

## **MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

October 2, 2023

Rowley Town Hall, 139 Main Street, Rowley, MA

6:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Cliff Pierce; Vice Chairman Christine Kneeland; Robert Snow; Sheri David (Town Administrator Deborah Eagan) Clerk Deana Ziev - ABSENT

### **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**

Dave Petersen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Dave Petersen of 25 Newbury Road said he is the Chairman of the Cemetery Commissioners and he wants to talk about an issue that happened this weekend. He said he is speaking as an individual and not on behalf of the Board. He provided a brief history of the Cemetery which started in the 1600s. He said the records for the gravesites were all done by hand in the past but thanks to Town Clerk Catie McClenaghan and Assistant Town Clerk Janet Peabody, the records are 95% computerized. He said they get many requests from people looking for historical records. He said they put signs in the Cemetery to designate the roads and to help people locate gravesites. He said the signs were installed by Cemetery Supervisor Tim McGinley, but this past weekend three signs disappeared, which is upsetting. He said the Police are investigating this, but he wanted to bring this to the attention of the residents in Rowley so that if people find them they can return the signs. He said this is disappointing, this is sacred ground, and the signs were installed to help people find the graves. Pierce said this is a very discouraging story and thanked Petersen for bringing this to the Board's attention.

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

1. Letter of resignation from Reserve Telecommunicator Dispatcher Chelsie Reilly

Bob Snow made a motion to accept this resignation with regrets, Sheri David second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSENT

2. Letter of resignation from Water Department Maintenance Laborer Joseph Colburn

Christine Kneeland made a motion to accept this resignation with regrets, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSENT

3. Letter of Commendation issued by Fire Chief Mark Emery to Firefighter John Ward

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*Fire Chief Mark Emery has issued a commendation to Firefighter John Ward for his work in outstanding work involving a serious motorcycle crash.*

Chairman Pierce read the Letter of Commendation into the record. Snow said Ward is to be commended for his actions.

4. Request from Town Administrator Deborah Eagan to appoint Amy Lydon to the position of Town Accountant

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*Debbie is recommending that Amy Lydon be appointed to the position of Town Accountant. (Memo and resume is attached.)*

*The Board knows that Amy has provided an excellent level of service in our office since 2012. She was the Assistant Town Accountant from 2009 – 2012. Additionally, she has a very strong financial background. She worked in the financial services industry as a compliance supervisor, accountant, and portfolio administrator at Numeric Investors in Boston. She also worked at Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. in Boston as a senior client account manager. She is a magna cum laude graduate of Boston College, where she majored in finance.*

*Debbie feels that Amy will be able to take on the responsibilities of this very important position in the Town, and Amy will bring knowledge of Town operations to this position.*

*If the Board is in agreement with this recommendation, the Board will need to vote to appoint Amy as the Town Accountant with a start date to be set by Debbie that gives us time to transition.*

Pierce said this is a fantastic choice as Amy has done a great job in the office. Eagan said she is requesting based on Amy's exceptional qualifications and institutional knowledge of the Town from her many years working for the Board, that she be hired at Pay Grade 13 Step 7 as outlined in her memo. Snow said when Amy was Assistant Town Accountant in 2012 / 2013 Amy picked up on discrepancies that others hadn't noticed, and she is very qualified for this position. Dave Petersen of 25 Newbury Road said he worked with Amy when he was on the Board for many years, she is a wonderful person and is so helpful to everyone and in helping Debbie. Petersen highly endorsed and congratulated Amy for this appointment.

Bob Snow made a motion to appoint Amy Lydon to the position of Town Accountant at Grade 13 Step 7, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSENT

**6:15 p.m. JOINT MEETING WITH THE PLANNING BOARD**

- 1) to meet with Rob Piersielak to discuss the vacant Planning Board seat
- 2) to vote to fill the vacant elected Planning Board seat

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*A copy of the Vacancy Notice is attached.*

*Because this is an opening on an elected Board, the statute requires both the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board to meet jointly to make this appointment. This appointment runs until the Annual Town Election, which will be held on May 14, 2024.*

*The procedure for the Joint Meeting is as follows:*

- 1) *BOARD OF SELECTMEN VOTE TO OPEN THE JOINT MEETING*
- 2) *Chairman Cliff Pierce calls for a motion and a second from the Board of Selectmen to open the Joint Meeting with the Planning Board by a roll call vote. The Board of Selectmen then votes to by a roll call vote.*

Bob Snow made a motion to open the Joint Meeting with the Planning Board, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – roll call vote: Cliff Pierce – aye; Christine Kneeland – aye; Bob Snow – aye; Sheri David – aye. Deana Ziev – ABSENT

Planning Board Chairman Chris Thornton made a motion to open the Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen, Kevin Moriarty second, all in favor – roll call vote: Chris Thornton – aye; Kevin Moriarty – aye; Craig Copeland – aye. David Jaquith – ABSENT

Joint meeting is open.

Pierce continued:

*Chairman Pierce announces that Rob Piersielak has applied for the open seat on the Planning Board. Chairman Pierce will call Mr. Piersielak forward.*

Pierce asked Piersielak: Thank you for your interest in serving the Town. Please tell us about yourself.

Piersielak responded: I have three daughters and we moved here from upstate New York last year for a job in Beverly. His background includes building and renovating

homes, he likes fixing things and likes to volunteer. He said the decisions made by the Planning Board affect the community and he is highly interested in participating.

Pierce asked Piersielak: State Law requires public officials to learn about the State Ethics Law and to take an online ethics test. If appointed, you would need to take the test. Would you have any issues with this?

Piersielak responded: I have no problem with taking this exam and this is how people have faith in the elected and appointed officials.

Pierce asked Piersielak: If appointed, you will be a member of a “public body” and will need to learn about the Open Meeting Law. The Town Clerk will be providing you information on this when you are sworn in. Do you have any issues or concerns with this? Public officials need to be acquainted with the State Public Records law. Most written communications, including email messages, are subject to the Public Records Law. Do you have any issues or concerns with this? He said there are also Planning Board rules and regulations and the Zoning Bylaws that need to be followed.

Piersielak responded: No issues with the Open Meeting Law or Public Records laws.

Pierce asked Piersielak: You are being appointed to a vacant elected seat, with a term to expire on May 14, 2024. Do you plan to run for this seat? If so, you will be filing the unexpired term which runs through 2027.

Piersielak responded: Yes

Planning Board member David Jaquith arrived at 6:25 p.m. and sat with the other Planning Board members.

Snow asked if he is familiar with Roberts Rules? Piersielak said no. Snow suggested that he get a copy of this as it outlines how meetings are run. David asked Piersielak if he personally has any issues that will be coming before the Planning Board. Piersielak said he lives at Falcon Ridge and there is discussion about sidewalks, but he will need to recuse himself on that.

Kevin Moriarty told Piersielak that he should review the Planning Board minutes to familiarize himself on what they have been working on. Chris Thornton said it would be helpful for Piersielak to watch the last two Planning Board meetings. Thornton said they meet once a month but sometimes will have a second meeting in a month. Pierce said he started on the Planning Board a long time ago.

Planning Board Chairman Chris Thornton made a motion to appoint Rob Piersielak to the open seat on the Planning Board, Kevin Moriarty second, all in favor – roll call vote: Chris Thornton – aye; Kevin Moriarty – aye; Craig Copeland – aye; David Jaquith – aye.

Bob Snow made a motion to appoint Rob Piersielak to the open seat on the Planning Board, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – roll call vote: Cliff Pierce – aye; Christine Kneeland – aye; Bob Snow – aye; Sheri David – aye. Deana Ziev – ABSENT

Bob Snow made a motion to close the Joint Meeting with the Planning Board, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – roll call vote: Cliff Pierce – aye; Christine Kneeland – aye; Bob Snow – aye; Sheri David – aye. Deana Ziev – ABSENT

Planning Board Chairman Chris Thornton made a motion to close the Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen and to adjourn, Kevin Moriarty second, all in favor – roll call vote: Chris Thornton – aye; Kevin Moriarty – aye; Craig Copeland – aye; David Jaquith – aye.

Joint Meeting closed and Planning Board meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

*Pierce read the following:*

*The Joint Meeting is now closed. Rob Piersielak will need to be sworn in by Town Clerk Catie McClenaghan before he can participate in a Planning Board meeting. Amy Lydon will prepare the Official Action Notice (OAN) documenting the vote tomorrow and will email it to Rob Piersielak and the Town Clerk.*

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

5. Request from Police Chief Scott Dumas to accept the Kevin and Avonte Program: Reducing Injury and Death of Missing Individuals with Dementia and Developmental Disabilities grant from the Department of Justice

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*Chief Dumas is requesting that the Board vote to accept this grant.*

*The grant is for the following:*

### ***Project Description***

*The Rowley Police Department is seeking funding to purchase Project LifeSaver transmitter bracelets, signal receivers, and necessary training to implement the Project Safe Return program; intended to reduce injury and death of missing individuals with Dementia and Developmental Disabilities. Transmitter bracelets, purchased through the grant award, would be available for free to eligible members of the community who have forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism, who, due to their condition may be prone to wandering from safe environments. Participation in the program is voluntary and participants, guardians or parents will need to sign an enrollment form, for these purposes. If a program participant goes missing, trained officers will utilize the radio receivers to locate*

*and rescue the missing participants, reducing the time missing and potential injury or death due to wandering.*

Bob Snow made a motion to accept this grant, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSENT

Chief Dumas thanked the Board for allowing him to apply for this grant and he thanked the following individuals who sent in letters of support for this grant:

- Senator Bruce Tarr
- Ellie Davis (Rowley COA)
- Courtney Hutchinson (Elderly Mental Health Outreach Team in Amesbury)
- Nicole LaPerriere (Pine Grove)
- Tim Sobezenski (NEEDS Center)
- Francis V. McDermott MD (North Shore Physican's Group) through collaboration with Karen Rodrigues, NSPG clinician

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### 1. Approve Personnel Plan language updates

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*The Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) approved the changes as shown on the attached for section B2-0 Stipends, Licenses, Uniform Reimbursements, Overtime and Shift Differentials, and to Appendix 24.*

*These changes are to the wording around stipends, longevity, educational incentives and shift differentials given to non-union Dispatchers and non-union sworn ranking officers. The changes reflect the practices in the Police Department to provide these non-union Dispatchers and non-union sworn ranking officers payment for these items equal to the amounts in the respective union contracts.*

*There are two additional changes that the PAC has not yet approved that add clarifying language for the following:*

- *When a person is hired above step 1 as detailed in Section A7-3 Exception #1, the new language clarifies how they move to the next step.*
- *When an employee moves from a full-time union position to a full-time non-union position, the anniversary date for the accrual of benefits is the date that they were first eligible for benefits under the union contract. (Language added to three sections of Personnel Plan: Longevity, Vacation and Sick)*

*Could the Board please review these changes and if the Board is in agreement, please vote to approve the changes.*

Christine Kneeland made a motion to approve these changes, Sheri David second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSENT

2. Approve 2024 retiree health insurance renewal

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*We need to renew the Town's retiree health insurance for calendar year 2024. MIIA has provided us with a Medex 2 renewal which reflects an overall 5.37% increase. MIIA is also offering a second retiree plan this upcoming year, Medicare PPO Blue Freedom, which has a lower monthly premium than the Medex 2 plan, because it is subsidized through the Federal government. Retirees have been contacted by Karen Summit about the new plan option.*

*Debbie is asking the Board to vote to authorize her to renew the insurance plans for the upcoming year.*

Christine Kneeland made a motion to authorize Debbie to renew the insurance plans for the upcoming year, Bob Snow second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSENT

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. Discuss Harney Field update

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*Debbie, Cliff, and Parks & Rec Chairman David Zizza have been working with Michael Harney on the wording of the plaque that is to be placed at Harney Field.*

*Chairman Pierce is asking the Board to approve a change to the wording on the plaque that will be placed at the field to the following:*

*Harney Field*

*Dedicated to Jane Harney, a teacher who served the Town of Rowley*

*The Board has previously voted to approve the following wording for the plaque:*

*Harney Field, Dedicated to Michael and Jane Harney*

*Mr. Harney had recently requested that the wording on the plaque be changed to acknowledge that his wife was a teacher.*

*If the Board is in agreement, please vote to approve the new language. Chairman Zizza will then proceed with ordering the plaque. Debbie will proceed with providing Mr. Harney with the deed restriction release for the parking and driveway access that was prepared by Town Counsel Tom Mullen.*

David asked if Michael Harney's name is being removed and only his wife's name will be listed. Eagan said that is what Mr. Harney wanted. Pierce said Mr. Harney is behind this language and this is what is important to him.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to approve the new language, Sheri David second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSENT

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. 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.
2. Fire Prevention Open House Event hosted by Fire Chief Mark Emery on October 9, 2023 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Fire Station, 477 Haverhill Street
3. The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission is holding a virtual regional housing production plan update session for Rowley residents and residents of other communities in the area on Thursday, October 12, 2023 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Residents can attend the virtual meeting by going to: [event.mvpc.org/Housing2](https://event.mvpc.org/Housing2).
4. The Board of Health regrets that due to nationwide supply-chain issues, no updated COVID vaccine booster shots were available for the vaccine clinic last week, although Flu, RSV, Pneumonia and other vaccines were administered to residents. We hope to have a supply of COVID vaccine ready for a COVID only clinic at the Fire Department on Friday October 6<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 AM to 1:00 pm. We will announce whether the vaccine has been received and the clinic will take place on our website on Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The website address is <https://www.townofrowley.net/board-health>

5. 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, Sheri David second, all in favor – aye (4-0).  
Deana Ziev - ABSENT



Meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Lydon  
Assistant Town Administrator

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Meeting memo regarding General Business #1: Letter of resignation from Reserve Telecommunicator Dispatcher Chelsie Reilly
2. Letter of resignation from Reserve Telecommunicator Dispatcher Chelsie Reilly
3. Meeting memo regarding General Business #2: Letter of resignation from Water Department Maintenance Laborer Joseph Colburn
4. Letter of resignation from Water Department Maintenance Laborer Joseph Colburn
5. Meeting memo regarding General Business #3: Letter of Commendation issued by Fire Chief Mark Emery to Firefighter John Ward
6. Letter of Commendation issued by Fire Chief Mark Emery to Firefighter John Ward
7. Meeting memo regarding General Business #4: Request from Town Administrator Deborah Eagan to appoint Amy Lydon to the position of Town Accountant
8. Job Vacancy Notice for Town Accountant position
9. Memo from Deborah Eagan regarding Town Accountant
10. Resume for Amy Lydon
11. Meeting memo regarding 6:15 p.m. Joint Meeting with the Planning Board
12. Notice of Vacancy on Planning Board
13. Email from Rob Piersielak regarding Rowley Planning Board Position Candidacy, including attached resume
14. Meeting memo regarding General Business #5: Request from Police Chief Scott Dumas to accept the Kevin and Avonte Program: Reducing Injury and Death of Missing Individuals with Dementia and Developmental Disabilities grant from the Department of Justice
15. Email from Chief Dumas regarding Grant Acceptance and attached document
16. Meeting memo regarding New Business #1: Approve Personnel Plan language updates
17. Personnel Plan language update to Section B2-0
18. Personnel Plan language update to Appendix 24
19. Personnel Plan language update to Section A7-3
20. Personnel Plan language update to Section B1-0
21. Personnel Plan language update to Section B4-0
22. Personnel Plan language update to Section B7-0

- 23. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #2: Approve 2024 retiree health insurance renewal
- 24. Renewal proposal from MIIA for retiree health insurance
- 25. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #1: Discuss Harney Field update
- 26. Email from Deborah Eagan regarding field dedication
- 27. Email from Michael Harney regarding field dedication
- 28. Announcement from Board of Health regarding COVID booster shots