



BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 14, 2022

Members Present: Shana Shufelt, Chair
Richard W. Brewer, Vice Chair
Steven J. Ouellette
Ann E. Boxler, Clerk
Brian Valcourt

Also Present: James Hartnett, Town Administrator

6:00 p.m. Call To order & Pledge of Allegiance

Acknowledgments & Recognitions

- Karen Wood Cambra, daughter of Charlene Wood.
- Ronald LaPlante "Bunnum" Bus Driver in Town for years, Call Firefighter, Veteran, huge racing fan, member of the VFW.
- Carol Freitas recapped the Veterans Day Service, saying it went great, short and sweet, thank you to all who helped, including the schools for hosting the Veterans, there was also a Veterans breakfast. She also noted that she has held information sessions that have been very well received. They are looking for donations for Christmas Food Baskets, food items and/or monetary donations. They hope to distribute 50 baskets.

Ms. Shufelt thanked her for all that she is doing, and Mr. Ouellette mentioned that the Police, Fire Department should also be recognized for helping with the event.

1. Public Hearings

2. Licenses/Permits

3. Appointments and Resignations

- a. Request from Keith Pelletier, Chief of Police, to approve the Retirement of Officer David Leite, after 27+ years of service, and to appoint him as a Reserve Police Officer.
Mr. Ouellette would like to recognize David Leite, with letter of appreciation. Mr. Valcourt noted that Dave Leite is a great guy, and thanked him for his service.
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to accept the resignation of David Leite, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.
- b. Request to appoint Amy Abate, Eric Abate, Brett Silvia & Megan Silvia as Public Weighers at A & E Metals, 449 American Legion Highway.
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the above mentioned as Public Weighers, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

4. Discussion

a. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Discussion

Mr. Hartnett addressed the Board, noting that he is working on preparing a balanced budget and hopes to present it at the December 19th Meeting. The town is looking at a \$600,000 - \$800,000 deficit, running out of options, an override needs to be considered and salaries may need to be cut. Mr. Hartnett recommends the Diman Question be placed on the April Ballot.

b. Internet Advisory Committee

Keith Novo (IT) and Jeff Christensen from Entry Point presented to the board, highlighting the many benefits of the High Speed Internet Project.

Mr. Christensen has been working with the committee for about 8 months and the report is ready to be finalized. This is now essential infrastructure, now is the time to move competition down in the stack, and create robust infrastructure.

Ms. Shufelt emphasized this project would not be subsidized by the town, subscribers would be paying for it.

Mr. Christensen noted the survey that was done in 2021 with reliability and cost being top priority.

Ms. Shufelt noted that the existing internet speed test revealed ½ of what is advertised.

Mr. Christensen stated this is a \$22,000,000 project.

Mr. Brewer questioned the Municipal Light Plant and how this works into this project,

Mr. Christensen added that Cities and towns are allowed to build this infrastructure under the municipal light plant law, and also a recent DLS ruling stated this can also be done through an Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Novo noted Fiber has been run from Route 6 to The Point, and the design supports enough fiber to support future development.

Shana, praised Keith, David and Entry Point for their work on this project.

Mr. Christensen stated the next steps would be to develop, ownership, structure and governance, begin to gather RFP's and most importantly community engagement, he also mentioned there is Federal Funding available and Wall Street monies are starting to come into play.

Mr. Novo added that we are well ahead, with the backbone in place.

Mr. Ouellette added that it may be good to present at the Infrastructure Committee meeting, to be held in January, it is a good place to gather public input.

David Cole added that he and Keith have already secured \$240,000 in grant money, and are ready to apply for more

5. Action Items

- a. Request from the Infrastructure Oversight Committee to hire Roger Fernandes as Project Manager, for the Route 6 Infrastructure Work subject to contract negotiations.

Mr. Hartnett noted that he interviewed Mr. Fernandes along with Bob Daylor and Maury May, his 20+ years of experience in Business and Finance makes him a good candidate for the position. The Infrastructure Oversight Committee, and Mr. Hartnett recommend hiring Mr. Fernandes.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to hire Roger Fernandes as Project Manager, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- b. Request from Chris Gonsalves, Highway Surveyor for an increase in Private Snow Plowing and Sanding Rates.
Mr. Hartnett addressed the Board stating that the Highway Department has had a difficult time hiring private plow drivers, and recommends the requested increases of \$60 per hour for Pick Up trucks, \$90 per hour for 6-Wheelers, \$110 and hour for 10-Wheelers and \$135 an hour for front end loaders.
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the increases, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.
- c. Request from Keith Pelletier, Chief of Police, to designate one handicapped parking space as near as possible to 488 Old County Road, the Head Country Store.
Lt. John Couto spoke to this request, Mr. Hartnett noted the store owner had been notified, Ms. Brown stated that the store owner didn't have a problem with the request he just asked that his employee parking lot not be blocked.
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the Handicap Parking Space, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.
- d. Request for approval of a Conservation Restriction on Kirby Brook Farm located at 333 Drift Road, Map 52 Lot 15.
Mr. Hartnett noted that this is a private restriction not being held by the Town, however the Board must sign off. Ross Moran addressed the Board, stating the importance of this restriction.
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the Conservation Restriction, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.
- e. Zoning Board of Appeals
1) Request to increase fees.
2) Request to reclassify Clerk's Position.
Mr. Menard and Mr. Elias addressed the Board in regards to the fees, stating that the ZBA is supposed to be revenue neutral, and they feel the board is losing money with the current fees, especially with time consuming issues. Mr. Menard proposed raising the fee to \$300 for Standard Filing and \$1500-\$2500 for more complex filings. Mr. Valcourt asked if there is a policy in place to waive the fees, income based. Mr. Menard noted there was no such policy in place. Ms. Shufelt asked Mr. Hartnett to look into other town policies as to waiving fees. Ms. Shufelt mentioned that a Public Hearing is needed to change fees, no action taken at this time. The Re-Classification of the Clerk's position was also discussed with Mr. Menard stressing the importance of the filing deadlines and reporting of legally time sensitive documents, advertising, etc. This reclassification request will be presented to the Personnel Board, no action taken at this time.
- f. Request to accept the following donations to the Council on Aging: \$175; Ralph Urban Donation for Best Use, \$25; Anonymous for Tech Help, \$5; Outreach, \$20; Barbara Norton, Best Use, \$50; Pam & Eric Diamond In Memory of Muriel Peters Totaling \$275
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to accept the above mentioned donations, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.
- g. Request from Carol Freitas, Veterans Service Officer to accept the following donations: Anonymous, \$25, Veterans Food Pantry and J&S Restaurant Enterprises, Inc. dba Kozy Nook Restaurant, \$1,000, Veterans Discretionary Fund
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to accept the above mentioned donations, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- h. Request to approve use of perpetual care funds to construct toilet facilities and septic system at the Cemetery Office.

Mr. Hartnett explained the original estimates were close to \$90,000, Diman has agreed to construct the bathroom, carpentry, plumbing and electric. The Town would be responsible for materials only. The request would be for up to \$40,000 of Perpetual Care Funds (\$20,000 for Diman materials and \$20,000 for tight tank. Ms. Slade also spoke in favor of this request.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the use of the Perpetual Care funds as requested, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- i. Approve request to the Finance Committee for Reserve Fund Authorization to purchase a truck for Town Hall Maintenance.

After a brief discussion, no action was taken at this time.

- j. Request funding from the Community Preservation Committee for upgrades to the Town Hall Electrical System and exterior preservation and repairs.

Mr. Hartnett noted the request is for up to \$150,000 for electrical upgrades and \$115,000 for exterior repairs, painting and concrete work to the Town Hall and the Garage. Ms. Slade stressed the importance of preserving the Historical Building, the buildings need to be protected.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the request for CPC funding, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

6. Town Administrator Report

Title V Regulations

Mr. Hartnett updated the Board of the status of the proposed regulations.

The Board of Health resubmitted the joint response letter to MassDEP to be included in the official public hearing records.

Diman Regional High School Ballot Question

The debt exclusion question on the November 7th ballot for Diman did not pass. 3,345 yes, and 3,700 no. Unless approved by the Town at a future election, funding for Westport's share of the school funding will be charged to the Town's operating budget. Preliminary estimates for FY24 would be \$101,000, but this increases substantially in FY25 to \$431,000. I would recommend that the question be placed on the Town election in April of 2023.

Old High School

At the last meeting of the Long Term Building Committee a recommendation was made to the Board of Selectmen to place a non-binding question on the April ballot, to see if the Town voters were interested in using the former high school for municipal offices and if the voters would approve funding to support the reuse. Preliminary estimates place the cost of such change of use at \$29 million dollars. It will be difficult to formulate a comprehensive question for the ballot, consideration should be given to circulating a survey to gather the public's input. Mr. Valcourt suggested setting up another meeting of the Long Term Building Committee.

National Opioid Settlement

Earlier in the year the State reached a settlement with opioid distributors, and participating municipalities will receive 40% of the abatement funds the state recovers. As a participating community Westport received the full amount of \$82,296.67.

Bristol County ARPA Requests

The Town received notification from Bristol County ARPA on the recent requests:

Route 6 Zoning Study – Level I approved, advanced to Level II

School Passenger Vans - Level I approved, advanced to Level II

Fire Department Pick-up – Level I Denied

(2) SUV's Fire Department – Level I Denied – resubmitted with additional documentation

7. Approve Minutes

a. October 24, 2022

MOTION by Ms. Boxler to approve the October 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

8. Report on Bill Warrant

Ms. Boxler noted the warrant was in order and signed.

9. Selectmen Liaison Committee Reports & Suggestions for Future Agenda Discussion / Action

Ms. Boxler – Affordable Housing meets on Wednesday

Mr. Valcourt – CIPC meets on the 30th

Mr. Ouellette – bike recycling is doing well, Infrastructure Oversight Committee is in full force, full house at last meeting, looking into have a meeting after the Holidays, possible bigger venue to accommodate the public.

Mr. Brewer – Audit Committee met to go over the 2021 Audit, no significant issues, suggested to invite Tony Roselli to come to the next meeting.

Ms. Shufelt – had the opportunity to visit the filming studio at the High School, she was impressed with the facilities .

Climate Resiliency working on flood study, School Building Committee; still trying to get the floors done, some other odds and ends.

10. Comments and Statements

11. Boards/Committees/Commissions Vacancy List

12. Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

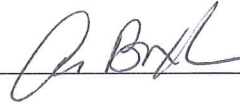
Adjournment

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to adjourn at 8:29p.m., seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.



Paula M. Brown
Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____



Ann Boxler, Clerk
Select Board Member

3a WPD Leite Retirement

3b A&E Metals

5a Infrastructure – Fernandes

5b Highway Dept - Plow Rate Increase

5c WPD Handicapped Parking Request

5d 333 Drift Road Map

5d CR Kirby Brook Farm

5e 1 ZBA Clerk Request

5e ZBA

5f COA Donations

5gf Veterans Donations

7a 09122022 ES Minutes

election results

WESTPORT MA - DIGITAL ACCESS MASTER PLAN - 11 03 2022 (1)

WESTPORT, MA - SELECT BOARD PRESENTATION - 11 14 2022

TA Debt service chart DIMAN