

**Hull Select Board  
Final Minutes  
January 10, 2024**

The meeting of the Hull Select Board was held at 7:00 p.m. on January 10, 2024 at Hull Town Hall, 253 Atlantic Avenue, Hull, Massachusetts.

Present: Greg Grey, Chair, Irwin Nesoff, Vice-Chair, Jason McCann, Clerk, Brian McCarthy, Member, Jerry Taverna, Member. Also present was Town Manager Jennifer Constable.

Before calling the meeting to order Grey led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance and asked for a moment of silence for Joe Menice, a long-time Hull resident, teacher in the Hull Public Schools, and tireless advocate for youth sports in the Town, who passed away on January 6, 2024.

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**SELECT BOARD GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

Constable said that at the last meeting the Board had said they would like to review the goals and priorities that were set at the Annual Retreat. Constable said she has put together a list of these, grouped by category, and has indicated those that have been completed or that the Board wanted to remove. She said she has also included items that the Board had wanted to add to the list.

**Economic Development/Community Development Planning**

1. Complete and adopt the Unified Work Plan. The Plan has been completed and adopted and its implementation is ongoing.
2. Support year-round business incentives. Ongoing.
3. Continue pursuing a collaborative relationship with DCR. Constable said that the Memorandum of Understanding with DCR is completed, but that this is an ongoing goal.
4. Review Vacant Commercial Property Bylaw

McCarthy asked if it would be possible to include, as part of the bylaw, a fine for owners of vacant properties that do not keep them in good shape. Constable said this might be possible but would have to be enforced by the Building Commissioner. McCann noted that the Economic Development Committee (EDC) has discussed the possibility of approaching owners to help them market their properties. Taverna suggested this topic be placed on a future agenda.

**Transportation Planning**

1. Work with MBTA to support efforts for more reliable ferry and bus service. Ongoing.
2. Encourage neighborhood/civic groups and business leaders to maintain and improve public spaces. Consider adopting a Park program Beautification Committee. The Board felt this goal should go under Open Space and Recreation Planning
3. Continue signage and Wayfinding Program
4. Incorporate Complete Streets in planning. Completed.
5. Designate liaison to MBTA/MPO and seek Board seat on MPO. Completed.
6. Review South Shore Mobility Study to identify opportunities for Hull including seeking an on-demand shuttle
7. Determine scope for a Town Transportation plan
8. Railroad Bed M Street – XYZ Street. Constable said this should also be considered under Open Space.
9. Create a Traffic Advisory Committee

McCann asked about the Town's relationship with the MBTA and if there is talk about cutting back service. Constable said that as far as she knows there are no service cuts being planned but that the MBTA overall is not in great shape and the Governor may be making some budget cuts. She said the loss of ferry service to Hull is always a concern.

## **Housing Planning – Affordable Housing Committee**

The Board had set three goals in this category but the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) they created is undertaking everything they had discussed. Nesoff said the AHC is working with a consultant to look at all town-owned land that could be used for affordable housing. It was the consensus of the Board that working with the AHC on strategies and actions to support affordable housing should be an ongoing goal.

## **Open Space and Recreation Planning**

1. Implement update of Open Space and Recreation Plan
2. Plan for full complement of recreational facilities. Moved to Capital Planning.
3. Continue efforts to replace playground structures, courts, and fencing in parks. Moved to Capital Planning.
4. Seek trail grants. Moved to Capital Planning.
5. Refine and revisit Pemberton EDP. The Board needs to set deadlines for completion.
6. Work with DCR to secure Fort Revere catacombs
7. Open Gym & Recreation Director
8. Fort Revere Committee
9. Consider and adopt a Park Program Beautification Committee

There was some discussion as to whether the Board wanted to move forward with a Fort Revere Committee. McCann said he is not sure a citizens' committee would be very productive on this type of a project. Grey said Fort Revere has been an ongoing problem and he feels there would be a great deal of public support for such a committee. Constable suggested that Fort Revere might be included as part of a Master Plan which could help organize the thinking around this area.

Nesoff asked about the Open Gym & Recreation Director position. The Board felt that it would be good to have someone who could oversee all recreation in the town and that given the changing demographics in Hull (fewer children and more elderly) that person should work in conjunction with the Senior Center. Constable said she thinks there is an opportunity for collaboration between departments. She said there are a few things, such as Hull being designated an Age Friendly Community, that might come together to create more funding opportunities. Grey said that the completion of the Open Space and Recreation Plan might position them to apply for grants. There was some discussion around using the Middle School as a location for recreational activities.

## **Capital Planning**

1. Update 5-year Capital Improvement Plan
2. Review Capital Funding Policies
3. Historical Asset Planning (added)

Constable said that all these goals are ongoing. She said the staff is looking at their capital improvement structure and is seeking to create funding streams for capital projects and establish money in the budget for that and said they are evaluating their Capital Outlay Committee to see what needs to be changed. She said that the Town Charter requires a Capital Plan every five years but that discussions around capital projects should be ongoing and the Committee should be meeting and having discussions on an annual basis.

## **Resiliency Planning**

1. Identify areas at greatest risk from climate change and begin to develop mitigation strategies
2. Continue policy to fortify continuous dune system
3. Promote green infrastructure
4. Beach Management Plan (added)

Constable said the Climate Adaptation Committee (CAC) has said the first three goals are ongoing. Grey suggested that they invite the Beach Management Committee to a meeting to hear their thoughts on the Beach Management Plan.

## Operations

1. Study departmental workloads to identify strengths and weaknesses and improve efficiency
2. Develop better coordination and execution of Board and Committee appointments
3. Feasibility of hiring Human Resource Director/Assistant Town Manager

Constable said that all three of these goals have been eliminated. She said that the first goal is the responsibility of the Town Manager and not the Select Board, and that the other two goals have been accomplished.

## Communications

1. Annual review of communications policy. (Changed to Update Communication Policy)
2. Improve communications among Board and Boards and Committees (semi-annual reporting/review)
3. Bi-Annual Legislative Updates (Representative and Senator)
4. Improve quality of communication with citizens
5. Add resources for communications position

Taverna said he has heard complaints that some of the information on the Town website is not up to date. Constable said the staff is trying to work on coordinating information and that some of the new staff will be tasked with website maintenance.

## General Planning

1. Succession Planning for Town Manager's Office. Completed.
2. Seek Funding for Master Planning effort
3. Schedule discussion with HRA. Ongoing.
4. Seek community input on Goals and Objectives. This is ongoing through establishment of Select Board policy on accepting public comment at Select Board meetings and will also happen through establishment of a Master Plan.
5. Select Board to work with COA to implement Study recommendations
6. Community Use of Public Buildings Policy. Completed.
7. Review/Update Select Board Policy (to be done at this meeting)

McCarthy asked about the implementation of the study completed by the Council on Aging. Constable said the Select Board, through its liaison with the COA, would be working with the Director to determine which portions of the assessment they were going to implement and prioritize them. Grey noted that there have been some issues with staffing at the COA that has slowed this process but it should be moving forward.

Constable said that town staff is keeping an eye out for grant opportunities for the Master Plan, which would cost between \$50,000 to \$90,000 but would provide a roadmap for the town for the next ten years. Taverna asked if Hull has had a recent Master Plan but Constable said the only document they have is approximately twenty years old and is not a true Master Plan. She said that the process would include a series of public workshops to get input from the community as to what they would like to see addressed. She said that a Master Plan would help support the goals and priorities of the Select Board.

Taverna asked Constable how she would evaluate the town in terms of financial health and its ability to tackle all the upcoming projects. Constable said that the town is very stable financially, but the projects on the horizon have significant price tags that would necessitate multiple funding sources including bonding. She said this is why it is important to have a Master Plan and a Capital Plan.

<b>Motion</b>	McCann	To adopt the Select Board's Goals and Objectives as presented on January 10, 2024
<b>Second Vote</b>	Nesoff	Unanimous

Constable said she would finalize this list and post it on the Town website.

## **SELECT BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Constable said that the present document outlining the Select Board's Policies and Procedures is twenty-two years old and was amended twelve years ago. She suggested the possibility of doing away with it entirely as some parts of it limit the Board's flexibility and many areas are covered by the Open Meeting Law. After discussion the Board disagreed, however, as they felt that it is important to have a document that is easily accessible and that the current document provides guidance on how their meetings are to be run. It was the consensus that they should review the current Policies and Procedures section by section and make any updates or changes that might be needed.

### **Section 1. Meetings**

The first section of the document relates to the conduct of meetings, including Regular meetings, Special and Emergency meetings, and Executive Sessions. A few outlined procedures were eliminated and several were updated or clarified. The time of the meetings was set at 7:00 p.m. and it was determined that Meeting Notices should be posted on the Town's "official posting location for providing notice as required by law."

### **Section 2. Agenda for Regular Meetings**

A number of changes were made in this section. There was some discussion about the timeframe for submitting agenda items and the posting of agenda notices as well as the informational packets that the Board receives before a meeting. Grey noted that there is some flexibility for the time of submitting agenda items when the Board meets on a biweekly basis but timing is more difficult when they meet weekly. Nesoff expressed concern that the Board is not always aware of upcoming agenda items until the Meeting Notice is posted. It was decided that the Chair would reach out to Select Board members by the end of the week preceding the meeting to let them know what the expected agenda will be. Constable said that the staff works to have the packets prepared by the Thursday before the meeting, but that is not always possible.

### **Section 3. Procedures During Meetings**

A number of items in this section were eliminated and several were changed to be consistent with the Select Board's newly adopted policy on public comments at meetings. There was a brief discussion as to whether to adopt Roberts Rules of Order or keep the meetings informal. The general feeling was that there should be an order to the meetings but that they would prefer a more informal set of procedures.

### **Section 4. Hearings**

After discussion the Board decided to state only that no Hearing would begin before the time stated on the Meeting Agenda. All other provisions were eliminated.

### **Section 5. Minutes**

A few minor changes were made to this section. Constable said she would confirm who the Keeper of Records for the Town is and would consult with Town Counsel regarding the release of minutes from Executive Sessions.

### **Section 6. Miscellaneous**

After discussion the Board decided that this section was not needed and should be eliminated entirely.

### **Section 7. Decorum**

Grey said he feels that everything in this section falls under the Organizational Commitments of the Board that they will be discussing later in the meeting. The Board decided to table discussion on this section.

### **Section 8. Suspension of Procedures**

No changes were made to this section.

**Section 9. Reconsideration of Votes**

This section was eliminated.

**Section 10. Interview of appointees and Applicants for Licenses**

This section was eliminated.

**Section 11. Review of Policies and Procedures**

No changes were made to this section.

**Section 12. Amendments to Policies and Procedures**

It was the consensus that policies and procedures should be reviewed at least annually.

**Section 13. Effective Date**

No changes were made to this section.

**Section 14. Distribution**

A minor change was made in the language of this section.

Grey said there were a few questions for the Town Counsel that need to be clarified. He said they would clean up the existing document and make a motion to accept it at a subsequent meeting.

**TOWN OF HULL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENTS**

Constable said she had formulated “Town of Hull Organizational Commitments” for both the Select Board and the Town Manager. She said the document was modeled on one that was presented at a Conference of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). She said that it is not intended to focus on the roles and duties of the Select Board but is about setting expectations for the public and establishing transparency, communication, and community engagement.

Several members of the Board had feelings about this document. McCann said he feels it is unnecessary and that the public should rely on the Town Charter, which he thinks explains the role of the Select Board in a plain and straightforward way. Nesoff agreed with McCann that such a document is not needed and said it merely sets forth how the Select Board is expected to act within their roles while not defining what the role is.

Grey said he thinks this would be a quick way for the public to understand the roles of the Select Board and Town Manager but said he thinks it should be set forth as “Expectations” rather than “Commitments.” In response to McCann’s comments, he stated that very few people would be inclined to read the Town Charter to understand the role of the Select Board. McCarthy said he likes the language of the document but also prefers the word “Expectations.”

After discussion it was the feeling of the Board that they would like time to look at this document more closely and discuss it further at a future meeting. Constable asked that this be done relatively quickly as the Board’s schedule will become very busy in the next few months.

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**TOWN MANAGER REPORT AND BOARD UPDATES**

Constable said she is happy to report that Michelle LeBlanc will be starting work as her Executive Assistant on Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. She said that the Assistant Town Manager job description and profile has been approved and the position should be posted by the end of this week or early next week.

Constable said the first bimonthly Town newsletter was sent out to an email list of about 2,000 people and so far they have received excellent feedback. She said they are planning to put a link on the Town website as well on Facebook and in The Hull Times to let people know how to sign up to receive this. There was a brief discussion about how to make sure that town events are included in the newsletter. Constable said they are working with an outside firm that develops the newsletter but she would try to circulate a schedule to Board members so they can let her know if there are things they feel should be included. Taverna asked if it was necessary to hire an outside firm to do the newsletter and Constable said she does not have the necessary staff for such a project and their fees are small and the product is professional. She noted that as a town Hull does not have the staffing levels required for some work that needs to be done in the town (e.g. engineers, surveyors), which is why they often use consultants. She said they are used in the place of full-time employees and serve to decrease the costs of projects.

Constable said they will be seeking quotes for a survey of the entire length of the railroad bed. She also said she has received questions about the lack of lighting at Pemberton. She said that during the past two storms poles at the pier came down, damaging the connection to the lights on the pier. She said they are working to repair this situation and have put temporary lighting in place in the meantime.

Grey asked what is happening on George Washington Boulevard. Constable said there is a sewer main leak and an emergency repair is being made. She said at this point they are not sure how extensive the repair will be, but they will need to do an emergency procurement to cover the work.

McCann asked about the status of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Middle School. Constable said they had a meeting this morning and are making good progress and that at this point they are evaluating some of the financial aspects of it. She said they would like to get out the RFQ for the architect so they can understand what would be needed to outfit the building to accommodate Town Hall services. She said they are hoping to know the costs in time for Town Meeting.

McCann said there will be an event at the Hull Lifesaving Museum tomorrow to honor Sally Snowman, the retiring civilian Lighthouse Keeper at Boston Light, and commended the Museum on all the community events they have sponsored. He also noted that there has been a lot of activity and programming at the Hull Public Library. He said that work to repair the top windows at the Carousel will start soon and said that Hull Pride is holding their annual Valentine's Day Dance Party on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup>.

Nesoff said the AHC has been working with a consultant to look at town-owned properties to see what might be suitable for affordable housing and are also looking at smaller properties with Habitat for Humanity to see if they can do anything in Hull. He also reminded everyone of the Hull No Place for Hate event at Wellspring in honor of Martin Luther King Day.

McCarthy said he would like to see reestablishment of a Beautification Committee become a priority in the next few months. He said he has spoken to a number of people who are very excited about this. Grey said there are several landscapers who have indicated they would be willing to help with this project at no charge. McCarthy also echoed Grey's comments on the passing of Joe Menice.

Taverna said he attended a Save Our Space (SOS) event and said he heard a lot of reasonable conversations and talk of compromise and understanding. He said this is an issue that will be coming up soon.

On a motion by McCann seconded by McCarthy the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Recorded by Kathleen Fanning

Approved by:

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## **Documents**

The following documents were included in the members' packets or were presented during the meeting and are available in the Select Board's office upon request:

- Agenda for Select Board Meeting on January 10, 2024
- Select Board Goals and Priorities
- Select Board Policies and Procedures
- Town of Hull Organizational Commitments/Pledge