

Chilmark Select Board, Planning Board & Human Resource Board

December 14, 2023 5:00 PM Joint Meeting Minutes

Present: Select Board: Chairperson Bill Rossi, James Malkin and Marie Larsen. Planning Board: Chairperson Richard Osnoss, Catherine Thompson, Ann Wallace, Peter Cook and Hugh Weisman and Janet Weidner. Human Resource Board: Jennie Greene, Bruce Golden and Employee Representative TTA Chief Ben Retmier. Others: Alison Kisselgof, Jennifer Christy, Diana DeBlase, Anna McCaffrey, Harbormaster Ryan Rossi, Jeffrey Maida, Police Chief Sean Slavin, Police Sargent Vieira, Police Officer Jessie Burton, Police Officer Michael Dullea. Ann Mayhew, Clarissa Allen, Kaitlin Jones, Malory Watts, Rebecca Gilbert, Krishana Collins, Amy Weinberg, Board of Health member Matt Poole, Lonnie Phillips, Mara Flannigan, Lauren Lynch. News reporter Thomas Humphreys. Videographer Lynn Christoffers (*some listed here arrived later in the meeting*)

At 5:00 PM Chairperson Rossi called the meeting to order in the Select Board meeting room.

Minutes:

12/5/23 draft minutes were not completed yet so this item was tabled to the 1/2/24 meeting.

Joint Meeting with Human Resources Board (HRB):

- Discussion of possible COLA policy change.
- Discussion of FY2025 COLA recommendation - currently 3% per policy.

Select Board liaison to HRB James Malkin asked to introduce this item. Mr. Malkin said an issue that came to the HRB about 10 years ago was issue of what to do when our calculation determined there was essentially no COLA. Staff was concerned given the cost of living on the Vineyard that no increase would put them backwards. At that time a recommendation was made and accepted by Select Board (Board of Selectmen at the time) that in no cases the town would give under 1% but in no cases would they go over 3%. This was the practice till last year when due to inflation nationally and locally, the Select Board accepted a recommendation from the HRB to give a 4% COLA and a onetime 3% adjustment. That resulted in that this year with a cap of 3% would make it no increase for some employees.

The question is do we stay with the 3% cap, change it, do away with it. These are the questions here today for discussion. HRB Chairperson Jennie Greene said that is a good job explaining. Chairperson Rossi agreed that is how he remembers it. Ms. Larsen asked why it was capped at 3%. Ms. Greene said that was a long time ago. Mr. Malkin said the reason for the cap is the Town has always been very fiscally frugal. There was concern expressed that this could get way out of hand. Jobs in town were good jobs, we wanted to control our cost and not simply buy into anything that the (CPI) numbers showed up. All about fiscal conservatism. Mr. Larsen said that is when we had people filling jobs we are not in that environment anymore. Chairperson Rossi and Mr. Malkin agreed.

Joint Meeting with Human Resources Board Continued...

Chairperson Greene said none of us want to pay more taxes, we are lucky we pay such low taxes, but at the same time we want to be fair to the employees.

Mr. Malkin moved for 4.12% COLA for FY25 and to continue the discussion of policy this coming year (2024). Ms. Larsen seconded the motion. **SO VOTED: 3 Ayes**

MS Fundraiser – Bike MS Ride the Vineyard:

Chairperson Rossi said this is a great event we have approved this every year for many years. The event is May 4, 2024. Chairperson Rossi asked Police Chief Slavin if there has been any issues or concerns. Chief Slavin said it's early in the season and we have had no issues. Ms. Larsen moved to endorse this event and approve road use permit. Mr. Malkin seconded the motion. **SO VOTED: 3 Ayes**

Employees completing their six month initial evaluation period:

- Facilities Manager / Patty Egan - Town Administrator sent written recommendation to the Appointing Authority (Select Board) that the candidate be appointed as a year-round employee. Mr. Malkin moved to appoint Ms. Egan a permanent employee. Ms. Larsen seconded the motion. **SO VOTED: 3 Ayes**
- Building Inspector, Zoning officer / Adam Petkus - Town Administrator sent written recommendation to the Appointing Authority (Select Board) that the candidate be appointed as a year-round employee. Mr. Malkin moved to appoint Adam Petkus a permanent employee. . Ms. Larsen seconded the motion. **SO VOTED: 3 Ayes**
- Board Administrator / Carolyn Stoeber - Town Administrator sent written recommendation to the Appointing Authority (Select Board) that the candidate be appointed as a Year-round Employee. Conservation Commission votes next Thursday to request the appointment of Ms. Stoeber as Conservation Officer. Town Administrator sent written request asking for a contingent vote by Select Board tonight so it can be effective January 1st. Mr. Malkin moved to appoint Carolyn Stoeber a permanent employee and Conservation officer starting January 1, 2024. Ms. Larsen seconded the motion. **SO VOTED: 3 Ayes**

Police Department - Request appointment of Aidan Coombs as Traffic Officer for winter service:

Chief Slavin was present for this request. Chief Slavin said Mr. Coombs has been a great worker for the town in the summers and we ask that you appoint him as traffic officer for winter service. Mr. Malkin moved to appoint Mr. Coombs as a traffic officer. Ms. Larsen seconded the motion. **SO VOTED: 3 Ayes**

MV Housing Bank Coalition - Select Board representative to replace Select Board Member Doty:
Select Board Chair Rossi said he would offer to do this but will not be running for another term this spring. Mr. Malkin proposed he fill this position till next Select Board member elected in April. Chairperson Rossi agreed to be representative as long as they are Zoom meetings.

Pre-School RFP - authorize release Friday: draft RFP and lease for December 14th approval by Select Board, December 15th & 22 legal ads, deadline January 2, Special Town Meeting January 22 for approval of 20 year lease to successful proposer:
Select Board supported moving this project forward and will review final paperwork on Tim Carroll's return.

Chilmark School - HVAC project report:
Chairperson Rossi gave a brief update that this project is nearing completion.

Terminate agreement with Judith Barrett on PHP RFP. Schedule RFP discussion on January 2, 2024: Chairperson Rossi said this was recommended by Ms. Barrett and there was no fee as she was doing it free of charge. Mr. Malkin moved to approve termination recommendation. Ms. Larsen seconded the motion **SO VOTED: 3 Ayes**

5:30 PM - Planning Board –Farms Bylaw:

Mr. Malkin asked to say something and then open to discussion, Mr. Malkin said "I have read the Town Counsel's response and have reviewed the language and discussion raised at our last SB meeting. The Planning Board wishes to proceed with the proposed language and people have spoken about the need to get a warrant article dealing with Farms onto the April Town meeting.

I feel that the most serious drawback with the proposed language is that it gives virtually unlimited freedom to do anything - including activities that aren't specifically noted — and to an extent that isn't limited (including number of events, frequency of events, size of events, connection between event and farm activities). The only limitations would be those restrictions that apply to the state agricultural exemption. And I'd note that exceeding the 25% on non-Mass farm produce, product or meat could result in the loss of the exemption for our current farm stands.

The potential consequences of the language on the table are, even if not likely to occur immediately, a significant increase in traffic (particularly problematic in the Town center and more generally our rural roads), inadequate parking (further aggravating traffic resulting in possible congestion on our streets), additional noise and lighting (disrupting the rural landscape), not to mention the likelihood of additional employees who may not have housing (challenging our current housing shortage).

Put simply, the proposal seriously threatens the very thing that makes Chilmark unique - its small rural village like character with no commercial district and a very few grandfathered small businesses.

This is not to say that some additional activities shouldn't be allowed, but they must be carefully delineated and defined and clearly limited in size, scope, frequency, etc. And these additional activities must be enforceable and enforced (eg reporting or some other way to ensure that farms are meeting the town's standards.) Accordingly, I believe that the current language should be referred back to the Planning Board to deliberate along these lines and those of comments of Town Counsel. The Planning

Board may then come back to the Select board with language that deals with these concerns. In my opinion, this is too significant an issue for Chilmark to rush into a change of current zoning and regulation.”

Chairperson of Planning Board Richard Osnoss gave a report of what the Planning Board has done and said they will proceed as directed by the Select Board. Members of the Farming community gave comments on wanting to move forward with process. Ms. Allen said she supported having defined wording in bylaw amendment and that the wording submitted was too broad. Select Board referred this back to the Planning Board and asked them to return back to Select Board with wording that reflected the concerns expressed. Chairperson Rossi said we don’t want to rush this is a very impactful proposal.

Mr. Malkin moved to send this back to Planning Board to work on what was discussed tonight. Chairperson Rossi said yes to create a definition and to set limits. Ms. Larsen seconded the motion.

SO VOTED: 3 Ayes

At 6:01 PM with no further items on agenda for discussion Mr. Malkin moved to adjourn. Ms. Larsen seconded the motion. **SO VOTED: 3 Ayes**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diana DeBlase.

Approved 01/02/2024

Document List:

- HRB COLA memo to Select Board
- Email correspondence with Legal Counsel regarding Planning Board / Farming bylaw amendment process and wording
- Police Chief request to Select Board to appoint A. Coombs -Traffic Officer
- National Multiple Sclerosis Bike MV Event 05/04/2023 permit and detail documents
- Building Department 6 moth report from A Petkus
- Chilmark Preschool architectural plans for location and concept proposal 12/7/2023
- Cape Light Compact energy efficiency Report: www.capelightcompact.org/reports