

Tuesday, January 16, 2024
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Gala Room, Town Hall, 40 South Street
7:00pm

Members Present:

Mark Elfman, Chair (ME)
Stephanie McGowan, Vice Chair (SM)
Leah Gibson, Clerk (LG)
Dennis Keefe (DK)
Seth Ferguson (SF)

Also Present:

Paige Duncan, Acting Town Manger (PD)
Katie Lang, Executive Assistant (KL)
Bob Cutler, Town Clerk (BC)

Janet Sargent Tracey (SJT) – 29 Putnam Road
Jennie Dyer (JD) – 400 Foxboro Boulevard
Burt Delaney (BD) – 18 Foxhill Road
Randall Lyons (RL) – 59 Carroll Drive
Hoa Zhang (HZ), Owner of Hao Sushi
Andrew Ballentine (AB) – 51 Sherman Street

All Select Board meetings are recorded and broadcast by Foxboro Cable Access on Government Channel 22/38 and at [FCATv.org/live](https://www.fcattv.org/live)

1. 7:00pm - Citizen's Input

Citizen's Input - Janet Sargent-Tracey: Vote-By-Mail

Janet Sargent Tracey— 29 Putnam Road in Foxboro here. And telling that I'd like to speak on the vote by mail that is offered in 2020. I'm speaking today to Massachusetts residents, and the only way not to have that for municipal voting is for the board to vote against that. And I'm speaking today to ask the board not to opt out. This was brought up last year on the agenda, and you voted to opt out, and I'd like you to reconsider that vote for this year. You have to vote every year on that. And the reason why vote by mail wasn't necessary in town was because very few people used it. And this is just for the municipal. The others are state mandated. And so the only time that it was used in municipal voting here in town was in 2020 during the pandemic. And during that cycle, over 45% of votes were cast either absentee or vote by mail. And without the absentee, a full 22% were cast by vote by mail on that election. And I think that's a pretty substantial number, 22% of people voting in town. And a real success story that it's a successful thing to do. Another point that was made was that to use an absentee ballot instead of a vote by mail. And I gave everyone a little packet, and the last page is right off of the Secretary of State's webpage. And it shows very clearly that there are only three reasons why one would qualify to vote absentee. If you have a disability, for religious reasons, or if you're going to be traveling. Bob Cutler has said that he's very liberal in giving those out, which is fabulous. I think it's great. And I want to say, too, that I think the clerk's office does a just a beautiful job. They've got a lot of integrity, and they're hard working. But there are two things, two points on that, and then I'll leave. One of them is when using the absentee ballot, you have to swear, under penalty of perjury, that one or more of the three criteria that I just named is true. And there are lots of people that can't swear that and would choose to vote by mail. The other one is that if we were, if people did bend the rules a bit and swear to that and get an absentee ballot, if the election was ever close or ballots had to be recounted or that was contested in any way, those ballots would be deemed not qualifiable. So they'd be thrown out. Those votes would not count. So I think for those reasons, it's very important. I've got a whole paper. You can read those, seven or eight points. That's why I think voting by mail is important. And so for those reasons, I ask the board not to vote against or not to-- let's see. I ask the board not to-- Opt out. Opt out. Thank you. Not to opt out and let the ruling stand as it is written in Massachusetts.

Jennie Dyer – 400 Foxboro Boulevard, apartment 9102. And I will be brief. I can't improve on the eloquence of the former speaker. But I'm here to tell my personal tale, which is that I care for a 93-year-old woman, my mom. She's handicapped.

And this means that if I'm to leave, as I did tonight, I must have a home aid at \$35. And the same holds true, obviously, for elections. I'm not the only person who has care issues to deal with. There are people whose work schedules conflict. There are people whose children need care. And so it's a difficulty. And during the pandemic, it was a blessing to be able to have the mail-in vote. We retained the right to have mail-in vote during municipal elections. We're in a minority. And I don't want that to continue. I am totally against opting out of the mail-in ballot for local elections. Thank you. Thank you. I don't think I can beat those two eloquence. Very organized. Well done.

Burt Delaney – 18 Foxhill Road. Two items I'd like to address tonight quickly do with your time and the weather outside. First of all, I'd like to publicly thank the screening committee that you folks put together for the new town manager position. I haven't sat on those committees myself here in town and where I work. The amount of time effort and volunteerism that goes into that is significant. I'd especially like to thank Mr. Cutler, Bob Cutler, for overseeing that that committee. Secondly, I'd like to publicly express my concerns to the four members of the board who disregarded their own process of selecting a new town manager. Ms. McGowan, you don't have to worry about any of this. Your lack of professionalism and total disregard for a fair interview process is concerning to say the least. You asked the screening committee to do their job and they did. They did it professionally. You simply didn't like their candidates and didn't like the process and you changed the rules of the game in the fourth quarter. I can't believe as we sit here in Foxborough six months later at the debacle of the other town manager that we're doing this again. You predetermined what candidate you wanted to push forward and you wasted the time of the screening committee. Shame on you. In particular, I was shocked when I heard two quotes from the members of this board. Ms. Gibson, I don't know what you mean by this, but quote, I don't think there's any harm in interviewing Ms. Duncan at this time. We quickly found out what the harm that was existed when two of the qualified candidates withdrew. The harm you also did not see is for future volunteers who are going to be asked to be on these screening committees to say why bother. That's the harm. We have yet to see the harm. Although those two candidates withdrew, we are going to see it. Mr. Keefe, quote, I've never seen a situation where the screening committee chooses not to forward the name of the board's designated choice. Did you have a designated choice prior to the screening committee looking at the candidates? Obviously, you did. The process is skewed. If this statement by you is not indicative that this board has already determined who the new town manager would be, was going to be, I don't know what is. Chairman Elfman, Doc, I've known you a long time. You're an ethical and qualified man, person. You as the leader of this board have an opportunity to right this ship. I ask you to make a motion and to suspend the appointment of the new town manager until at a time that this board or a newly elected board can do it the right way. I'm disturbed that this board, again, six months later, has turned this interview process upside down. We are a laughing stock. There's only 32 of us in this world. We are on a world stage with the stadium sitting up on route one. You asked volunteers to do a job and they did. You didn't like it. You changed the rules of the game. So, again, I ask you to immediately suspend the appointment of a new town manager. I would also ask the four members who chose to change the rules of the game in the fourth quarter to resign immediately from your leadership positions. You have shown that you are not capable, for whatever the reasons, to make decisions that are in the best interest of this community. I look forward to seeing you step down and new leadership step forward. As we saw up on route one last week, you could have great leadership for a long time, but change sometimes is necessary. It is necessary in the town of Foxboro. Thank you.

Randall Lyons – 59 Carroll Drive in Foxboro. I've been here 10 plus years. I drafted an email that I sent out on Friday, just expressing my overall thoughts on the process. I think you guys acknowledged last week that a mistake was made in terms of not expressing your desire to put forward the acting town manager. Mistakes happen. I respect that. I think you brought it up. You acknowledged it and you move forward. I am I serve as an executive director for a nonprofit trade association here in this as a statewide trade association. I also sit on several boards. I understand the process. I get what you're under. I don't work for towns. I don't understand the public side of it, but I certainly acknowledge the effort that goes into this. My point in my letter was to look at Paige's experience for the last seven or eight months and talk to the town leaders that she represents, the town boards to get their way in, to see if they have her support, to see if they have if she has earned their respect, if Paige has earned their respect, if Paige has earned their support, then absolutely she should be the candidate. She is now has the seven to eight months on the on the job experience to do the job. Yes, she may not have the exact qualifications needed or not needed, but the exact qualifications to match the other two candidates. But you can't put a price tag on the seven to eight months that she's already been on the job. She has now

put forward a budget that is in process and I don't know if it's exactly completed, but as mentioned in the last meeting, it is going through the end of this month and is going to be heard by you. It's going to be heard by the budget committee and then it's going to be voted by the town. So there absolutely is a checks and balance system in this going through the process of hiring. I appreciate your support on the board. I appreciate all of your volunteer work and my quick research that I did today. The five of you have approximately one hundred and fifty years living in Foxborough. One hundred and fifty years. My guess is none of you are moving. So to the best of my knowledge, you absolutely want to do the right thing and hire the appropriate candidate. I don't know the exact answers to the questions that I ask about Paige. I've never met Paige. I've talked to her, I think, once on the phone. I don't know her. I don't know those answers. I'm hoping you do. And if those answers are yes, they have her support. Yes, she has. They have they have her. Excuse me. She is respected. Then I do believe that she is the appropriate candidate for the position. Thank you.

Citizen's Input - Juri Love: YMCA Accident. Reviewed the accident that occurred at the YMCA in December 2023 and asked the Select Board to have a safety committee to see what can be done to prevent this in the future in all areas of Town

2. 7:10pm - Public Hearing: Change of Category Application for Hao Sushi LLC dba Hao Sushi at 70 Central Street

PUBLIC HEARING::The Foxborough Select Board, acting as the Local Licensing Authority pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 138, will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 beginning at 7:10 p.m. in the Gala Meeting Room, Town Hall, 40 South Street, Foxborough, MA on the application for a Change of Category of license from an On Premises Annual Malt & Wine Restaurant License to an On Premises Annual All Alcoholic Restaurant License, for Hao Sushi LLC, d/b/a Hao Sushi, 70 Central Street, Foxborough, MA; Manager Hao Zhang.

HZ – Owner of Hao Sushi. Doing business for over a year. Looking to expand the license. TIPS Certified.

KL – This will be a license that is node specific for Uptown. Have three all alcohol on premises license town wide available.

Review and vote on Change of Category Application from an On Premises Beer & Wine License to an On Premises All Alcohol License for Hao Sushi LLC dba Hao Sushi at 70 Central Street

Motion to approve the request from Hao Sushi LLC dba Hao Sushi at 70 Central Street, for a Category Change Application from an On Premises Beer and Wine License to an On Premises All Alcohol License, by L. Gibson, 2nd by S. Ferguson.

Approved 5-0.

3. 7:20pm - Town Clerk: Public Hearing: Mail In Voting Discussion & Vote

Public Hearing: Select Board to discuss and vote on Mail In Voting for Annual Town Elections.

Motion to open the public hearing pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 54 Section 25 B to opt out of mail in early voting for the annual town election scheduled for May 6th 2024.

BC – I want to follow up from women that spoke earlier about the mail in voting for the town election. So last year was the first year that mail in voting was allowed for municipal elections. I came in to opt out. You all agreed and we opted out for last year. And if you recall last year we did not have a contested ballot. So if we had had mail in voting I would have been required to send out ballots to anyone that had requested a by mail ballot during the year. Last year was an off year cycle from for elections. But this year it's even more important. We have four elections this year. We have the presidential primary in March the September primary and then the November presidential election. So two years ago when we had the election cycle we had thousands of requests for mail in ballots. If for instance for March I'm expecting to get somewhere between three and four thousand requests for mail in ballots which is a great thing. It's convenient for people. However what it creates for the town election where we typically get anywhere from a thousand to two thousand people participate I'll be required to send out three to four thousand ballots to anyone that selects all elections for the year. That would be at a cost just for the mailing at approximately thirty five hundred to four thousand dollars just for the mailing. That doesn't include any time involved in processing doesn't include the extra cost for additional ballots that we would have to order because for the town election I normally order around three or four thousand ballots but I'd have to

order you know eight to ten thousand ballots and you know the more you order the more you're going to have to pay for that. So to get to the points made by the women who spoke earlier tonight and also the ones that you've received additional letters I know because I've seen them any of the points that are made in there the absentee ballot is that's why the absentee ballot is there. If we had the absentee as an alternative which we did last year you would have a directed mailing to people who actually want to vote for that election. What I'm afraid is going to happen is we're going to send out three to four thousand ballots and we might get five hundred back based on you know past records for our town elections. So although I don't expect this year to be an uncontested ballot I you know we haven't had a big turnout I think we had like maybe twenty five hundred two years ago to the point where one of the women said that most cities and towns have not opted out last year was the first year that we had to do it. So a lot of cities and towns were just trying to figure out how it was going to work for them and it was an off-election cycle. I've talked to many of my Clerk friends who are right now as we speak attempting to opt out as well because of the same reasons that I mentioned to you the cost involved mostly. If I knew that we were going to send out four thousand to get four thousand back I wouldn't be here but with spending a lot of money for a little return on that. I brought a copy of the application for an absentee ballot application. There is no place for them to check and list the reason why they are requesting it. So we're not asking them to lie. Essentially since the pandemic the reasons on here are interpreted liberally because as we just saw the last month and a half I don't know but most people I know were sick the whole month. So if they weren't feeling well didn't want to expose other people or be exposed they can do that for medical reasons and do an absentee ballot. Any of the reasons mentioned in the letter they can do an absentee ballot. If they're caring for an elderly parent or a child and can't get away during the day they can do an absentee ballot. If they have worked concerns they're not going to be in town during polling hours they can do an absentee ballot. So I would just stress like we talked about last year the cost to do it especially in an election cycle year where we're going to have thousands of requests for by mail battling for balloting for the other elections you know I would request that you'd opt out again. I gave you a PowerPoint that I had done today over at the Council on Aging. Try to explain some of the confusion that goes into this whole thing now that we have these postcards. When you look at the postcards there's lots of confusion with them because if they're an unrolled voter they don't know that they're supposed to check which ballot to that we should send them. Sometimes they forget to sign it just there's a lot of extra confusion and the confusion and the cost I think are two reasons why I would actually opt out again this year.

ME – Opting out for just municipal? No overlap for us in May. State goes out automatically?

BC – Yes.

SM – What is the process to get an absentee ballot?

BC – In person, online, state website or a written letter that's signed along with a mailing address.

SM – What is the timeframe?

BC – Apply at any time. Expect ballots to be received the second week in April. Up to 5 days before the election.

SM – Get application and then mail out the absentee ballot. No issue with the votes not being counted?

BC – No. There is no way to decipher if the ballot was an absentee as it goes in without someone's names. If absent from polling hours for any reason – just cannot making it to the pole for any reason – working, caring for an elderly person.

SM – Maybe best practice if to get this before the 5 day

DK – Do you have an estimate of who we might be missing if we opt out? I feel like we might be on the wrong side.

BC – Anticipate 3000 to 4000 will make the request. Not sure how many will vote in the town election. Anywhere from 500 to 2500 the last few years.

JST – I spoke to the person who's the head of the division of elections at the secretary of state's office and that's essentially from him. So I assume he knows the Massachusetts laws very well. The other point I wanted to make was yes, turnout is very low for municipal elections are very low for mail in ballots, but it's also very low for polling places. And yet we open up the polling place and we set up the machines and so forth. And I don't think anyone would say because

municipal election turnout is low at the polling places that we shouldn't offer polling places. And it seems a bit of a double standard to say, yes, we'll have the polling place and but we won't offer a vote by mail. I also want to point out Foxborough is not a small town. We have one polling place and that is difficult for some people to get to that. And the last point I'd like to make is I don't always know if or when I'll be asked to work or care for my parent, my mom. And it might happen, it might not. So I don't have a five day window to say that I would qualify for an absentee ballot.

SF – Sounds like you could always air on the side of caution and that seems like a reason to request an absentee ballot.

JST – Was told that I had to swear that it was true. It would be perjury.

ME – Number one covers everything.

PD – For clarification we do have a debt exclusion override for the DPW building, might make turnout different.

Andrew Ballentine, 51 Sherman Street. So I want to speak on a couple of the topics that were brought up as to why we would go forward with an opt-out. And my understanding is that this is a fiscal issue, that we're talking \$4,000 to \$10,000. It's worth saving that money. I think we need to have default mail-in voting. And if you're asking me to make a second request for an absentee ballot, you're asking me to put in time because the town doesn't want to spend that time. Municipal elections should be just as easy for citizens as state and federal elections. Even if it is a minor item, requesting an absentee ballot when you are already requesting vote by mail is an additional roadblock. Now, additionally, the fact that the criteria on the absentee ballot can be interpreted very widely to allow everyone that wants it to be able to vote, that may be the reality, but it is not the perception. And the perception matters. If town people who want to vote think that they can't request an absentee ballot, I have not heard of any education or communication that we have planned. There's no committee that's going to make sure that all of our fellow townspeople know they can request an absentee ballot. And I have a feeling if you were to do so, to make sure that they know that's also going to cost money. So I don't think it makes sense to try and save this money. We spend more on the police tasers than we do on sending out mail-in ballots. So it's a question of proportion. We're talking about a very minor item in our budget. And I think we spend much more than that on other items that also do not get a full range of use. So if you're talking about 20 percent of the mail-in ballots actually being used, do we have other things that we buy knowing that they might be necessary, but only 20 percent of the time get used? What was your first thing? Andrew. Andrew, I'm sorry, Andrew. I have a bad memory. So first off, I'm going to say I am absolutely, especially with all the arguing that's going on about, did people vote illegally? Did they not? The last four to six years in general, I want to start off with saying that I am for everybody having the opportunity to vote. There's no way any decision I would make for or against would be about people's right to vote. What I do want to say is I feel like it's easy. Would you spend an extra \$10,000 for the right to vote? Maybe you're going to say yes. What would you have to realize? And I'm not speaking for anybody else here, but the decision, if I say we should opt out, if it's going to save the town four to \$10,000

SM – I am for everyone having the opportunity to vote. I am fiscally conservative. I would look to the expert who knows the trends to see if we should spend that money or not.

Motion to close the public hearing by L. Gibson, 2nd by S. Ferguson.

Approved 5-0.

LG – Send in two of these?

BC – A few ways. The Secretary of State postcard, signed letter, portal – 6 to 7 ways just for the mail in voting. If opt out for municipal, send in that application or signed letter.

LG – Would you educate?

BC – Yes, was just at the council on aging. Can do another to help educate.

SM – Could someone call?

BC – Yes. Just need something signed.

LG – Are we OK with the State in doing this?

BC – Before last year, it was not an option.

DK – I am fiscally conservative but I think we are in an environment where every vote is needed. I'm against opt out.

BC – We have already had people sign up.

Motion to opt out of mail in voting pursuant to MGL chapter 54, section 25 B for the annual town elections scheduled for May 6th, 2024, by L. Gibson, 2nd by S. Ferguson.

Approved: 3 – 2 (DK & SF opposed). Opting Out.

Town Clerk: Authorize 1 Police Officer for 2024 Elections: March 5th Presidential/Primary Election, May 6th for Annual Town Election, September 3rd for State Primary, November 5th for Presidential/Primary Election. Now it is the Boards obligation to staff it.

Motion to approve authorizing 1 Police Officer for 2024 Elections: March 5th Presidential/Primary Election, May 6th for Annual Town Election, September 3rd for State Primary, November 5th for Presidential/Primary Election, by L. Gibson, 2nd by S. Ferguson.

Approved 5-0.

Announcement of Election Nomination Papers available, process and dates leading up to Annual Town Elections.

BC - Returned by March 18th by 5pm. Some for School Committee. Front page of the website and listed on the Clerk's page.

4. 7:40pm - Town/Town Manager Goals Discussion

Town/Town Manager Goals – Discuss cadence for periodic review moving forward. Discuss development of strategic town-wide goals.

ME – Tip off discussion.

SF – Conversation started. Two pieces – Town Manager goals and Town wide agenda goals. These need to be reviewed and weighted. Five years ago, we had no goals, this is a recent development. Little less focus on them as we have had a lot on our plates. If this is what we want to put our energy towards, I think they need a higher profile and attention with a regular cadence. They are Town Manager goals but also Select Board goals. How do we keep these tops of mind? How do we track? If not important, then they should drop off. Quarterly review? Want to see where we are headed strategically. Town wide goals that is a longer term view, as well as the communication.

ME – I think this is a good start.

SF – This is our current goals list. Paige identified in several communities, started with their mission as a government unit and then the strategic goals were laid out as to how we get there. We have this framework, now just how do we move forward and how to we keep top of mind. How do we achieve? How do we keep fresh? Want them to be available and have people understand them.

DK – I've been through this kind of process many, many times, you know, setting goals, uh, and, um, there's always the next step. And that is after you set the goals, which are general, then what are the objectives within the goals, which are specific and you measure yourself against the specific objectives that you're trying to achieve within the goal. Right. I mean, that's the report. That's the reporting that we need to develop because that's really creates the action that we can monitor meeting to meeting, but you need the objectives. Within the goal. So, and this isn't a place to really do that. Right. You need a subcommittee or some other group to, to help get that next level. I would suggest then is that some of our goals are objective based and that they're measurable.

LG – Cadence is critical. Maybe we decide what months these goes on so it doesn't fall off.

ME – Put on website to get feedback on goals.

LG – Curious how other communities do that.

SF – Just need to start somewhere and make some progress. Not like the GOFA award doing it all in one year!

LG – Seems like the right time to kick off.

PD – Shall I ask the staff? We can fill in what has been done to show what progress has been made.

ME – A months' time. See a draft what has been accomplished. Fill in and then the board can review and determine next steps.

5. 7:50pm Acting Town Manager's Update

Weather – 1/7/24 Snow storm. 1/9 and 1/10 rain/wind storm and today's snow. Schneider lot available for overnight parking during snow emergencies. DPW working hard to keep ahead of snow. Did a stellar job on 1/7 after Patriots game. Public safety commended them.

National Grid – February 13th BOS meeting. Several car vs pole events.

Retirement - Robert "Scott" MacMaster - Appointed Call Firefighter by Chief Sheehan - 11/25/1981, Appointed Call Lieutenant by Chief Boswell – Date UNK, Appointed Permanent Firefighter by Chief Boswell – 11-10-1990, Scott was one of the four original Paramedics in the department and was instrumental in building and growing the program in the community.

Municipal Water Management and Conservation Project Grant: \$18,240 / Foxborough Water Department has partnered with the Neponset River Watershed Association to implement several water conservation activities focusing on social media campaigns, rebate programs, water-efficient fixtures, and targeted educational mailers and newsletters.

131 Morse St / BOH Grant – Thanks to Matt Brennan, Foxborough has been accepted into UConn's TAB Spring 2024 Municipal Assistance Program. 1-2 students will be assigned to your project with someone from our team overseeing their work and final deliverables. Will assist with 131 Morse Street community engagement

BOH Regs – speaking of BOH, comments are still being sought on draft regulations until January 22nd. The public should be aware that these regulations affect Title 5 (septic systems) dumpsters, restaurants, liquor licenses, etc. so folks should take a look. Available on the Town's website.

MBTA Communities A special PB meeting scheduled for tomorrow night, January 17th to hear from TKG on where they'd like to see the MBTA communities district.

World Cup – Working with TKG and MassDOT on possible pedestrian bridge. Congressman Auchincloss' office has been assisting us with navigating federal funding opportunities.

Human Resources Updates: Current Open Positions – interviewing, Communications Director – been on pause pending TM decision

Miscellaneous Updates: Budget – In the midst of FY25 budget meetings with finance and departments. Intend to bring budget to January 30th Select Board meeting.

Construction Updates: South Street and Cedar Street Raw Water Main - Sprague Road to Witch Pond, Raw water main has progressed up South St from Rt. 106 and is currently near House #451. Weather dependent, there is approximately 2 weeks of work left before they encounter Mass DOT property and may have to wait until Spring, East Street & Cocasset Street Intersection Reconstruction, The flashing pedestrian sign has been installed and the project is now complete.

6. Selectmen's Update

7. Action Items

Recreation Department - Accept donation of \$340 for lighting up the Town Common from Doctor Richard Moschella of Foxboro Animal Hospital.

Motion to approve the donation of \$340 for lighting up the Town Common to the Recreation Department from Doctor Richard Moschella of Foxboro Animal Hospital, by L. Gibson, 2nd S. Ferguson.

Approved. 5 – 0.

National Grid - Petition for Conduit Location to relocate on JO Pole on Water Street - Pole 15 ~ 15 Feet west of the current location.

Motion to approve the Petition for Conduit Location to relocate the JO Pole on Water Street - Pole 15 ~ 15 Feet west of the current location, by L. Gibson, 2nd by S. Ferguson, , by L. Gibson, 2nd S. Ferguson.

Approved. 5 – 0.

Select Board - Approval of Minutes from meeting on December 19th 2023 & January 3rd 2024.

Motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of December 19th 2023 & January 3rd 2024, by L. Gibson, 2nd by S. Ferguson, by L. Gibson, 2nd S. Ferguson.

Approved. 5 – 0.

8. Town Manager Candidate Discussion & Possible Vote

Select Board to review and discuss all candidates. Possible vote.

ME – My intent was to never embarrass that committee. I felt, we are a Board, had the right to add a name along with those that were given to us. A few dropped out but we will continue the discussion. I will not be resigning.

DK – Whenever I say designated choice or designated candidate or whatever, it really might, my reference was she was a designated choice. For the acting town manager, period. It would make no sense for me to say she was a designated choice for town manager. That would make no sense at all. That would be speaking on behalf of the board. That would be taken a position we've never taken privately or publicly. And I just want that clarified for the record because that's what I said. That's what I meant. And I'm just clarifying that for the record, because if you don't, it just kind of keeps on going. It has a life of its own.

SM – I'm going to say this with as much respect as I can. Here it comes. But, but so I think probably, okay, so you cleared up that statement, but I think what also was a, a little, like I almost couldn't believe that you were saying it was you followed that up with, Bernie gave us 15 to 20 seconds, just an update introducing the candidates. Christine, you're 10 years in Cohasset, 10 years in New York, then on. The next thing you said, what was troubling to me, you said after, you didn't have any resumes in front of you. Then you proceeded to say, after hearing that, it makes Paige's resume look that much stronger. So for me, I don't know, I don't know how we wouldn't, you know, perceive that to be what, what you said. So I think maybe some of the, why people are upset because the first remark came, then the second remark came. And, and I understand, you know, the first one could have been, I took it like you were calling her our designated candidate.

SF – I wanted to recommend an approach, talk about the candidates in order – strengths, weaknesses, etc. Scott – I thought he like a “good guy.” I think he could do the job. Good examples of work but only after we pulled them out of him. Like the work with schools to housing and creating a new culture in his town hall. I would have liked to hear more about Abington and not in Duxbury. Wanted more town manager substance.

SM – Agree with a lot of what Seth said. Felt more about Duxbury but that is part of his journey up to town manager. I like that he was a building inspector before. Liked work with the police department and general communication to his community. Seemed like he could be a good fit here. Friendly. Talked a lot about the strategic plan – although in Duxbury – helpful to us here.

ME – Agree with Seth and Steph. Seemed like he wore a lot of hats in Abington. He will have department heads here that would take a few of those. Never worked with a big entity like the players on Rt. 1.

LG – Seth nailed it. Got the impression there were a lot of different roles in Duxbury. Like the philosophy of the public being the investors and the customers.

DK – Really a town manager for only 3.5 years which was a bit of a surprise. Did some good big projects. Budget of Abington is only \$63 million, without education is \$34 million. Issue of scale. Interviewed well. Limited to resources to work with – HR – that could handicap him moving forward. Foxborough has internal responsibilities but also the external responsibilities are huge. There just is not much going on in Abington. Would have to work with our subject matter experts and he would have to prove to them that he understands their needs.

SM – He did say there were things he wished he had in Abington that are here now. Might be like arriving in Disney Land.

DK – Paige has over 30 years of municipal experience. I think she has experience for today's town manager. I talked to a lot of her direct reports to see what people are thinking. The fit and respect is there. \$93 million budget, without education is \$54 million.

LG – Paige had mentioned that she does not know it all but the buck stops with her. She wants to get the job done but follow the rules. She isn't afraid to tell people no. I think her idea of the communication director will give the community a voice – I liked. She is lacking the collective bargaining and budgeting but she is in the trenches of budgeting now. Team can help her with the collective bargaining.

ME – Interviewed well like all three candidates. Learning fast with the budgeting.

SM – Department heads that I spoke with have good things to say about her. Leadership skills are great. Fears are department heads mentioned lack of experience – somewhere surprised she went from Planner to Acting Town Manager. I was just looking for more experience. She was not doing anything wrong. Would we hire a CEO with no experience to run a \$93million dollar budget in the real world – no. She has the respect of the department heads. she's getting through, she's getting through the budget and, and they talk about how good of a finance team we have. I just want to make sure people realize that Marie is wonderful. We have a great finance director. Marie does not set the budget. The town manager sets the budget. Okay. And then, and then from there, they're going to shift it off to ad com, shift it off to this board. Nowhere does it say that the finance director is, is, um, recommending the budget. So, and I will listen, I know she doesn't have experience in that. So, so, you know, I'd like to give her a little bit of free pass this time around, but we have to know that she's the one that has to be with the department heads. And I, and from what I hear, she's, you know, and I think she said it herself, she is getting it done with Marie. I just have to remember that Marie's about what funds are there. Marie isn't the one to decide what department heads can get that half that's on page. And I think this budget, you know, if she happens to get the job, um, I'm not going to just in the budget goes, we have a great budget. I'm not going to say, well, look at, she did the budget. Okay. Um, I'm going to be worried about next year and, and it's okay. I mean, that's, that's collaboration too. But what I'm hearing is Marie's been helping. So the budget itself, Marie's supposed to be telling them what the funds are. So I'm still a little bit iffy on her doing the, you know, the budget. I hope it comes out great. I wish her success in what she's doing, but those, I guess are, are, and, and I guess the only thing that I would add is that I, with her, with the great skills she has, I still feel like Fox bro is not an entry level town. I'm worried about us hiring an entry level town manager. SF – Strong interview. Concrete examples for all questions. Experience working with Paige. Strong verbal and written communications. I talked with some Department Heads – a lot of support across the team. Known commodity across the areas – strong relationships with Kraft Group. The initiatives I have, Paine School, Auditorium, licensing work, goals work – very responsive. New to budgeting and collective bargaining.

LG – Rattled off a few projects. If you mention something in passing to Paige, it is grabbed on, worked on – it just gets done. Something important. We are not an entry level town – biggest thing that separates us is Rt. 1. And the stadium.

SM – Wouldn't you think a lot of the strengths is because she was our Director of Land Use? A lot of the projects are ones from her former role.

DK – Collective bargaining is a concern but Paige Eppolito has a great background who can assist. Another thing with collective bargaining is that all of our Department Heads were Union Presidents. With them, counsel, Paige, there is a good team. Not worried about bargaining or budgeting. Budgeting goes through all department heads and then it gets to the town manager who can focus on the 5 to 10 issues that need to be reviewed, then it goes to the AdCom, Select Board and Town Meeting.

SF – Joe. Excellent communicator, quick on his feet. Answered honest. One concern is that land use is not a strong suit. Without town having a lot of activity in developing that might be a risk. He lives an hour and 20 minutes which could be an issue and we expect him to be here on a regular basis.

SM – Commute as well. Building inspector also had this problem and left. Could be an issue. Easy interview – easy to laugh. Thought he would be a good fit here. Experience that would help him here along with the great department heads we have here.

ME – Agree with Seth and Steph. Big concern with the free cash response. I think he went around it. Made me think he didn't have a strong budget background.

LG – Agree with it all. Great interview – like the rest. Couldn't find a Facebook page. Town might be a bit behind in technology, no MBTA – but Joe was very honest. He did say there is a lot to do there but he has been there for 36 months. Didn't feel there was a lot accomplished in that time frame. Different community in the summer versus the winter. Waste water is just not a problem here. Maybe exposure hadn't come yet.

DK – Interviewed well. Strong procurement and finance. Limited external responsibilities. Where will he live? That could be a big issue if he commutes. I did read as much as I could in Braintree – I would want that pinned down and clarified before a contract is determined.

SF – I think some support for Paige but would want to hear support for another candidate.

SM – With any of the three we could have some concerns. Wish we asked about Joe's commute.

SF – Steph, separating the issues you have with the process and the candidates, does that make a difference of how you think of the candidates?

SM – It's hard for me to separate the process. I felt the support Paige was getting was from the work she did with her former position. Not fair to Paige in what happened. We need to claim ownership. Not comfortable with making a pick but I know I have to.

SF – To clarify what I mean, one of the other candidates lives 2.5 hours away. That's all that I meant.

LG – Drop outs do happen. Bernie said to pick 4 to 5 people because people drop out.

SF – As far as post interview, the emails and feedback, there was support for other candidates as well as Paige – some civic leaders and residents.

LG – Notes that I received was not just people that had worked with Paige in her former role.

SM – Mine was all zoning and planning.

ME – straw poll.

SF – Paige.

SM – Joe

ME – Paige

LG – Paige.

DK – Paige.

Motion to appoint Paige Duncan as the town manager subject to a negotiated contract and to appoint the select board chair and the town labor council to begin negotiations with the selected town manager. L. Gibson, 2nd by S. Ferguson.

4 – 1 (SM opposed). Approved.

10. Adjourn

10.1 Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

Agenda documents:

10224_Patty Fitzgerald

010324 Minutes

010324_Juri Love_YMCA

010524_Rereation Gift_Moschella

011623_Water Street

011624_Hao Sushi Change of Category Applicaiton ABCC

011624_Hao Sushi Public Hearing Change of Category

121923 Minutes

122823_Vote by Mail Correspondence

DEP Municipal Water Management and Conservation Projects

ELECTIONS 2024

FY24 TM Goals

Lt to Select Board re Vote by Mail 1 12 24

National Grid Water Street Agenda

National Grid Water Street Public Hearing Notice_011623