



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

RMLD Board of Commissioners

Date: 2022-04-21

Time: 7:00 PM

Building:

Location: Zoom

Address:

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Robert Coulter, Chair; Philip Pacino, Vice Chair; John Stempeck, Commissioner; David Talbot, Commissioner; Marlena Bitá, Commissioner.

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Public: Pam Daskalakis - 71 Lilah Lane, Reading
RMLD Staff: Coleen O'Brien, General Manager; Janet Walsh, Director of Human Resources; Hamid Jaffari, Director of Engineering & Operations; Gregory Phipps, Director of Integrated Resources; Wendy Markiewicz, Director of Business Finance.
Citizens' Advisory Board: Vivek Soni, Chair, Reading.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Philip Pacino, Secretary Pro Tem

Topics of Discussion:

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Coulter called the Board of Commissioner's (BOC) meeting to order at 7:00 PM and announced that the meeting would be held on Zoom and live on RCTV and YouTube.

Opening Remarks and Introductions

Chair Coulter read the RMLD BOC Code of Conduct and asked all remote attendees to identify themselves.

Vice Chair Pacino served as Secretary at the meeting.

2. Public Comment

Citizens' Advisory Board

Vivek Soni, Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB), reiterated that each year the CAB recommends budgetary items to the BOC. This year, due to high price spikes and delays in equipment there are significant cost increases in the system. Moving forward, the CAB requests that the RMLD provide a comparison of the budget estimate and the expected price for reference.

Liaisons to the RMLD Board

Karen Herrick, Select Board, congratulated the re-elected Commissioners. The Town looks forward to working together.

Karen noted that many residents and town staff are willing to be involved in the General Manager's search process, and hope that it will be open and transparent.

Public Comment

Pam Daskalakis of 71 Lilah Lane, Reading, made a public comment. Pam highlighted the importance of the new General Manager role. Pam cited the example of the recent Town Manager Search Committee, which included two residents, two Select Board Members, and three professional employees. Pam respectfully requested that the BOC consider one or two selection committee positions for residents to apply to and participate in.

3. Reorganization of the RMLD Board of Commissioners

Chair Coulter opened the floor to accept nominations for Chair.

Commissioner Stempeck made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Coulter, to nominate Commissioner Pacino for Chair.

Chair Coulter made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Talbot, to nominate Commissioner Bitá for Chair.

There were no further nominations. The Commission then proceeded to the election of the Chair.

Nominee, Commissioner Pacino: Motion Fails: 2:0:3 (2 in favor, 3 abstained) Roll Call Vote: Chair Coulter, Abstained; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Abstained; Commissioner Bitá, Abstained.

Nominee, Commissioner Bitá: Motion Carried: 4:1:0 (4 in favor; 1 abstained) Roll Call Vote: Chair Coulter, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Abstained; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Bitá, Aye.

At this point in the meeting, newly elected Chair Bitá presided as Chair.

Chair Bitá opened the floor to accept nominations for Vice Chair.

Chair Bitá made a **motion**, seconded by Vice Chair Pacino, to nominate Commissioner Talbot for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Stempeck made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Coulter, to nominate Commissioner Pacino for Vice Chair.

There were no further nominations. The Commission then proceeded to the election of the Vice Chair.

Nominee, Commissioner Pacino Motion Carried: 5:0:0 (5 in favor) Roll Call Vote: Chair Bitá, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye.

No vote was taken regarding Commissioner Talbot's nomination for Vice Chair.

At this point in the meeting, newly elected Vice Chair Pacino presided as Vice Chair.

Vice Chair Pacino noted that the representative from the RMLD BOC Sub-Audit Committee attends the Town of Reading Audit Committee meetings.

Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Talbot, to nominate Vice Chair Pacino for the RMLD BOC Sub-Audit Committee.

Erica Morse, Executive Assistant, noted that per Policy 19, the second member of the Sub-Audit Committee acts as a back up to the primary member.

Commissioner Stempeck made a **motion**, seconded by Vice Chair Pacino, to nominate Commissioner Coulter for the RMLD BOC Sub-Audit Committee.

There were no further nominations. The Commission then proceeded to the election of the RMLD BOC Sub-Audit Committee Members.

Nominees, Vice Chair Pacino and Commissioner Coulter **Motion Carried: 5:0:0** (5 in favor)
Roll Call Vote: Chair Bitz, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye.

4. GM Evaluation and 2021 GM and Board Goals

Coleen O'Brien, General Manager, stated that the 2021 goals were reviewed at the last meeting, but incentive for 2021 was not discussed.

Chair Bitz asked to re-visit the status of the employee survey.

The General Manager reported on the process and progress of the employee survey. The 2021 goal was to hire a consultant to do an employee survey to be conducted in early 2022.

The RMLD was able to find a consultant and work through the procurement process. Currently, the survey questions are being finalized. Once the BOC reviews the questions, a date will be arranged for the consultant to distribute the survey to RMLD staff.

Discussion ensued regarding the status of the employee survey goal and whether this goal was met.

Commissioner Talbot stated that at the last meeting the BOC asked for the draft questions to be circulated and for the survey to be conducted in end of 2022.

The General Manager stated that this is an evaluation for 2021. The agreed upon 2021 goal called for the GM to hire a consultant in early 2022; thus, this goal is on schedule. Chair Bitz and Commissioner Coulter agreed that their interpretation of the goal was for the survey to be completed by early 2022.

It was decided that the status of this goal was "in progress".

The General Manager noted that normally in the process, the goals are reviewed, and an incentive is decided for last year's accomplishments.

At this point in the meeting Commissioner Coulter experienced technical difficulties, with his Zoom connection.

Commissioner Stempeck suggested moving on until Commissioner Coulter returned.

Commissioner Stempeck made a **motion**, seconded by Vice Chair Pacino, move that the RMLD Board of Commissioners provide Coleen O'Brien with a salary increase of 4% for 2021 in addition to a 4% bonus.

Chair Bitz asked a question; is it standard practice in the Municipal industry to pay cash bonuses to municipal employees? Commissioner Stempeck replied that the BOC has done

this for many years. The General Manager added that this is technically a merit increase and is usually ICMA, cash or a combination of the two.

Commissioner Coulter returned to the meeting at this time.

Commissioner Coulter moved to amend the **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Talbot, for a salary increase of 2% and merit increase of \$5K.

Commissioner Talbot stated that the Board has approved significant raises over the last seven years (\$165-\$224) and the General Manager's current salary is situated at the top handful of salaries statewide. The General Manager noted that the 2022 salary survey has not been released yet.

Commissioner Talbot suggested a half year cash bonus of \$10K. This option would put the BOC in a more advantageous position when negotiating with potential GM candidates. The General Manager clarified that the incentive in question is not just for 6 months; but for all CY21.

Discussion ensued regarding the GM evaluation and incentive process.

Wendy Markiewicz, Director of Business and Finance stated that the GM salary has changed since CY20. The General Manager received an incentive in CY21 for the CY20 performance evaluation. It was clarified that the incentive for CY21 is not a raise for CY22; it is an incentive for CY21 accomplishments that is retroactive to 1/1/2022.

Commissioner Coulter withdrew his motion to amend Commissioner Stempeck's motion.

Commissioner Coulter proposed a revised amendment, seconded by Chair Bitá, of a 3% salary increase and a \$5K merit increase.

Discussion ensued regarding the 3% salary increase.

Chair Bitá was in favor of a 2% increase; noting that a 3% increase in base salary carries forward for a lifetime payment. Chair Bitá cited concerns that the net 3% number is high from a rate payer perspective and clarified that her stance is not reflective of the performance of the GM.

Commissioner Stempeck disagreed, stating that the General Manager is managing the largest Municipal facility in the state, and has done a great job throughout her tenure. The BOC should reward and thank her for the work she has done to transform the RMLD into a modern organization and for bringing in exceptional staff to carry this legacy on.

Discussion ensued regarding the relationship between the merit increase, pension, and rate payers.

Vice Chair Pacino stated that he agrees with Commissioner Stempeck, the General Manager accomplished a lot to get the system up to date and functioning as it is.

Commissioner Stempeck amended the original **motion** to a 4% merit increase and \$7K bonus.

The Board of Commissioners voted on Commissioner Coulter's amendment for a 3% increase and \$5K bonus.

Motion Failed: 1:4:0 (1 in favor, 4 against). Roll Call: Chair Bitá, Nay; Vice Chair Pacino, Nay; Commissioner Stempeck, Nay; Commissioner Talbot, Nay; Commissioner Coulter, Aye.

The Board of Commissioners voted on Commissioner Stempeck's amendment for a 4% increase and \$7K bonus.

Motion Failed: 2:3:0 (2 in favor, 3 against). Roll Call: Chair Bitá, Nay; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Nay; Commissioner Coulter, Nay. The BOC discussed splitting the difference between Commissioner Stempeck's and Commissioner Coulter's motions.

Mr. Talbot made a **motion**, move that the RMLD Board of Commissioners approve that, reflective of the period from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021, Ms. O'Brien receive a salary increase of 2.5% in addition to a \$5K paid out as Ms. O'Brien chooses, as ICMA, cash, or a combination of the two.

Commissioner Stempeck proposed a revised amendment; the Board of Commissioners voted on Commissioner Stempeck's amendment for a 3.5% increase and \$6K bonus.

It was noted that Commissioner Talbot's motion and Commissioner Stempeck's motion were never seconded.

Mr. Talbot made a **motion**, seconded by Chair Bitá, move that the RMLD Board of Commissioners approve that, reflective of the period from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021, Ms. O'Brien receive a salary increase of 3% in addition to a \$5K paid out as Ms. O'Brien chooses, as ICMA, cash, or a combination of the two.

Motion Carried: 4:1:0 (4 in favor, 1 against, 0 abstained) Roll Call: Chair Bitá, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Nay; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye.

Vice Chair Pacino stated that the GM Evaluation needs to happen in January, and the Chair is responsible for putting forth a numeric recommendation.

4. Interim General Manager and General Manager Search Committee

Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Chair Bitá, move that the Board of Commissioners finalize GM interview questions and conduct interviews in Open Session for the Interim General Manager position. Meeting date to be determined.

Motion Carried: 5:0:0 (5 in favor, 0 abstained) Roll Call: Chair Bitá, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye.

Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Coulter, move that the Board of Commissioners appoint a GM Search Committee for the consideration of applicants and interviews for the GM position.

Discussion ensued relative to the appointment of a GM search Committee.

Commissioner Talbot stated that hiring a GM is the BOC's biggest responsibility. Chair Bitá and Commissioner Stempeck agreed that all five Commissioners should be involved throughout the entire process.

Vice Chair Pacino noted that previously, the BOC appointed a screening committee, which met offsite to screen applications. The committee then made recommendations to the BOC, who conducted interviews of the finalists in open session. Discussion ensued relative to the BOC hiring an outside professional to conduct the GM search.

Commissioner Stempeck stated that when this process was conducted in the past, the BOC did not initially hire an outside consultant. After receiving minimal response to the advertised position, the BOC hired a consultant who was able to solicit candidates from other municipal operations state-wide. It is important to note that this time there are qualified internal applicants.

Commissioner Coulter stated that when discussing process and candidates, there needs to be a distinction between Interim General Manager versus General Manager.

It was decided that the BOC would conduct interviews with the in house Interim General Manager candidates and once an Interim General Manager is appointed, that person will serve in that position for 1-3 months while the BOC continues with the GM search and process.

Vivek asked a question, and discussion ensued on the involvement of the CAB or Town in the Interim GM and GM search process.

Chair Bitra stated that the CAB should be involved in both the IGM and GM search process.

Commissioner Stempeck agreed with Chair Bitra, but noted that in relation to the Town, the separation of the Town and RMLD is important to maintain. This issue is why the White Paper came to be, to keep the separate while remaining tied. Moreover, larger commissioners also tend to have a more difficult time reaching decisions.

Chair Bitra stated that she would like the town involved at some capacity.

Commissioner Talbot stated that the CAB functions as a way for all towns to be involved.

Vice Chair Pacino suggested that Chair Bitra and himself come up with a GM Search process come back next meeting with a recommendation.

The suggested motions relative to appointing a GM Search Committee were not voted on.

Discussion ensued on scheduling a date and time for the Interim GM interviews.

It was decided that the Interim GM interviews would take place on May 3rd, 2022, at 5:30 PM.

5. General Manager's Report **MEAM Annual Meeting**

The MEAM Annual Meeting will be held on May 19 and 20, 2022. In Plymouth, MA.

Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Chair Bitra, move that the Board approve Ms. O'Brien's travel to, and attendance at, the MEAM Annual Managers' Meeting to take place from May 19 and 20, 2022 in Plymouth, MA.

Motion Carried: 5:0:0 (5 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstained) Roll Call: Chair Bitra, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Mr. Talbot, Aye; Mr. Stempeck, Aye; Mr. Coulter, Aye.

Commissioner Coulter noted that any Board member who would like to attend the MEAM meeting should be able to.

Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Chair Bitá, move that the Board approve any Commissioner who wishes to travel to, and attendance at, the MEAM Annual Managers' Meeting to take place from May 19 and 20, 2022 in Plymouth, MA.

Motion Carried: 5:0:0 (5 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstained) Roll Call: Chair Bitá, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Mr. Stempeck, Aye; Mr. Talbot, Aye; Mr. Coulter, Aye.

Community Update

- The General Manager stated that the High School Art Contest Awards night will be held on May 12, 2022 at 7:30 PM. The winner's artwork will be featured on the cover of the Annual Report. Vice Chair Pacino and Commissioner Coulter agreed to present at the awards.

Bike Adoption

- The General Manager noted that RMLD is hosting the annual bike adoption event with the Town and Climate Action Committee. Bikes will be dropped off on Friday April 29, 2022, and the bikes will be available for adoption on Saturday April 30th 2022.

Future Board Meetings

- The General Manager reported that the RMLD is facing a supply chain issue with the IT equipment which will allow Hybrid Meetings.

Discussion ensued on holding in person versus virtual meetings. Chair Bitá noted her support of in person meetings, and Commissioner Stempeck requested an option for Zoom.

- Erica stated that the Audit Committee meeting will be held in person on May 23 or May 25, 2022 followed by a Joint meeting with the CAB.
- Erica reported that the Economic Development meeting is in the process of being scheduled.

6. RMLD Procurement Requests Requiring Board Approval

IFP 2022-01 – Trouble Truck with Trade-In

Hamid Jaffari, Director of E&O reported on IFP-2022-01.

At the previous Board meeting, the BOC requested that Hamid look further into the Trouble Truck trade in options associated with this bid.

James A. Kiley was the lowest responsible and responsive proposer; whereas Altec took to many exceptions, had a higher cost, longer delivery time, and could not guarantee the trade in value.

The current proposal is good for 90 days; 60 days have since passed. If the proposal is not awarded in the next 30 days, the price and lead times will increase. Most industry members placed these orders in Q1 and there are no guarantees that RMLD will receive the truck for two years. Moreover, the truck will have to be maintained and in operations until RMLD gets a new truck and either retires or sells the current truck at auction. This would amount to approximately an additional 13K expense.

Per the BOC's request, the RMLD staff spent hours researching and were unable to find anything on the secondary market that met the required specs.

Hamid noted that he performed an independent verification and found two companies that are in the business of procuring and refurbishing used trucks. One company was not

interested and cited that the trucks they purchase need to be in flawless condition. Hamid cited the example of rust caused by salt on the roads as one issue with the truck's condition. Hamid was given a best guess estimate of \$5K-\$15K for what one of these companies would pay. The high end of 15K is only for vehicles in perfect condition.

Hamid discussed the options the BOC has moving forward with the current proposal.

Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Commissioner Stempeck, that proposal IFP 2022-01 for one (1) Trouble Truck with Trade-In be awarded to: James A. Kiley Company for \$252,419.00, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 164, §56D, on the recommendation of the General Manager.

Motion Carried: 5:0:0 (5 in favor, 0 against) Roll Call: Chair Bitá, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye.

7. Scheduling

It was decided that the Board would meet on either May 23 or 25, 2022 following the Audit Committee meeting at 6:00 PM.

The May Accounts Payable and Payroll warrant signing schedule by Commissioners was reviewed.

8. Adjournment

Vice Chair Pacino made a **motion**, seconded by Chair Bitá, move that the Board of Commissioners adjourn regular session.

Motion Carried: 5:0:0 (5 in favor, 0 against) Roll Call: Chair Bitá, Aye; Vice Chair Pacino, Aye; Commissioner Stempeck, Aye; Commissioner Talbot, Aye; Commissioner Coulter, Aye.

Documents Used

2022-04-21 RMLD Board of Commissioners Regular Session Packet
Board Packet Attachment 1

A true copy of the RMLD Board of Commissioners minutes as
approved by a majority of the Commission.


Philip B. Pacino (Oct 21, 2022 10:02 EDT)

Oct 21, 2022

Philip B. Pacino, Secretary Pro Tem RMLD Board of Commissioners