

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Select Board
Tuesday, August 9, 2022
Remote Online Meeting (Zoom 841 4469 9490)
Called to Order at 6:30 p.m.**

Remotely participating were Board members, Chair Christopher Houston, and Laurie Bent. Also present were Town Manager Leon A. Gaumond, Jr., Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director Lisa Yanakakis, Town Moderator Ripley Hastings, Legal Counsel Lauren Goldberg, Chair of The Finance Committee Lisa Reitano, Chair of the Sustainability Committee, Katharina Wilkins, The candidates for the vacancy position on the Sustainability Committee; Pamela Wood, Alan Orth and Nick Christman, Town Recreation Director Chris Fitzgerald, Chair of the Planning Board Leslie Glynn, Chair of the Weston Historical Society Phyllis Halpern

Mr. Houston called the remote meeting to order and read the following:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Weston will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. We will strive to provide access to such meetings via a link to call in, or other similar option. In the event we are unable to accommodate the same, despite best efforts, we will post recorded sessions of the meeting as soon as possible following the same. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings.

Resident Comments: None.

Special Town Meeting: Logistics with Moderator, Town Counsel and Town Clerk and Warrant Article Positions and Presentations.

Mr. Houston called the Special Town Meeting to order. He clarified that the Agenda reads Annual Town Meeting when it should read Special Town Meeting. Mr. Houston then turned the meeting over to Town Manager, Leon Gaumond. Mr. Gaumond stated Town Counsel and Town Moderator are joining the meeting. He stated the Town Clerk was unable to join the meeting. The Chair of the Finance Committee, Lisa Reitano is present as well.

Mr. Gaumond stated the Finance Committee voted its support, no position or opposition to Articles at their last meeting. The Consent Agenda has some articles that the FinCom decided to choose no position on due to the nature of the article. All of the other articles that were voted on, those of financial nature were given with unanimous support by Finance Committee. The pool was a unanimous vote from the Finance Committee. The Pickle Ball was a 5-3 vote in favor of moving forward recommending that Article. Mr. Gaumond stated The Article for a motion to support the last article on the Agenda, The School Reserve Fund for Special Education, failed to pass with a 4-4 vote.

There was a stalemate on the School Article. Mr. Gaumond stated there will be substantive discussions on the 3 out of the 8 Articles that will be presented.

Mr. Gaumond asked the Select Board and Town Moderator if clickers will be used at the Meeting and if so what number will be used. Mr. Houston asked about the price breakdown for the clickers. Mr. Gaumond stated around \$14,000. After discussion, Mr. Houston stated to Mr. Gaumond that they were just giving a sense of their opinions. He stated that ultimately, it is the Moderators call. Mr. Hastings

stated yes, and he would be more than happy to confer with Mr. Gaumond to make the decision in the next day.

Mr. Gaumond stated that one more logistics item. The Chair of the CPC was unable to join the conversation today. He was wondering if the CPC needs to be prepared to make any motions at Town Meeting or presentations. Mr. Gaumond asked Mr. Hastings if Mr. Ober was prepared to make the motions at Town Meeting.

Mr. Houston stated the consistent practice of the CPC has been that the CPC person makes the motion, and if there is another proponent not on the CPC to turn the floor over to that person for the presentation. He added, before the person turns it over, the CPC person has to state the CPC supports the article. Atty. Goldberg confirmed this practice. She added there is a mandate that the Community Preservation Committee must provide its recommendation in order for the Town to appropriate the funds for those purposes. Mr. Gaumond stated that he is willing to relay those messages to Mr. Ober at the conclusion of the meeting if everyone is willing to agree to.

Ms. Reitano stated that the FinCom would have sheets of paper at the back of the auditorium that inform people how they voted. She said they did not oppose anything, so she will not be getting up to speak.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the Rec Commissioner who is presenting the pool project asked what the limit for the presentations is. They would like to request 10 minutes for that, and Pickle Ball is happy with 5 minutes. Mr. Hastings stated that the pool is a big project and requires 10 minutes that is ok. He stated he is going to be stricter with time limits. He feels 5 minutes is fine for the Pickle Ball.

Mr. Houston asked Ms. Reitano for a summary version of the 4-4 split on the Special Ed Reserve Fund. He stated that he figured Fin Com would have loved because it helped smooth out budget fluctuations. Ms. Reitano stated everyone recognizes there is a problem and there are concerns about its out of district claims particularly these times with mental health issues there are concerns that there will be extra ones you cannot budget for. The average out of district claim is \$170,000 and if is a residential one. Everyone recognizes there is some concern over it. They feel there are other remedies. The schools usually return money back to the Town, free cash. Lately it has been about \$500,000- \$700,000. It's not well spelled out as to what they want to do and how they want to fund it. There is nothing in the Warrant that puts a cap on it. Ms. Reitano stated that you could look at the whole FinCom Reserve and what it pays for. One FinCom member was concerned about the \$75,000 and would rather just return it and cut peoples taxes. She stated that the School Committee is feeling pressure to budget more tightly. She stated that she is not sure how tightly it should be budgeted, just return it at the end of the year. She said there was a lot of discussion how it's not all that clearly spelled out exactly how you want to do this, should you do this now or do this in the Fall when you know more what you want to put into it. Mr. Houston stated that from the school standpoint, when they do a budget, they get criticized by certain people in town, and they get really criticized if their percentage is even higher if they have a spike in SPED spending. Yet, when they return money, those people do not come back and say sorry. They are trying to undergo smoothing thing that will reduce volatility. Reserves are not like slush funds. People on FinCom in the past have objected to the Reserves.

Interviews for vacancy on Sustainability Committee

Mr. Gaumond stated there are three candidates for the open position on the Sustainability Committee: Nick Christman, Pamela Wood and Alan Orth. He said the Chair of the Sustainability Committee, Katharina Wilkins was present.

Ms. Wilkins stated she wanted to thank all of the volunteer who applied for this position. She stated that whoever joins this Committee would get familiar with the Weston Ahead plan since that is their Agenda for the next foreseeable future. This includes plans around becoming lower energy consumers, and smart and efficient buildings. Not just what traditional Green Efforts are such as trees because there are already committees that focus on that. She said they like measurable outcomes of progress. They need to stay abreast of what is going on with the State Legislature and also the development of Green Communities and other Green Spaces.

Ms. Bent asked Ms. Wilkins in terms of what she was looking for, where she sees needs on the Committee.

Ms. Wilkins stated that a quantitative mind with attention to detail. This might require a sustained effort. We need someone who is committed and will show up to the meetings. It's more reading small print than meets the eye to be successful with what the Committee is doing. There is a lot in motion on the State level that Weston needs to pay attention to so they can stay competitive when it comes to things such as grants applications. It would require a person with a quantitative mind filtering through a bunch of websites and attending meetings that are held by other Massachusetts entities.

Ms. Wood stated that she is the Jury Commissioner for the Commonwealth, a licensed attorney and has lived in the town for a long time. She has served on a number of town roles, such as Library Trustee for a number of years, on the Board of Directors at Merriam Village and active on a number of committees at First Parish Church. She is interested in the Sustainability Committee because it has the potential to have an impact on individuals. Getting individuals involved in things that have caught the town's attention in recent years such as composting. Clean up days around town have great potential for getting people individually engaged in sustainability efforts. People are interested in rail trails and conservation land, which is one of the objectives in the Weston Ahead plan for the healthy natural eco systems, which is something she is particularly interested and engaged in. The real draw for her is the potential to have an impact statewide on a larger level because there is so much opportunity to leverage with other communities on things like Mass Transit, and energy co-ops. She stated there is a plan for Weston power save, the shared energy plan the Sustainability Committee has been working on. She has been in government for most of her career, she started out in a big firm practice where she worked on some environmental cases with leaking underground storage containers issues impacting communities. She worked on other cases involving Urea Formaldehyde Foam Insulation (UFFI), carcinogens and the environment.

She moved into Federal Government in the late 80's early 90's and then stayed government ever since. She feels that's a big advantage because she has done a lot of Legislative Drafting, lot of advocating. She has worked with the Legislature, and has testified before the Legislature numerous times. She has worked with State Reps Mike Barrett and Alice Peisch. She would like to do this on Sustainability. She feels she has a quantitative mind due to her current work experience managing the jury.

Mr. Orth stated that he has a long resume and is active with the Town of Weston. He has three things that apply to this job. He served 18 years on the Recreation Commission, 6 terms: 14 years on Board of Assessors. He was a co-founder of Lands Sake. He created a couple fall festivals at Lands Sake which he said helped become mainstream. He is a holistic thinker, in terms of eco systems. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts, the parts are all important. He feels Sustainability is about growth and change over time. He said Weston has grown and changed over the last 60 years. Early on they had visionary thinkers that bought all the Conservation Land. It gives Weston a certain place in the region due to the amount of open space. Planning for the future and thinking about change is part of how he is trained to think. This is one of his strengths. The second strength is he knows a lot about the water systems. From the holistic approach he sees how man affects nature, and nature affects man, they co-develop. He looks

at the natural water cycle, and the water supply system. He took graduate level courses in Surface Water Hydrology which was quantitative. He currently represents the Sustainability Committee and the Water Resource Sub Committee. He feels they need to look at potential flooding and drought, and how they will plan and be prepared. Overall, he has been involved in environmental issues in Weston, including the early recycling committee. He gave an idea he wanted to share. He says Housing has been a big issue. In order to sustain we need to deal with the issues. The new project on 750 Boston Post Road, that is going forward, we should negotiate with them and get them to use geothermal instead of oil or gas and give them support in trying to do that. Mr. Orth stated that is the futuristic way of his thinking. Of all the things he has done the environment part is what is most important to him.

Mr. Christman stated he is the Chief Operating Officer at Namely, a software company based out of New York. He moved to Weston with his wife and two children about two years ago. A big part of the reason they moved here is because they sensed the results of past efforts done by the Town of Weston on conservation and sustainability. It's a beautiful place, it feels different and is a great place to raise a family.

Mr. Christman is currently on a sabbatical as he transitions out of his current job and move into the climate space. He is looking to join a start up in the Boston area focused on the climate problem. AS he was doing that, he came across the volunteer position and thought it would be wonderful to get involved on the local level. He read further about it, including the Weston Ahead Plan in depth. That plan really excited him. It was made clear how much effort in the past has gone into making Weston a sustainable town, one that leads in the green community. Also, how much more effort is planned in the future. A place that would make him proud to raise his children and leave to them.

Mr. Christman stated the Weston Ahead Plan lays out a compelling and clear path for the kind of town that would make us proud to raise children in. He said when he looked at the plan, he felt he could really help. His job as a CEO is to understand the vision of an organization and to make it happen. When you have a good plan, it comes down to detailed problem solving, really good communication and the ability to develop the interpersonal relationships and move a big group of people toward that common goal. With all the good thinking that went into the plan, what needs to happen next is the hard part of execution. He stated that it can be real challenge. He said we would have to excite and inspire the town. They need to help make it make financial sense by tapping into mass incentives. We will need to make sure we are hitting the measurable carbon goals across the town. We will need to make sure we are working across departments. Where a lot of people have budget constraints and other priorities, we would need to move the town as fast as possible towards that goal, so it is the town we create, not just the plan we wrote down and put on a shelf. The last reason he applied is because he has the time since he is on sabbatical and attended the last Sustainability Committee meeting. He spent about an hour and a half talking with a member of the Sustainability Committee about understanding the working and success of tapping into Mass programs and different things across the state. There is a great group between Katharina and the Sustainability Committee making a lot of progress. He stated he has the ability and time to plug in o help in a significant way. That was the basis for him submitting his application.

Ms. Bent said that based off what Ms. Wilkins said they were looking for, Mr. Christmas is the best fit. As someone who worked on the Weston Ahead Plan, and is interested in moving that forward, she is interested in actionable steps. Ms. Bent said her vote would be to appoint Mr. Christman to this position.

MOTION: Ms. Bent moved to appoint Nick Christman to fill the vacancy on the Sustainability Committee, a term to expire on June 30, 2025. 2nd by Mr. Houston.

Roll call vote Mr. Houston and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously**

Further discussion on the Celebrations Committee

Ms. Bent said that with Celebrate Weston, during the debrief there was a feeling that there is a need for some coordination among the various townwide activities of a celebratory nature. This is how this idea was created.

Mr. Gaumont stated that he and Ms. Bent discussed about setting up a Standing Festival Committee or something along those lines to be a resource for future Celebrate Weston Events. Mr. Gaumont stated that in other towns he has previously worked in, there were Special Events Committees or Celebrations Committees. These committees were not only charged with helping to plan big events like Celebrate Weston, but even smaller events like a town bon fire or mini concert event. The Town has a number of committees already, but the idea is that this group could help out with the Memorial Day Committee or other Veteran's celebrations, Spring Fling or Winter Fest to help coordinate those and make them easier. Ms. Bent feels that this Committee would create an institutional memory, a bank of experience. That when a new volunteer steps up to do one of the celebrations like Memorial Day or Veterans Day, there would be a group of people who were familiar with what needed to be done to make it work. There would be more support for the volunteers running these celebrations.

Mr. Houston stated that having infrastructure to keep Celebrate Weston going forward would be great and high priority. It might be easy for that Committee to take on Memorial Day and Veterans Day because they are smaller. Mr. Houston stated that we would have to be careful about stepping on peoples toes since the High School has been doing those for years, and it's an important activity to certain groups. He also stated that the Women's Community League probably does not want to get pushed out.

Ms. Bent clarified stating that is not the intent to take over celebrations that others have been running. It's rather coordination.

Mr. Houston stated that he was on board with it, and there did not need to be a vote to take the next steps in exploring it. He said it was a great idea and appreciated the willingness to pursue it.

Discussion in emergency repairs to Louisa's Wall

Mr. Gaumont stated that Leslie Glynn is present to speak on the matter of emergency repairs to be made to Louisa's Wall. She is requesting to start the emergency repairs on Louisa's Wall through the Case Estates 2006 municipal appropriation. He stated that the Select Board still has said if they agreed to utilize \$1,600.00 for those emergency repairs. A future conversation would be what are the wall budgetary requirements moving forward.

Mr. Houston asked Mr. Gaumont what the fundamental issue is. He asked if we can spend \$1,600.00 from the Case Estates to fix this. He stated there was some question as whether the \$1,600.00 was part of the Case Estate mandate, or when the Article was voted on.

Mr. Gaumont stated that that Ms. Glynn was looking to get some of the emergency repair work done this calendar year, and to do so, she needs to coordinate that before their schedule filled up.

Ms. Glynn stated that she would like to get it done before the next freeze fall cycle. She called the Waller who did the work, and the report. He gave a timeframe of October -November. She would like to get the approval for the funds from the town to take care of it.

Mr. Houston stated that some of the email traffic also pointed out other repairs that are needed for the wall. It looks like it's more in the \$20,000 range.

Ms. Glynn stated that there are 4 items for Louisa's Wall repairs which total \$ 21, 250.00. This includes the \$1,600 for the emergency repairs. Mr. Houston stated that the Historical Commission or anyone else might want to seek it from the CPA Account, which would be voted on at Annual Town Meeting, not the Special Town Meeting. These repairs are ones that can wait until next summer. Ms. Glynn confirmed that the other repairs can wait, just the emergency wall repair needs to be done this year.

MOTION: Mr. Houston moved to authorize to approve taking the approximate \$1,600.00 for emergency repairs out of the Case Estates to repair Louisa's Wall . 2nd by Ms. Bent.

Roll call vote: Ms. Bent and Mr. Houston voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

Consent Agenda

MOTION: Ms. Bent moved the Consent Agenda as follows:

Accept a gift of \$65,342.00 from the Weston Skating Club to the Weston Recreation Department

Approve a request for a 5K road race permit from Weston Police Relief Association, Inc., on Saturday, October 15, 2022, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The Police, Public Works, and Fire Departments have reviewed and approved this request, subject to conditions.

Laurie Bent
Clerk

Note: A copy of all documents, explanatory material, and exhibits presented to and used by the Select Board as part of this meeting are attached to the approved minutes