

SUDBURY SELECT BOARD

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2022

(Meeting can be viewed at www.sudburytv.org)

Present: Chair Charles Russo, Vice-Chair Janie Dretler, Select Board Member Daniel Carty, Select Board Member Lisa Kouchakdjian, Select Board Member Jen Roberts, Interim Town Manager Maryanne Bilodeau

The statutory requirements as to notice having been compiled with, the meeting was convened at 7:01 PM via Zoom telecommunication mode.

Chair Russo announced the recording of the meeting and other procedural aspects included in the meeting.

Call to Order/Roll Call

Select Board Roll Call: Carty-present, Kouchakdjian-present, Roberts-present, Dretler-present, Russo-present

Opening Remarks by Chair

Chair Russo stated he would hold his remarks until the next Board meeting.

Reports from Interim Town Manager

- Health Director expects increased COVID rate; test kits are available
- State Legislation and Governor Baker could extend government remote meetings to December, 2022 or sometime in 2023.
- ARPA page has been updated on the Town website, as well as all other Town project updates
- Water Chestnut treatment/removal at Stearns Mill Pond and Carding to take place in next two weeks

Reports from Select Board

Board Members decided to forego reports.

Citizen's Comments

None

Discussion and possible vote to create and release a statement related to recent Zoom bombing of a meeting and condemning any form of racism, discrimination, or intolerance

Present: Nuha Muntasser, Co-Chair of DEI; Nalini Luthra, Co-Chair of DEI

Chair Russo confirmed that the last Select Board meeting on June 28, 2022 was bombarded with Zoom display of racial slurs and profanities. He stated that the Board would now discuss:

1. What happened
2. How to respond to what happened
3. What to expect in the future, and how to plan for what could happen

Chair Russo stressed the purpose involved restoring trust that such incidence would not occur again, and note that Police and IT are studying the matter. He noted that Chat functions are being updated so this cannot happen again.

Chair Russo confirmed that he discussed the matter with former Town Manager Hayes, Interim Town Manager Bilodeau, Police Chief Nix, DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) Commission members, and the Town residents.

Board Members reviewed Statement #1 and Statement #2.

Vice-Chair Dretler was in favor of Statement #1, and indicated that she would not mind eliminating the Chat function.

Board Member Carty said the occurrence was intolerable, especially in consideration of the repeated use of hateful racial slurs on the last Select Board meeting attended by former Town Manager Hayes. He agreed with Vice-Chair Dretler regarding elimination of the Chat function, and he indicated he would prefer to eliminate the Q&A function as well.

Board Member Carty acknowledged his drafting of Statement #2 which further detailed specifics about the incident. He noted that about a year ago an antisemitic incident took place and we took specific action. Similarly, a month ago we declared Family Pride Month, which was specific. He stated that Statement #1 was not specific enough given the actual incident. .

Board Member Roberts agreed that the recent event was a very disturbing and hateful event, and does not represent the values of Sudbury. She asked about Town counsel guidance in relation to recent incidents. Interim Town Manager Bilodeau responded that Town Counsel confirmed that the Chat function could be removed, and the Open Meeting Law would not be violated with this in mind.

Board Member Roberts agreed with eliminating the Chat function.

Chair Russo commented that the Sudbury Public School Committee did not use Chat or Q&A functions at their meetings.

Ms. Roberts stated she favored both draft statements.

Board Member Kouchakdjian echoed the Chair's statements, adding that she maintained a zero-tolerance level regarding this type of activity and was relieved to see that the Police are being involved to the extent of the law. She opined that the IT department might start capturing IT addresses. Board Member Kouchakdjian agreed with the removal of the Chat function.

Board Member Roberts stated she and former Select Board member Schineller worked on the remote meeting policy, and could amend that policy in light of recent events. Board Member Carty recommended that Town Counsel be consulted first.

Nuha Muntasser, Co-Chair of DEI, thanked the Select Board, Chief Nix, Mark Thompson and Town staff for their efforts. She encouraged the Select Board to release a statement which must clearly address what happened against the Black community. She agreed with utilizing the letter of the law to prosecute. She offered assistance by the DEI. Ms. Muntasser suggested victims reach out to the DEI.

Nalini Luthra, DEI Co-Chair agreed with Nuha and indicated that the Board's message must address details specific to the incident and must consider people of color at this time. She stressed that this message must not be

minimized, and Town Manager Hayes was targeted at this meeting. She agreed about eliminating the Chat function, adding that these words reflected a hate crime, and if it were a meeting in person, it would result in an arrest.

Resident and member of Racial and Social Justice Sue Abrams, 24 Hudson Road, noted that the Select Board was quick to respond to the hateful event. She stressed that all Town Committees should get guidance if this should happen again.

Vice-Chair Dretler recommended that Statement #1 be edited by adding language focusing on the Black community.

Chair Russo stated he was taking DEI comments seriously and proceeded to eliminate much of the language in Statement 1. Chair Russo suggested that Board Member Carty continue to draft the statement and work with other related parties in Town. Dan confirmed he was not able to do so in the next few days, due to upcoming obligations.

Chair Russo requested that Board Member Roberts continue with finalization statement process, and speak with Chief Nix, collect resources from Sudbury for Racial Injustice, DEI, and the Town Social Worker, when making updates as discussed this evening.

Both Vice-Chair Dretler and Board Member Roberts recommended that links to other statements by the Board be included.

Vice-Chair Dretler asked if best practice materials could be distributed to other Town Boards and Committees should this happen at their meetings. Interim Town Manager Bilodeau stated that IT could send such guidelines, and she would follow-up with Town Counsel before Board Members proceeded.

Vice-Chair Dretler mentioned the Tuft Guidelines for such Zoom bombs:

- Should always have a plan
- Preserve information (do not delete the Chat in this case)
- Report the incident immediately
- Respond in the moment
- Notify the Community

Resident Susan Berry, 4 Dawson Drive, agreed with elimination of the Chat, and confirmed she was still able to see the Chat function at her end.

DEI members stated they would be willing to work with Board Member Roberts in the next couple of days.

Chair Russo read in the words of the motion. Board Member Carty moved in the words of the Chair. Board Member Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

It was on motion 5-0; Kouchakdjian-aye, Carty-aye, Roberts-aye, Dretler-aye, Russo-aye

VOTED: To remove the Chat function during Select Board meetings, as discussed

Citizen's Comments (cont.)

No public comments

Chair Russo stated the discussion would be considered at the next Select Board meeting of 7/12/22.

Discussion and possible vote on potential events, activities, or actions reaffirming Sudbury's support for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice within the community and condemning any expression of hate, prejudice, intolerance, or discrimination against any individual or group.

Chair Russo confirmed that this agenda item had been covered.

Adjourn

Chair Russo read in the words of the motion. Vice-Chair Dretler moved in the words of the Chair. Board Member Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

It was on motion 5-0; Kouchakdjian-aye, Carty-aye, Roberts-aye, Dretler-aye, Russo-aye

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM

SB Meeting – 7/6/22 - Documents & Exhibits

1. Discussion and possible vote to create and release a statement related to recent Zoom bombing of a meeting and condemning any form of racism, discrimination, or intolerance.

Attachments:

- 1.a Sudbury Select Board Statement on Anti-Discrimination_update
- 1.b 07052022SB_Statement_Dcarty_draft