

Meeting Minutes of the Hanover Select Board Special Meeting held in a Hybrid Format with both in person attendees in the First Floor Hearing Room of Hanover Town Hall as well as remote attendees via Zoom videoconference, on Monday, July 24th, 2023 @ 7:00 pm.

Call meeting to order and Pledge of Allegiance

At 7:00pm the Chair called the meeting to order.

Present at Town Hall were Chair Vanessa O'Connor, Vice Chair Rhonda Nyman, Selectman David Delaney, and Selectman Steve Louko. Selectman Tuzik was unable to attend.

Also present at Town Hall were Town Manager Joe Colangelo (TM), Assistant Town Manager, HR Director, CDMI Director Ann Lee, Director of Public Affairs, Licensing and Insurances Janet Tierney (DPA), and Student Interns Luke Hoyes, Vanessa Bulman and Sean Dever.

All rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

The Chair requested any public comments, reminding those present that there is a limit of 3 minutes per person for public comments, seeing none.

Meeting Minutes

The Chair asked for any questions or comments on the Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2023, Selectman Louko raised concerns with the lack of detail regarding his abstention from voting on the Municipal Relief Transfers. The Chair noted that minutes cannot be modified to insert context however instructed DPA to look into her notes to see if Selectman Louko made any comments at that time that would be appropriate to include. The Chair took the approval of the minutes of July 10, 2023 off of the Agenda for this evening and informed all that the Board will consider their approval at a future meeting.

The Chair requested any questions or comments regarding the Executive Session Minutes listed for approval this evening, seeing none.

The Board voted to approve the Executive Session Minutes of:

December 5, 2022	March 20, 2023
December 19, 2022	April 3, 2023
January 9, 2023	April 24, 2023
January 17, 2023	May 15, 2023
February 6, 2023	June 5, 2023
February 27, 2023	June 20, 2023
March 6, 2023	

Public Hearing -Licensing

Public Hearing (7:00pm) on the Application from Sage & Salt, LLC dba Sage & Salt, located at 1202 Washington Street, Hanover, MA 02339, for a Section 12 On-Premise Restaurant All Alcoholic Beverage's License with proposed Manager of Record Jon D'Allessandro.

The Chair read the Public Hearing Notice, [attached](#), into the record.

Jon D'Allessandro and Andrea Schnell Co-Owners of Sage & Salt appeared before the Board and spoke on the application. DPA informed the Board that the application had received all necessary

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Department Head approvals. DPA also informed the Board that their requested hours of liquor service are Monday – Friday and Sundays 9:00am to 12:00 Midnight and Saturdays 9:00am to 1:00am.

The Chair requested any questions or comments from the Board. The Board discussed the application with Mr. D’Alessandro and Ms. Schnell. The Board Members welcomed Sage & Salt to Town.

The Chair requested any further questions or comments. Hanover residents Kathy and Tom Kennedy introduced themselves and informed all that they live behind Sage & Salt’s location and welcomed Sage & Salt to the neighborhood. The Board voted to approve the Application from Sage & Salt, LLC dba Sage & Salt, located at 1202 Washington Street, Hanover, MA 02339, for a Section 12 On-Premise Restaurant All Alcoholic Beverages License with proposed Manager of Record Jon D’Alessandro.

Appointment

Consider Appointment to the Board of Registrars as recommended by the Republican Town Committee

Rick Mattes of the Republican Town Committee and Kimberly Bakeberg appeared before the Board to speak on Kimberly’s proposed appointment to the Board of Registrars. The Chair received confirmation that the Republican Town Committee is required to put forth three candidates and they have brought forth Kimberly Bakeberg, Julia Leone and Yvonne Bright however, their strong candidate is Kimberly Bakeberg. Ms. Bakeberg spoke to the Board on her background and interest in serving on the Board of Registrars. The Chair requested any questions or comments, seeing none.

The Board voted to appoint Kimberly Bakeberg to the Board of Registrars as recommended by the Republican Town Committee.

Presentation

Overview of Services Provided by the John C. Curtis Free Library

Library Director Virginia Johnson (LD) appeared before the Board via Zoom.

LD informed all that there will be a discussion of the Library’s Saturday hours at the Board of Library Trustees meeting in September, noting that for budgetary reasons the Saturday hours have been scaled back. The Chair expressed an interest in hearing of budget neutral ways to address Saturday hours at the Library. LD agreed to have a meeting to discuss this topic further. LD provided the Board with an overview of the services provided by the Library, [presentation attached](#).

The Chair requested any comments or question for LD, seeing none.

The Board thanked LD for her time.

Municipal Aggregation

Paul Gromer of MASS POWERChoice appeared before the Board and Presented “Hanover Energy Choice Key Decisions July 24, 2023”, [presentation attached](#).

Mr. Gromer began with a discussion of the key decision of which plan to offer and the amount of renewable energy included within the offered plan. Two options were presented to the Board. The first being a two-option plan, with the default option being the least expensive product with no

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additional renewable energy and an option to opt up to add in additional renewable energy which will be more expensive.

The second plan for consideration would be a three-option plan where the default has some additional renewable energy included and residents could choose to either opt down to a less expensive option with no additional renewable energy or opt up to a more expensive plan with more renewable energy included.

The Board discussed the plans with Mr. Gromer. When asked, Mr. Gromer informed the Board that within the option with no additional renewable energy, the State's mandated minimum amount of renewable energy, 22%, will be included.

The Board discussed the plans with Mr. Gromer. Mr. Gromer confirmed that new residents on basic utilities will be automatically enrolled in the program, once a quarter or so new residents will receive a mailing letting them know they are in the program, and giving them an opportunity to opt out. Mr. Gromer also confirmed that residents can opt out at any time with no cost, however they would not be guaranteed the contract rate if opting back in thereafter. Mr. Gromer that they are looking into allowing residents to opt back in at the contract rate in the future.

The Board discussed the possibility of having a plan where the default option would be no additional renewables and then offering two more options, instead of one as presented, with the different levels of some additional renewables and 100% renewables. Mr. Gromer confirmed that that could be done.

Mr. Gromer informed all that typically the savings involved in these plans are 5% to 10% less than basic service from the utility companies.

The Chair requested any questions or comments. Selectmen Louko and Delaney expressed an interest in setting the default at the cheapest rate with the 22% standard amount of renewables in order to save the most money for the residents, while giving residents the option to opt up to more renewables if they so choose.

Chair O'Connor expressed an interest in setting the default at some additional renewables, which does not prevent residents from opting out of the program or opting for less renewables, in order to show that as a Town, Hanover is taking a bend towards being more environmentally conscious by choosing renewable options when they are so easily and efficiently presented to us. Resident Catherine Harder Bernier joined the meeting via Zoom and inquired about the pricing of the plans. Mr. Gromer spoke on pricing and informed all that typically the contract will have a fixed rate for two or three years depending on the rate at the time the contract is signed. Resident Mike Cianciola appeared before the Board and asked if instead of being automatically enrolled in the program, could residents be opting in instead. Mr. Gromer informed all that State Law has set it up so that those currently on basic utility service are auto enrolled unless they opt out and those currently on a private service can opt in if they wish. Resident Catherine Harder Bernier appeared via Zoom and asked if there were any enrollment or cancellation fees. Mr. Gromer confirmed that there are no fees to join or cancel, and there is no minimum term. Mr. Gromer confirmed for the Board that due to state regulations, the Board must choose the plan up front and could choose to change the plan later, however it could delay the rather lengthy legislative approval process the plan must go through. Mr. Gromer confirmed that the choice of plan does not change his company's compensation as they are compensated on volume of kilowatt hours that run through the program, not choice of plan.

The Chair requested any additional comments or questions, seeing none.

Noting that it did not seem the Board Members have reached a consensus on this decision, the Chair stated that she would entertain a motion to authorize Mr. Gromer and his Team to pursue a

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typical three offering structure with additional renewable energy in the default, and the cheapest option and 100% renewable electricity as the options. The motion was not made. The Chair made the motion and asked for a second, seeing none. The Chair requested an alternative motion. Selectman Louko made a motion to have the State standard of 22% renewables as the default in a three-offering structure that offers residency to have some additional renewables or go 100% green with 100% renewable energy. Selectman Delaney seconded the motion. The Chair requested all in favor, Selectman Louko, aye, Selectman Delaney, aye. The Chair requested all opposed, Chair O'Connor, aye, Vice Chair Nyman, aye. The Chair noted that as the vote is split the decision may need to be put off until Selectman Tuzik is also present to participate in the decision. TM encouraged the Board to reach a decision this evening as not making the key decisions this evening would hurt the chances of the program moving forward in a timely fashion. Mr. Gromer confirmed that this a threshold decision so the Town will need to make this decision in order to take the next step and move forward. Vice Chair Nyman expressed an interest in reaching out to local communities prior to taking this vote, in order to see how the choices they made with regards to the plan they are offering, have worked out for them. The Board further discussed the plan options. The Board moved on to the Town funding piece of this discussion and noted they would return to the plan option piece thereafter.

Mr. Gromer discussed the option for the Town to collect a small fee through the program, noting that typically the amount approved would amount to 60 cents per resident per month. Mr. Gromer stated that the funds would need to be used for the program, for instance to be put toward the cost of Town Staff who work on the program. The Board discussed the pros and cons of the proposed fee with Mr. Gromer and TM. The Chair asked for any questions or comments. Selectman Delaney inquired as to a guestimate of the amount of expenses on the Town side to run the program. Mr. Gromer stated for most communities the expenses would be modest with the consulting firm doing the majority of the work but there is some time required on the Town side overseeing the consultants, fielding questions from the public and handling additional public education or marketing for the program. The Chair commented that as this is a service the residents have asked that the Town provide, which is not a traditional service for the Town to provide, she would support having the fee and collecting it to support the operations of the program. Selectman Louko mentioned that MASS POWERChoice already is receiving a fee to run the program and is absorbing the vast majority of the work that goes into this and he is against adding an additional tax to the residents in their electricity bill. The Chair stated that as the Town heads into a very challenging couple of budgeting years, the Town needs to be very cautious about taking on more expenses, be they significant or relatively minor. TM strongly encouraged the Board to adopt this fee as the Town is heading into challenging fiscal years and also noting that there has already been a substantial amount of staff time involved in getting this program up and running. Resident Catherine Harder Bernier joined via Zoom and asked what is the process to opt out of municipal aggregation. The Chair allowed the question to be answered however noted that the Board is going to focus on the Town funding piece and then go back to this issue. Mr. Gromer informed all that opting out can be done via post card, phone call or on the website, and once the program is up and running, opting out can be done via phone call or on the website.

Resident Mike Cianciola appeared before the Board and agreed that there are startup costs involved and asked if the fee could be eliminated once the startup process is completed. Mr. Gromer informed all that yes, the Town at this stage would be asking for authorization to collect an adder of up to a specified amount. The Town can decide every six months whether or not to collect that

amount, and if so, how much to collect. Further noting that the Town would not be obligated to collect that full amount or collect the fee at all. The Chair noted that she is still in support of adopting the fee however she is more comfortable with the fee knowing that the funding can be based on the actual expenses of the program as opposed to a set fee. The Chair further noted that as we add this service to Town, the Chair would prefer not adding additional costs to the Town during a time when the budgeting is really challenging and the costs are unnecessary. Selectman Louko asked if a lesser amount could be used for the fee. Mr. Gromer stated that the Town will need to request up to a specified amount, which would be the max amount and the Town can choose to collect less than that or zero. Mr. Gromer suggested the Town use 1/10 of a cent as the max amount because that amount is almost always approved, further noting that a larger amount may not be approved and there is no reason to ask for less because you can always collect less. As asked, Mr. Gromer informed all the Town will not receive any fees until the program is up and running and kilowatt hours are running through the program. Then the Town would receive a rolling monthly check.

Seeing no further questions, the Board voted to approve the collection of a small fee through the Municipal Aggregation Program, the amount to be determined later, but not to exceed .1 cent per kilowatt hour. Chair O'Connor, aye, Selectman Delaney, aye, Vice Chair Nyman, aye, Selectman Louko, nay.

The Board returned to the plan offering structure decision to be made.

When asked, Mr. Gromer informed all that the State's minimum renewable requirement increases each year according to a schedule, and the floor level will always be whatever the State's minimum requirement is, with the Town's chosen increment floating on top of that.

As the Board Members opinions on the offering structure decision had not changed, the Chair proposed that the Board meet again as a five-member Board before September possibly via Zoom to vote on this.

The Chair asked for the interns to reach out to the surrounding towns and ask the levels they have opted into and what the response has been. Vice Chair Nyman also offered to help with that effort and share what she found with the Board.

TM took a moment to recognize the great efforts of Intern Luke Hoyes and Steve Ryerson on branding the program, coming up with the logo and setting up the website. The Board thanked them for their work in moving the program forward.

Discussion of parameters for the Town Manager Evaluation

The Chair informed all that this is something the Select Board is tasked with doing, and largely due to Covid, the Board has been unable to perform the Town Manager's formal evaluation. The Chair noted that informally the Board has continued to evaluate TM and offer feedback regularly, however it is important in terms of transparency and accountability to perform the formal evaluation process as well. The Chair informed all that she is working with ATM Ann Lee to see the evaluation process used in the recent past, and the documentation available to use now and then bring that before the Board to decide if the Board will continue to use what is available or revamp it if necessary. The Chair stated that this process is in no way a knock at TM or his performance. The Chair noted that TM has done wonderful work and all are appreciative of that. The Chair asked for any comments or questions from the Board. Selectman Delaney commented that this has been a helpful process that has been used with past Town Managers. The Chair commented that hopefully this will be ready for the next meeting.

Town Manager Report

TM discussed the recent incident involving a large Police presence at town hall which resulted in the front door being broken down, noting that fortunately it was a swatting incident and there was no actual danger.

TM informed all that the MassWorks funded projects related to the Hanover Crossing redevelopment are ongoing and will continue for a few months, noting that information regarding this is available on the website in order to inform people of where the work is being done, and approximately when it will be completed. TM further noted that the traffic on Route 53 will certainly be impacted for the foreseeable future.

TM also informed all that the Rail Trail project continues to go very well and the lot line adjustment will be before the Planning Board on August 14th to move forward with the connection of the Rail Trail to Ellis Field.

TM introduced Student Intern Vanessa Bulman who presented a revamped “Welcome to Hanover Packet”, attached, which she created as her Student Intern Project and noted that this is not yet the final version. Vanessa presented the Packet and invited anyone interested in providing additional information for inclusion in the packet to please email her. The Chair noted that the inclusion of a map of the open areas in Town would be helpful. TM also noted that information on the Municipal Aggregation Program would be a great addition to the packet. . TM informed all that the packet will be made available on the Town’s website and requested feedback on the packet be sent to Vanessa Bulman so that she can finish up the packet before returning to school. The Board thanked Vanessa.

TM introduced Student Intern Sean Dever to present his Student Intern Projects to the Board. Sean presented the Handbook he created for Committee, Commission, Board, and Trust Members, attached, as well as his Memo regarding the formation of a Select Board Public Comment Policy, attached. TM invited feedback on the handbook and also recommended that Board adopt a Public Comment Policy which would become part of the Select Board’s Policies and Procedures Manual. The Chair thanked Sean, noting that she had watched the trainings Sean recommended and that is why she had moved forward with the 3-minute limit to the Public Comment section of Select Board Meetings. The Chair commented that she appreciates Sean’s recommendations on how the Town can be on their best footing with regards to respecting freedom of speech while making sure the Board is running appropriately focused meetings of appropriate length. The Board thanked Sean. TM encouraged the Select Board to provide feedback on the student intern projects.

Select Board Forum

When asked, TM informed the Board that a swatting incident is a hoax where an incident is called in that isn’t actually happening. In this case the hoax which was meant for Hanover in a different state which came in as a call regarding a gun shot wound victim on the First Floor of Hanover Town Hall. Law Enforcement responded as they would to a real incident, however it was not.

The Chair mentioned that Jim Hoyes had reached out to see if there are any specific topics the Board would like him to follow up on with regards to his work as Hanover’s Representative to the MBTA Advisory Board, or any formal requests the Board would like submitted on behalf of the Town, noting that Jim sits on the MBTA’s Operating Budget Oversight and Ferry Committees.

Vice Chair Nyman informed all that she is proud to announce that thanks to the efforts of Corrine Crissinger, a former 8th Grade Civics Student, Senate Bill 1302 filed by Representative DeCoste

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and Senator Keenan has been signed into law officially changing the name of the Hanover Board of Selectmen to Select Board. The Vice Chair noted that she was in full support of Corinne's suggestion to make a more gender-neutral Board, as there are two women sitting on the Board. The Vice Chair thanked Corrine for all her efforts for the town and everyone else who helped get this bill over the hurdles.

Selectman Louko thanked the Department of Environmental Protection for denying the permit for Holtec to dump nuclear waste products in Cape Cod Bay, noting that this is a step in the right direction and all are looking forward to State Regulators and the Department of Environmental Protection pushing for them to come up with a plan to remove it completely from the Southeastern Massachusetts.

The Vice Chair mentioned that someone had contacted her to remind the Board Members to speak into the microphone as people at home are having trouble hearing people speak.

Executive Session

At 8:35pm, in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, §21(a)3, the Chair requested a Roll Call Vote to enter into Executive Session to discuss Strategy with respect to Collective Bargaining Agreement Negotiations with the Fire Fighter's Union, and also to discuss Strategy with respect to Litigating Position as it Relates to the Former National Fireworks Site, as a discussion of these topics in Open Session could have a detrimental effect on the Bargaining and Litigating Position of the public body.

The Chair Announced that the Board will not be returning to Open Session.

Roll Call Vote: Selectman Louko, aye, Selectman Delaney, aye, Chair O'Connor, aye, Vice Chair Nyman, aye.

Adjourn

The meeting ended and adjourned at 8:41pm.