

Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

Wednesday, November 10, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date the Board of Selectmen held a workshop at the Town Hall Sun Room. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Duval. Present from the Board of Selectmen were Chairman Duval, Vice Chairman Hoyt, Members Blanchard, Nowak and Rosenberg. Also present were Town Administrator Green, Board of Health Chairman Rhoads, DPW Operations Supervisor Cota, Brian Rhodes from iBerkshires, and Administrative Assistant Dunlap.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss Book Collection Bin: *Board of Health Chairman, Dr. Rhoads.* Chairman Duval reviewed information provided from Dr. Rhoads at a meeting, and a workshop was scheduled for further discussion. Linda Cernik of Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District (NBSWMD) was invited, but unable to attend, and she and Ed Driscoll will be invited to the Board of Selectmen meeting. It was noted that an alternate position on the NBSWMD needs to be filled since it was vacated by the passing of Jim Bush. *Dr. Rhoads* advised the Discover Books donation box is a program where they harvest paper and hardbound books that would otherwise be thrown in the trash. The bins are usually located at the Transfer Station where people throw things out, and put them in the bin instead of the paper or solid waste, which is paid for by the Town. Discover Books takes the books and tries to sell them at prices that are about the same as Amazon, and have a money-making aspect as part of their business model. Anything that cannot be sold or donated to a charitable organization is pulped for insulation so it does not go into the landfill. Linda Cernik had advised she is not aware of any other competitive program, and this program is free at the location of the Town's choice. The bin does not have to be at the Transfer Station, and does not need a concrete pad so there is no cost to the Town. There is no contract and if the Town wants to terminate the service they will remove the box. It is not clear how much cost would be eliminated for the Town. Discover Books is willing to provide a key to anyone interested in running the program and will give us a pickup schedule so we will know when they are coming. Friends of the Adams Free Library can come and sort through the books to see if there is anything they think they can sell, and can also put any of their unsold books in this bin to dispose of them in an environmentally positive way. He reported he reached out to the Transfer Station Supervisor in Plainfield, who confirmed their current donation bin is Discover Books and they love it. *Town Administrator Green* expressed concern about whether there is enough room at the Transfer Station, and whether it needs to be in a place where there is an attendant. If not, he suggested the supermarket may be a good location because the Town doesn't have the manpower to supervise and manage the bin. *DPW Operations Supervisor Cota* expressed concerns about the amount of space at the Transfer Station, which already has traffic issues. He noted that with the size of the trucks to get the bins space is already tight. *Dr. Rhoads* suggested putting the bin in the space in front of the metal dumpster. It was pointed out that being able to get in to remove it was the issue and there is not enough room to maneuver in that area. *Vice Chair Hoyt* expressed an additional concern about adding another bin with items of value that could be damaged or stolen. Brief discussion took place about

cameras and signage being appropriately in place for safety and security purposes. *Dr. Rhoads* advised that the design is similar to the textile box with a padlock on the door and is one-way, like a mailbox for putting books in. Additional concern was expressed about people cutting the padlock, and *Dr. Rhoads* advised he would ask Plainfield if security has ever been a problem. It was noted that if there is resale value for what is in this bin it is the concern. The sponsored book houses already in Adams were confirmed to still be active and maintained by Adams Community Bank. The design of the Transfer Station was discussed, and it was explained that adding anything to the current design creates a traffic issue with cars on the corners. Drainage issues, the influx of brush, and the leaf bunker being highly utilized were touched on. *Dr. Rhoads* confirmed that the Transfer Station is a lot more constrained than those in other communities and he confirmed that the Library is not an option so it could be on private property. It was pointed out that this could be an attraction at the supermarket. He expressed that if security and practicality at the Transfer Station are an issue he will look for another venue with the cooperation of the Library and others concerned about book donations. *Chairman Duval* advised the Board will decide about the bin at their regular meeting. *Vice Chair Hoyt* asked for an opinion and possible layout of the Transfer Station from DPW Operations Supervisor Cota. *Dr. Rhoads* was asked to reach out to Bob Pytko at Adams Hometown Market to see if it is a possibility as private property may not be monitored but the supermarket is lit and open daily.

Discuss Establishment of General Government Review Committee: *Chairman Duval* reviewed that the Board received the estimate from Bernard Lynch of Community Paradigm Associates for these services. The proposed services would support the committee to the Selectmen and be part of the process. He advised he was able to get historical information on both times committees were formed to review the Charter and to provide recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. It was first done in February, 1979 and the Study Committee led to a full-fledged Charter Committee and Change of Acts that were incorporated to bring them up to date. Changes included the creation of the DPW, in addition to others. In 2009 the Board of Selectmen appointed another Charter Study Committee comprised of nine members. He noted that the Board of Selectmen gave the Committee direction on the process, timing and what was expected in the report upon completion. The report was submitted to the Board of Selectmen at the time, which was taken under advisement. The Charter Study Committee role was only to provide the Board of Selectmen with recommendations, and had very little authority. Once the report was submitted, a Charter Commission would be formed following Massachusetts General Laws. It was explained that Town Meeting was presented with the request to change Elected Officials to appointed but it did not pass. It was pointed out that there was a Board of Selectmen Liaison at the time that was part of the Commission, which put forth a year of effort, meetings, and outreach to other communities. Mr. Lynch from Community Paradigm Associates advised other communities have not had to go through Town Meeting to form a Charter Commission. A Government Review Committee can be formed with the Community Paradigm Associates. Mr. Lynch would oversee it and provide a report to the Board of Selectmen for review. The changes the Board approves will be put on the Town Meeting Warrant. Once approved at Town Meeting it would go to State legislature for certification. Documents and Town Counsel's opinion on this will be provided to the Board Members prior to the next meeting. It was explained this evening the decision would be to determine how many people would be on the Committee, and the composition of the committee. Last time there were nine Committee Members, which did not include either the Town Administrator or Board of Selectmen, as they provided support. It was noted that the desire was to get the process started in December or January. Discussion took place on the process and the how are the Committee Members would be chosen. It was explained that in the past the Board asked for volunteers, but Committee Members need to be vetted by the Town Administrator to explain what is involved and the commitment level. Past


documents were noted as being very insightful and it was explained this is a step to modernize the government in Adams. It was pointed out that Adams doesn't have a charter per se, but this will inform where the Town should tactically and surgically update what is in place. The Town just has Special Acts which have been continuously added on over time. Changes made over the last hundred years were outlined. *Member Rosenberg* inquired what areas need to be modernized, and it was explained that some include timeframes for meeting fiscal requirements, and the ratification process. The Committee worked independently in the past and then brought their findings to the Town Administrator. The Town Administrator will be involved in the process, and Town Counsel is a support person. It was pointed out that public education is imperative. There is an obligation to inform Town Meeting Members to present the work of the committee. If it is voted down at Town Meeting, the Town has up to two years to bring it back for another vote. It was explained that this happened in 1983 and 1984. It will be structured to allow Town Meeting to address it issue by issue, which was advised as one issue in the past that was not favorable eliminated everything else. *Town Administrator Green* advised that the Tax Collector/Treasurer and Assessor are assessing people's property and then asking to be elected, which puts the public employee in a precarious spot and is why separation of powers are important. *Member Blanchard* asked that the Board of Selectmen have a workshop to look at the Charter to see where they would like changes made, to inform what recommendations to give to the committee. It was pointed out that outreach to other communities will take place, and in the past the Chair and the Committee had free rein where they wanted to go with the recommendations. It was emphasized that the committee should have the ability to provide recommendations without pressure from politics. It was noted that the Board of Selectmen can provide a consensus for areas to pay attention to and the consultant can provide input to flag areas that need to be updated and modernized. The Committee can come back to the Board of Selectmen with their input for guidance and they don't have to be directed or have pressure put on them. *Vice Chair Hoyt* reviewed the proposal from Community Paradigm Associates and noted this was already outlined as a step to be taken. The procedure of moving forward was briefly touched on. It was noted that there are a variety of Acts that can be amended with legislature, noting the amendment date. To put in an actual Charter would require scrapping everything and creating a single omnibus document. Both get to the same place, using different documents. *Member Nowak* noted the loss of grant opportunities for the Town because of the delay in getting it down. It was explained that the work is expected to take ten to eighteen months. Recent work done on a similar project in Athol was referenced and the conclusions that come from that will be interesting to consider. The Town of Adams "Charter" is four Special Acts, which is how Adams initially organized. An Omnibus Charter is a newer government option. *Member Nowak* outlined a suggestion of Committee representatives from the community for a cross-section to be from the areas of government, education, business, police, law, public works, cultural arts and two "at large". Input from the consultant on recommendations will be solicited. It was desired to have someone do interviews of potential committee members. If it is decided to scrap all the Acts, the consultant and Committee will have to rebuild it and provide input in concordance with Massachusetts General Law. If there are no changes there is no reason wording from 1935 cannot be used. The next step was outlined as announcing at the next meeting that anyone interested in volunteering should provide their name to the Town Administrator with their background information and Town Administrator Green will go through the list with seven or nine members that the Consultant and Town Administrator feel is a good cross-section of the community for the Board of Selectmen to approve. *Member Blanchard* suggested having names submitted from the Board of Selectmen to be approached first. It was noted that this is a very large commitment and the Charter will be a living document that affects the people that reside here. The Consultant was described as being thorough.


Vice Chair Hoyt noted the Consultant's most recent commitment which lasted eighteen months and sometimes met twice a month. She noted that Committee Members did drop off during that timeframe because of the commitment. *Member Blanchard* suggested having alternate Committee Members so if someone drops out they can step in. *Vice Chair Hoyt* suggested having Board of Selectmen Members talk with people and have them apply to be reviewed. Discussion took place on the composition of the committee. It was noted that applicants should provide the Town Administrator's office with their resume and why they would like to serve. Concern about volunteers expressing interest and not being chosen being slighted was expressed. It was noted that if people were sought out that had experience and given to the Town Administrator he could reach out to them and discuss the time commitment. Board Members were asked to drop off names to the Town Administrator to vet them and bring the list back to the Board of Selectmen after he and the Consultant decide on a cross section. The Consultant and Town Administrator will look at the names and see how a committee is usually populated to fill the committee with seven to nine people. The Town Administrator will provide the Board with the names in one of the meetings in December, and Board Members are asked to provide names to him by next Wednesday. It was requested to have a quality of candidates over quantity, and an intended start of January 2022. The names will not be made public until the finalists are decided.

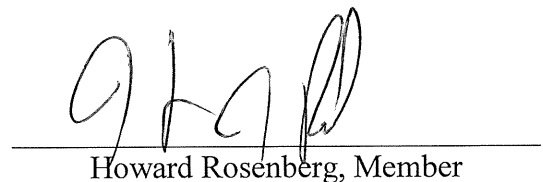
ANNOUNCEMENTS, GOOD OF THE ORDER: *Member Blanchard* asked for an update on Center Street light issue, and it was explained that Sommer Electric reported it is working as designed. They are not going with loop sensors anymore in the pavement, but instead with mast-based sensors. VHB has been asked to install it and to talk to MassDOT to make sure the cycle of equipment is appropriate. *Chairman Duval* advised the wiring needs to be dug up and fixed and re-spliced. Town Administrator Green will ask the DPW to have it changed at night to flash so traffic is not hung up. Brief discussion took place about having a Workshop on the week of November 22nd. *Member Nowak* noted it was good to see Davis Street being worked on, and it was noted that Community Development Coughlin sent a nice letter to those in the area. It was noted that FEMA will be out for a site visit for the Jordan Street Culvert.

ADJOURNMENT: *Motion made by Member Blanchard to adjourn, second by Vice Chair Hoyt. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah J. Dunlap, Recording Secretary


Joseph Nowak, Member


Christine Hoyt, Vice Chair


Howard Rosenberg, Member


Richard Blanchard, Member

John Duval, Chair