

Town of Otis
Selectboard/ Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
Conference Room
1 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253
Wednesday, May 28, 2025, at 6:30 PM

[This meeting will be held in person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend. A remote option is offered via zoom with the link provided below.](#)

Please note that while an option for remote participation is being provided as a courtesy, the meeting will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law. Anyone with interest in any specific item should plan in person attendance.

Attendance: Gary Thomas-Chair, Larry Southard, Terry Gould, Brandi Page, Sue Brofman, Diane Dyer, Stacey Schultze, B.J. O'Brien, Sue Ebitz, Jim Crandall, Cynthia & Jim Fletcher, Gordon Middleton, Katie Utenis. Zoom: Mimi Crandall.

Call to Order: 6:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from 5/13 & 5/20 were approved as amended.

Reconstitute the Board: Gary congratulated all the newly elected members. Terry spoke to say that she feels she's due for the Chairmanship, she puts in the time and feels she does a good job. She questioned whether being passed over is because she's a woman. Gary strongly opposed to that assumption. Larry disagreed as well. Larry stated he has noticed a change in her behavior and worries that she has seemed aggressive lately. Terry felt that was an unfair assessment. Larry stated that he is not interested in being Chair. Terry replied that she would not second a motion for Gary to be Chair, Gary would need to do that himself. Larry made a motion to have Gary continue as Chair. Gary seconded the motion and the motion passed. Sue Ebitz asked if she could speak. She inquired what the usual practice is? Does this typically rotate? Gary replied yes that a member is typically Chair their third year but that the last couple years they have done it differently.

Results of Town Meeting: The Board agreed they were disappointed that the Highway garage addition didn't pass nor the purchase of the Poultry Farm. Terry said it was clear the voters have no appetite to spend money. Brandi stated she was disappointed as well and feels that the voters aren't placing a value on the services that the Town is expected to provide. Sue Ebitz commented that people were surprised no one from Highway spoke for the Highway addition. People agreed and expressed not enough time to understand the full implications of the Poultry Farm purchase. Residents express wanting more information. The Town expressed frustration that we do push out information and have public meetings and very few people attend, even with the zoom link. Both sides agreed that the turnout was limited and we want more voters coming out and deciding on these larger issues. Stacey suggested using social media to get information out. The Board is unsure of next steps on the Highway garage.

Capital Plan: Brandi stated that at Town Meeting and in the Revitalization document residents are unaware of what the Town has for Capital Planning. We have an existing database of capital assets which needs to be updated as well as a recent formal review from the Department of Revenue with recommendations. This is something we have wanted to task the Finance Committee with updating but there has been some turnover on the Committee in the last several years. Brandi was hoping we could have them get started. Gary wondered if we should wait on this. Jim stated he had started to look at the info and was comfortable getting the committee

underway on this. Larry made a motion to officially task the Fin Com with updating our Capital Planning policy and documents. Terry seconded and the motion passed.

Appointments: The Board had received one application. This will be continued until a later meeting. Terry and Larry were ok with that. Sue Brofman is stepping down from Revitalization after being elected to the Fin Com. Cynthia Fletcher had submitted interest. The Board unanimously appointed Cynthia to the Revitalization committee as an alternate with the expectation Hal will move into the regular spot.

North Blandford Culvert Work: The bids were opened today. Western Earthworks submitted a proposal of \$122,500 and Clayton Davenport submitted a proposal of \$100,000. Brandi asked for a motion to award the work to Clayton Davenport pending approval from Mass DOT prequal. Terry made the motion. Larry seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Mass Works Amendment: Brandi needed the Chair's signature on an amendment to our Massworks grant. This extends our award to June 30, 2026.

Town Wide Clean-up: Katie Utenis is willing to step up and take this over. The Board was fine with Derek's usual role. The group hopes to use social media to get the word out and bolster involvement. Eric was not in favor of having a free day at the Transfer Station to coincide. The Board agreed. There is a hazmat collection Aug 9th in Lee if anyone is interested.

Recent and Upcoming Events: Stacey said the needs assessment survey will be going out. She asked if the Board had taken a look and had any feedback. Terry stated she was still working through it. COA is having a cell phone class on Monday. Terry thanked Gordon and Sue for fostering plants to benefit the food pantry this summer.

Review & Approval of Warrants: Payroll and vendor warrants are on the table for signature.

Not Anticipated by the Board: None

Adjournment: 7:43 PM