

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

September 25, 2023

Rowley Town Hall, 139 Main Street, Rowley, MA

6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Cliff Pierce; Vice Chairman Christine Kneeland; Clerk Deana Ziev; Robert Snow; Sheri David (Town Administrator Deborah Eagan; Assistant Town Administrator Amy Lydon)

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Pierce called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He said the meeting is being audio and video recorded by Rowley Community Media.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Sheri David led the Pledge of Allegiance.

6:00 p.m. TO 6:05 p.m. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sieglinde Aigner-Crooks said she has loved being a Rowley resident for the past thirteen years and she attended the recent 911 Memorial Ceremony. She read a quote that Reverend Bob Hagopian made at the September 11th ceremony about how back during the 2001 tragedy, people displayed flags as a sign of unity and people did not take a knee during the National Anthem back then. She said these words stabbed her in the heart and she reached out to Reverend Bob that day to discuss his comments. She said taking a knee is a peaceful action, and a Black athlete lost their athletic career because of this. She said Reverend Bob defended his words via text messages back to her. She read a quote that was made by Sheri David at the September 11, 2023 Selectmen's meeting. Sheri David said that her comments were not made on behalf of the Board and her comments were her own. Aigner-Crooks said the awful sigh heard by David may have been her or it may have been from her friend. Aigner-Crooks asked why a man of the cloth would make a comment and why would Sheri agree with the comment and take issue with someone sighing. She said she has been married to a Black man for over thirty years and racism is still an issue in this country. She said it hurts her to bring up the peaceful action of kneeling in light of the recent insurrection at the Capital and the many mass shootings in the country. She said we don't need to worry about kneeling athletes; she respects their freedom of speech and hopes the Board does as well. Pierce thanked Aigner-Crooks for her comments, and as with all public comment topics, because this topic is not on the agenda the Board cannot comment on this.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Request from Town Administrator Deborah Eagan to appoint Linda Cook to the position of Assistant Town Accountant

Chairman Pierce read the following:

Debbie is requesting the Board vote to appoint Linda Cook to the position of Assistant Town Accountant. Attached is the request.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to appoint Linda Cook to the position of Assistant Town Accountant, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

2. Request from Treasurer/Collector Karen Summit to appoint Jessica Greaney to the position of Assistant Tax Collector

Chairman Pierce read the following:

Karen is requesting the Board to vote to appoint Jessica Greaney to the position of Assistant Tax Collector.

Bob Snow made a motion to appoint Jessica Greaney to the position of Assistant Tax Collector, Deana Ziev second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

3. Letter of resignation from Police Detective/Full-time Police Officer Robert Adams

Chairman Pierce read the following:

The Board needs to vote to accept Robert Adams resignation.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to accept this resignation with regrets, Sheri David second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

4. Request from Police Chief Scott Dumas to appoint Robert Adams as a Reserve Police Officer

Chairman Pierce read the following:

Robert Adams has offered to stay on with the Police Department as a Reserve Police Officer. Chief Dumas is requesting the Board of Selectmen to vote to appoint him as a Reserve Police Officer effective September 26, 2023.

Bob Snow made a motion to appoint Robert Adams as a Reserve Police Officer, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSTAINED

5. Request from Police Chief Scott Dumas to lift the freeze for the position of Police Detective/Full-time Police Officer

Chairman Pierce read the following:

The resignation of Robert Adams has created a vacancy in the position of Detective/Full-time Police Officer in the Police Department. Chief Dumas is requesting that the Board of Selectmen vote to lift the hiring freeze so that he can fill this vacancy.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to lift the hiring freeze for this position, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSTAINED

6. Request from Building Inspector Ken Ward to appoint James Pike to the position of Alternate Building Inspector

Chairman Pierce read the following:

Ken is requesting the Board of Selectmen vote to appoint James Pike to the position of Alternate Building Inspector. James currently serves as the Georgetown Building Inspector.

Deana Ziev made a motion to appoint James Pike to the position of Alternate Building Inspector, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

7. Letter of resignation from Library Assistant for Youth Services Arianne L. Slauenwhite

Chairman Pierce read the following:

The Board needs to vote to accept Arianne's resignation.

Deana Ziev made a motion to accept this resignation with regret, Sheri David second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

8. Request from Library Director Pamela Jacobson to lift the hiring freeze for the position of Library Assistant for Youth Services

Chairman Pierce read the following:

With the resignation of Library Assistant for Youth Services Arianne L. Slauenwhite, Pam is requesting the Board to vote to lift the hiring freeze for this position.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to lift the hiring freeze for this position, Deana Ziev second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

9. Letter of resignation from Pumpout Boat Operator Lucas Reed

Chairman Pierce read the following:

The Board needs to vote to accept Lucas Reed's resignation.

Bob Snow made a motion to accept this resignation with regret, Sheri David second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

6:15 p.m. APPOINTMENT Robert Breaker, Chairman, Veterans Committee to discuss the following:

- Appointment of John Reilly to the vacant seat on the Veterans Committee
- Memorial Day Parade planning and funding
- Wreaths Across America
- Eastern Essex Veterans Services Director position

Appointment of John Reilly to the vacant seat on the Veterans Committee

Bob Breaker said John Reilly is a retired Commander of the US Navy and well suited to serve on the Committee. He said Reilly ran the working group for the parade and the Memorial Day Parade. He said he is also retired from the State Police.

Bob Snow made a motion to appoint John Reilly to the Veterans Committee, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Memorial Day Parade planning and funding

Breaker said the Parade working group will begin meeting in October. He said he has concerns about the funding because last year's parade cost \$5,000 to hold, and the flags cost \$2,000. He said we may be able to raise the funds through the community again this year, but he is not sure how long the community will donate for this. He said the Committee members and participants did a great job, but he isn't sure that we want to do a parade every year. He said he will keep the Board updated on the Committee's meetings. Kneeland made a recommendation to keep with the past tradition of having the Board of Selectmen lead the parade so that they are the first people on the Town Common to meet the parade goers. Breaker said they will address this and other issues that have been brought to their attention. Snow said there are about 300 Veterans in Town and it has been difficult over the years to get them involved. He said many Veterans were not treated well when they came back to this country. Breaker agreed with Snow and said he spends a lot of time on outreach.

Wreaths Across America

Breaker said the Fire Department is holding a 5K race event to raise money for the Veterans, and is using the Light Department bill mailing to publicize this. He said in the

past they publicized Wreaths Across America using a flyer sent in the Light bills. He said they need people to help publicize this event, which has a cut-off date of November 16th. He said last year they were ahead of where they are this year, and he is asking that they be allowed to hang a banner on the Town Common backstop to publicize this.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to authorize the banner on the Town Common backstop as requested, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Eastern Essex Veterans Services Director position

Breaker said they are hiring a new Director and he wants to be sure they are hiring the best possible person. He said Veterans haven't attended the Eastern Essex Veterans Services Board meetings to voice their needs. He said he recently hired a plumber to replace a toilet for a Veteran in Town, and other Town Veterans gave money to pay for this. He said another Veteran in Town has stage four cancer and they need to go to Beverly because we don't have a Director. He said when Hamilton and Wenham left the District it created a financial burden and now the Administrative Assistant is a part-time position, which hurts Veterans. He said he has been asking the other communities to bring this up to their Boards of Selectmen. He said it is vital to get the best possible candidate into this position. Snow said he served as on Veterans Board for 12 years and while he was Chairman they started to televise the meetings for transparency. Breaker said he reviewed the minutes and sees that nobody shows up at these meetings. He said the Vietnam Veterans are the next group who will need help, they feel they have been disrespected, and they have no idea that there are VA Services available to them or where to get help. He said this information needs to get out into the community. Snow said Veterans help each other and he helped a Veteran family to find services while he was in Aruba. Breaker said Veterans need to register with the VA to be eligible for services, and said this position is extremely important.

David said the search committee has narrowed the candidates down to between two and five, and their names have been redacted. She said if Breaker supports a candidate who has applied, he should send in a letter of recommendation.

Snow said the attitude in the past in the service has been to suck it up if you were injured, but now they document all injuries. Breaker said the two best members on the Veterans Committee are not Veterans. He said they are working on a project with Triton students to install pvc pipes at the gravesites of Veterans so that the flags can be placed in the pipes rather than in the ground. He said Nerissa Wallen set up a Facebook page detailing volunteer positions available in Rowley. Pierce thanked Breaker for a great parade, and it was the best one he has attended. Breaker said all the people did all of the work. Pierce thanked Breaker for keeping the Board informed on these important issues.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Update on the September 14, 2023 Triton District Communication Committee meeting

Chairman Pierce read the following:

Vice Chairman Christine Kneeland and Selectman Sheri David are the Board's representatives to the Triton District Communication Committee.

They attended the September 14, 2023 DCC meeting. Christine will give the Board an update on various topics that the DCC is focused on.

Christine Kneeland read the following:

- 1) Rowley will be hosting the November 16, 2023 DCC meeting in the Town Hall Auditorium, rather than the January 25, 2024 meeting. The meeting location was switched from Salisbury to Rowley due to a conflict. Salisbury will host the January 25, 2024 meeting.*
- 2) Christine and Sheri are both on the Alternative Assessment Subcommittee. The DCC requested two representatives from each Town in the District to serve on this subcommittee. Finance Committee Chairman Larry White declined to serve, so Sheri will serve with Christine on this subcommittee*
- 3) Superintendent Brian Forget informed the DCC that he sent a letter to the Legislature's Joint Committee on Education supporting the passage of two bills that would have a direct impact on increased funding for Triton.*

Kneeland said the first is Senate bill #303 which is for an increase in funding by the State for the education foundation budget. She said the second bill is House #448 which is for adequate minimum school aid. She said more information about these bills is on the Governor's website.

Kneeland continued:

- 4) Christine and Sheri will be attending the Essex County Asset Builder Network Breakfast on October 6, 2023.*

Kneeland provided the following additional updates:

- Any changes or recommendations for a DCC agenda can be sent by any committee member to Brian Forget, Linda Litcofsky or Nichole Staude no later than the Friday before the next meeting
- They met the new Facilities Director John Skoniecki who replaced Chris Walsh
- Every student is entitled to universal free meals
- Forget informed them they had a great opening of the schools, and a couple of schools have mold issues, but not Pine Grove

- The building project for the middle and high school was submitted to the MSBA this past April and they should hear from the MSBA this coming December
- The District's theme this year is "Belonging"
- There is a donor for the Performing Arts program who has committed to paying for the purchase or rental of instruments for all fourth graders across the district
- The Landlord/Tenant working group will be meeting because Salisbury Elementary School is now owned by Salisbury and not by the District, so the regional agreement will need to be updated to reflect this

David said she and Kneeland also met with Brian Forget and Nerissa Wallen to review the Chapter 70 funding formula.

Bernie Cullen of 283 Wethersfield Street said he was at the meeting and agrees with the updates provided. He said we need to work with the other two Towns to try to change the assessment formula which uses annual enrollments to allocate the costs to the Towns. Kneeland said she reached out to Forget on the assessment formula and she will discuss this after their next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Update on the intersection of Route 1 and Central and Glen Streets traffic light

Chairman Pierce read the following:

We were informed today from Frank Suszynski of MDOT that the traffic lights have been turned on. Frank says that they are still in the testing and adjusting phase for a couple of weeks and that he is asking for feedback from the Town on how they are operating. Debbie has asked the Police, Highway, Fire, and Light departments to send any feedback on the lights to her so that she can forward them to MDOT.

Snow said he has been pestering Suszynski for the past three years about this and we are very lucky to have received this light. He said there are 100,000 intersections in the State and our State Senator and Representative got this project moved forward from 2027/2028. He said there are a few bugs to be worked out and asked people to let the Board of Selectmen know if they encounter issues so we can address them. He said it took ten years to get this light in. David said we should ask the Police Chief to have the officers sit and observe the light cycles there during the busiest times of the day for a couple times during their shifts. Pierce said that is a good idea. Pierce said this has been a long road and Snow deserves a lot of credit for this. He said we need to start working on getting a traffic light at the intersection of Route 1 and Wethersfield Street, which is just as bad. Eagan said she will pass the request on from the Board to the Police Chief, and will also let Brian Forget know about the status of the lights so he can let the bus company know.

Bernie Cullen of 283 Wethersfield Street said the Wethersfield Street intersection is dangerous and people don't obey the rules of the road and wave people on through the traffic. He said the Police should hand out tickets for this. He said the Water Department staff can also monitor the lights since they frequently travel through them. Snow said Highway Surveyor Patrick Snow has worked to trim the vegetation at this intersection to help with visibility, and we have to go to the legislature to change the speed limit on the road. Kneeland said both intersections are heavily traveled by students. Pierce said there have been three deaths at the Wethersfield intersection and no deaths at the Central/Glen intersection. He said the State analyzed both intersections and determined that the Central/Glen Street intersection was the priority.

Rowley resident Saba Whitmore asked if there is a right turn on red allowed at the new light when leaving Wethersfield Street. She said she doesn't think there needs to be a "No Right Turn on Red" sign there as it is self explanatory and goes with the flow of traffic. Snow said he hasn't had a chance to go to the intersection to see if there is a sign there, but he plans to go there. Whitmore said the Board discussed adding more police presence at the intersection but this doesn't make sense to her as people will slow down way below the speed limit if they see the police cruiser, which messes up the whole flow of traffic. She said there has never been a death at the Wethersfield Street intersection and having two lights within one mile doesn't make sense. She said it seems ludicrous to add a police presence at both intersections as suggested. David said it is not ludicrous to add police presence at fatal intersections. She said she has lived there for 34 years and has been to fatal accidents at the Wethersfield Street and Central/Glen intersections. She said the reason for the police presence is to see if there are any issues with the lights that were turned on today, and it would be for a couple times during the shifts and not the entire shift, to watch a couple cycles of the traffic light.

Danby Whitmore of 61 Glen Street said she noticed today that the yellow light changes very fast. David said if a Patrolman sees an issue at the light, they can reach out to MassDOT and have them come to fix the issue.

2. Discuss Housing Partnership Committee

Chairman Pierce read the following:

During the June 26,2023 meeting, the Board discussed creating a Housing Partnership Committee that would be charged with the following tasks:

- *Study, promote and facilitate affordable housing in the community by working through public and private partnerships;*
- *prioritize housing initiatives and goals that focus on enabling families, the elderly, and veterans, to have housing choices in the community;*

- identify resources in the community or in the region to supplement housing needs;
- identifying and researching available sites for potential affordable housing projects;
- acts as an advisor to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board;
- promotes the creation and preservation of affordable housing;
- makes recommendations to the Planning Board on housing matters;
- makes recommendations on Comprehensive Permits (40B) to the Board of Selectmen and ZBA;
- recommends policies on affordable and accessible housing; and
- serves as source of information on affordable housing matters.

At this meeting, the Board authorized Debbie to work on this and to get legal guidance from Town Counsel Tom Mullen. Tom has provided legal guidance to the Board on the creation of the committee.

Debbie:

I don't doubt that Town Meeting could adopt a bylaw to create a Housing Partnership Committee, but when I did a brief online search the examples I found in other towns appeared to be committees created and appointed by, and answerable to, the Select Board. I should think that would be the preferable route, if only because changes in the structure or charge of the committee could be made by the Board at any meeting without having to wait for the Annual Town Meeting.

That said, I'll be happy to prepare either a draft bylaw or a Select Board vote to create such a committee. Either way, there are some issues that the Board needs to decide:

1. Size of the Committee: My search, like yours, has shown that most are 5 members, which seems appropriate. A smaller committee would probably not have room for the desired specialties sought in members; a larger one might be unwieldy and could have problems achieving a quorum.

2. Composition of the Committee: I certainly recommend that the committee be appointed by the Select Board (as opposed to complicating things needlessly by having some members appointed by other bodies or officials). But do we want to specify particular fields the members should be drawn from? I recommend saying that the Board will attempt to fill the committee with persons experienced in affordable housing, real estate, construction, banking and other relevant fields. I do not recommend requiring that any particular fields be represented by any particular number of members. Thus it would seem to me too confining to require that 1 member be a builder, another a banker, etc.

3. *Residency. I recommend that the committee be open to non-residents. Under G.L. c. 41, s. 109, we are free so to structure any appointed committee, and persons with the desired expertise and interest simply may not be available locally at any given time.*

4. *Term. I suggest a relatively short term for each appointment, such as 1-2 years, and certainly not more than 3. If a member proves troublesome, removing him from office during his term can lead to legal claims that he is being punished for his substantive votes in violation of his First Amendment rights, but the Board always has the right to decide not to re-appoint. Terms should be staggered.*

5. *Charge. I think the charge laid out in the minutes looks very good.*

I hope this is helpful. Please feel free to call me any time. Thanks.

Tom

How does the Board wish to proceed? Would you like Town Counsel Tom Mullen to provide the Board with a motion and vote to create the committee? If so, the Board will need to advise him on the five items listed above:

- 1) *Size of Committee*
- 2) *Composition of Committee*
- 3) *Residency*
- 4) *Term*
- 5) *Charge*

Pierce said it is a good idea to ask Tom Mullen to work on this. Eagan asked the Board about if they agree with the five members and the charge of the committee as outlined above. Pierce said all of Mullen's suggestions are appropriate. Ziev said the term should be two years staggered. Pierce said he thinks it should be open to non-residents.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the guidelines as discussed by the Board, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

MINUTES

- September 11, 2023

Deana Ziev made a motion to approve the minutes of September 11, 2023, Sheri David second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Bob Snow - ABSTAINED

- September 11, 2023 Executive Session

Christine Kneeland made a motion to approve the minutes of September 11, 2023 Executive Session, Sheri David second, all in favor – aye (3-0). Bob Snow – ABSTAINED; Deana Ziev - ABSTAINED

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Board of Health is sponsoring a multi-vaccine clinic at St. Mary's Church, 202 Main Street, September 28, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Registration is required. Please register through the Town's website. For more information, call the Health Department at 948-2231
2. The American Red Cross Sound the Alarm smoke detector event to be held on Saturday, October 7, 2023. Volunteers will be installing free smoke alarms. To request a smoke alarm installation appointment, call 800-564-1234.
3. The Town has the following board vacancies:
 - **Planning Board Associate**
 - **Conservation Commission**
 - **Council on Aging**
 - **Open Space Committee**
 - **Rowley Cultural Council**
 - **Zoning Board of Appeals – Alternate member**Interested residents should send a letter of interest to the Board of Selectmen. Positions are open until filled.

ADJOURN

Bob Snow made a motion to adjourn, Deana Ziev second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Lydon
Assistant Town Administrator

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Meeting memo regarding General Business #1: Request from Town Administrator Deborah Eagan to appoint Linda Cook to the position of Assistant Town Accountant
2. Memo from Town Administrator Deborah Eagan regarding Appointment of Assistant Town Accountant
3. Cover letter and resume from Linda Cook
4. Job Vacancy Notice for Assistant Town Accountant

5. Meeting memo regarding General Business #2: Request from Treasurer/Collector Karen Summit to appoint Jessica Greaney to the position of Assistant Tax Collector
6. Email request from Treasurer/Collector Karen Summit to appoint Jessica Greaney to the position of Assistant Tax Collector
7. Meeting memo regarding General Business #3: Letter of resignation from Police Detective/Full-time Police Officer Robert Adams
8. Letter of resignation from Police Detective/Full-time Police Officer Robert Adams
9. Meeting memo regarding General Business #4: Request from Police Chief Scott Dumas to appoint Robert Adams as a Reserve Police Officer
10. Email from Captain Sedgwick regarding Robert Adams
11. Meeting memo regarding General Business #5: Request from Police Chief Scott Dumas to lift the freeze for the position of Police Detective/Full-time Police Officer
12. Email from Chief Dumas regarding lifting the hiring freeze
13. Meeting memo regarding General Business #6: Request from Building Inspector Ken Ward to appoint James Pike to the position of Alternate Building Inspector
14. Email from Ken Ward regarding James Pike
15. Meeting memo regarding General Business #7: Letter of resignation from Library Assistant for Youth Services Arianne L. Slauenwhite
16. Letter of resignation from Library Assistant for Youth Services Arianne L. Slauenwhite
17. Meeting memo regarding General Business #8: Request from Library Director Pamela Jacobson to lift the hiring freeze for the position of Library Assistant for Youth Services
18. Meeting memo regarding General Business #9: Letter of resignation from Pumpout Boat Operator Lucas Reed
19. Letter of resignation from Pumpout Boat Operator Lucas Reed
20. Handout from Bob Breaker regarding Wreaths Across America
21. Updated meeting memo regarding 6:15 p.m. Appointment: Robert Breaker, Chairman, Veterans Committee to discuss the following: Appointment of John Reilly to the vacant seat on the Veterans Committee; Memorial Day Parade planning and funding; Wreaths Across America; Eastern Essex Veterans Services Director position
22. Email from Bob Breaker regarding Selectmen meeting
23. Letter from John Reilly regarding appointment to Town of Rowley Veterans Committee
24. Meeting memo regarding New Business #1: Update on the September 14, 2023 Triton District Communication Committee meeting
25. Email from Christine Kneeland regarding DCC meeting switch
26. Email from Christine Kneeland regarding Alternative Assessment Subcommittee

27. Email from Brian Forget regarding two bills before the Joint Committee on Education, including attached letter to the Committee from Triton
28. Email from Christine Kneeland regarding Essex County Asset Builder Network
29. Updated meeting memo regarding Old Business #1: Update on the intersection of Route 1 and Central and Glen Streets traffic light
30. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #2: Discuss Housing Partnership Committee
31. Email from Tom Mullen regarding Housing Partnership Committee
32. June 26, 2023 Meeting memo regarding New Business #4: Discuss Forming a Housing Partnership Committee
33. Minutes excerpt from June 26, 2023 regarding New Business #4: Discuss Forming a Housing Partnership Committee
34. Draft minutes of September 11, 2023