



**Town of Ayer
Ayer Select Board
Ayer Town Hall - 1st Floor Meeting Room
Ayer, MA 01432**

Broadcast and Recorded by APAC

January 17, 2023
Open Session Meeting Minutes

SB Present: Jannice L. Livingston, Chair; Shaun C. Copeland, Vice-Chair; Scott A. Houde, Clerk

Also Present: Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager
Carly M. Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager

Call to Order: J. Livingston called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. J. Livingston stated that this meeting/hearing of the Ayer Select Board will be held in-person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend this in-person meeting. Please note that while an option for remote attendance and/or participation via Zoom is being provided as a courtesy to the public, the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law. Members of the public with particular interest in a specific item on this agenda should make plans for in-person vs. virtual attendance accordingly. This meeting will be live on Zoom and Channel 8. The public may access the proceedings by joining Zoom (Meeting ID# 897 9080 0793) or by calling (929-205-6099).

Pledge of Allegiance: Select Board members and meeting attendees stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Meeting Agenda:

Motion: A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by S. Copeland to approve the meeting agenda.

Motion passed 3-0.

Announcements: J. Livingston announced that the Winter Parking Ban is in effect from November 15 through April 15. She also announced that the Cable Advisory Committee will be holding a public hearing tomorrow on February 18, 2023 at the Ayer Shirley Regional High School.

Public Input: None

Dr. Katie Petrossi, Director, Council on Aging: K. Petrossi was in attendance to ask the Select Board to accept a donation from the Friends of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center in the amount of \$500.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to accept the donation from the Friends of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center in the amount of \$500. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Jeff Thomas, Director, Dept. of Parks and Recreation - Kiddie Junction Playground Update: J. Thomas was in attendance to update the SB on the Kiddie Junction Playground project. He handed out an updated cost estimate from the Town's consultant. There is about \$550,000 available for the project from prior authorizations. The Parks Commission plans on seeking an additional \$500,000 from the Community Preservation Committee and an additional \$460,000 from the Capital Planning Committee and ARPA funding. J. Livingston asked if the Parks Commission had asked Nashoba Tech or the Boy

Scouts to help with certain aspects of the project. J. Thomas said that they hadn't yet, but are planning to do so in the future and that they are always looking to partner with volunteers. J. Livingston also asked if the Parks Commission had thought about selling bricks or trees to help fundraise for the project. J. Thomas said they would be pursuing fundraising opportunities.

S. Houde stated that he is on the Capital Planning Committee and there is support on the Committee for the project. He cautioned that there are several other big items that have been submitted to the Capital Planning Committee, such as the West Main Street Bridge and the new Fire Dept. truck.

There was additional discussion relative to the funding options of the project. J. Thomas stated that there have been two major factors in the cost increase; the cost of the equipment has doubled and that the first funding authorizations for the project were for Phase 1 only, which were the demolition of the original structure and soil remediation.

Pauline Conley, 40 Cambridge Street also suggested selling bricks and/or trees to help offset costs.

Susan Copeland, Town Clerk – Opening of Annual Town Election to be held on April 24, 2023:

Susan Copeland was in attendance asking the SB's consideration to open the Annual Town Election, which is being held on Tuesday May 9, 2023 from 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM in the Great Hall of the Town Hall. Nomination papers for the following offices will be on the ballot: Assessor (1) 3-year term; Board of Health (1) 3-year term; Commissioner of Trust Funds (1) 3-year term; Constable (1) 3-year term; Library Trustee (1) 3-year term; Park Commissioner (2) 3-year term; Planning Board (2) 3-year term; Regional School District Committee (1) 3-year term; Select Board (1) 3-year term; Housing Authority (1) 5-year term.

She noted that nomination papers can be requested from and submitted to the Town Clerk's Office during regular business hours. The last day to request nomination papers is Friday, March 17th, 2023, at 12:00 PM and the last day to submit nomination papers is Tuesday, March 21st, 2023, at 5:00 PM. Susan Copeland stated that there is a requirement for 32 valid signatures on nomination papers.

Motion: A motion was made by Shaun Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to open the nomination process for the Annual Town Election offices to appear on the ballot as read by the Town Clerk. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Opening of Annual Town Meeting (Monday April 24, 2023) Warrant: R. Pontbriand is recommending that the SB vote to officially open the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. He also offered the following dates set by the Town's Budget and Town Meeting Calendar:

- The deadline for all Warrant Articles will be 12pm on March 31, 2023.
- The deadline for all Citizen's Petitions to the Town Clerk will be 12pm on March 31, 2023.
- The SB will meet to finalize and approve the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant at their meeting on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 6pm.
- The 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant will be officially posted by Friday, April 7, 2023 and sent for printing and mailing to all Ayer households in advance of Town Meeting.
- The 2023 Annual Town Meeting will take place on Monday, April 24, 2023 at 7pm in the Auditorium of the Ayer Shirley Regional High School.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by S. Copeland to open the Annual Town Meeting Warrant for the April 24, 2023 Annual Town Meeting. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Town Manager's Report - Administrative Update/Review of Town Warrant(s): R. Pontbriand provided a brief Administrative Update to the Select Board on the various activities, initiatives, and projects of the Town since the Select Board last met and referenced the Town Warrants that are in the Select Board's packet that were approved since the Select Board last met. R. Pontbriand also announced the Public Hearing being held tomorrow on January 18, 2023 by the Cable Advisory Committee and the First Public Budget Forum being held on January 25, 2023. At the next Select Board meeting on February 7, 2023, the Finance Committee will be attending to hear the Ayer Shirley Regional School District Budget Presentation. He said he is open to recommendations by the Board on what information they would like presented at the budget forum on January 25, 2023.

FY '24 Budget Update – R. Pontbriand stated that DRAFT #1 was submitted to the SB and Finance Committee on January 13, 2023 and it was a starting off point and will be subject to adjustments as we go through the process. He noted that energy and fuel costs are significant in this budget. There is an administrative day sergeant being proposed in the Police Department and the Building Department is proposing increasing the Assistant Building Inspector's hours from part-time to full-time. He is recommending that the Reserve Fund be reduced from \$300,000 to \$200,000; traditionally, pre-pandemic, the Reserve Fund was funded at \$150,000. There will be a slight reduction in the Town Counsel budget. He is awaiting additional information on the insurance lines. The first DRAFT does not include COLAs; 3 non-union contracts that are being negotiated; and the Town Hall Clerical Union negotiations, which are also underway.

New Business/Select Board Member Questions – Enforcement of Trash Receptacles on Public Ways (S. Houde): S. Houde is looking for additional information on trash receptacles in public ways and what the Town's options are. R. Pontbriand has spoken with the Building Commissioner and the Health Agent about the issue. The Building Commissioner will be attending the Board's next meeting in February.

J. Livingston stated that the Chairs of the Devens Jurisdictional Framework Committee from Ayer, Shirley and Harvard have been invited to sit down with MassDevelopment on February 6, 2023 and she will keep the Board updated.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by S. Copeland to approve the meeting minutes from December 6, 2022 and December 20, 2022. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Adjournment: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to adjourn at 6:56 PM. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Carly M. Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager

Date Minutes Approved by SB: February 7 2023

Signature Indicating Approval: Scott A/H