

Select Board Work Session Minutes

February 25, 2025

Via Zoom Platform (Hybrid)

Select Board Members Present: Susan Areson-Chair; Nancy Medoff-Clerk; Susan Girard-Irwin-Member; Stephanie Rein-Member

Others Present: Kelly Clark-Assistant Town Manager

Absent: Robert Weinstein-Vice Chair

Chair Areson opened the meeting at 2:00 pm and read aloud the information for members of the public to join the meeting. She stated that comments and votes would not be taken during the work session.

DISCUSSION ON POLICY 66: COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Areson and Clerk Medoff stated that they worked on this policy during the summer and that they had combined the "Public Communications Policy" and the "Communications Policy". After editing and sharing it with each other, Clerk Medoff ran the policies through AI with the purpose of condensing them. Other members of the Board asked if the format would be the same as previous policies, and Clerk Medoff stated that content is the same in the new version, though it may look different. The new policy aligns with Policy 54: Code of Conduct, and Policy 62: Social Media Policy, which will be discussed in a future Work Session.

In the section *Email, Cell Phone & Text Communications*, the Board discussed the need for transparency to comply with Open Meeting Law. Chair Areson stated that this includes never using the "blind copy" (Bcc) feature or replying to everyone ("reply all") on emails intended to share information or discussion. Board and committee members should ensure all communication outside of a public meeting are "routed" through the staff liaison. To be more inclusive of other means of communication (texting and phone calls) the word "routed" was changed to "relayed".

For the section *Public Records & Retention* they decided to clarify that all public records must be stored in a municipal building, to avoid the interpretation of "public building" to mean records may be stored in a business or general public building. Member Girard-Irwin questioned where electronic records should be stored, but it was decided designating the storage of electronic records was not needed in the policy.

The section called *Social Media Policy* was changed to *Social Media Communications & Statements* to differentiate it from Policy 62: Social Media Policy because it specifically involved the way individuals communicate through social media.

Assistant Town Manager Clark raised a question about the rule stating that "blind copying" is not permitted on official town emails. She stated that when they are emailing a group and would like to protect the privacy of the individuals to whom it is being sent, town staff will use blind copying. It may also be used when staff send emails for HR purposes. Situations where you may want to use it were discussed as well as the need to capture emails being forwarded without the sender's or recipient's knowledge. They also specified this does not include alerts or distribution lists through the town website. Assistant Town Manager Clark suggested stating generally who the email is being sent to within the email to then permit blind copying. Blind copying could be used to avoid "reply all" on emails,

especially when used to alert another staff member to a situation or on emails involving bids or purveyors. Chair Areson preferred wording that suggested it may be used for situations “such as” or “including” confidential HR or legal purposes or for privacy and to avoid “reply all” in large group emails.

The Board then discussed the policies under the heading *Public Communication & Information Dissemination* and questioned whether town boards and committees are permitted to vote on a statement and share it in channels not overseen by the town, such as the newspaper. Clerk Medoff and Member Rein were in support of the line being removed. Assistant Town Manager Clark suggested adding that they must have approval from the Town Manager or designee before it is shared.

For *Legal and Ethical Considerations* they agreed it should mention compliance with the conflict-of-interest laws from the Mass Ethics Commission. When considering the line mentioning sharing images and videos, they discussed that in public settings consent for photos is always granted, so the addition of the words “in some settings” and “may require consent” were added to encourage anyone unsure of how the rule applies to ask for guidance.

In reviewing the final document, they decided to change “Town Manager” to “Town Manager or designee” to ensure that language and direction were consistent throughout the document.

DISCUSSION ON POLICY 35: TOWN MANAGER’S POWERS OF APPOINTMENT

Assistant Town Manager Clark stated that in most cases it is important to advertise for open positions externally. For the Waiver of Provisions, she proposed adding that each Select Board Member must be consulted either at a public meeting or individually. Any Board Member may request that the proposed waiver be added to a public meeting agenda. This adds time efficiency to the process and helps identify any internal candidates who have shown proficiency and interest.

Assistant Town Manager Clark proposed changing the amount of time that a job is open to a minimum of five business days. This gives internal and external candidates time to apply and removes the subsequent wait time when it is not necessary. For the interview process, she also suggested removing the requirement for the second interview, changing it to specify that it is only necessary to conduct second interviews (Step 4) if the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, or Department Head did not serve on the initial interview panel (Step 3).

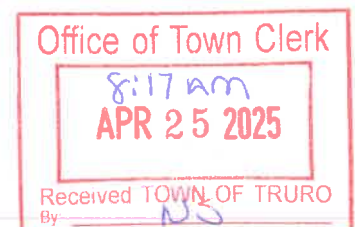
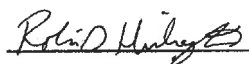
The Board had agreed that employment postings in the newspaper should not be a requirement, but Clerk Medoff suggested adding that job openings should be posted on online recruiting platforms.

Assistant Town Manager Clark stated that she would work on the amended versions of both policies and provide Board Members copies of each at the Select Board Meeting that evening. These versions would replace any copy initially provided in their packets.

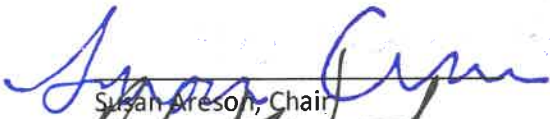
Chair Areson made a motion to adjourn at 3:28 pm.

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,




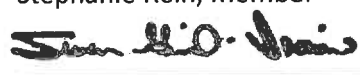
Robin D. Huibregtse
Board Support/CPC Coordinator


Susan Breson, Chair


Robert Weinstein, Vice Chair


Nancy Medoff, Clerk


Stephanie Rein, Member


Susan Girard-Irwin, Member

Public Records Material Attachments

Draft Revised Policy 66: Communications

Current Policy 66: Communications

Draft Revised Policy 35: Town Manager's Powers of Appointment

Current Policy 35: Town Manager's Powers of Appointment

