



## BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 19, 2022

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

Member Absent: Brian Valcourt

Also Present: James Hartnett, Town Administrator

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

### **Acknowledgments & Recognitions**

#### **1. Public Hearings**

#### **2. Licenses/Permits**

#### **3. Appointments and Resignations**

- a. Request to accept the resignation of James Watterson from the Zoning Board of Appeals, effective immediately, request dated December 1, 2022.

**MOTION** by Mr. Ouellette to approve the resignation with a letter of appreciation, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

- b. Request from Bernadette Oliver to appoint Kristin Stinson as Assistant Town Clerk, effective January 3, 2023.

Mr. Hartnett stated that 5 or 6 applicants were interviewed, all good candidates but Ms. Stinson was recommended for the position.

**MOTION** by Mr. Brewer to appoint Krisitn Stinson as Assistant Town Clerk, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

#### **4. Action Items**

- a. Request from Carol Freitas; Veterans Service Agent (VSO) to accept the following donations:

Judy & Steven Marshall, \$100, Veterans Food Pantry

Multiple anonymous donors, \$45, for Veterans Christmas Basket distribution

Angelo Latini, \$50, for Veterans Christmas Basket distribution

Simone Blanchette, \$100, Veterans Christmas Basket distribution

Gerald & Janet Pichette, \$100, Veterans Food Pantry

James Coyne, \$100 for Veterans Food Pantry

William R & Rosayne Saccone, \$200, Veterans Food Pantry

Geraldine Fortier,(5) \$20 gift cards for Veterans Christmas Basket distribution

Multiple anonymous donors, (30) \$20 gift cards for Veterans Christmas Basket distribution

Paul Durette, (5) \$20 gift cards for Veterans Christmas Basket distribution

Carol Freitas, VSO addressed the Board stating that 50 gift baskets will be distributed to local Veterans, Thursday from 9-11 at the VFW, and the Veterans Food Pantry gets replenished throughout the year.

**MOTION** by Mr. Ouellette to accept the above mentioned donations, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

- b. Request from Beverly Bisch, COA Director to approve the Meal Site Manager Job Description, approved by the Personnel Board on February 17, 2022.

After brief discussion, Mr. Hartnett explained that the Personnel Board approved the JobDescription however it has to also be approved by the Selectmen.

**MOTION** by Mr. Brewer to approve the Meal Site Manager Job Description, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

## **5. Discussion**

### **a. FY24 Budget Discussion**

Mr. Hartnett presented the Preliminary FY 24 budget to the board by first highlighting the Revenue Sources; State Aid 15.25%, Local Receipts 10.5% and Property Taxes 73.7%. The Operating Expenses; Debt Service 9.8%, Pension & Insurance 15.3%, Other Assessments 4%, Salaries (Town) 19.5%, Expenses (Town) 7.2% and School/Regional Expenses 44.2%. He identified some of the budget concerns, Negotiated Raises exceeding New Net Revenue, some of the numbers are only estimates including health insurance, regional schools, charter schools and school choice. Overall the budget is not sustainable without a proposition 2 1/2 override.

With the cuts that have been made over the last couple of years including this proposed budget, future Free Cash amounts will be less than what we are seeing this year. He pointed out that Required Obligations have increased accounting for 25% of the overall budget, compared to 17% in 2008.

Mr. Hartnett stated that it is important to get the Diman Debt exclusion passed and recommended putting it on the April Ballot.. This is a priority and will have considerable impact on the operating budget starting in FY24. He also suggested using Free Cash to pay off the Campground property, this would free up \$100,000+ in the operating budget. Free cash may also be needed for the old high school and retroactive pay for the police department. This is in addition to the typical capital projects..

The old High School is costing the Town approximately \$200,000 per year and recommended putting the Property up for sale.

To help with the coordination of the budget process and a possible override he suggested that the budget review group meet including members of the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee. Mr. Hartnett noted that the Town has been looking at other funding sources to offset the budget such as Assessors new growth, fee increases, Grants, Health Insurance options and support from the local Delegation.

Ms. Shufelt added that Diman definitely needs to go on the April Ballot, and needs to be promoted better, she also agrees that the town needs to go for an override, however doesn't feel it should be on the same ballot as Diman. Ms. Boxler agreed. Mr. Brewer added that Diman is crucial. He is curious as to what the Finance Committee thoughts are on the



override process, is it approved first on the Ballot then appropriated at Town Meeting, or Town Meeting first then Ballot. Ms. Shufelt stated that it can proceed in either order. Ms. Shufelt added that this is the preliminary budget proposal, a balanced budget needs to be to the Finance Committee by February 10, 2023. Mr. Hartnett noted free cash should be certified within the next couple of weeks. Ms. Shufelt suggested putting together an informal budget/override working group, Mr. Brewer volunteered to be a part of the group.

b. **Town Clerk's Office Discussion**

Mr. Hartnett addressed The Board noting that Bernadette Oliver, Town Clerk has extended her retirement date until the end of January, which is very helpful. The new Assistant will start on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Interim Town Clerk position has been posted, however no one has come forward, with Bernadette staying on, this gives us some time to make an appointment.

**6. Town Administrator Report**

**Transfer Station and Cemetery**

The Department of Labor Standards (DLS) has reviewed the actions taken by the Town of Westport addressing deficiencies at the Transfer Station and the Cemetery Department and found the responses satisfactory. Both facilities now have bathroom facilities with heat and light, security fencing height has been addressed and the small gas tanks have been replaced. Portable restrooms will remain at the transfer station and the cemetery will utilize portable facilities until the permanent restroom and septic system can be installed.

**Beacon Wind Offshore Wind Project**

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has notified the Town of the proposed Beacon Wind Project and is inviting the Town to be a consulting party to the Project. By becoming a consulting party the Town will be actively informed of steps in the review process, including public meetings, and participation. It does not appear that this project will have a direct impact on the Town of Westport but a request has been made to include Westport as a consulting party.

**Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant Program**

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the Department of Fire Services (DFS) has awarded the Town of Westport \$19,000 in State Fiscal Year 2023 funding for the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant Program. The Fire Department along with many other Town Departments have been actively pursuing grants to update equipment and offset costs. Competitive Grant applications take time and expertise to complete and additional resources are needed to administer grants and prepare reporting and closeout documents.

**Department of Telecommunications and Cable**

The Town of Westport received notice from the Department Secretary, Shonda D. Green that the Charter Communications license with the Town expires on June 6, 2023. A written report on the status has been requested and forwarded to the Cable Advisory Committee.

**7. Approve Minutes**

- a. December 5, 2022

**MOTION** by Ms. Boxler to approve the December 5, 2022 Minutes, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

**8. Report on Bill Warrant**

Ms. Boxler stated the Warrant was signed and in order.

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

Ms. Boxler – nothing to report

Mr. Ouellette – SRPEDD moving forward, shared the Dartmouth/Westport Study that was done.

Mr. Brewer – CIPC has held several meetings, the usual array of projects were presented, and grant opportunities were discussed.

Ms. Shufelt – Internet Advisory Committee – all fiber has been installed, next steps will be to get construction phase estimates, need to discuss with KP Law Municipal Light Plant vs. Enterprise Fund, how to get the message out, funding sources need to be discussed, and keeping Entry Point or similar company on board. Climate Resiliency - hasn't really met, but the subcommittees continue to meet. School Building Committee – floors have been started, bus shelter still needs to be done, still under budget, contractors are anxious to finish up.

**10. Comments and Statements**

**11. Boards/Committees/Commissions Vacancy List**

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

- 13. Executive Session** – pursuant to the provisions of MGL c 30A section 21(a), Chair declares an open meeting will have a detrimental effect to:

- a. Discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining - Westport Police Association.  
b. Approve Minutes: December 5, 2022

**MOTION** by Mr. Ouellette at 7:38 p.m. to enter into Executive Session for the reasons declared by the Chair, seconded by Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, and Shufelt aye.

**Adjournment**

**MOTION** by Ms. Shufelt at 7:55pm to adjourn the open meeting, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.



Paula M. Brown  
Administrative Assistant

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_



Ann Boxler, Clerk  
Select Board Member

3a Waterson Resignation  
3b Asst Town Clerk  
5a Veterans Donations (2)  
5b Meal Site Manager Job Description  
Budget 1 FY22 Local Receipts 6-30-22  
Budget 3 FY 24 BOS Expenses 12-19-22  
Budget 4 FY 24 BOS Revenues 12-19-22  
FY23 Budget 12-19-22 Final (2)  
Local Receipts FY22-FY24  
TA1 23S-7422 Westport Cemetery Close Ltr  
TA2 23S-7424 Westport Transfer Station Close Ltr