



BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 23, 2023

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

Also Present: James Hartnett, Town Administrator

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

Public Hearings

1. Licenses/Permits

- a. Request from the Acoaxet Club Inc. and Acoaxet Club Inc. d/b/a The Pro Shop accept the change of manager and officers for 2023. Manager: Bettie Jill Tate, President: Christopher Thompson, Vice President: Bettie Jill Tate, Treasurer: Matthew Forbes, Clerk Rebecca Merchant, Directors: Peter Briggs, Michelle Carney, Stephen Carney, Thomas Coughlin, Duncan Law, Jonathan Mongie, Sean Mullaney, Alicia Patterson, Peter Rosenfield, Andrew Wheeler and Marie Woollam
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve that change of officers for the Acoaxet Club, Inc and the Acoaxet Club Inc. d/b/a The Pro Shop, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

2. Appointments and Resignations

- a. Request from Jim Hartnett, Town Administrator to appoint Bernadette Oliver as Temporary Town Clerk effective February 21, 2023.
Mr. Hartnett addressed the Board stating that Bernadette would work approximately 20 hours per week through the April Election.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to appoint Bernadette Oliver as Temporary Town Clerk, with a letter of thanks, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.
- b. Request from Excel Recycling to remove Charlene Garcia as Public Weigher, and to appoint Emily Nickerson as Public Weigher.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to appoint Emily Nickerson as Public Weigher, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

3. Action Items

- a. Request from the Council on Aging to accept the following donations \$50; Ralph Urban Donation for Best Use, \$10; Gloria Veloza for Outreach, \$5; Ora Caya for Outreach, \$5; Anonymous Outreach, \$25; David Deitz for Equipment Use, \$100; Westport Women's Club for Tech Totaling \$195
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to accept the donations, seconded by Mr. Brewer, the Board voted 4-0 in favor.
- b. Request to approve the Employment Agreement for Principal Assessor, Theodora Gabriel.
Mr. Hartnett addressed the Board stating that Theo's Contract is up in March, the contract is the same, and includes a yearly 2% increase and educational stipend.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the Employment Agreement, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.
- c. Request from Matt Armendo, Board of Health Director to recommend approval of three positions to be hired under the Board of Health Shared Service Grant to the Personnel Board.
Matt Armendo and Tanya Ryden addressed the Board, Mr. Armendo summarized the positions and stated he was meeting with the Personnel Board on Wednesday. These positions would be paid out of PHE Grant Funds, with 15% of the Annual Grant coming back to the Town, approximately \$45,000. The PHE Grant is for 3 years.
Mr. Brewer questioned if these positions were Union Positions, they are not, he also questioned the long term cost to the Town, as far as retirement benefits, etc. Mr. Hartnett answered the Town would be responsible for Retirement Funds. Mr. Hartnett also noted that he tried to avoid hiring as employees and it was not an option at this time.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to post the positions and forward to the Personnel Board for the proposed positions, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.
- d. Request from the Planning Board for \$20,000 Bristol County American Rescue Plan Act Funds for the Route 6 Rezoning Project.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the use of \$20,000 in ARPA Funds for the Rte 6 Rezoning Project, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.
- e. Request from Atty. Kathleen O'Donnell to approve the "Waiver of Option to Purchase an Agricultural Value" the property located at 253 Adamsville Road, Westport, Assessors Map 78, Lot 2.
Mr. Hartnett addressed the board noting this is the large parcel on the NW corner of Adamsville Road and Sodom Road. The Town has the right to purchase or assign its rights to purchase every time the property is sold. The property is already protected.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve granting of the waiver, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.
- f. Request from Carol Freitas, Veterans Service Officer to accept the \$100.00 donation from J&S Restaurant Enterprises, Inc. d/b/a Kozy Nook for Veterans discretionary use.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to accept the donation from the Kozy Nook, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.
- g. Request to amend the Diman Regional High School Debt Exclusion question for the April 11, 2023, Ballot.
Mr. Hartnett noted that the opinion of KP Law is that the explanation cannot be included on the Ballot, he is recommending the ballot wording to include the question and the yes/no wording only.

Mr. Brewer added that Elected Officials can speak to the question, however not allowed to use Town Recourses to get the word out, he questioned the Website.
Mr. Hartnett added the Question will need to be approved by Bond Council.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to amend the Diman Ballot Question Debt Exclusion Ballot Question, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

4. Discussion

a. FY 24 Budget/Override Discussion

Mr. Hartnett would like to get guidance from the Board on the School Department Budget and use of "Free Cash"

School initial request \$21,706,159
TA Recommendation \$20,627,332
(\$ 1,078,827)

Budget Override – support and yearly budget adjustment amount- the private review committee has requested to be on the February 6th agenda. Hartnett believes the Town needs a minimum override of \$3,000,000. There are different options as to how this can be assessed and used.

Ms. Shufelt noted at a recent Override Committee Meeting, she spoke in favor of using free cash up to \$500,000 for the Schools, however she noted that was her personal recommendation not that of the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Shufelt asked to have the Override Committee attend the February 6th meeting.

Mr. Brewer added that the budget meeting with the School Department went very well, it was positive and businesslike, hoping to settle before Town Meeting.

5. Town Administrator Report

Project Updates

Route 177 Roundabout – The Town received additional funding for design and is working with PARE Engineering and MassDOT on approval. The 25% design plans were submitted and PARE is currently working on addressing comments. MassDOT required an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) that took additional design and review time. The results of the ICE study showed that the roundabout was the preferred option. Looking for MassDOT to hold a 25% design public hearing later this spring. This timeline will likely be extended.

Drift Road Small Bridge Replacement – The Town was awarded design grant funding through the MassDOT Small Bridge Program. PARE Engineering has been hired by MassDOT to design the new structure. PARE is looking to get the authorization to start design by the middle of February. Survey work, wetlands delineation for the base plan should begin in March with design completed by the end of the year. A request has been made to PARE Engineering to engage the public early in the process.

Hix Bridge Landing – The Landing Commission has been working with GZA on the redesign of the Hix Bridge Parking area and boat ramp. Geotechnical Borings have been completed in the area of the ramp, the survey has not been finalized but a draft plan was submitted. The Design memorandum is near completion.

Town Farm – The two oil tanks were replaced at the Town Farm, the existing tanks were in poor condition and the oil delivery company would no longer deliver fuel to the property. This work would not have been completed in a timely manner without the assistance of the highway department, they were able to remove the old steel water tank and pour a new concrete floor within a couple of days. Very much appreciated.

Fire Department Grants

Chief Brian Legendre submitted a letter recognizing Deputy Dan Baldwin and Administrative Assistant Haleigh Brown for acquiring \$1,047,021.74 in grant funding for the Town.

6. Approve Minutes

a. January 9, 2023

MOTION by Ms. Boxler to approve the January 9, 2023 Minutes, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

7. Report on Bill Warrant

Ms. Boxler noted it was signed and in order.

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

Ms. Boxler – none

Mr. Valcourt – LTBC on Weds, he sent draft ballot question to Jim and Paula

Mr. Ouellette – Cable Contract pushing forward, Bike Path Committee has storage area now,

DEP Meeting had a good turnout, SRPEDD meets on Wednesday

Mr. Brewer – CIPC going well, next meeting will be ranking requests

Ms. Shufelt – Internet Advisory in full force, they reached out to KP Law for input on Municipal Light Fund, fiber is all laid out, end points need to be tied in. Climate Resiliency Committee has a lot of creative people, high school presentation went well, they are actively looking at grants.

9. Comments and Statements

10. Boards/Committees/Commissions Vacancy List

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

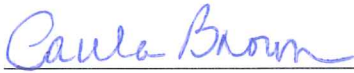
12. Executive Session – pursuant to the provisions of MGL c 30A section 21(a), Chair declares an open meeting will have a detrimental effect to:

- a. Discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining – Teamsters Local No. 251
- b. Discuss strategy with respect to Highway Surveyor Employment Agreement
- c. Approve Minutes: December 19, 2022

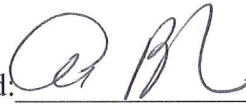
MOTION by Mr.Ouellette at 6:43 p.m. to enter into Executive Session for the reasons declared by the Chair, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Shufelt aye and Valcourt, aye..

Adjournment

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt at 6:57 pm to adjourn the open meeting, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.



Paula M. Brown
Administrative Assistant

Approved: 

Ann Boxler, Clerk
Select Board Member

1a Acoaxet Club Pro Shop
1a Acoaxet Club
3a COA Donations
3b EA Principal Assessor 1-4-23
3d 1.10.23 PB Request to BOS for Add'l ARPA Funds
3e Santos- Adamsville Road
3e Sign off Santos Adamsville Road
3f Veterans Donation
3g Diman Ballot Question Legal Opinion
3g Diman Question TC 01232023
3h Excel - Public Weigher
4a KPLaw Legal Opinion Override 1-1-23
6a 01092023 Minutes
FY 24 BOS Expenses 1-9-23
FY 24 BOS Revenues 1-9-23