

**SELECT BOARD MEETING
February 10, 2022 5:30PM
Town Hall/Hybrid**

Quorum noted

A. 5:30 PM: Meeting called to order by Chairperson Donhauser.

B. Roll Call: Mr. Donhauser, Mr. McPherson, Mr. Widi, and Ms. Dow.

C. Pledge of Allegiance recited

D. Moment of Silence observed

E. Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

F. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

5:31 PM Motion by Mr. Donhauser, second by Mr. McPherson, to approve the minutes of January 27, 2022, as written.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes

Mr. McPherson - Yes

Mr. Widi – Yes

Ms. Dow - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

H. Department Head/Committee Reports

5:32 PM 1. Planning Board: Ancillary Counsel

Mr. Sullivan said that I spoke with our Planner, Jeff Brubaker, and when our regular counsel (BernsteinShur) has a conflict, we'd like to have an option to back up with an ancillary counsel, which we've done in the past. As my recommendation calls for, and I think this, along with our banking relationships, our legal relationships should be reviewed in the spring just to make sure that we have the right arrangements with the existing firm or if there's another firm out there that would be a better fit for Eliot. I don't have any that I'm aware of but it's prudent to review these agreements on a regular basis every few years, and I understand that it hasn't been done. During the spring I will review it and hopefully I will have a recommendation before the Board later in the year.

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The SB had no questions regarding this item.

5:33 PM 2. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Sullivan said that his report had comments on the budget process, police contract and the finance director. These three items will be discussed further in the agenda. Regarding **pickleball**, we started having conversations with the people who design them. I met with the pickleball group earlier this week and we had a great meeting. I had a meeting yesterday with **MSAD #35** and had a great visit with **Footprints** and really admire the work they are doing. Meghan Shapiro-Ross is a force to be reckoned with; that she is really dedicated and passionate about what she is doing in there.

J. New Business:

5:34 PM 1. Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Update (verbal)

Mr. Sullivan said that certainly no vote necessary, here, but the Budget Committee has not submitted any additional questions. I have their questions up on the Town website Town Manager's Page. I encourage citizens to go and look at how that is progressing. They did present some analysis for voting patterns with regards to the Fogg Library that were interesting. We identified some changes, as did they about the Bicentennial Committee appropriation being cut. I'll also be asking you, as the SB, to change the wage reserve title to wage reserve and training. I think these two items are inextricably tied. As we train people, we have to adjust compensation to protect them from getting stalled and as they become more experienced and available to do other jobs, I think it's incredibly important that they are protected in that manner. We'll be covering training and wages in that \$194,000 appropriation.

Mr. Donhauser asked if Mr. Sullivan was asking us to change the name or if he was going to.

Mr. Sullivan said that I would change the name and you would have to support it. I hope you would support it.

5:36 PM Mr. Donhauser said that I think it's grand and asked for input from Board members.

SB members were supportive.

Mr. Donhauser said, regarding the Fogg Library, I read a letter presented by the Budget Committee Chair and I take issue with one of the suggestions she made.

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She compared when we had a Citizen's Option the last time we voted. The Citizen's Option was much higher than what the SB and the Budget Committee recommended. The issue is that she said that there are a number of people that voted "None of the above" and then she equated those people with actually voting against it and I think that's a wrong assumption. In her argument, she said that people who voted for the SB and Budget Committee and add those "None of the above", it exceeded the people who voted for the Citizen's Option. I don't think you can assume that people voting "None of the above" are voting against it. They might have wanted something more and I just wanted to point that out.

5:38 PM Mr. Sullivan said that I think that's an important point getting into the mind of the voters. We can see that on a national level, the presupposition of what voters are going to vote or thinking when they're voting is nearly impossible. As you say, they might be voting just because they had some other idea and, therefore, "None of the above".

Mr. Donhauser said that I don't have any significant issues with the rest of her letter but that part sort of hit me right off.

Mr. McPherson agreed. I had the same thought. It doesn't mean they are voting against it. I have had people very close to me make the statement, "Is that enough?" So I don't agree with her statement.

Mr. Sullivan will put the letter up on the website for the public to review.

5:40 PM **2. Request for Appointment of Leslie Stevens, Eliot Agricultural and Food Security Commission.**

Both Ms. Stevens and Mr. Owens were present for this item. The SB expressed their pleasure with Ms. Stevens, Mr. Owens and Ms. Plocharczyk for being the first volunteers for this commission.

Mr. Widi moved, second by Ms. Dow, that the Select Board appoint Leslie Stevens to the Eliot Agricultural and Food Security Commission for a term ending June 30, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes

Mr. McPherson - Yes

Mr. Widi – Yes

Ms. Dow - Yes

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Unanimous vote to approve motion.

5:42 PM 3. Request for Appointment of Sarah Plocharczyk, Eliot Agricultural and Food Security Commission.

Mr. Widi moved, second by Ms. Dow, that the Select Board appoint Sarah Plocharczyk to the Eliot Agricultural and Food Security Commission for a term ending June 30, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

4. Request for Appointment of Norman Owens, Eliot Agricultural and Food Security Commission.

Mr. Widi moved, second by Ms. Dow, that the Select Board appoint Norman Owens to the Eliot Agricultural and Food Security Commission for a term ending June 30, 2024.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

Mr. Sullivan said that I will contact the three inaugural members, congratulations, and set up a date that's convenient for them to meet. He also asked that they stop in to be sworn in with the Town Clerk's office. I am really excited. Mr. Stevens is a chef and brings that food service experience. Ms. Stevens has been a great advocate and is a farm person. Ms. Plocharczyk is also a farmer. It's exciting to have those diverse backgrounds.

Mr. Owens said that he volunteers at Footprints and also Table of Plenty so I have those connections.

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Mr. Sullivan said that we have another applicant coming in at your next meeting and there is one more opening after that.

5:44 PM 5. Ratification of Town Manager's Appointment of Finance Director/Treasurer.

Mr. Sullivan introduced Doreen Chester, who is attending via Zoom. This is very exciting and we are all very happy. Ms. Chester went through a gauntlet of interviews and did extremely well in the on-line testing; that we appreciate that. Since 2008, she's been the finance director in Exeter, NH and very skilled and experienced. She will be able to start on the 21st of February and invited her to speak.

Ms. Chester said that I am really thrilled about the opportunity and I'm really looking forward to know everyone and working for the Town of Eliot.

The SB members welcomed her.

Mr. Sullivan said that I would like to thank the panel, who did a great job managing to come up with a great candidate. Ms. Chester is their top candidate and very professionally handled. David Ross-Lyons, Wendy Rawski, and Melissa Albert did a thorough job and it's greatly appreciated. We're excited Ms. Chester.

Mr. Widi moved, second by Mr. McPherson, that the Select Board confirm the Town Manager's appointment of Doreen Chester as the Eliot Treasurer/Finance Director pending completion of all employment requirements and reviews.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes

Mr. McPherson - Yes

Mr. Widi – Yes

Ms. Dow - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

Mr. Donhauser said welcome to Ms. Chester. We look forward to having you.

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K. Old Business:

5:47 PM 1. Police Union Contract Ratification

Mr. Sullivan said that this has been a very long process. I think we've come to terms and will remain competitive with our police. We had discussed these changes in executive session. A lot of communities are looking at 4% and 5% for COLAs but, as you can see, in Year One it's 2.5%, which will be retroactive. Year Two is 2%. Year Three is 2%. An extra addition to that is that we're putting \$1,000 to the base salary in Fiscal Year 2022 and then, in Fiscal Year 2023, we'll add another \$500 after the 2% COLA. The reason for that is, when you only use percentages in a contract, the distance between the lowest paid (newest officers), some that are very hireable to be taken away from you, are moving away from the higher officers. So, I was really excited that the union voted to support that line of thinking. I think it's a good step for us to retain and protect some of the young officers as they come in. Not that older officers don't get stolen away, sometimes, it's just less likely. The sergeant's pay is pretty much what was left from the original bargaining team standards that were put in place back in October. The sergeant will get paid 10% over the highest Patrol Step with anyone less than three years. Three years at 12% and eight years at 14%. Regarding the educational stipend, because educational costs have gone up, it was deemed appropriate to go up by 1.5%. Midnight shift differential goes from \$.75/hour to \$1.00/hour. Outside detail pay will be \$75.00/hour, which will be very beneficial for our police officers. Vacation buy-out is a little bit different where we changed the language to 10-hour increments. Retirement health insurance is just allowing the retiree from the Police Department to buy into the system. It doesn't cost the Town anything. That will allow the retirees to stay on the health insurance and pay 100% of the cost. Regarding vacation buyout is the one I was referring to earlier that's a little bit different. It allows us to pay out 40 hours as opposed to allowing somebody to carry over. If you weren't able to take a vacation this year, you're not probably going to take it next year and it's just going to build up. By allowing people to buy it out, if they were to take their vacation, we'd have to backfill that with somebody at time and a half. This really saves us half pay for those 40 hours. I just pay it out directly to the officers. I think it's a prudent way to approach it. With Insurance opt out we agreed to go from \$300.00 to \$350.00. Regarding uniforms, it is quite different. We were previously paying \$1,200. We add \$300 to go to \$1,500 but we added that right to their salaries. It doesn't have a real affect on the budget because that money was already in there to pay them for their uniforms. It's now the employee responsible for their uniforms with language that the Chief can direct them to buy new uniforms as the come in with uniforms that are substandard. The ARPA bonus has been discussed before. Then language that would certify that the SRO (School Resource Officer) is a fully sworn officer and part of this bargaining unit. The fitness incentive, we got a

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language change that requires everyone to participate and only those who pass it will get any incentive pay for it. Then, we put in a 15-minute shift change so when one cruiser is coming in, the other officer that's coming on for that shift would be there before so he or she could discuss what went on in that shift and things they should be looking for. It's a common practice. It adds one hour and a quarter of overtime for each officer. Total, our calculations were that the retro would be about \$56,000 to \$57,000. This will add about the same to the contract on an annual basis. A little bit more in the next year because there is the 2%. When you break that down over eight officers, it's really not that onerous. We had put an amount in the budget that we are going to make sure of our numbers but we think we can pare that back a little. It's a great contract, I think, for the Town of Eliot. And the police are very happy, from what I hear. They have already voted in terms of this contract. If you are willing to, and I hope you are, ratify the MOU tonight I will get back to you with a final contract as soon as it can be crafted for you to accept and sign.

5:55 PM Mr. Donhauser asked if we've lost police officers in the recent past.

Mr. Sullivan said that we lost one this year; that we have one retiring now.

Mr. Donhauser said that I think this is a great contract to retain our police officers.

Mr. Sullivan said, in particular, when you see that there are some communities offering \$15,000 bonuses. This will not make you the richest place to work but it will be competitive; that I think you've got a great leader there so people are willing to work with him. I'm excited and I think it's going to be good for the department.

Mr. Widi moved, second by Mr. McPherson, that the Select Board accept and approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Town of Eliot and the MAP Eliot Police Union and direct the Town Manager to notify the union of this vote and to return a complete agreement back to the Select Board for final ratification when available.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes

Mr. McPherson - Yes

Mr. Widi – Yes

Ms. Dow - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

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L. Approval of Warrant(s):

5:57 PM Mr. Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Mr. Dow, that the Select Board approve A/P Warrant #63 in the amount of \$109,641.22, dated January 30, 2022; A/P Warrant #65 in the amount of \$188,697.26, dated February 6, 2022.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

L. Selectmen's Report: Seeking Committee Members Listing

5:58 PM Mr. Donhauser listed the available committee openings. The Capital Improvement Committee has two regular member positions, one through June 2022 and one through June 2023. The Conservation has one regular opening and two alternate openings. The Planning Board has two alternate member openings. We encourage people to fill out an application. Are there any other comments by the SB on anything.

There were no Selectmen's reports tonight.

M. Executive Session

There was no executive session tonight.

N. Adjourn

Mr. McPherson moved, second by Ms. Dow, that the Select Board adjourn.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

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The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Lemire, Recording Secretary

S/ Robert McPherson, Secretary

Date approved: March 17, 2022