm Complex being public property and what can or cannot be regulated and, how to regulate it. That would require the HHS Board to have access to Town Counsel by first forwarding questions to the Town Administrator.

R. Johnson supports the idea of a policy – G. Solas would strongly like to see a town smoking policy – L. Mills is in favor of the policy and suggests keeping employees in mind when considering the policy.

Selectman Vadnais' recommendation is to make the policy as stringent as the law would allow, taking into consideration that there are people that are smokers, employees and contractors who smoke.

S. Vadnais requested a motion to vote in favor of directing the Board of Health & Human Services to flush out a policy for the Board of Selectmen's consideration. L. Mills- so moved. Second by G. Solas. Vote 4-0.

Action Item (2): Updates to the Personnel Policy with the Personnel Board Chair, with possible action

Chairman of the Personnel Board Richard Panofsky present to review and answer questions from the Board in regards to proposed procedural personnel policies.

G. Solas- motion to approve the proposed Personnel Policies 2, 3, 4 and 5, as submitted by the Personnel Board, to be reviewed by Town Counsel. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Discussion:

The Chair will provide a copy of the policies to Atty Kate Feodoroff for review, prior to scheduling a public hearing.

Action Item (3) Vote to Approve the Cannabis Social Equity Policy

The Chair recommends inviting general counsel attend a meeting to answer questions and provide guidance on the subject.

Action item 3 tabled because there's not enough information.

R. Johnson- motion to table Action Item 3. Second by G. Solas. Vote 4-0.

Discussion:

Selectman Solas volunteered to spearhead and be Town Counsel's contact. Selectman Vadnais will contact Town Counsel to follow up with G. Solas, who will then bring back information to the Board.

Selectman Mills requested a copy of the Social Equity Policy be sent to the Town Planner and the Chair of the Planning Board Patrick Landry.

Action Item (4) Vote Correction to New Hire Joseph Reis' Hiring Status from 10/30/23 Meeting

G. Solas- vote to correct the motion made at the October 30th meeting for Joseph Reis and replace with: "motion to approve new hire Joseph Reis as a Dispatcher for the Police Dept, effective 10/30/23". Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Action Item (5) Vote to Approve Wilcox and Barton Task Order #6 -PWS (Public Water Supply) for Town Hall, Fire Dept and COA

G. Solas- motion to approve and sign Task Order #6 for Wilcox and Barton for the continued work on the Public Water System design. Second by L. Mills. Vote 4-0.

Action Item (6) Vote to Approve 3rd Quarter Franchise Fees (PEG) Cable \$57,201.27

G. Solas- motion to accept the third quarter franchise fee distribution, of \$57,201.27, and authorize the Treasurer to deposit the funds in the appropriate account. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Selectman Solas explained that this is money that Comcast sends the Town, on a quarterly basis, for all the subscribers they have. The Town gets a certain percentage back in four equal installments.

Action Item (7) Vote to Approve Reserve Fund Transfer of \$12,200 for the Planning Board for Fuss & O'Neil Services

The Interim Finance Director is requesting a RFT of \$12,200 to be deposited into account # 011753-53000, Planning Board budget, to pay Fuss & O'Neil to complete the required stormwater filing; this is necessary in order to file the 4M, in accordance to the requirements set by MassDEP.

G. Solas- motion to approve the reserve fund transfer of \$12,200 into the Planning Board account 011753-53000, to pay for services needed from Fuss & O'Neil in completing the 4M Stormwater reporting. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Action Item (8) Vote to Approve Fundraising Request from the Historical Commission for Shady Bend Renovations

The Historical Commission requested permission to fundraise for the renovations at Shady Bend (purchase from May 2023 Town Meeting). Town Counsel has approved and they can move forward with the fundraising. Accounting will set up a separate account for the funds to be deposited when checks/cash are submitted to the Treasurer's office by a member of the Historical Commission.

Artie Pierce, Chairman of the Historical Commission, is looking for ways to fundraise outside of the town; broaden fundraising efforts to Rhode Island and others to fundraise for the Historical Commission and looking beyond Shady Bend and fundraise for the Historical Commission in general.

Chairman Vadnais suggested tabling the action and revisiting it after R. Johnson or the Town Administrator speaks with Town Counsel to see if a motion can be made in an expanded way, and to be able to cover other projects or, if it has to be project specific.

G. Solas- motion to table Action Item 8. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Action Item (9) Discussion RE: Hay Wagons with AgCom Chair, with possible action

Agricultural Commission Chair Tish Vadnais and Historical Commission Chair Artie Pierce would like to hold on to the Francis Farm hay wagons, which the town currently owns - The two groups would like to keep and maintain these wagons and, both agree the wagons have value to the Town - the Agricultural & Historical Commissions have both voted and would like the Board to allow them to keep the wagons.

The Board voted to accept the Historical and Agricultural Commissions proposal to keep the wagons. All Board members agreed. Vote 4-0.

Selectmen's Reports:

Johnson: An update on 172 Summer St- most everything has been taken out- there's just a stock pile of tires; Conservation and BOH have been out and everything looks great.

Solas: Invite the COA- anyone who knows of a family member or friends that may need services from the COA is welcome. GATRA will pick up and drop off at the COA. Always think about the COA for people you know can enjoy it.

Mills: Invite to the residents to drive by Town Hall and see the new lighting. Hope residents are happy with them. Between Town Hall outdoor lighting, the Police & Fire Departments signage and lighting, the area is being revitalized! Still waiting for a sign that's on order for the Town Hall and a sign for the Fire Station.

A serious problem has developed at the corner of Peck and Anawan St. Problem has been identified as dangerous, where there's a body of water and the road is giving way. The root cause is that the retaining walls that were put there is failing- repairs will begin to rectify the situation.

Training for the Police Department and, if the Board agrees, it would be interesting to have Police come before the Board to discuss what the training was about. Per Chairman Vadnais, it should be added as a top agenda item for the next meeting.

Deignan: Absent.

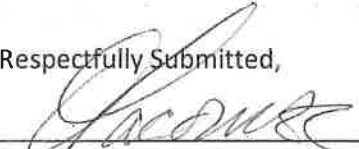
Vadnais: Together with Selectman Mills, working on negotiating contracts- 2 police contracts and 1 dispatcher's contract. Also, still working with ambulance committee trying to resolve the issues they are having in continuing their service to the Town.

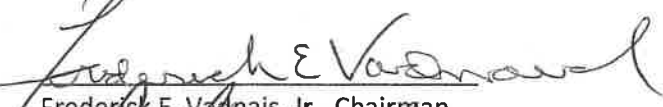
Other Business:

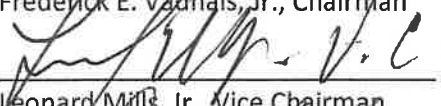
ADJOURNMENT:

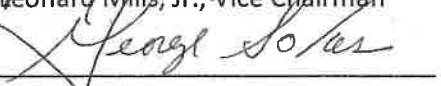
Selectman L. Mills- motion to adjourn the Regular Session at 8:00 PM. Second by Selectman G. Solas. Vote 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



Odete Lacourse


Frederick E. Vadnais, Jr., Chairman


Leonard Mills, Jr., Vice Chairman


George M. Solas, Sr., Clerk

Absent
Michael P. Deignan, Member


Robert Johnson II, Member

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Approve: 12/11/2023