



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

March 3, 2025

6:30pm

Hybrid Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting, Meeting: ID 856 3231 4644 Passcode: 366224 Mobile: 1.646.558.8656

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

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 Mr. Round remotely attended and stated the meeting is being recorded.

Public Comment: Jim Starkey, 13 Tucks Point Road spoke on the harbor bylaw, mooring changes, and commercial mooring fees.

Chairman Report & Actions Items: The Board reviewed the action items.

New Used Car Dealers License – StormCastle Automotive LLC, 50 Summer Street:

Silas Nivay, StormCastle Automotive LLC, explained that they are a small, specialty collector car company. All business would be conducted online, and no cars will be present at the property.

Mr. Federspiel noted that from a licensing perspective, everything seemed to be in order with no major issues but a zoning question needed to be addressed. The town's bylaws were silent in terms of the table of uses for car dealerships, but did mention car and boat dealerships in the parking section. Mr. Federspiel suggested there might be an omission in the use table. The Building Inspector will be speaking with Town Counsel for clarification.

Ms. Harrison moved that the Select Board approve a used car dealer's license for StormCastle Automotive LLC at 50 Summer Street, contingent on the resolution of any zoning issues; Mr. Delaney seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Round – yes.

2 Board Representatives:

a. Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA):

Mr. Federspiel suggested that John Round would be a good fit for representing the town on the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA). Mr. Round expressed willingness to take on the role, noting that seniors have the biggest interest in this initiative and that he interacts with them regularly. Mr. Federspiel mentioned that meetings occur monthly, possibly every six weeks or so.

b. Water Meter Vendor Review:

Mr. Round was also suggested for the water meter vendor review, given his previous involvement with the Water Resources Task Force.

c. Hazard Mitigation Plan Update:

The board briefly discussed the hazard mitigation plan update, noting that it might require more effort than the other representative positions. Ms. Harrison volunteered.

3. Consent Agenda:

- a. Meeting Minutes – February 18, 2025
- b. Special Event Permit – North Shore Kids PMC Ride, June 1, 2025
- c. Memorial Bench – Carl & Mary O'Brien
- d. Naming Policy for Fields and Other Recreation Areas

The board discussed pulling out the naming policy for fields and other recreation areas from the consent agenda for further discussion. They agreed to add language requiring that new or renamed fields should be posted on the Parks and Rec section of the town website with directions to the location within two weeks of approval.

Mr. Sollosy moved to accept the consent agenda minus the naming policy to vote on later; Mr. Delaney seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Round – yes

Ms. Bilotta moved that language be added to the naming policy saying new or renamed fields should be posted on the Parks and Rec section of the town website with directions to the location within two weeks after the name is approved; Ms. Harrison seconded. Mr. Delaney – yes, Mr. Sollosy – yes, Ms. Bilotta – yes, Ms. Harrison – yes, Mr. Round – yes

4. Liaison Reports:

Ms. Bilotta noted that the Downtown Improvement Planning Committee addressed the need for public bathrooms and sent DPW a priority list of the top three wayfinding signs to do this year and the three remaining in FY26.

Mr. Sollosy stated winter basketball has ended; summer playground registration is open, and summer position interviews will start next week. Also, beach tags go on sale April 1st.

Ms. Harrison stated the School Committee meets tomorrow. Their finance subcommittee had an interesting meeting last week and trying to set a date for the next meeting. The deadline for submitting the budget is March 18th.

5. Annual Town Meeting Articles Discussion:

Mr. Federspiel reported that there were three petition articles received by the deadline:

- A non-binding vote on the tobacco sale prohibition for anyone born after 2004
- Prohibition on certain rodenticides
- A proposal to amend the current heavy construction timeframe and noise bylaw

The board briefly discussed these articles and their implications. Mr. Federspiel also noted that there will be 4-6 zoning amendments, and the Planning Board will be working through these changes in upcoming meetings.

7:00pm Ms. Mellish called the Finance Committee meeting to order; Mr. Parkins seconded. Ms. Mellish – yes, Mr. Parkins – yes, Mr. Oldeman – yes, Mr. Twining – yes, Mr. Creighton – yes, Mr. Nahatis – yes.

6. Joint Meeting with Finance Committee

Operational Audit Presentation:

Bill Keegan from Capital Strategic Solutions presented the results of an operational audit conducted for the town. Key points from his presentation included:

- Staffing shortages impacting service delivery
- Inconsistent use of technology for efficiency purposes
- Need for better staff and succession planning
- Communication challenges within and between departments
- Support for reorganization and more efficiency among departments and the Town Administrator
- Concerns about capital needs and funding challenges
- Desire for continued strong communication and transparency
- Emphasis on sustainability and environmental resilience

Mr. Keegan presented a proposed improved organizational structure, reducing direct reports to the Town Administrator from 18 to 8 departments. He emphasized the benefits of this structure for collaboration and strategic planning.

The board discussed various aspects of the presentation, including technology utilization, regionalization of services, and the proposed organizational changes. Some Board members expressed concerns about making structural changes before a new Town Administrator is hired.

Mr. Keegan recommended implementing the organizational restructuring and weekly operations meetings as soon as possible, expanding HR support, prioritizing capital needs, and enhancing communication and technology integration.

7.

a. FY26 Operating Budget

Mr. Federspiel presented updates on the FY26 operating budget. Key changes included:

- Addition of an Accounting Clerk position to support the Finance Director model
- Boosting the Assistant to the Town Clerk position from half-time to full-time
- Recommendation to add a Deputy Fire Chief position starting in the fourth quarter of FY26

The board discussed these proposed changes, with Ms. Bilotta expressing concerns about making structural changes before a new Town Administrator is hired. They also discussed the need for automation and efficiency in financial operations.

b. FY26 Capital Budget

Mr. Federspiel presented updates to the FY26 capital budget, including:

- Reducing the library window repair project for \$200,000 to \$50,000, to be funded by CPC
- Funding for the Rotunda project, estimated at \$3.3 million, was initially expected to come from two \$1 million grants (Seaport Council and CZM) and \$300,000 from CPC. However, the CZM grant is unlikely due to limited funding and priority given to projects directly protecting people. Therefore, an additional \$800,000 is proposed for the Rotunda, with options to seek further funding through CPC, consider bonding, use fund balance, or reduce other capital projects.
- Increase in road resurfacing budget from \$900,000 to \$1,300,000 due to higher anticipated costs

Both boards discussed funding options for these projects, including the use of CPC funds, bonding, and additional fund balance allocations.

c. FY26 School Budget:

The proposed school budget increase was discussed, with a 7.29% increase in Manchester's assessment share. This increase is driven largely by a 27% increase in health insurance costs. The board noted that this increase would require an override in Essex, and there was discussion about the possibility of a super town meeting if the budget is not approved by both towns.

d. Long Range Facility Plans:

Mr. Federspiel presented a detailed spreadsheet showing potential large capital projects over the next 25 years, including their costs and potential funding sources. The boards discussed various aspects of this long-range plan, including the need to prioritize projects, balance short and long-term needs, and communicate effectively with residents about these plans.

9:25pm *Mr. Creighton moved that the Finance Committee adjourn; Mr. Oldeman seconded. Ms. Mellish – yes, Mr. Parkins – yes, Mr. Oldeman – yes, Mr. Twining - yes, Mr. Creighton – yes, Mr. Nahatis – yes.*

8. Town Administrator's Report – Senior Center Update/3A Unfunded Mandate Conflicting Rulings/Town Administrator Preliminary Screening Committee Progress:

• Senior Center Update:

Mr. Federspiel provided an update on the senior center project, including progress on the purchase and sale agreement with the Masons, development of condo documents, and the start of fundraising planning. He also mentioned that they had received proposals from two architectural firms for design work.

The board discussed funding options for the project, with some members advocating for moving forward with construction and fundraising concurrently, while others preferred to wait until more funds were raised before committing to construction.

• 3A Unfunded Mandate Conflicting Rulings:

Mr. Federspiel reported on the conflicting rulings regarding the 3A zoning law as an unfunded mandate. He explained that while the state auditor had deemed it an unfunded mandate, the Attorney General's office disagreed and would defend it in court. Mr. Federspiel noted that Manchester would not have a strong case to seek a waiver from the mandate, as the town had received funding to develop the proposal and had conducted an impact analysis showing no negative fiscal effect.

• Town Administrator Preliminary Screening Committee Progress:

Mr. Federspiel reported that the screening committee was underway and conducting interviews. He mentioned that the board should plan for interviews with final candidates around April 3rd, with a decision potentially being made on April 7th.

Lastly, Mr. Federspiel informed the board that as part of cybersecurity measures, it was recommended that the town transition its domain name to a .gov address.

9:48pm *Ms. Bilotta moved to adjourn; Mr. Sollosy seconded. Ms. Mellish – yes, Mr. Parkins – yes, Mr. Oldeman – yes, Mr. Twining - yes, Mr. Creighton – yes, Mr. Nahatis – yes.*

Meeting Materials:

Used Car Dealers Application
Operational Audit Presentation

FY26 Budget Documents
Consent Agenda Information