



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

Broadcast and Recorded by APAC

March 6, 2024
Open Session Meeting Minutes

SB Present: Scott A. Houde, Chair; Shaun C. Copeland, Clerk

SB Absent: Jannice L. Livingston, Vice-Chair

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

Call to Order: S. Houde called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. S. Houde further stated that this meeting/hearing of the Ayer Select Board (SB) 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. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to approve the meeting agenda.
Motion passed 2-0.

Announcements: None

Public Input: None

Joint Appointment of Associate Planning Board Member by the Select Board and Planning Board:

The Select Board (SB) was joined by members of the Planning Board. Those in attendance were Jonathan Kranz, Chair; Ken Diskin, Geof Tillotson, Clerk. Julie Murray was in attendance via Zoom. J. Kranz stated that pursuant to the Town of Ayer Bylaws the Planning Board is made up of 5 members and 2 associate members. J. Kranz introduced Kathleen Cachel, candidate for an associate member seat. Ms. Cachel was interviewed by the Planning Board on February 13, 2024 and her candidacy was forwarded unanimously to the Select Board this evening.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to approve the appointment of Ms. Kathleen Cachel as an Associate Member of the Planning Board. Term to expire June 30, 2026.

Motion passed 2-0.

Danny Ruiz, Town Planner - Presentation of Proposed Zoning Bylaw Warrant Articles: The SB received a presentation from D. Ruiz, Town Planner on the proposed Zoning Bylaw Warrant Articles to be considered by the Annual Town Meeting on April 22, 2024. The Planning Board will be holding a Public

Hearing on the Zoning Bylaw Warrant Articles on March 12, 2024 at 6pm. The four articles for consideration are as follows: the adoption of the updated Zoning Map reflecting the zoning changes that were approved at previous Town Meetings; the adoption of amending §320-3.2. A. Establishment (ZBA) to include language showing the structure and how many members make up the ZBA; the adoption of amending the Inclusionary Housing Bylaw §320-10.3 Basic Requirements by adding language regarding guidelines for affordable multifamily new construction; and the adoption of amending §5.2 Table of Use Regulations. D. Ruiz stated that the Town wants to encourage more affordable housing so that residents that want to downsize can sell their house and afford to stay in Town. These proposed articles are the result of a working group. There were no questions.

Alicia Hersey, Program Manager, Community Development Office - Review of Ayer Community Development Strategy: A. Hersey presented an updated Community Development Strategy that was included in the SB packet. She noted that in updating the plan, her department used public input obtained via community outreach. She is requesting that the SB approve the updated Plan.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to approve the updated Community Development Strategy for 2024-2029 as presented. **Motion passed 2-0.**

Review of Ayer Housing Rehabilitation Program Guidelines – A. Hersey presented the FY '24 Ayer Housing Rehabilitation Program Guidelines that were included in the SB packet. She noted that the update to this plan was mostly housekeeping. She also updated the plan to state that up to 25% of the funding can be used outside of the downtown target area.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to approve the updated FY' 24 Ayer Housing Rehabilitation Program Guidelines as presented. **Motion passed 2-0.**

Letter of Support for the CDBG Grant Application – A. Hersey is requesting that the SB approve the DRAFT letter of support for the 2024 CDBG grant.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to approve the letter of support as drafted in the SB packet. **Motion passed 2-0.**

Town Manager's Report - Administrative Update/Review of Warrants: R. Pontbriand presented an administrative update on the various activities, initiatives, and projects of the Town since the Select Board last met. He thanked the Town Clerk's Office and all the Election Workers for another job well done in terms of yesterday's Presidential Primary Election. He referenced the Town Warrants he approved since the Select Board last met on February 20, 2024. He advised that the primary focus of the Town right now is all things budget and town meeting preparation.

FY 2025 Budget Process Update - R. Pontbriand advised that the development of the FY 2025 Budget remains on schedule. The Second Public Budget Forum will be held on March 27, 2024 at 6pm at which time DRAFT #3 of the Budget will be presented and traditionally represents the final budget. The DRAFT Budget is currently hovering around a 6% increase. He advised that on March 4, 2024 the Ayer Shirley Regional School Committee certified their FY 2025 Budget and the FY 2025 assessment for Ayer is at \$817,044 or a 6% increase. This is down from the previous number of \$1.1 million. The Required Local Contribution factor continues to be a principal budget driver for Ayer. On February 6, 2024 the Nashoba Valley Technical School District certified their Budget and Ayer's assessment is \$1,074,675 which represents an approximately \$62,000 decrease from last year due to fewer students attending this year. He advised that contract negotiations are wrapping

up. The Fin Com is meeting on March 7 at 6pm for a presentation on the Police Budget. He advised that March 19 will be the Water and Sewer Rate Public Hearing as part of the Select Board meeting. He advised that the Select Board should finalize the funding plan for 71 Sandy Pond Road at the March 19 meeting and that he is attending the Community Preservation Committee Public Hearing tonight at 7pm regarding the CPA funding application. The Annual Town Meeting Warrant closed on March 29, 2024 and the Select Board is scheduled to approve the Annual Town Meeting Warrant on April 2, 2024 at 6pm.

New Business/Select Board Member Questions: S. Copeland thanked the Town Clerk's Office for running a successful Presidential Primary Election.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to approve the meeting minutes of February 20, 2024. **Motion passed 2-0.**

Adjournment: A motion was by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to adjourn at 6:05 PM. **Motion passed 2-0.**

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

Date Minutes Approved by SB: 3/19/24

Signature Indicating Approval: 