



Office of the Board of Selectmen
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Randall V. Becker, Chairman
Earl Gabor, Vice-Chairman
Thomas Klebart, Secretary
Lisa Kontoes
Donald Bourque

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 31, 2022 5:30 P.M.

Selectmen's Meeting Room
Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA
via conference call in accordance with Governor Baker's
emergency "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the
Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20"

MEETING OPENING: At 5:31 p.m., Chairman Becker called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA. The following individuals were present: Chairman Randy Becker, Selectman Lisa Kontoes, Selectman Earl Gabor, Selectman Thomas Klebart, Selectman Donald Bourque, Finance Director Tim Bell, Town Administrator Richard Lafond and Executive Assistant Courtney Friedland. The Board stood and took the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Becker stated on March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing as fully stated on the agenda. As further explained on the agenda, the Executive Order relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body through adequate, alternative means. On February 15, 2022, Governor Baker signed into law a new session law extending certain COVID-19 related measures. The new law, Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, includes an extension until July 15, 2022, of the remote meeting provisions of the Governor's March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Chairman Becker announced there was no one attending via Zoom.

Meeting Minutes

Motion by Selectman Kontoes, seconded by Selectman Klebart, to approve the meeting minutes of May 16, 2022. Call Vote: Selectman Bourque – yes, Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT:

Mr. LaFond stated the Special Town Meeting Warrant had one article. This article was for the Bartlett High School Renovation Project.

Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Klebart, to recommend approval of Article 1 of the Special Town Meeting Warrant for Tuesday, 6/21/22 at 6:30 p.m. at Bartlett High School, 52 Lake Parkway, Webster. Call Vote: Selectman Bourque – yes, Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

DISCUSSION OF BARTLETT HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION INFORMATION MATERIALS:

Chairman Becker stated Mr. LaFond has spoken with Attorney Hewig and out of an abundance of caution he advised the Board of Selectmen to not put forth a letter of support for the Bartlett High School Renovation Project as a Board. He said it is a very public vote and it was best to avoid the perception of using town's resources. He said the Board has received three separate handouts. Mr. Becker read through the Board of Selectmen's Synopsis regarding the Bartlett High School Renovation Project.

Why did the Webster Board of Selectmen recommend approval of a second series of votes for the BHS renovation for June 21st (TM) and June 28th (Ballot)?

1. With the June 30th MSBA decision deadline looming, coupled with the next meeting of the MSBA on June 22nd, there was not enough time to request an extension from MSBA. Without a second vote, if an extension was not granted, the Project would have to go back to the drawing board and face another five to six-year delay.
2. Important to show the MSBA the Town made its best effort to make more citizens aware of the ramifications of a No vote. (See "Yes Vote/ "No Vote" flyer.)
3. Important to correct some misinformation about the project that was being shared on Facebook and other media. See new *FAQ sheet on School website*: https://www.webster-schools.org/cms/1ib/MA02202540/Centricity/Moduleinstance/960/BHS_Yes-No-WebsiteVersion2.pdf
4. Important for citizens to understand the significant increased costs of proceeding with borrowing money to handle Code-Compliant Renovations over multiple (15+) years. These increased costs are a result of inefficiencies of renovating various systems (HVAC, Roof, Electric, Plumbing) over multiple years versus a coordinated renovation at once and the estimated impacts of inflation. (See *handout "What are scenarios if the MSBA-Approved Option does not move forward?"*)

It will actually cost taxpayers significantly more if the MSBA Funding is turned down.

5. Important for citizens to understand the basics of why it's almost impossible to have large capital projects completed under Proposition 2 ½ without a debt exclusion.
6. Important for citizens to understand the detrimental impact on operational budgets if a Proposition 2 ½ Debt Exclusion is not approved.
7. Important for citizens to understand that the increase in taxes is not expected to hit their tax bills for another three years or so. This tracks along with when more significant monies will be expended for the project. A great deal of concern was expressed that with inflation running so high currently, now was not a good time for this project as people were having a hard time making ends meet.

The Board of Selectman has voted to recommend approval of the Bartlett High School building renovation project.

Additional Points to Consider

The total building project cost is \$101.4million. However, the town will receive an MSBA Share reimbursement of \$51.6 million resulting in the cost paid by the town being reduced to \$49.8 million.

The actual cost of the construction cannot exceed \$101.4 million at any stage of the project. Therefore, any changes in construction requirements must be completed within the amount approved by the Town of Webster voters.

In order for the project to be approved, Town registered voters must approve a Debt Exclusion under Proposition 2 ½, which was adopted back in 1980 as a way to limit the growth of government spending. As a result of this law, in order to pay for this type of large-scale capital project, debt exclusions have become a necessity.

For the project to be approved, Town registered voters will have to approve the debt borrowing at the town meeting at Bartlett High School auditorium on June 21, 2022 at 6:30 PM. A two-thirds majority is required for approval. Under state law, a second vote by ballot will take place on June 28, 2022 at the Webster Town Hall. A simple majority is needed for the ballot vote for approval.

What happens if the town voters do not vote 2/3 approval at Town Meeting and a simple majority at the ballot vote?

A rejection by the town will result in the building renovation project not being undertaken in an efficient and cost-effective manner using funds from the MSBA. However even though the building renovation cannot be completed, the town will still need to make the code-compliant renovations that were part of the original renovation project. The code compliant renovations currently cost \$66.5 million. With a no vote, the MSBA will not provide reimbursement of any of the costs of Code-compliant renovation construction. Therefore, the total cost of \$66.5 million will be paid for by the town of Webster- out of existing operating budgets as required under Proposition 2 ½. This will have a significant detrimental impact, estimated in a 6% to 8% range decrease in operating budgets. In addition, the code compliance construction will be completed in multiple phases over a longer period of time, resulting in higher future costs increasing the cost of code compliant renovations to an estimated \$106.3 million over 15+ years.

Lastly, Mr. Becker quoted Abraham Lincoln in which "Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters." He said sadly, if this turns out to be the case, it will be our children that will suffer.

Mr. Lafond stated the Building Commissioner and the Fire Chief have delayed enforcement in light of the project being brought to the voters. He said there are issues that need to be addressed. He said it is not as easy as simply replacing a boiler. He said these repairs trigger bringing the facility up to code. He said the town has a lot to lose if this doesn't pass. He said this is a wonderful opportunity for the community. Selectman Kontoes stated that if the renovation project proposed is not passed then the town would have to start from scratch to be eligible for MSBA funding. It was noted that Sheppard Hill High School had recently submitted their project to MSBA and would be in front of Webster if the votes failed.

WEBSTER DUDLEY OXFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – “ONE DAY” LIQUOR LICENSE REQUEST:

Selectman Bourque recused himself.

Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to approve the “One Day” Liquor License Request submitted by the Webster Dudley Oxford Chamber of Commerce for June 13, 2022 from 4:00

p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Samuel Slater Experience at 31 Ray Street, Webster, MA. Call Vote: Selectman Bourque – recused, Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

OUTDOOR SEATING DISCUSSION:

Selectman Bourque stated he asked to have this on the agenda for discussion. He stated Governor Baker signed legislation extending outdoor dining and to-go cocktails to April 2023. The Town of Webster has a list of approved outdoor dining establishments from prior years. Establishments that received prior approval will automatically be approved this year. If an establishment would like outdoor dining they must apply to The Town Administrator. The application will then be reviewed by the Building Commission and Town Planning before being approved. On June 5, 2020, The Board of Selectmen voted to authorize the Town Administrator to approve requests for outdoor seating areas for restaurants and expand the premises for on-premises liquor licenses holders.

BARTLETT HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT SUPPORT VOTE:

Selectman Klebart stated the Board of Selectmen never took a formal vote to recommend the approval and support of the Bartlett High School Renovation Project.

Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to support and recommend approval of the Bartlett High School Renovation Project. Call Vote: Selectman Bourque – yes, Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

1. Personnel – Interviews will be conducted next week for the open position in the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen office. There were 45 applicants.
2. Cable Contract Renewal – The Cable Advisory Committee has been established and the IT Director has stepped up and taken the lead. His enthusiasm is appreciated.
3. Events – The Memorial Day Parade was well attended. Along with the Veterans, Mr. LaFond would like to thank the DPW and Custodians for all of their hard work and dedication that went in to making sure everything went smoothly.
4. Memorial Beach Facilities – A meeting was held last week with the Recreation Director, Police Chief, and DPW Superintendent to discuss safety issues at Memorial Beach. He the last two weekends there has been an abundance of trash and health/safety issues at the beach and bathrooms. He said many suggestions have been discussed. One suggestion was a sign-in sheet for the bathrooms. He said one of the consensuses was that allowing grilling has caused an abundance of trash and bad behavior. He said party groups show up in the morning and stay all day. They grill and leave trash behind. He said the majority of these groups are not Webster residents. He said the grills also cause a safety and liability issue. Selectman Becker stated the Board of Selectmen voted to take out the town provided grills in 2002. In 2018, the Board of Selectmen voted to allow small propane grills back in the beach. He said the grills that are being brought in now are full size grills in the back of trucks.

Selectman Becker stated there is also a safety issue at the Lakeside beach area. He said the buoys for the swimmers were not put in yet. He said the State has taken over putting them in. He suggested contacting someone from the State and see if they can be put in by this weekend.

Mr. LaFond stated our Health Agent, Camille Griffin, was informed by a resident of the South Pond that the algae conditions looked similar to last year at a point in time when a member

of her family became ill. Ms. Griffin performed a visual test and sent photographs to DPH. DPH confirmed that the conditions warranted a health advisory. The advisory was posted at the two public access points to South Pond. One is a municipal access and the other a state access. The advisory was also posted on our website and social media. Chairman Becker stated the town/State should confirm this determination by testing. Mr. LaFond stated he will follow up with Ms. Griffin. Selectman Klebart also mentioned the Town should look into enhanced communication for the many residents in South Pond or any other part of the lake should this type of situation arise again.

Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Klebart, to approve the Town Administrator's Report. Call Vote: Selectman Bourque – yes, Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Finance Committee	Full Member - 1
Personnel Advisory Board	Full Member - 1
Water & Sewer Commission	Full Member - 1
Zoning Board of Appeals	Alternates - 2
Economic Development Committee	Full Member - 2
Historical Commission	Full Members - 2
By-Law Committee	Full Members – 2
ADA Committee	Full Members - 2
Cable Advisory Board	Full Members - 3

NEXT MEETING:

June 13, 2022, 6:00 p.m. Second Floor Meeting Room, Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570

June 21, 2022, 6:00 p.m. Second Floor Meeting Room, Bartlett High School, 52 Lake Parkway, Webster, MA 01570

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Selectman Kontoes, seconded by Selectman Klebart to adjourn at 6:21 p.m. Call Vote: Selectman Bourque – yes, Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Friedland, Executive Secretary to the Board of Selectmen**

EXHIBITS:

1. Draft Meeting Minutes from May 16, 2022 Board of Selectmen's Meeting
2. Document: June 21, 2022 Special Town Meeting Warrant
3. Document: What are scenarios if the MSBA-Approved Option does not move forward?
4. Document: Yes Vote/ "No Vote" flyer
5. Document: Board of Selectmen Synopsis on the Bartlett High School Renovation Project
6. Documents: "One Day" Liquor License Request submitted by Webster-Dudley-Oxford Chamber of Commerce

