

**New Salem Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
July 12, 2023**

Present: Sue Cloutier (SC), Zara Dowling (ZD), Rick Taupier (RT), Select Board; Kathy Neal, Town Coordinator; Andrew Maurer, Recording Clerk

The meeting was called to order.

No one spoke during the public comment period.

**Town Coordinator Kathy Neal (KN) and SC discussed what they'd learned since the last Select Board meeting about the term lengths of town committee appointments.** They determined that many of the appointments are only for one year. During this discussion, it was discovered that in some cases the terms listed on the appointment paperwork, which were to have been corrected by this meeting, were still wrong. In particular, ZD was able to verify that the expiration dates for the terms of the Conservation Commission members were incorrect.

**ACTION:** KN will determine the correct term expiration dates for any appointments in question and correct the relevant paperwork.

**ACTION:** The Select Board asked the Town Coordinator to determine how to change term lengths so that terms for all committees can be staggered. In some cases where all members of a committee are new, the committee will need to specify which member(s) will serve a full term and which member(s) will serve shorter terms in order to provide the intended staggering effect in the future.

**VOTE:** ZD motioned to approve the following appointments for which the paperwork was in order. SC seconded. Passed unanimously.

Animal Control Officer

- Franklin County Animal Control

Ballot Clerk

- John Mannino
- Janet Henderson
- Genie Casey
- Sue Dunbar
- Tina Newman
- Marianna Mannino
- David Cramer
- Hannah Dupont
- Jeanne Clayton

- Lisa Finestone
- Mary Ann Palmieri
- Sue Arnold
- Marilyn Adams
- Mary Ellen Kennedy
- Andrea Frost
- Cam Dunbar
- Aimee Dupont
- Brian Casey

#### Broadband Committee

- Niles Larson
- Sue Dunbar
- Paul Chapin
- Kathryn Soule-Regine
- Cameron Dunbar
- Sue Cloutier
- Mary Ellen Kennedy

#### Cemetery Committee

- Nancy Glick

#### Election Warden

- C. Lynn Layton

#### Energy Committee

- Zara Dowling
- Ricardo Conde
- Daniel Grubbs

#### Franklin County Solid Waste Management Representative

- Amy Fagin

#### Historical Commission

- Michael Dupont
- Paula Daniels-Johnston

#### Precinct Clerk

- Jen Mannino

#### Board of Registrars

- Gabriele Voelker

#### Technology Committee

- Dan Grubbs
- Andrew Maurer

#### Tree Committee

- Bill Lafley
- Joe Nawrocki
- Calvin Layton
- Bruce Spencer
- Lisa Finestone

#### Zoning Board of Appeals

- Wayne Hachey

**VOTE:** ZD motioned to appoint Rick Taupier as FRCOG Representative. SC seconded. Passed unanimously.

**SC and RT discussed the hiring of new Department of Public Works employee Aaron Thibeault.** They stated he will be receiving slightly higher than the advertised amount of pay, in return for which he will take on extra responsibilities, including “PR,” for which he seems well-suited. His additional duties may include, among other things, following up with calls and emails to the department.

ZD suggested bringing in the head of the DPW, Highway Superintendent Jacob Cooley, to discuss the arrangement. The board agreed this would be useful and chose July 31 as its preferred date. The board decided to approve the appointment of Aaron Thibeault now and determine specific responsibilities later, in collaboration with Cooley.

**VOTE:** RT motioned to appoint Aaron Thibeault to the DPW. ZD seconded. Passed unanimously.

**ACTION:** RT will invite Highway Superintendent Jacob Cooley to the July 31 Select Board meeting.

**Carla Halpern discussed a planned running event called the Village Ultra.** She stated that the Village Ultra is a 24 hour running event with four courses around town. She described the routes and stated that the event is a fundraiser, with this year’s proceeds to benefit the Victoria Rose Scholarship at a dance studio in Orange. The event is to be held from 7pm-7pm on September 2-3, 2023. Halpern noted that all set up, clean up, etc. will be taken care of by the event organizers. She asked the Select Board for permission to hold the event and to have volunteers and athletes use the town hall bathrooms during the event and the set-up and take-down periods.

SC asked Halpern to notify the police department. SC also suggested putting an ad and information about the event in the New Salem News. CH said she would notify the police and

fire departments. ZD asked CH to check whether there is anything the fire chief would like the event organizers to do and to keep the Select Board posted if so. Halpern noted that participants sign a waiver releasing the town and event organizers from all liability.

**VOTE:** SC moved to give Halpern permission to hold the Village Ultra and to allow event volunteers and athletes to use the town hall bathrooms. ZD seconded. Approved unanimously.

**CH discussed a separate 10K fundraiser run called the Rabbit Run.** She stated she is first seeking permission from the Select Board to hold the event, which would occur in the spring of 2024 and has not been held since before the pandemic, and secondly seeking input about whether there is a particular town department or cause for which the board would like the proceeds from the event to be designated. She noted that in the past the money has been earmarked for the Playground Committee. SC mentioned that the town playground is near the leach field for the library, which puts limits on what can be put there and what changes can be made. The Select Board will discuss where they would like the fundraising money to go at a future meeting.

**VOTE:** SC moved to support reestablishing the Rabbit Run. ZD seconded. Passed unanimously.

**ACTION:** CH will come back to the Select Board in September to discuss how the board would like to designate the money raised from the Rabbit Run. CH will be in touch with RT about getting permission from the state to hold the run on Quabbin land.

**The Select Board discussed the proposal from Entre Technologies for setting up town emails through the Microsoft 365 platform.** ZD asked if anything is to be gained from the transition to town emails, or whether the same could be accomplished using shared Gmail addresses, for instance. After some discussion, RT suggested that the board did not have enough information to make an informed decision about Entre's proposal, and that continuing the conversation would not be a good use of meeting time. Given the urgent need for email addresses for the Police Department and the Town Coordinator, the Select Board decided to sign up for a small number of accounts in the short term and then task the Technology Committee with determining remaining needs and drafting recommendations.

**ACTION:** Emails will be created for the members of the Police Department and the Town Coordinator. ZD will check with the police chief about any other technology needs. The Technology Committee will be charged with doing a town technology inventory to determine what technology requirements exist town-wide and reporting back to the Select Board with recommendations.

**The Select Board discussed that with all members being new to the board, there are systems of organization that may need to be improved upon** so that members can come to each meeting prepared and ready to use the time efficiently. RT suggested improving the structure of the Select Board meeting agendas to include, for example, whether an item is solely

a discussion or requires a vote. He suggested formalizing the agenda to a more standard format. The Select Board discussed that there may be issues with emails between members not being received.

**ZD discussed the spreadsheet she put together about town needs.** There are more items than are practical to address, so she requested the help of other members in setting priorities. SC stated that capital planning for buildings and grounds is a high priority for her. The board discussed that the whole list needs to be revisited when there is more time to discuss it. One item, the hiring of an additional DPW worker, was removed from the list because it had already been completed.

**ACTION:** SC and KN will find and compile existing job descriptions for town employees.

**ACTION:** All board members will review the spreadsheet before the next meeting and decide what their priorities are and what they would be willing to take on.

**The board discussed priorities for the upcoming 7/31/23 meeting with the Highway Superintendent.** RT's highest priority for the highway department discussion is determining ways to improve public-facing communications. ZD said that the DPW building itself is a high priority for her. She wants to determine what work has been done, what needs to be done, and where the money is coming from. SC stated that within the DPW, but also in all town departments, she wants to prioritize providing town employees with whatever training and education they need to be able to do their jobs well.

**ACTION:** KN will put an announcement in the New Salem News about the new DPW worker, also naming and recognizing the current employees.

**ACTION:** KN will check on the status of equipment operator licenses for all the Highway Department employees.

**KN noted that the 1794 Meetinghouse needs a new fire alarm system and the steeple requires attention.** She let the other board members know that 1794 Meetinghouse Executive Director Brad Foster will attend the next Select Board meeting to discuss these matters.

**The Select Board discussed the minutes of May 24.**

**VOTE:** SC motioned to accept the minutes of May 24 with minor amendments. ZD seconded. Passed unanimously.

**The Select Board discussed the minutes of June 26.**

**VOTE:** ZD motioned to accept the minutes of June 26 with minor amendments. SC seconded. Passed unanimously.

RT motioned to adjourn at 9:38pm. ZD seconded. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Maurer