



Town of Hamilton
Select Board
Meeting Minutes of May 20, 2024

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, MGL Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Select Board members, a meeting of the Hamilton Select Board was posted for May 20, 2024 at 7:00pm. This meeting was held at the Hamilton Wenham Library, 14 Union Street, and via Zoom. The meeting was live on HWCAM and recorded. .

The Select Board functions as the Chief Executive body of the Town. Its five members are elected to three-year terms with one or two seats up for election each year. The Board acts as the chief policy making body of the Town and directly supervises the activities of the Town Manager. The Select Board typically meets the first and third Monday evening at 7:00 p.m.
Select Board: Caroline Beaulieu (2025); Thomas Myers (2025); Bill Wilson (2026); William Olsen (2027); Rosemary Kennedy (2027).

Call to order: *With a quorum present, Chair Beaulieu called the meeting to order at 7:29 PM, identified the meeting was being recorded and those present: C. Beaulieu, Chair; B. Wilson, Vice-Chair; T. Myers, Clerk; R. Kennedy; W. Olson; Also present: Joseph J. Domelowicz Jr., Town Manager; and others as noted.*

The Chair announced Board and Committee openings as displayed on the agenda:

- Conservation Commission – 2 openings
- Council on Aging - 2 Associate openings
- Finance and Advisory Committee – 1 opening, 1 associate opening
- Hamilton Wenham Cultural Council - 1 opening
- Historic District Commission - 2 openings for 3 year terms, 2 openings for 2 year terms
- Human Rights Commission - 1 opening
- Planning Board - 1 Associate opening
- Zoning Board of Appeals – 1 Associate opening

Public Comment: *There was none.*

Town Manager Report: J. Domelowicz announced a Town public information session will be held on June 12, regarding the town center plan, the State 3A zoning law, and the elementary school project. The state is doing a repaving of 1A from the train tracks to the Ipswich line. The first phase of construction should be done this week.

Select Board Member Reports:

- B.Wilson provided an update on the School Committee meeting where there was extensive public comment on the elementary school project. There will be a community survey to ascertain the opinion of the community at large.
- R. Kennedy noted she has introduced herself as a liaison to the boards and committees she is assigned to.
- Chair Beaulieu explained that there are continuing comments circulating regarding the 3A zoning issue, and that it is a public process and they are trying to engage the public in many forums. She reiterated that nothing can happen without a vote at Town Meeting.

Consent Agenda:

- **Approve minutes of April 22, 2024 Select Board Meeting**
Vote: The Board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

Agenda:

- **Approve request from HWRHS to allow graduate flags along Bay Road**

Bryan Menegoni, HW Regional High School Principal explained that they would like to place yard signs along 1A to celebrate each of the high school graduating seniors. The signs will be placed in the public way and in front of public buildings.

Vote: The Board voted unanimously to approve the request from HWRHS to allow graduate signs along Bay Road for the week of May 28 through the week after graduation.

- **Review project priorities and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding request for Patton Park and sidewalk improvements as presented on May 6, 2024 – Discuss and Vote**

J. Domelowicz requested this discussion be deferred until July. Although the ARPA funding needs to be allocated before the end of December, there is a bid process open for the Town Hall, and there is some concern that there may be a small gap in funding when the final costs are known. The goal is to make sure there isn't a need for any ARPA funding to close the gap before fully completing the ARPA allocations. The Board agreed to hold the discussion until July.

- **Jack Davis** asked the Board if the DPW has a budget for maintenance, and commented that specifically the bandstand at Patton Park is in need of maintenance. The uneven sidewalks on Railroad Ave. are also a tripping hazard and rather unsightly.

- **Review request for citizen led effort to create a bus shelter for students at Forest St. and Gregory Island Rd.**

- **Eric Mimmo**, 3 Beech St, explained that there are approximately 10-20 children in this small neighborhood of Chebacco Lake that are getting on the school buses. He has proposed to add a bus stop next to an existing bike rack and to build a bus shelter for these students. He is proposing a 12x20 shelter with a concrete base, shelter cover, and solar lighting. He is a licensed contractor and he would use volunteers to build it. The DPW has offered to help clear the area and prepare the site. His intention is to build something that will be no-maintenance for 30 years. If he has sufficient donations, he hopes to add plastic coverings for the sides as wind/weather breaks.

J. Domelowicz added that there would be no financial impact to the Town, and the DPW Director has agreed to help clear the site, and the building inspector has reviewed the plans and the application. This is a small strip of land that is owned by the Town. He noted that the Select Board can accept this as a donation to the Town, and any subsequent offers of donation projects can be reviewed and accepted or denied in the same manner.

Vote: The Board voted unanimously to approve the citizen-led effort to create a bus shelter at Forest St and Gregory Island Road per the application as committed by Eric Mimmo.

- **Discuss request by private citizens to use COA (Council on Aging) for a public information sharing on May 30, 2024 – the town does not have a policy on the use of public facilities**

Chair Beaulieu noted that Courtney Ashwood (Wenham resident) held a public information session on the state 3A zoning law at the Hamilton legion that was well attended, and would like to hold a second session at the COA. There is not currently a policy on the public's use of the COA. Chair Beaulieu would like to discuss it because it is 3A zoning and because it would be at a Hamilton public space and it is important to be clear that this is not a Town-led or Town-endorsed session. There are speakers and experts who would be involved, but the perspective is leaning toward no on 3A, and the Town is trying to keep the public discourse more neutral.

J. Domelowicz noted that the applicant has withdrawn the request and has located another site. In the meeting packet there are drafts of facilities use documents for the Board to comment on. The policy would apply to Town Hall and the COA. The Chair questioned whether the policy should allow for anyone from anywhere to request the facilities or should it be only Hamilton residents. R. Kennedy expressed preference for Hamilton residents, and to require an insurance rider. J. Domelowicz will put together a draft policy and bring it back to a future meeting.

- **Discuss need for a one-page statement about various proposals and projects (ie., MBTA 3A zoning, Elementary School, Gordon Conwell and 133 Essex 40b)**

Chair Beaulieu said the Town would put together a one-page flyer with a list of the significant projects going on in Town, with links to where more information can be found. They are planning to do it as a mail drop in all mailboxes, at a cost of approximately \$700. This would be mainly an index of links, and also an announcement of the upcoming public information session. The draft flyer will be brought back to the Board for approval.

- **Discuss roles of liaisons with boards and committees**

Chair Beaulieu noted that there is a lot of conversation that happens when visiting other meetings and/or online, and KP Law has reminded the Board that if you speak you need to be clear that you are speaking as a personal citizen and not speaking on behalf of the Board, unless there is an explicit designation by the Board to speak on a specific agenda item. If you speak at a meeting, you should not introduce yourself as the Select Board as it implies you are speaking on behalf of the Board. There was discussion of having a resource that helps the Board have clarity on the Board's positions on the various issues in order to consistently represent the Board's perspective.

- **Discuss Regional School District Agreement priorities and process**

J. Domelowicz explained that Hamilton, Wenham and the School Committee have agreed to opening the school agreement for discussion, and different attorneys from KP Law will represent the two Towns in the negotiations. The current proposal is for the three Board Chairs and the two Town Administrators to work as the vehicle for negotiations. In the packet are the two letters

that Hamilton sent a few years ago to the School Committee and the Town of Wenham. The question now is if there are other items that should be on the agenda. R. Kennedy expressed when the Schools come to Town Meeting and ask for funding, she expects that funds will not be diverted to other uses. She believes there should be more responsibility to the taxpayers. W. Olson noted that there are limitations to what the Towns can do in that regard given state laws. B. Wilson observed the town of Hamilton provides a lot of real estate for the schools and wondered whether that can be discussed. Creating more transparency between the Towns and the Schools, and utilizing the five chairs meetings have been effective, this could be built into the agreement. Chair Beaulieu questioned whether there is any attention to outplacement of students, and whether that should factor in to the financial distribution between the towns. R. Kennedy expressed the desire for more transparent data about choice students, and whether the District asks if a child needs an IEP plan before admitting them, and what is the actual cost of educating those students.

B. Wilson briefly described the process the Board went through three years ago when the letters were drafted. It was noted that the agreement is very antiquated, and was originally done for a Regional High School in 1959, and then was amended a few times, but it is still a 1959 document. The method for choosing school committee members is no longer legal for example. J. Domelowicz noted that the agreement terms have to stay within state laws on school funding. There was discussion on the use and mechanisms of stabilization funds and what can be done with them. John McGrath of the Finance Committee noted that there has been a real effort from the School District to reduce the excess and deficiency funds and to make the budget more specific. The Board asked if there are any bullet points from Wenham on what they are looking for in the agreement and J. Domelowicz said he would follow-up with them.

Adjournment Vote: *The Select Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:50PM.*

Meeting Packet Enclosures:

- Select Board minutes of April 22, 2024
- Email request from B. Menegoni re: yard signs recognizing class of 2024 graduates
- Town of Hamilton ARPA funds spreadsheet
- Memo from Town Manager and Finance Director re: Request for use of ARPA funds for Sidewalks and Patton Park
- Hamilton Master Plan for Patton Park
- Donation and License Agreement for donation of materials and labor to construct bus stop at Gregory Island Road; and Release of Claims, Indemnity, and Hold Harmless Agreement
- Email from Theresa Woodbury re: Town Democratic Committee use of COA for meeting space
- Email from Courtney Ashwood re: hosting a meeting on 3A zoning at the COA
- Council on Aging Facilities Use Agreement form
- Town of Hamilton Code of Conduct of the Select Board
- Select Board Handbook and Orientation
- 2021 Select Board letter to Dana Allara requesting the opening of the Regional School Agreement
- 2021 Select Board letter to Wenham Select Board Chair requesting the opening of the Regional School Agreement

Respectfully submitted by D. Pierotti, Recording Secretary, 5/27/24.

The minutes were prepared from video.

Respectfully submitted as approved at 6/3/24 meeting.

 _____ Tom Myers, Clerk