



## MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

SELECT BOARD • TOWN HALL

Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts 01944-1399

Telephone (978) 526-2000 FAX (978) 526-2001

### MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD

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March 17, 2025

6:30pm

Hybrid Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting, Meeting: ID 856 3231 4644 Passcode: 366224 Mobile: 1.646.558.8656

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Harrison – Chair, Mr. Round – Vice-Chair, Ms. Bilotta, Mr. Delaney, Mr. Sollosy

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:** Town Administrator, Mr. Federspiel, Executive Assistant, Debbie Powers, DPW Director, Chuck Dam

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Ms. Harrison called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:30pm with five members present in person and stated the meeting is being recorded.

**Public Comment:** no comments

**Chairman Report & Actions Items:** Ms. Harrison – entire increase as an override. The Board reviewed the action items.

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1. **Committee/Board Interview – Colleen Morse, Zoning Board of Appeals:** Postponed until April 7<sup>th</sup> because Ms. Morse was unable to attend the meeting.

2. **Friends of Manchester Trees Presentation – Rosedale Cemetery Project:**

Jody Morse presented on behalf of the Friends of Manchester Trees regarding their project at Rosedale Cemetery extension. She explained that they received a \$28,000 CPC grant in 2023 to plant trees in both Rosedale Lane Cemetery and Little Cemetery. In 2023, they planted 10 new trees in Rosedale and did cleanup of invasives in Rosedale Extension. For 2024, they focused on Rosedale Extension, taking a step back to develop a comprehensive plan with the help of landscape architect Lolly Gibson.

Ms. Morse outlined four goals for the project:

1. Make the cemetery look beautiful
2. Remove high-risk dangerous trees, particularly Norway maples along the borders
3. Plant only native species to improve the ecosystem and support wildlife
4. Use the project as a showcase to educate residents about native tree species

She noted they plan to plant 39 new native trees next month, remove 8-10 unhealthy trees, do some pruning, test and amend soil as needed, and install a temporary drip irrigation system. The project is fully funded by the CPC grant and Friends of Manchester Trees' nonprofit funds.

She thanked the DPW for their cooperation and assistance in determining planting locations. She mentioned their stretch goal is to get the cemetery certified as an arboretum once they reach at least 25 unique native species.

Chuck Dam, DPW Director, confirmed the project wouldn't interfere with future burial sites, though a few tree locations may need slight adjustments. He noted potential plans to remove the cemetery office building in the future to create more grave sites.

The Select Board members expressed support for the educational aspects of the project and the focus on native species. They agreed by consensus to support the project moving forward.

### **3. Seasonal Alcohol License Renewal – Manchester Bath & Tennis Club, Inc.**

The Board briefly discussed the seasonal alcohol license renewal for Manchester Bath & Tennis Club. It was noted that there have been no recent noise complaints from neighbors, indicating their current practices are working well.

*Mr. Delaney moved that the Select Board approve the seasonal alcohol license for Manchester Bath & Tennis Club, Inc; Ms. Bilotta seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Round - yes*

### **4. Affordable Housing Trust Update & Makeup:**

This agenda item was not discussed as the Affordable Housing Trust representatives were unable to attend the meeting. It was noted that the item would be rescheduled for a future meeting date.

### **5. Annual Town Meeting – Articles/Budget and Staffing Proposal Reviews:**

Mr. Federspiel presented an overview of the draft warrant for the Annual Town Meeting, which contains 20 articles including standard budgetary items. He noted that the school budget remains a challenging factor, with a current proposed increase of 7.29% for the school district appropriation.

The overall impact on taxpayers is projected to be a 3.5% increase, with about 1.5% on the town side and 2.5% on the school side. Mr. Federspiel highlighted proposed staffing changes in the budget:

- A new full-time position as part of the move to a Finance Director model
- Increasing the Assistant to the Town Clerk from half-time to full-time
- A new Deputy Fire Chief starting in the fourth quarter

The Board discussed these staffing proposals in detail:

For the finance department position, Andrea Mainville and Jen Yaskell explained the need for additional support due to increased workload and the benefits of transitioning to a finance director model. After discussion, the Board voted to approve the addition of a full-time accounting clerk

*Ms. Harrison moved that the Select Board approve the addition of a full-time accounting clerk position; Mr. Sollosy seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes, Ms. Bilotta – no, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Round - yes*

For the town clerk's assistant position, the Board discussed the need for increased coverage and the potential to charge for optional services like notarization to offset costs. The Board agreed to support increasing the position to full-time.

Fire Chief McNeilly explained the need for a Deputy Fire Chief, citing increased administrative workload and the need for better coverage. The Board supported this addition.

The Board also discussed the senior center project, agreeing to allocate \$50,000 from the fund balance for architectural work to support fundraising efforts.

### **6. DPW Discussion:**

- a. **Public Restrooms:** Mr. Federspiel provided an update on efforts to secure public restrooms in town. He reported having a positive conversation with the owner of Dunkin' Donuts, who agreed to make their restroom available to the public in exchange for a reduction in their water and sewer bill. The Board discussed pursuing additional locations and improving signage for existing public restrooms, including at Town Hall.

- b. **Forester Road Water Line:** The Board discussed the issue of the private water line on Forester Road serving about half a dozen homes. Chuck explained that this line evolved in a piecemeal fashion as homes were built. Some residents have requested the town take over and replace the line.

The Board discussed options including:

- Having the town pay for a new line
- Using a betterment program where residents would repay the costs over time
- Waiting until the planned Bennett Street water main project in 2028 to potentially include this as an add-on for cost efficiency

The consensus was to pursue the betterment option if residents request it, but to wait until the Bennett Street project in 2028 for potential cost savings. The Board agreed to revisit the issue if residents raise concerns before then.

- c. **Sidewalk Snow Maintenance:** Mr. Dam provided an overview of DPW's snow removal practices and challenges, particularly regarding sidewalks. He explained their prioritization system and equipment limitations, noting that the recent Presidents' Day weekend storm was exceptionally challenging due to its duration and the rain that followed heavy snow.

The board discussed the idea of implementing a bylaw requiring property owners to clear sidewalks in front of their properties. However, there was little enthusiasm for this approach. Instead, they suggested focusing on better communication and education for residents about snow removal expectations and responsibilities.

The board agreed to add this topic to their action list for further discussion in the fall, potentially including information in the fall town meeting materials and using the town's alert system to remind residents about snow removal responsibilities during storms.

- d. **Central Street Crosswalk Relocation:** Mr. Dam discussed plans for relocating and improving crosswalks on Central Street. He explained that the crosswalk near Morse Court was removed due to ADA compliance issues but could be reinstated once made compliant, likely as part of the upcoming Pleasant Street paving project in May or June.

The Board also discussed the crosswalk near Seaside One, with Mr. Dam explaining that any major changes would be part of the future culvert project. In the meantime, he proposed repainting parking spaces this spring to improve safety and visibility.

The Board agreed to have Mr. Dam proceed with repainting parking spaces and adding the Morse Court crosswalk, when possible, then reassess the situation once these changes are implemented.

#### **7. Assignment of Moorings at Manchester Marine:**

The Board discussed the mooring assignments at Manchester Marine. Mr. Federspiel explained that there was an inconsistency between the harbor regulations and recent practices regarding the addition of new moorings through bow-and-stern conversions.

After extensive discussion, the Board decided to allow a one-year provisional arrangement for the 2025 season while they work to clarify and potentially amend the harbor regulations.

*Ms. Bilotta moved that the town allow anyone from the mooring waiting list to be eligible for a provisional mooring from Manchester Marine for the 2025 season up to 10 moorings; Mr. Delaney seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – no, Mr. Round – yes*

The Board also agreed to have the Inspector General's office conduct an audit of the harbor operations and to work on updating the harbor regulations to clarify mooring assignment procedures and transaction logging requirements.

#### **8. Town Administrator Preliminary Screening Committee update:**

Mr. Federspiel reported that three finalists have been advanced for the Town Administrator position. Interviews are scheduled for April 3rd. The Board discussed the interview process, including how to formulate questions, the format of the interviews, and logistical considerations such as whether to live-stream the interviews or record them for later viewing.

The Board agreed that Ms. Bilotta and Mr. Round would work with the consultant, John Petrin, to compile interview questions. They also decided to explore options for recording the interviews without live-streaming to ensure fairness among candidates.

#### **9. Liaison Updates:**

Ms. Bilotta reported on attending an economic development breakfast hosted by the Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce. She highlighted discussions about resources available for downtown development and the importance of having a clear vision and strategy for the town's downtown area.

Mr. Round mentioned ongoing discussions about water meter replacements and the use of AI in reviewing RFP responses.

#### **10. Consent Agenda:**

- a. Meeting Minutes – March 3, 2025
- b. Longevity Bench – Town Common
- c. Canvassing License – Verizon Business
- d. Volunteer Recognition – James Diedrich, Zoning Board of Appeals

*Mr. Round moved that the Board approve the consent agenda items; Mr. Delaney seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Round - yes*

#### **11. Town Administrator's Report:**

Mr. Federspiel provided brief updates on ongoing projects:

- The Pleasant Street site is being evaluated for contamination costs.
- Senior center fundraising planning efforts are underway, with the public phase set to begin in September
- Nomination papers for elections are due April 1<sup>st</sup>

*10:06pm Ms. Bilotta moved to adjourn; Mr. Round seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Round - yes*

#### **Meeting materials:**

Friends of Manchester Trees presentation  
Seasonal Alcohol License renewal  
Draft Town Meeting warrant  
Consent agenda items