



Town of Swampscott Select Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 17, 2021
Swampscott High School – Room B129 / Virtual

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Polly Titcomb (Chair), Neal Duffy, David Grishman, Peter Spellios

MEMBERS ABSENT

Don Hause

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Neal Sheehan, Tasia Vasiliou, Lara Goodman

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Allie Fiske, Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives; Interim Police Chief David Kurz; Gino Cresta, DPW Commissioner & Asst. Town Administrator; Marzie Galazka, Director of Community & Economic Development; Patrick Luddy, Treasurer/Collector; Ben Straight, Town Assessor; Molly O’Connell, Senior Planner; Amy Sarro, Director of Finance and Administration

The meeting was called to order to 6:06 PM

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marblehead resident Mary Elizabeth Reddish spoke in regards to weekly protests occurring in Swampscott.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

- COVID-19 Update
- Solid Waste Contract
- Senior Center Update
- Solid Waste Contract

Chairperson Titcomb confirmed that the language as voted in the Select Board meeting on 11/17/21 is included in the final contract.

UPDATE ON SEARCH FOR POLICE CHIEF

Interim Police Chief David Kurz described the process that the Town will engage in for the search for a new Police Chief, which started with 3 meetings that provided the Chief with an opportunity to gain insight from the community. Chief Kurz also provided an update on the new process for hiring officers which is additionally underway with the Fire Department.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR SEARCH

The Board of Trustees and Town Administrator will be working with a company to do a search for Library Director which will commence after Thanksgiving.

UPDATE ON I/I

Dave Peterson from Kleinfelder walked through a recommended policy for the Infiltration & Inflow (I/I) Offset Program. Infiltration is unwanted groundwater that enters the sewer system through cracks and structural defects in the system. Inflow is unwanted rainwater that enters the sewer system through roof leaders, sump pumps, driveway drains, etc. I/I negatively affects available sewer capacity, costs for treatment, and can affect water quality at the beaches. 51% of pipes in Swampscott are older than 90 years old.

In Swampscott, 58% of base flow is estimated to be infiltration and inflow which is significantly higher than other communities. Dave Peterson described an underdrain system in Swampscott which can be partially why our percentage is so high.

Removing I/I will alleviate capacity issues, address critical age and poor conditions, reduce cost, and is required by Mass Regulation. Offset policy objectives would include supporting revenue for projects that would mitigate I/I, adhere to best practices and regulatory obligations, and elevate the Town's commitment to manage I/I and environmental best practices. Dave Peterson outlined several policy options and made a recommendation that the Select Board adopt Method #3. The policy will need to be approved by the Select Board.

Sean Fitzgerald clarified that any fees taken in as part of this method would go into a dedicated fund for I/I mitigation.

TAX RATE RECAP

The Board of Assessors called their portion of the meeting order at 8:12 PM

Town Assessor Ben Straight provided a presentation on the Tax Rate Recap demonstrating the growth in values in various properties. Treasurer/Collector Patrick Luddy reviewed various factors that play into the tax rate including appropriations and state charges. He then reviewed revenue including state aid and local receipts. Mr. Luddy reviewed what the tax rate would be under different scenarios shifting the tax rate.

Mr. Straight reviewed the excess levy capacity, which is the difference between the max property tax revenue a community is legally permitted to bill. By utilizing \$1.55 million in free cash, the average single family tax bill would be \$9,078.

Mr. Straight then reviewed the Residential Exemption Option which may be granted exempting up to 35% of owner-occupied residential properties by shifting a higher tax burden on non owner-occupied and higher-valued residential properties. He also reviewed the small commercial exemption of up to 10% of value allowed on commercial properties to properties that meet certain criteria.

The Board of Assessors was in attendance for this joint meeting and discussed the discrepancy between assessed values and home price sales. There was also a discussion about the different silos worked in by planning, zoning, and BOA. Chairperson Titcomb discussed the potential of doing a financial summit with Board of Assessors in the future with the Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Affordable Housing Trust.

On Board of Assessors **MOTION** (Sheehan) and **SECONDED** (Vasiliou) it was **VOTED** to adjourn the Board of Assessors portion of the meeting.

PRECINCT MAP UPDATE

Senior Planner Molly O'Connell provided a recap of the process to re-precinct the municipality. Since the October meeting, the changes included evening out the population distribution, ensuring each precinct has a high voting area, and ensuring Town Meeting representation.

On **MOTION** (Spellios) and **SECONDED** (Duffy) it was **VOTED** to approve the modified map. All in favor.

FALL SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

Due to the incomplete nature of the warrant, the Select Board suggested that it not be closed on November 17. The Select Board stepped through the warrant to discuss each article.

ARTICLE 2 – Approve Funding – Pedestrian Safety Infrastructure: The Town Administrator will gather more pedestrian safety information. The Select Board also confirmed that this expense should be bonded.

ARTICLE 3 – Approve Transfer of Free Cash – Collective Bargaining Agreements: There will be more information for Town Meeting

ARTICLE 5 – Appropriation from Transportation Infrastructure Enhancement Fund: On **MOTION** (Grishman) and **SECONDED** (Duffy) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action on this Article.

ARTICLE 8 – Establish a Solid Waste Enterprise Fund: This article will create the structure of the enterprise fund but it will not be funded until next fiscal year. The staff needs to be prepared at Town Meeting to be able to explain how this will be funded. There was a discussion regarding potentially delaying the article until the Spring Town Meeting. Town Administrator Fitzgerald will prepare more information for further discussion at the next Select Board Meeting.

ARTICLE 9, 10, 11 - Select Board Name Changes: On **MOTION** (Spellios) and **SECONDED** (Grishman) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action on Articles 9, 10, and 11.

The next meeting will take place on Zoom on Monday, November 22 at 5:00 PM. There will be a vote to close the warrant at that time.

On **MOTION** (Spellios) and **SECONDED** (Grishman) it was **VOTED** to approve Town Moderator's request to have the Town meeting be held through remote participation.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Vote to approve appointment of member to the Athletic Field Advisory Committee
- Vote to approve meeting minutes for 10/27/21 and 11/3/21 meetings
- Authorize the Town Administrator to finalize and execute a contract that exceeds \$500,000 with Xtreme Shotcrete LLC as the lowest bidder for Bid #2022-005 (Kings Beach Sea Wall Repairs, Phase 2)

On **MOTION** (Grishman) and **SECONDED** (Spellios) it was **VOTED** to approve the consent agenda. All in favor.

SELECT BOARD TIME

- Peter Spellios remembered Billy Vousboukis who passed last week.
- Chairperson Polly Titcomb commended Veteran's Day Ceremony
- The Select Board wished good luck to all teams competing in the next few weeks

On **MOTION** (Grishman) and **SECONDED** (Duffy) it was **VOTED** to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:11 PM.

True Attest,



Allie Fiske, Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives

Minutes approved by Select Board in vote at meeting on 12/1/22.