



# Select Board & Board of Sewer Commissioners



## Retreat Meeting AGENDA

Date  
August 8, 2023

Time  
9:00 AM

Location  
Massachusetts Maritime Academy  
Conference Center  
20 Tower Lane (Room 109)  
Buzzards Bay, MA 02532

This facilitated Retreat/Workshop for the Select Board/Board of Sewer Commissioners will not be recorded, broadcast or livestreamed by Bourne TV.

All items within the meeting agenda are subject to deliberation and vote(s) by the Select Board and the Board of Sewer Commissioners.

### 9:00 AM Retreat and Workshop Session

1. Introductions and Orientation - Select Board, Town Administrator, and Jerry Posner, Facilitator.
2. Discussion of roles and responsibilities, communications and Select Board dynamics.
3. Discussion of FY24 Town Administrator goals & evaluation instrument.  
Status and priority  
Expected outcomes
4. Next steps
5. Adjourn

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2023 AUG -4 AM 10:37  
TOWN CLERK BOURNE

Select Board & Board of Sewer Commissioners – Annual Retreat  
Minutes of Tuesday, August 8, 2023  
Massachusetts Maritime Academy – Conference Center – Room 109  
9:00 am – 2:00 pm

**Select Board**

Mary Jane Mastrangelo, Chair  
Melissa Ferretti, Vice Chair  
Anne-Marie Siroonian, Clerk  
Peter Meier  
Jared MacDonald

**Board of Sewer Commissioners**

Jared MacDonald, Chair  
Melissa Ferretti, Vice Chair  
Mary Jane Mastrangelo, Clerk  
Peter Meier  
Anne-Marie Siroonian

TA Marlene McCollem  
ATA Liz Hartsgrrove  
Jerry Posner, Facilitator

Chairs Mastrangelo and MacDonald called the meetings to order at 9:00 am

- Small changes make a big difference over time
  - It's not predictable how our choices can affect the future
  - Many potential outcomes
  - [The Butterfly Effect](#)
- Fixed points – things that happened in the past
- Teams = Us
  - Mindset
  - Behavior
  - Attitude
- Emotional
  - Limbic System – ancestral (fight or flight, survival) Defensiveness
  - Emotional, Stress, anger, Reactive
- Rational
  - Prefrontal Cortex – Socially responsible, reasonable, thoughtful
  - Likes questions to engage and learn more, to evaluate more
- Board Operations
  - What is working well
    - Willingness to speak to each other – communication
    - Public meetings – well moderated, organized, prepared
    - Attentiveness to the task at hand
    - Able to be transparent with the public
    - Not a lot of personal agendas
    - All here to work for the good of the town
  - Where is there friction
    - Too much in the weeds – loose people at home – they turn the TV off. Should keep to bullet points
    - It's hard to understand why people watch a SB meeting and what their perception is

- There's not enough conversation – just “yessing” decisions that had already been made that are impacting the whole town
    - People watch the meetings because of a personal agenda
  - Business & Performance element to what we do
    - We can't manage people's perception but we can manage our response
    - Self-awareness – body language, tone of voice, facial expression
    - Figure out the main point & how to move the conversation forward to resolution
    - How do we explain complicated, complex issues
    - Feeling left out of important conversations
    - Not taking the time to get to know and trust each other – finding out info from others instead of hearing it from the Board
    - Important for all the Board members to get the same info – some people had info and others have been left out
  - What is the best way for the Chair to communicate to the Board
    - Email
    - For Info only
    - Do not reply
  - How should the Chair communicate with the TA
    - Allowed to have 1-on-1 conversations – there is nothing wrong with that
    - Don't be afraid of the Open Meeting Law
  - Humans make mistakes and make poor decisions, but we trust each other to do the best we can
  - No individual authority – only the Board has authority
    - Individual member's opinion does not represent the Board
    - Have to be authorized
    - Once the Board makes a decision, members have to live with it, even if they don't agree
- What is the best way to communicate with the TA
  - Email
  - Board members can always call the TA & ATA
  - Concerns about violating the Charter
  - Is it necessary to go through the Chair to talk to the TA? No, it is not.
  - Send questions in advance, if possible, to make the most efficient use of the TA's time
  - Make an appointment so the TA can be prepared for the discussion
  - The Chair does speak for the Board
  - Email questions to the TA in advance and let her answer the questions at the meeting so everyone can hear the answer
- If a citizen contacts you with a problem, what do you do?
- Dealing with the Press/Media – Board vs Individual
  - The Chair speaks for the Board
  - Members can speak for themselves
  - If it's a matter of the Town, then the question should be referred to the TA
  - Board responses should be through the Chair
  - Members shouldn't speak for themselves, except for a factual response – support the Board decision
  - What is the protocol?
  - How do Members express their personal opinions?

- Is there value to telling the press that an individual member doesn't agree with the Board's decision?
- Relationships with members of the Press adds challenges in navigating
- Do you want to present a unified front?
- Should the press contact the TA first & she decides if the Chair or Board is contacted?
- It's confusing to the public to have multiple people giving answers
- The media picks & chooses what they want to write about – they are hunting for info – this should go through the Chair – individual members should not be giving info
- Town matters -> TA
- Board matters -> Board position -> Chair statement
- Bring a PR firm on board?
- Roles & responsibilities of both the Board & TA – expectations – chaos
- Public Education – transparency
  - Role of social media by the Town
  - Things need to be handled by the Board, not individuals
  - PR firm – what do you want the outcome to be?
- Does the Board see a value to doing a self-evaluation?
  - Everything individuals say is as a member of the Board
  - Is the statement productive or counter-productive?
- The media does not always publish what we actually say
- “official” Town Facebook page
  - Business info
  - Convenient
  - Have to think strategically about how we are going to use social media
  - Wait until after 8/28 to make changes & deal with the fallout
- What are we obligated to share with the public
  - The Board isn't supposed to get involved or interfere with personnel matters
  - The Board needs to stay the course – actions should speak louder than words
  - Exposing the Town to risk
- Make your decision based on what's best for the Town
  - A vocal minority cannot drive the Board
  - Have to look at all the facts
- Should the individual SB members do self-evaluations?
  - The School Committee would do a public self-evaluation annually
  - Is it shared? Kept private?
  - Probably a good practice
  - What questions should be used?
    - How are individuals contributing towards achieving the Board's goals?
- Historically the Board has not set goals or established budget priorities
- Belief System (BS) – Drives/Motivates/Influences Decisions
  - May not be able to change an opinion even if it is clearly not fact-based
  - Confirmation Bias – finds evidence to support belief regardless of facts.
- TA Review is in February – March
  - What is the purpose of for the review/feedback?
  - What is the outcome we expect in this time period?
  - We need to know exactly what we are evaluating
  - What is the expectation

- Simplify the evaluation instrument
- The Town is at significant risk with our IT infrastructure
- This is a to-do list – we have to focus on the priorities
  - It has to be realistic
  - It can't be everything
- Do we evaluate the TA on the goal being finished, or on how she does it?
- The highest priority is Office migration to the cloud.
- HR Policies – plan on pushback from employees
- South Side Fire Station – get a plan to TM for approval
  - The ball field is not at risk
  - Pocasset site is pending
- 6 high priorities for TA (Office 365 Migration, HR Policy Update with Collins Center, CWMP, Police Station, Fire Station, Capital Plan)
- Shift to BOS goals: Curbside Pickup policy and Revise Financial Policy
- Marijuana Policy is dependent on STM vote
- List the goals in the evaluation instrument & provide feedback, but do not use a numerical score
- A lot of what people expect the TA to do is outside of her agency & power
- The evaluation instrument was new to everyone
  - Confusion on the rating
  - How do we make this fair?
  - Remove some of the criteria
- The Board does not need to know/care about the “how” the TA does her job
- How should the Board evaluate her?
- Is the Board happy with her work?
- Are we still using the rest of the instrument?
- August 15 agenda – vote TA goals
- Future Exec Session on the evaluation instrument

Motion to adjourn at 2:00 made by Peter Meier, seconded by Anne-Marie Siroonian, voted 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marlene McCollem