



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
JANUARY 26, 2024**

Members Present: Chair Michael Riley (Remote), Vice Chair Kimberly Conway (Remote), Secretary Andrew Deslaurier (Remote), Michael Rosa, and John Burrows

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Town Manager John Curran, Assistant Town Manager Clancy Main, Director of Administrative Services Robert Maynard, DPW Director Fred Russel, Police Chief Roy Frost, Recording Secretary Dawn McDowell

Chair Riley called the meeting to order the emergency meeting and stated that the meeting is a hybrid meeting with a Zoom option. Since we have three members who are remote, all votes will be taken by roll call and roll call attendance will be taken. Member Rosa was Present, Secretary Deslaurier was Present, Vice Chair Conway was Present, Member Burrows was Present and Chair Riley was Present.

Call to Order 2:00 PM

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

New Business

1. Discussion and Possible Reconsideration of the Vote Taken to Change the Salem/Gray Street Intersection into a 4-Way Stop

Mr. Curran stated that the decision to make the intersection a 4-Way stop has caused a public safety issue. He wants the Chief to comment. There are no markings on the street and the police have been watching it today since the signs went up.

Chief Frost stated that the signs went up between 9:00 – 9:30 AM today. They had officers monitoring the intersection and it was immediately apparent that people were not stopping. They have stopped between 60-70 people running the stop signs and have issued verbal warnings. There is no delineation on the road, and he is very concerned that he was not brought in to discuss this before the signs went up. He was very upset that no one talked with him before this action was taken. He spoke with the Town Engineer after the fatality and discussed options. This area has historically been a problem area and the history was given to Mr. Curran. There is a traffic study in progress and until we get those results, he would encourage the Board to take down the signs immediately until we can have a collaborative discussion with engineering once the traffic study is completed.

Member Rosa stated that when we voted to add the 4 way stop signs, he assumed that they would be installed per MassDOT guidelines which include certain height, distance from the corner and pavement markers. He was impressed that the signs were installed so quickly but he thought that the pavement markers would go hand and hand. The vote we took was an attempt to make that intersection safer. The signs went up at 9:53 AM and we got an email for an emergency meeting at 10:35 AM. Member Rosa stated that he went down to the intersection and cars were stopping. When he left at 1:46 PM, the DPW were there adjusting the height because they were not at the correct height. Member Rosa agrees that the stop line needs to be installed and they need to be installed per DOT standards. This has been going on since 2020 and there was a police officer and the Town Engineer on the Traffic Management Committee (TMC) back then and nothing was done. He completely respects the Chief, but this is safer.

Chief Frost stated that he has looked at impact delineation markers that could be added. He is not a traffic expert, but this would bring attention to the intersection, but he would want to talk with the Town Engineer first. In the first hour of the signs, 20 cars went through without stopping. We could increase enforcement until the appropriate decision is made but he can't have a cruiser there 24/7. The problem is that when people are coming up Gray Street, there is an assumption that if this is 4-way stop, then the people on Salem Street will stop and that could cause more accidents.



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Secretary Deslaurier asked if there is a similar site in town that we could look at, like the Marshall Street intersection. Chief Frost stated that this intersection is much busier than Marshall Street and there is a 3-way stop on Cook/Alexander and he is not comfortable with that one either. People are driving at a high rate of speed on Andover Street when they come onto Salem Street. Secretary Deslaurier agreed that this whole area has been a nightmare for years. Has traffic collection started? Mr. Curran stated that they just contracted with Beta, so he is not sure. There also would be a concern that they would start data collection with the 4-way stop installed so that would give an accurate picture.

Vice Chair Conway stated that we are the Road Commissioners, but we are not traffic experts. Those are the police, Town Engineer and Beta. We need to stop thinking that we are traffic engineers. She requested that Mr. Curran ask Beta to expediate the traffic study but in the meantime, we should take down the two additional signs that were just installed. We made a mistake, take down the signs and do it properly after the traffic study is completed.

Member Burrows stated that he went down there at 11:30 AM and there were no police there. For the most part, most cars stopped but there were a couple of roll throughs. The first day is always tough until people get used to it. There is a road that was closed temporarily, and it's still closed 26 years later. People need to get used to it, the lines need to be painted on the ground and maybe look at those delineation markers. He appreciates the police and what the Chief has said but people need to be responsible and pay attention. It comes down to enforcement. Roads change all the time in the city or if you go to a new place, you need to be responsible and pay attention to the rules of the road.

Chair Riley apologized to Chief Frost, and we should have brought in the professionals before we made a decision. Since the TMC has been disbanded, we rely on the police and Town Engineer for traffic expertise. This is long overdue in this area. He was down there also, and it was dangerous. We need to listen to the experts, and we all want to make it safer.

Member Rosa stated that Vice Chair Conway stated that we need to listen to the traffic engineers because they are the experts, but they have been wrong on multiple occasions: River Street, Town Center turning radius etc. It defies logic that adding 2 extra stop signs makes the intersection less safe. If we take them out, then 100% of the traffic goes through. The signs are too far back and there are no pavement markers. We need to add the pavement markers and look at the delineation markers but leave them in.

MOTION - Vice Chair Conway made a motion to remove the two stop signs that were just added on Salem Street and ask the Town Manager to expediate the traffic study. The motion was seconded by Secretary Deslaurier and voted 3-2-0. On a roll call vote: Member Rosa voted No, Secretary Deslaurier voted Aye, Vice Chair Conway voted Aye, Member Burrows voted No, and Chair Riley voted Aye.

Member Burrows stated that the motion is to make it the way it was. Chair Riley replied yes.

MOTION - Secretary Deslaurier made a motion to adjourn the Select Board meeting of January 26, 2024 @ 2:34 PM. The motion was seconded by Member Rosa and voted 4-1-0. On a roll call vote: Member Rosa voted Aye, Secretary Deslaurier voted Aye, Vice Chair Conway voted Aye, Member Burrows voted No, and Chair Riley voted Aye.

*Respectfully Submitted by Dawn McDowell,
Recording Secretary*



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Exhibits for the Select Board Meeting – January 26, 2024

Call to order 2:00 PM

New Business

- 1. Discussion and Possible Reconsideration of the Vote Taken to Change the Salem/Gray Street Intersection into a 4-Way Stop – No Exhibits**

Approved On: March 18, 2024