

TOWN OF ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS
ADAMS TOWN HALL BUILDING, 1st FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP MINUTES 06/13/2018

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TOWN CLERK
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CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Duval at 6:30 p.m. Members Blanchard, Hoyt, Nowak and Bush were present as well Interim Town Administrator Cesan.

NEW BUSINESS:

Facility Use Request Process:

Chairman Duval reviewed the amount of time that the Board of Selectmen spends on Facility Use Requests. Categories on the form and building managers were identified. It was recommended that the Town Administrator approve some of the requests and forward a list of the approved routine administration requests to the Board of Selectmen, who would not give up consent authority but move it through in a single vote to approve them all. It was noted that the Board should take ownership of items that are discussed at meetings. It was expressed that the Board does not give input on items until the Announcements and Good of the Order section of the meeting and should give more input in the creation of the agenda. Members may report out on their own goals. It was pointed out that this is not a Town Administrator meeting to provide information to the Board. Board Members would identify goals individually and with the Town Administrator and report on the status of these goals. It was explained that the Board needs to have more responsibility and cover issues important to the community. Citizens Conference would be utilized for additional press for an event or to ask questions. An example of the Beekeeping Meeting at Visitors Center was given as an example of an administrative item that could be approved by the Town Administrator. If this procedure was adopted, some events, if denied, may have the option to appeal to the Board of Selectmen for reconsideration. Events with alcohol or large events like Bike Night, or Hijinx would definitely come before the Board for approval. Requests for a park or field use have already been vetted by the Parks Commission. Further discussion took place about how the items would be voted on, either individually or en masse. Clarification was requested because the Town Charter states the Town Administrator gives the oversight for approval. It was suggested that anything that requires police, alcohol or a cost to the town would come to the Board of Selectmen for approval. Otherwise the Town Administrator would have complete oversight as the Town Charter states. A new addition to the form advising that no sports practice is allowed on fields was noted and has been a policy, if not always enforced. It was explained that the Department of Public Works raised an issue of fields not having time to rest. Discussion took place about streamlining meetings for efficiency. One member noted that time is not a concern and the Board can use Facility Use Requests to create announcements to the community. An observation was made that there is not much discussion by the Board about unless there are issues to be handled. The time spent on facility use requests was noted as not being exorbitant. One Member requested the procedure stay the same. Additional discussion took place about Board Members setting goals and reporting on them to show progress on getting things done. It was noted that the Board has always been there if big items need to be done, like getting the Greylock Glen, the Train and the Bike Trail projects accomplished. It was explained that the Selectmen are spokespeople for the town and those making requests. It was expressed that Members and the Interim Town Administrator feel pressured to rush through meeting items because of talking so long about facility requests. It was noted by some that people get tired and the audience gets restless. A request was made to create a procedure to separate out the important requests from the ones that administrative or routine. It was countered that if someone puts in the effort to do an application they should get the time spent on it. It was explained that the staff tries to work closely with people to get all of their items in order but often applicants do not get their items completed before the meeting.

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A request was made for the Town Administrator to be the ultimate gatekeeper for these requests. A suggestion was made for the Town Administrator and the Department Heads to approve all requests unless they have to do with alcohol or have a cost associated with it outside of the budget. The agenda from the week prior was scrutinized for not having enough information or input from the DPW and Police Department to weigh the impact of the event, but there was pressure on the Board Members to approve the item at that meeting. The Town Administrator would meet with Department Heads to get the information and documents needed. It was explained that the Town Administrator's Report could outline information on Facility Use Requests. Once approved by the Town Administrator, an invitation would be given for the applicant to come to the Board Meeting to advertise their own event during *Public Comment*. It was explained that there is Town staff that are better equipped and have expertise on these needs. It was further explained that Parks Commission went through an application thoroughly and then an applicant had to go through it a second time with the Board of Selectmen. It was commented that if there is a Parks Commission approval and due diligence on their part the Board of Selectmen does not need to go through it again. If an application is rejected the Board could be there to hear an appeal. Additional recent form updates include a review by the DPW for approval. It was noted that the majority of the Board approves of having the Town Administrator handle the approval of Facility Use Request Forms. It was explained that the Board could review them in a ratification style process. The Town Administrator does the day to day business and the Board of Selectmen approves the pre-vetted documents. Brief discussion about changing the Town Charter took place. The responsibilities of the Board of Selectmen to hire the Town Administrator, Police Chief and DPW Director were noted and this will be discussed at an upcoming meeting as an agenda item.

Board of Selectmen Yearly Goals: It was noted that historically it has been the Town Administrator that explains what has been accomplished, and the accomplishments of the Board need to be reported back to the Town. Board Members were encouraged to take on goals they have a passion for to move the Town and community forward. It was outlined that the Town Charter has sections for the Board of Selectmen regarding setting direction with policy and goals and for the Town Administrator to align goals to the Board's. Board Members explained they didn't wish to micromanage or step on toes. It was pointed out that the Board of Selectmen is a policy board that sets the direction for the Town, and the Town Administrator, Departments and Staff implement the tasks on a day to day basis. The Board was explained to be a communicator and to articulate the policies to the residents. The Town Administrator runs the Town day to day. Examples were given of issues given to the Town Administrator to investigate and report back to the Board of Selectmen for communication back to the constituent. It was explained that the Board of Selectmen needs to be informed well enough to articulate the projects that the Board has identified as priorities. The Board should be aware of major things to know enough to be able to talk about it to citizens. The Chain of Command was reviewed. Examples were given of Board Members working during the day, attending meetings at night and not having the time to field questions and answers. Board Members were explained as being the ambassadors for the Town with the delegation, state officials, and constituents but also needs to be utilized to create a vision for the Town in addition to setting priorities. One Board Member advised that he disagreed with that process and advised he likes to personally look into issues that are brought to him from citizens so he feels confident that he has substantial information. Dissatisfaction was expressed about getting the agenda two days before the meeting instead of a week in advance. Former Town Administrator Butler was reported to give the Board Members a synopsis on any controversial items the week prior. It was noted that the month of March is about budgets which results in the Board looking at goals so they can be financially prepared.

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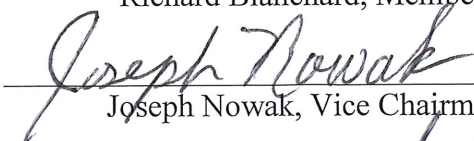
The completion of the Strategic Plan and the updated Open Space Plan were mentioned as projects to complete, and a staffing vacancy needs to be filled to support this. Budget cuts that produced staffing reduction were explained as being an impact in accomplishing tasks and providing services. It was pointed out that if someone is out everyone must pull together to keep things going and there is no cushion like in the past. It was explained that the Town needs to think about how things can be done differently while maintaining the responsibility to the citizens. It was noted that the grass is really high on both sides of the Ashuwillticook Bike Trail and the more responsibilities added creates more burden on already slim staffing that cannot fulfill the expectation. Extending the work force and looking at scheduling equipment was discussed. High grass in the Roundabout was also noted. It was explained that the Board of Selectmen doesn't have the authority to go to the DPW Director to get things done, and must go to the Town Administrator per the Town Charter. A workshop was suggested to create an implementation plan and to go through the goals, activities and strategies. Sub-Committees were explained to assist in the Town Administrator's role and to gain a broader expertise as a working committee on the Board. The effective use of workshops to solve issues was discussed. A suggestion was made for the Board to meet on a Saturday morning to work out issues on the white board and to write out goals. This would give the Board an opportunity to identify what is working well, what can be done differently, and what is not working. One Member advised he felt everything is fine in the current process and the biggest problem is that Adams has no infusion of private money. The over-dependency on grants was expressed as a concern and the Interim Town Administrator's resiliency and talent in getting grants thus far was lauded. It was noted that the Economic Development Commission was created and fell apart because it had no direction. Bringing small businesses into Adams and solving transportation were pointed out as issues to solve. Broadband internet was described as a need in this community to enhance the communication network. Board Members were asked to notify the Interim Town Administrator and the Administrative Assistant the Saturdays that Members are free over the summer for scheduling a workshop. A review of the 2013 adopted Economic Development Plan and the chart on the Strategic Plan will also need to take place.

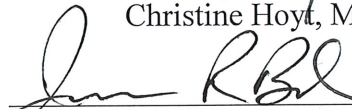
ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Member Blanchard to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Bush, Vote: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

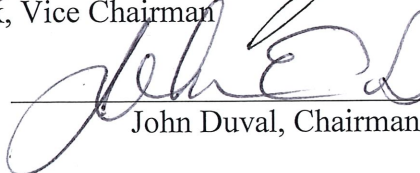
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


Richard Blanchard, Member


Christine Hoyt, Member


Joseph Nowak, Vice Chairman


Jim Bush, Member


John Duval, Chairman