



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

SELECT BOARD • TOWN HALL

Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts 01944-1399

Telephone (978) 526-2000 FAX (978) 526-2001

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD

February 3, 2025

6:30pm

Hybrid Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting, Meeting: ID 872 5076 2791 Passcode: 039766 Mobile: 1.646.558.8656

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Harrison – Chair, Ms. Bilotta, Mr. Delaney, Mr. Sollosy

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Round

STAFF PRESENT: Town Administrator, Mr. Federspiel, Executive Assistant Debbie Powers

Ms. Harrison called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:30pm with four members present in person and stated the meeting is being recorded.

Public Comment: Sarah Pierce, 9 Friend Street questioned about the town's electrical compacity, which has resulted in power outages and the lack of capacity to support Cell Signaling. Mr. Federspiel explained that outages are not due to any capacity issues and that the town has the capacity to support phase 1 and part of phase 2 of the CST project. He recently met with National Grid and there are projects to help with the capacity of the grid in the works.

Chairman Report & Actions Items: Chair Harrison updated a discussion she had with Steve Gang, Chair of the Conservation Commission and Jody Morse, President of the Friends of Manchester Trees, to move tree hearings to the Commission. The consensus of the Board was to discuss this at a meeting with all involved. The Board reviewed the action items.

1. National Grid Public Hearing – 9 Bennett Street:

Mr. Sollosy moved that the Select Board open a public hearing on the petition of National Grid to install underground PVC conduit to 9 Bennett Street; Mr. Delaney seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes

Nicholas Angelo, a design engineer with National Grid, presented a petition for conduit installation at 9 Bennett Street. The installation would involve trenching from an existing manhole on Bennett Street to provide service to a customer-owned handhold on the property.

The Select Board members asked if Mr. Angelo had any information about a recent power outage, which he did not. Board members mentioned that a manhole cover had reportedly been displaced during the outage.

No public comments were received.

Mr. Delaney moved that the Select Board close the evidentiary portion of the public hearing; Ms. Bilotta seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes

Ms. Bilotta moved that the Select Board approve National Grid's petition to install underground PVC conduit from handhole 99-2 to customer owned handhole 99-22 and all appurtenances at 9 Bennett Street, with the stipulations proposed by the Director of Public Works. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes

2. Cultural Council Interview – Linda Crosby:

Linda Crosby was interviewed for a position on the Cultural Council. She said that while she was not very familiar with the council's work, she had been asked to join to help promote their activities due to her extensive connections in the community. Ms. Crosby highlighted her past involvement on various town committees and boards.

Board members thanked Ms. Crosby for her willingness to serve and noted that her network would be beneficial to the council.

Mr. Sollosy moved that the Board appoint Linda Crosby to the Cultural Council for a term to expire on June 30, 2027; Ms. Bilotta seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes

3. Review & Consider Adjustment to Water Bill for 33 Harbor Street:

The Board decided to postpone this item to the February 18th meeting as the homeowners were not present. Mr. Federspiel mentioned that there had been a few other phone calls about water bills, but this was the only formal request for adjustment. He noted that mailers about new water rates had been sent out in the fall, but there was concern that this was after the period of water usage in question.

4. Approval to Join Cape Ann Transportation Authority to Provide Service to Manchester-by-the-Sea:

The Board discussed joining the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) to provide transportation service to Manchester-by-the-Sea. Felicia Webb, the administrator at CATA, explained the process of joining, which would involve a vote by the town, notification to CATA, an advisory board meeting, and development of the actual service details.

Board members asked about the timeline, with Ms. Webb estimating it could be a six-month process. The Board discussed the potential service, which would likely complement the current COA van with a similar on-demand service. The budget for this would likely come from reallocating the current MBTA assessment of around \$130,000.

Mr. Delaney moved that the Select Board approve Manchester-by-the-Sea joining Cape Ann Transportation Authority and to have CATA develop a service proposal for the Board to review at a future meeting; Mr. Sollosy seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes

5. Review Draft Changes to the Special Event Permit Application to Include Water Events:

Mr. Federspiel presented draft changes to the Special Event Permit application to include water events. New requirements included a written safety plan, maximum number of attendees and vessels, non-boat owner transportation plan, safety channel for egress, harbor detail, and penalties for unpermitted events.

The Board discussed the definition of an event, expressing concern about potentially discouraging water activities. They considered starting with regulations for commercial entities advertising on-water events and setting a threshold for the number of boats that would require a permit.

Board members suggested asking the harbormaster how many boats could be handled without extra resources to determine an appropriate threshold. They also discussed the need to balance safety concerns with not overly restricting activities.

The Board decided to revisit the draft with more specific guidelines, focusing initially on commercial events and events exceeding a certain number of boats.

6. Review & Approve 26 Central Street easement:

Mr. Federspiel explained that this easement was related to the Central Street culvert project. The town needed to acquire a small permanent easement (less than 20 square feet) and a temporary easement of similar size to replace a support wall.

Ms. Bilotta moved pursuant to the provisions of GL c.83, Section 4, to acquire a permanent and a temporary easement on property located at 26 Central Street for drainage/culvert purposes, and to award damages in the amount of \$4,000 for said taking, and further to execute an Order of Taking to take said easement. Ms. Harrison seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy - yes

Mr. Federspiel noted that the town would continue to reach out to the property owner to see if they would like to enter into a broader agreement, but this action allows the project to move forward.

7. Update on Provisional Moorings:

Mr. Federspiel provided an update on the provisional mooring program. All the people on the waiting list were given information about the possibility of obtaining a mooring through Manchester Marine, the only marina offering commercial moorings. About 60 people expressed interest, and the first 12 on the waiting list were given the opportunity to sign up. Ten of the first twelve accepted, and the Harbormaster moved on to the next two on the list.

The Board discussed the need to keep a close eye on the program, ensure transparency, and have annual updates. They also mentioned exploring database software to facilitate reporting on the waiting list and transactions.

8. Appoint of Town Administrator Screening Committee Members – 2 At-Large and 2 Previous Select Board Members:

The Board discussed and voted on appointments to the Town Administrator Screening Committee. After deliberation, they decided on the following appointments:

Mr. Sollosy moved the Select Board appoint Rob Beatty and David Crehan as “at-large” members to the Town Administrator Screening Committee; Ms. Harrison seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy - yes

Mr. Delaney moved that the Select Board appoint Eli Boling and Margaret Driscoll as past Select Board members to the Town Administrator Screening Committee; Ms. Bilotta seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes

9. Liaison Updates:

Mr. Sollosy reported that the July 4th Committee, under the Parks & Recreation Committee, had their first meeting the previous week. He mentioned that two new members were on the committee.

Ms. Harrison reported on the upcoming School Committee public hearing on their budget, scheduled for Wednesday at 7:00 PM. They will discuss various budget scenarios that are being considered, including cuts to staff positions.

10. Consent Agenda:

- a. Meeting Minutes – January 6th & 21st**
- b. Special Event – Greater Cape Ann Chamber – Festival by the Sea, August 2, 2025**
- c. Special Event – YuKan Run LLC – Half Marathon by the Sea, September 14, 2025**
- d. Approval of two Longevity Benches – Magnolia Ave (at Kettle Cove Burying Ground) and Beach Street (adjacent to Masconomo Park)**

Ms. Bilotta moved that the Board approve the consent agenda items; Mr. Delaney seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes

11. Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Federspiel provided highlights from the recent MMA Connect 351 conference, including discussions on electric vehicles, new legislation filed by the governor, and an award received by the town for its wellness program.

He reported disappointing news about health insurance rates, with an expected increase between 10-20%, likely closer to 15%. The Board discussed the possibility of promoting Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) coupled with high deductible plans to help mitigate costs.

Mr. Federspiel also provided updates on:

- Harbor Points has opted to lease the Community Center space to a local business, limiting its potential public use, though there may still be an opportunity to include public restrooms.
- The operations audit report is expected soon, and an executive summary has been requested to highlight key recommendations before a final presentation.
- A fire at 109 Summer Street was effectively contained to the garage due to strong coordination among departments and mutual aid, and Chief McNeilly's commendation is worth sharing.
- The Mason Building project is progressing, with final documents nearly complete, a fundraising consultant hired, and architectural firm interviews scheduled. Discussions continue on financing through voter-approved bonds, with donations expected to cover repayment, making this a part of the FY26 capital budget.
- The noise ordinance remains a topic of debate, as CST has requested an earlier construction start time of 7 AM, which would require either an exception based on public safety concerns or an amendment to the bylaw.
- Lastly, for Ocean Street, DPW believes the proposed \$100K in the FY26 budget is sufficient to develop viable options for residents, while additional grant opportunities and academic involvement are being explored.

8:08pm *Mr. Bilotta moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Delaney seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Sollosy - yes*

Meeting Materials:

National Grid Petition

Special Permit draft changes

Consent agenda items