



Select Board  
February 12th, 2024  
Meeting Minutes

Public present: T. Cofske, C. DeFalco, D. Fagerstrom, M. Egan, T. Pina, J. Ballou, C. Jambora, T. Schnetzer  
Members present: M. Kelly, G. Adams, A. Bercovici, P. Vandal

Chair M. Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. All in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. M. Kelly announced that the meeting is being recorded.

Meeting Minutes

MOTION: G. Adams, to accept the January 17, 2024 minutes.

SECOND: A. Bercovici

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

MOTION: G. Adams, to accept the January 29, 2024 minutes.

SECOND: A. Bercovici

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

New Business

**Hitchcock Free Academy – Request for Use of Town Common for the Annual 2024 Summer Series Concerts and Use of Town Common Sign to Advertise the Concerts**

T. Cofkse informed the Board that the Summer Series Concerts plans to run from July 17th to August 21st, with a rain date of August 28th.

MOTION: G. Adams, to approve the request for the use of the Town Common for the Summer Concert Series for Hitchcock Academy.

SECOND: A. Bercovici

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

**Request for Use of Town Flag Poles**

The Board discussed its response to a private group's request to fly a flag on the town flag poles. M. Kelly stated that he believed the Town would have to fly the requested flag as it did not have a pre-existing policy prohibiting it. M. Kelly continued, saying that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, (Shurtleff vs City of Boston), ruled that a town could not deny the request in the absence of a policy prohibiting it. M. Kelly added that his view was that the Town should not fly private organization flags on a Town flag pole, the Town should only fly the American flag and the POW/MIA flag. M. Kelly concluded that the town should draft a policy but only after flying the flag already under request.

P. Vandal asked whether this was a matter for the Select Board or the town floor. T. Cofske stated that towns have done both. Making a policy was addressed again but, because it was not on the meeting's agenda, no policy was made.

G. Adams discussed the Boston decision. G. Adams brought up that Boston had three flag poles, one of which was used for public speech, while Brimfield, on the other hand, only has one flag pole at any given site, and those flag poles are used for government speech. G. Adams went on to say that if Brimfield could establish that it hadn't flown any flag other than the U.S. flag and the POW flag, that would serve as precedent. G. Adams stated the Board should take flag protocol into account when drafting the policy. G. Adams concluded by raising the idea of potentially adding a second flag pole for the purpose of public speech and thought the Board should respond to the group requesting its flag to be flown by clarifying that the Town's flag poles are currently only for government speech. No action was taken.

#### **Sign 2024 Presidential Primary Election Warrant**

MOTION: A. Bercovici, to sign the 2024 Presidential Election Warrant.

SECOND: G. Adams

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

#### **2024 Annual Common Victuallers License:**

Quinebaug Cove Campground

MOTION: G. Adams, to approve the 2024 Annual Common Victuallers License for Quinebaug Cove Campground.

SECOND: P. Vandal

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

#### **2024 Annual Flea Market Owner/Operator License:**

Grand Trunk Antiques

MOTION: A. Bercovici, to approve the 2024 Annual Flea Market Owner/Operator License for Grand Trunk Antiques.

SECOND: P. Vandal

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

ABSTAIN: M. Kelly

#### **TERVA Corporation Presentation of Options for Municipal Office Space and Discussion of Public Information Sessions and Preparation for Special Town Meeting**

Building Committee chair M. Egan summarized the purpose of the TERVA presentation to the Board. M. Egan said the presentation was to go over dates for public information meetings, already discussed with

the Building Committee, and a subsequent meeting with the Select Board, to recommend to the Board the municipal office space option to move forward with, in order to present the project at a Special Town Meeting to approve funds for schematic designs of the project. M. Kelly asked how many options are being considered. M. Egan replied that there are currently three options under consideration but the intention is for those options to be narrowed down after the informational meetings with the public. M. Kelly suggested putting the question as to whether something should be done about the municipal offices project on the floor at the Special Town Meeting.

TERVA representative T. Pina presented options for municipal office space as well as options for what to do with the existing Town Hall, in its current state. T. Pina added that after an informal meeting at the end of January, TERVA had its first formal meeting last week with the Building Committee. TERVA has assembled a timeline. This is not their typical approach. Usually, a design team is hired and an architect develops a schematic of the preferred option but, because there are not currently funds available to hire an architect at this point, the Building Committee's funds are being used to frame out a process to reach a Special Town Meeting, potentially in early May, to decide if the Town wants to allocate money to hire an architect and continue the process.

T. Pina said this meeting was only to talk about the timeline to firm up the Select Board's agreement to hold a Special Town Meeting in early May and work backwards. Two info sessions are built into the schedule, to talk to the community and stakeholders to discuss the project. The first info session has been discussed for March 25th, directly following the Select Board meeting. The second has been discussed for the first week of April, possibly at the Senior Center. Both meetings will also be available virtually, although they do not yield feedback as readily that way. Following the info sessions, TERVA has tentatively scheduled to come back to the Select Board on April 10th and, if needed, on April 24th.

T. Pina went on to add that the goal of this first endeavor is to transfer funds from other available accounts to fund design and schematic drawings in order to get an estimate. The process would then be repeated with the schematic set of drawings. The architect would finalize the preferred option, enough for an estimator to work from, and get two estimates and reconcile them.

TERVA has created three options. Option #1: fixing the Town Hall and adding an Annex. Option #2: fixing up the Town Hall to make office space, with no annex. Option #3: a standalone building on the Town parcel where the current Annex sits. Of the three options, Option #3 would be the simplest. It is easier to predict and less expensive than renovating a 9,000-square-foot historic building. Option #1 would be the most expensive.

G. Adams received confirmation that there are two things the townspeople need to vote on at the Special Town Meeting: whether to move forward with a project and whether to approve funding to move forward. M. Kelly asked what, as the Building Committee sees it, the next step would be. M. Egan replied they were looking to schedule info sessions to get the Town's input and to schedule the Special Town Meeting. The dates being looked at are March 25th and April 3rd. G. Adams asked about a potential third info session, possibly on a Thursday, to make it easier for people to attend. D.

Fagerstrom interjected that the Town Hall would be available to host it if the info session was held after April 1st. T. Pina asked what is required to get a Special Town Meeting scheduled. T. Cofske replied a warrant must be drawn and posted 14 days in advance as well as a town-wide mailing.

The Building Committee suggested a May 8th date for the Special Town Meeting. It was believed that scheduling any sooner might compress the timeline too much and the following week is Flea Market. G. Adams asked if a date could be set. T. Cofske said she was concerned that it was not on the agenda for the meeting. M. Kelly said the Board would do it at the next meeting.

Finance Committee member J. Ballou asked if grants for historical buildings would be incorporated into the estimation for Option #1. T. Pina responded that the town would have to vote for full funding and then, effectively, be reimbursed by any potential grants. J. Ballou added that knowing the final figures would help in making a decision. T. Cofske added that new construction would not have eligibility for a large number of the potentially available grants. J. Ballou then asked if the plans being sought now would be more detailed than those made in 2017. T. Pina answered that those were just conceptual models.

G. Adams added that he appreciates the work TERVA is doing and went on to say that TERVA is not just focused on the needs of the Annex but on the needs of the Town going forward. T. Pina said one of the conclusions of the last meeting with the Building Committee was that unless stabilizing the Town Hall was addressed in the plan, TERVA would be solving one problem while leaving Brimfield with another for later.

M. Egan asked the Board if the Palmer Road option was off the table. M. Kelly thought it should still be considered but that it was K. Moore's responsibility to address it at the Special Town Meeting. The Palmer Road option would be a separate process from what TERVA is doing with the other three options. T. Pina raised concerns over having competing ideas. T. Pina added that winterizing the Town Hall and stop-gap measures to repair it were not something that could be sustained indefinitely.

#### ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: A. Bercovici, to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: P. Vandal

VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Christopher DeFalco



Martin J. Kelly, Chairperson

**MEETING MATERIALS:**

- Posting 2-8-2024
- Meeting Minutes January 17th
- Meeting Minutes January 29th
- Hitchcock Academy Town Common Usage request email
- Pro-life flag
- TERVA Brimfield Town Hall Admin Offices Project renderings