

BOS Regular Special Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 20, 2021
7:30 pm
Hybrid meeting: Town Hall Hearing Room & via Zoom

Present: Julia Pemberton, Michael Thompson, Peg O'Donnell, Krista Gramer, Georgetown Firehouse representatives, Eversource representatives, and town constituents and via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by Julia Pemberton.

Minutes from May 16, 2022 were reviewed.

Motion to approve. P. O'Donnell. M. Thompson. No discussion. Unanimous.

Public Comment

10 people spoke up about the Tree Resiliency Program that Eversource is proposing for the town, taking place the length of Cross Highway to Lonetown Road/Rt. 107. Residents expressed their concern that the potential over-cutting not only make this scenic road unattractive, it would also negatively effect climate and the life that inhabits these large trees. Many hoped Eversource would consider using Redding as an underground pilot program—burying the lines—as an investment for both the town and state.

Review of the Employee Handbook

Krista Gramer from the Finance Department presented to the Board of Selectmen detailed changes made in the Employee Handbook. A plethora of items were mentioned from employee vacations, holidays, full to part time positions, FMLA, employee health benefits, pension plans, employee programs, just to name a few. All needed updating. Steve Gniadek, current Finance Director, acknowledged and thanked Krista for her effort completing this task, helping clarify terminology that is oftentimes misinterpreted.

Neighborhood Assistance Act Program (NAAP): Georgetown Volunteer Fire Company

Will Ely of the Georgetown Fire Department presented that the Fire Department wants to update the boilers and heating system to a more efficient one, for a total of \$56,000. The Neighborhood Assistance Program start date is January 2023 to June 2023. This is no cost to the taxpayers in Redding.

A motion was made to approve the \$56,000 to apply to the NAAP for this new system. P. O'Donnell. M. Thompson. No discussion. Unanimous.

A note of thanks was given to both Steve Santa and Will Ely for setting an example for other organizations for moving to a more energy efficient system.

Eversource Resiliency Project

Eversource representatives shared their process, first by going to the Board of Selectmen and then speaking at a public forum on May 25, 2022 at the Redding Community Center where they presented their Tree Resiliency Project: the ability to prepare for and adapt to changing conditions and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions, specifically high impact, low frequency events. The idea is to work

with property owners on the 3.7 mile length which includes Cross Highway, Hill Road to Redding Road. The segment powers 4 critical facilities: Town Hall and Police Station, Black Rock Turnpike Fire Dept, Hill Rd. Fire Dept., Joel Barlow High School Emergency Shelter. The work will be conducted within the road rights-of-way in coordination with the town's tree warden, CT DOT and scenic roads committees. According to Eversource: "Tall growing trees within 10 feet of outermost wires will be removed to prevent future grow-ins. To increase resiliency, we will also target risk trees within the fall zone. Risk trees are those that can fall on or contact power lines and cause an outage. Our professional arborists will evaluate all trees within the Fall Zone to determine a tree's risk potential based on its species, location, health, and structural composition and prioritize the removal of risk trees to minimize their ability to cause an outage. If a tree must be removed, it is cut as low to the ground as possible. An Eversource Arborist or trained permission specialist will be going door to door to talk with each property owner along the segment. Following state statutes and regulations, notification and a town permit is required for tree work in the town right-of-way. Before tree work can be performed on private property, we must obtain consent from the property owner." Eversource's timeline includes completing the project by end of October 2022. There was a very long discussion and questions to Eversource about the project.

American Rescue Plan Working Group: Project proposals

Twenty-four projects so far in total have been brought to the attention to the ARPA committee. 8 are town-related projects, 8 are from NGOs (non-government organization), 2 are from Board of Education, 2 are from the fire departments, 2 are from ER9 parents organizations and 2 are from private citizens. The Board of Selectmen will review the projects to decide whether they go to a Special Town Meeting for citizens to vote on.

Public Comment

9-10 people spoke up during public comment and asked questions of Eversource as well as the Selectmen.

Administrative Updates:

Jamie Gracy, the new Highway Director, will get certified as a Tree Warden starting this fall. There will be a few retirements going forward. Steve Gniadek is retiring July 14 and there will be a new director to take his place, TBD. Doug Hartline is retiring from the Health Department. His last official day is June 29, 2022 but he will fill in as a part-time worker until his replacement is found.

Motion to adjourn at 10:01 pm. P. O'Donnell. M. Thompson. No Discussion. Unanimous.

Submitted by
Alice Smith