

**Regular Session Minutes – Bedford, MA -Reed Room
Hybrid Participation Meeting (Zoom and Select Board Meeting Room)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roMyBS891X8>
August 28, 2023**

PRESENT: Chair Bopha Malone, Clerk Shawn Hanegan, Paul Mortenson, Margot Fleischman, Emily Mitchell

ALSO PRESENT: Colleen Doyle, Kerri Rufo, Charlie Ticotsky, Amy Fidalgo, Town Manager's Office; Mike Rosenberg, *The Bedford Citizen*; Robin Steele, Recreation Commission; Ben Thomas, Finance Committee; Paul Fath, Joe Gallagher, Cynthia First, Matthew Mortenson, Jennifer Kelley, Carol Kelly, Jenny Stewart, Paul Laudano, Karen Moore, Brian Covell, Paul Schuman, Michelle Puntillo, Ali Khaledi, Pam Brown

Chair Bopha Malone called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

23-146 Executive Session

1. Strategy and Preparation for Contract Negotiations with Union/Non-Union Personnel

Ms. Mitchell moved that the Select Board adjourn into Executive Session for the purposes of strategy and preparation for contract negotiations with union and non-union personnel, to return to open session. Mr. Hanegan seconded.

Roll-call vote: Ms. Mitchell aye, Mr. Hanegan aye; Ms. Fleischman aye; Mr. Mortensen aye; Ms. Malone aye.

The Select Board meeting returned from Executive Session at 7:28PM.

23-147 Public Comment

Brian Covell, 124 North Road, stated his concerns about information that was published in *The Bedford Citizen*.

End of Public Comments

23-148 Board and Committees

**Interviews: Paul Fath and Karen Moore (COA)
Joseph Gallagher (300th Committee)**

Ms. Malone outlined the charge of the Council on Aging. Ms. Moore & Mr. Fath provided a brief summary of their backgrounds and association with Bedford.

Mr. Hanegan asked Mr. Fath and Ms. Moore how they would use social media and what ideas they have for the COA.

Mr. Fath believes that by leveraging social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, we can expand our reach to the broader community, particularly focusing on the active seniors and aging population who are already engaged on these platforms. He aims to address the challenge of fostering community support and creating energy through shared information and engagement.

Ms. Moore addressed the need for seniors to stay in their homes by providing assistance for home repairs and explaining available programs, particularly as they struggle with fixed incomes. She mentioned enhancing the Bedford Council on Aging's Facebook presence to engage older individuals who tend to check the platform, and combatting senior loneliness by potentially implementing an "Adopt a Senior" program connecting younger individuals with seniors to create companionship and mutual benefit within the community.

Ms. Mitchell moved that the Select Board appoint Paul Fath and Karen Moore to the Council on Aging Board with terms to expire June 30, 2026, and authorize the Town Manager to sign the letters on behalf of the Select Board. Mr. Hanegan seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Ms. Malone outlined the charge of the 300th Anniversary Committee. Mr. Gallagher provide a brief summary of his background and association with Bedford.

Mr. Hanegan moved that the Select Board appoint Joseph Gallagher to the 300th Anniversary Committee with a term to expire June 30, 2026, and authorize the Town Manager to sign the letter on behalf of the Select Board. Ms. Mitchell seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Materials: Committee Interviews Memo for 8.28.23 Meeting, Gallagher Questionnaire, Moore Town of Bedford Questionnaire for Volunteers, PF COA Board Position - Questionnaire for Volunteers

23-149 Old Billerica Road

Proposed Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding

Attorney Brown outlined efforts to find a compromise regarding the lack of adherence to the existing Memorandum of Understanding amidst challenges in addressing concerns from abutters. While her clients originally considered converting the barn on the property into a community activity space, they now propose constructing a two-family unit, including one affordable unit. They seek flexibility in choosing the affordable unit. Attorney Brown mentioned potential input from the Planning Board and preferences for not placing affordable units in old structures, possibly opting for single-family homes instead.

Ms. Fleischman addressed the inclusion of affordable units, noting a prior agreement proposed and agreed upon, and emphasizing the importance of written agreements. She acknowledged the offer to donate \$25,000 to the Affordable Housing Trust in lieu of building affordable units, but noted it would not cover the cost of building or converting such units elsewhere. She discussed her preferences for different project configurations and percentages of affordability, considering financial feasibility and the potential challenges of older structures for affordable housing. She expressed interest in hearing the Planning Board's thoughts on preserving aesthetics and converting the barn.

Ms. Fleischman moved that the Select Board commit to executing an MOU re: Old Billerica Road with two options contingent on Planning Board approval:

1. 15 units total by creating 2 units within the barn structure (whether renovated or replaced), with 1 affordable unit being one of the new units, and each barn unit no more than 1500 sq. ft; or
2. 13 total units, with 1 affordable unit plus a \$20,000 donation to the Affordable Housing Trust.

Mr. Mortenson seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Materials: MOU (Amended) Pkg to SB, Email from Chris Gittins 8-28-2023

23-150 Call for Special Town Meeting—November 6, 2023

Ms. Doyle stated that the recent survey on Town Meeting preferences revealed that approximately half of the respondents preferred the current meeting schedule on weekday evenings, while the other half preferred a different schedule. Mr. Hanegan suggested finding a compromise to avoid excluding one group consistently, suggesting a weekend meeting for Special Town Meeting, since that meeting date is not specified in the charter and would be determined by the board. Ms. Doyle noted that Special Town Meeting is currently planned for November 6, and if the board desires to change the day, preparations would be needed immediately to accommodate that change.

Ms. Fleischman moved that the Select Board issue a call for Special Town Meeting to be held at the Bedford High School Auditorium at 9 Mudge Way on Monday, November 6, 2023, at 6:30 PM. Ms. Mitchell seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Ms. Mitchell requested the word “handicap” be changed to the word “accessible” in Article 7 wherever possible.

Materials: 8.25.23 DRAFT STM23 Warrant

23-151 Consent Agenda

Regular Session minutes—July 24, 2023; August 7, 2023; August 14, 2023

Mr. Hanegan moved that the Select Board approve the consent agenda.

Mr. Mortenson seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Materials: Regular Session Minutes July 24, 2023, August 7, 2023, August 14, 2023

23-144 Town Manager’s Report

1. Emergency Response Update—Acceptance of Donations

Ms. Doyle stated that currently, there are 38 families sheltering in Bedford, with an increase since the last update. Many of these individuals are school-aged, prompting efforts by the Bedford Public Schools to enroll them and provide language and other necessary support. An interdepartmental working group meets daily to coordinate the response, involving various town departments. The focus

has been on securing medical care and food, with attention shifting to emerging needs such as transportation and clothing. To enhance agency for those in need, the preference is for monetary donations and gift cards, rather than donations of food, clothing, or personal care items. A request is made for blanket approval to accept gift cards, streamlining the donation process. A website has been set up for information and coordination, and volunteers for coordination efforts are welcomed. Monetary donations can also be made, similarly to the process during Covid.

Ms. Fleischman moved to authorize the Town to receive emergency response donations of funds and gift cards to support refugee families in Bedford. Ms. Mitchell seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Ms. Doyle announced that she has received a job offer in another community and after careful consideration, she has decided to accept it. She expresses gratitude for the 11 years she has spent in Bedford, acknowledging the significant effort that goes into running a town. She appreciates the opportunity to learn and grow in her career and expresses thanks for the support and assistance she has received, particularly in recent months. She looks forward to the next opportunity.

The Select Board thanked Ms. Doyle for her service to the Town of Bedford.

23-145 Liaison Reports

Ms. Fleischman mentioned the memo from the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) regarding sidewalk prioritization, especially related to the removal of MBTA bus stops. Given Mr. Ticotsky's impending departure, she asked to remind the new Town Manager about maintaining the relationship with the MBTA, to address the disappearing bus stop concern. Ms. Doyle responded that the Department of Public Works (DPW) will now be the point of contact with the MBTA.

Ms. Malone reminded the board the 300th Committee meets this Wednesday via Zoom.

Ms. Fleischman moved to adjourn. Mr. Hanegan seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Kerri Rufo

Approved at the 9/11/23 Select Board meeting.