



BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

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

Also Present: James Hartnett, Town Administrator

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

Acknowledgments & Recognitions

1. Public Hearings

6:05pm - petition from National Grid requesting permission to install 1 SO Pole on Briggs Road beginning at a point approximately 25 feet south of the centerline of the intersection of Briggs Road. Install new Pole 8-1 to serve customers. National Grid #30584896 Dated September 6, 2022. Albert Galvin from National Grid spoke to this request, there were no abutters present.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to grant the Pole Request, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor, Ms. Boxler was absent.

2. Licenses/Permits

- a. Request from the Holy Ghost Club, 179 Sodom Road for a One Day All Alcohol Beverage License for a Scallop Dinner on Friday, October 14, 2022 from 5pm-10pm.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the One Day License, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor, Ms. Boxler was absent.

3. Appointments and Resignations

- a. Request from Marie Fontaine to be appointed to the Council on Aging Board. Mr. Brewer as Board of Selectmen Liaison recommends this appointment.
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to appoint Marie Fontaine to the Council on Aging Board, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor, Ms. Boxler was absent.
- b. Request from Chief Pelletier to re-appoint Michael Chicca as Full Time Officer.
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to re-appoint Michael Chicca as Full Time Officer, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, the Board voted 4-0 in favor, Ms. Boxler was absent.
- c. Request from Sue Brayton, Treasurer/Collector to appoint Maria (Stella) Farias as Payroll Benefits/Tax Title Specialist, effective October 13, 2022.
Ms. Brayton addressed the Board highly recommending Stella to the position.
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to appoint Stella Farias as Payroll Benefits/Tax Title Specialist, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor. Ms. Boxler was absent.

- d. Request from Matthew Armendo, Board of Health Director to appoint Ryan Furtado as Transfer Station Attendant, effective November 3, 2022.
Tabled to the next meeting.
- e. Request from Chris Gonsalves, Highway Surveyor to appoint Gary Ferry as Mechanic Operator, effective October 13, 2022.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to appoint Gary Ferry as Mechanic Operator, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor. Ms. Boxler was absent.
- f. Request from Bernadette Oliver, Town Clerk to post the Assistant Town Clerk Position. Ms. Oliver addressed the Board in regards to this position, and asked if the position could be posted in house and advertised simultaneously.
MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to post the position simultaneously, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, the Board voted 5-0 in favor.

4. **Discussion**

- a. 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting Schedule
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the 2023 Meeting Schedule, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.
- b. Request from Irene Buck, Cable Advisory Board to discuss Westport's Cable License.
Mr. Daylor and Mr. Kochman addressed the Board, advising the board of the several page agenda in regards to the contract with Charter which expires in 2023. Cable TV has been the people's access to government especially with Covid. The Cable Advisory Board recommends renewing the contract.
There are things we know we can ask for, and certain things are not negotiable. Looking to secure funding to continue programs in town, advancing equipment and capital improvements in the coming years. It is important to have an attorney familiar with Cable TV law. The Cable Advisory Board recommends retaining the Atty at this time to begin the negotiation process. Looking for slight increase in the rate from 3.5% to 4%, and increase capital from 100k for 2 bytes to 150k for 3 bytes.
Mr. Ouellette noted the committee did a lot of work, seems reasonable with upgrades, from here they will go to legal.
Ms. Shufelt suggested to retain KP Law at this time. Need a representative to work with the Advisory Board and report back to the Board of Selectmen, as an alternate if Mr. Ouellette can't make it, Mr. Brewer volunteered.
Mr. Brewer asked if Charter was the only company, did the Board contact other carriers? Mr. Ouellette noted they have reached out to them in the past and there has been no interest. Mr. Valcourt noted the disadvantage of someone else coming in is that they would have to buy Charter infrastructure. Ms. Shufelt noted that this is just Cable TV, it does not include the internet.
MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to begin the renewal process, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.
- c. FY24 Budget Discussion
Worksheets will be distributed to departments within the next week to meet the draft municipal budget calendar. Meetings with representatives from each department will take place in November with recommendations to the Select Board by the middle of December.

Revenues

1. The budgeted revenues from local receipts for FY23 are at about 85% of FY22 actual receipts. This is an improvement over previous years when estimated receipts were closer to 95% of actual receipts. Differences include an increase in excise tax that accounts for approximately 50% of local receipts, and decreases in licenses/permits and ambulance revenue. (see attached)
2. The property tax levy (not counting debt exclusions) is expected to increase approximately \$1,186,200 or close to 4%.
3. Budgeting for local receipts should increase \$300,000 to \$400,000 over FY23 estimates.
4. Brookwood Solar came on line in July of 2022 and Coastal Healing should be operating prior to the next fiscal year.

Expenditures

In order to balance the budget last year, departments absorbed cuts and reductions in expenditures, this will make the FY24 Budget even more challenging.

1. The Town/School used \$389,260 in one time funds to balance the budget in FY23, additional one time funds were also used by the School Department to offset negotiated raises.
2. The Town has not settled with the Police Union, they have been without a contract dating back to July 1, 2021. Town Hall employees have also reorganized under the Teamsters union and their contract is currently being renegotiated.
3. Health insurance premiums continue to increase along with property and liability insurance.
4. Cherry Sheet Assessments for Charter Schools and School Choice went up another \$180,000 between FY22 & FY23, it is anticipated that there will be a similar increase going into FY24.

Policy Recommendations

1. Department budgets should be prepared assuming level service with contract approved salary increases. A salary increase of 2% should be used for employees without an approved contract.
2. New revenues shall be shared with the School Department 54% School and 46% Town after excluding changes in benefit costs, regional schools, liability insurance, and debt service. Additional funding approved at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting for the schools and Town should also be considered when determining the revenue disbursement.

5. Action Items

- a. Request from Bernadette Oliver, Town Clerk for an increase in Election Stipend.
Ms. Oliver addressed the board noting that the Election stipends have been the same since 1978, she is asking for an increase as regulations have changed over the years, bringing the 3 Step Voting Process to a 12 Step Process, she is asking for \$300 for Town Elections and

\$600 for State Elections, retroactive to the September 6, 2022 Primary Election. She also stated that there is money in the budget to cover this year.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the increase in the Election Stipend retroactive to the September 6th Primary Election, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- b. Request from Bernadette Oliver, Town Clerk to approve the November 8, 2022 Election Warrant.

Ms. Oliver addressed the Board stating that the Ballots have not been received yet, they should be received by the end of the week. Early Voting will take place Saturday, October 22nd and Saturday, October 29th from 8am – 2pm, Monday – Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm, October 24th – 28th.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the November 8, 2022 Election Warrant, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- c. Chapter 61A Release, 278 Drift Road, Map 52, Lot 20A, Parcels A&B, as shown in ANR Plan Book 184, Page 12.

Mr. Hartnett noted that the AG/Open Space Committee requested that this property not be released. They have been requested to attend the meeting. The Town owns the property between the Westport River and this property (gravel pit) and if the Town purchased this property it would increase the value of the Town's waterfront property. However, at this time the Town does not have a funding source to purchase this property, unless the AG/Open Space committee has identified a funding source, I would Recommend releasing the Property from Chapter 61A.

Mr. Valcourt addressed the Board that this land has been previously discussed as being prime for cemetery space and asked that the Board table until the next meeting, the board agreed to postpone.

- d. Chapter 61A Release, Division Road, Map 48-12-0, described as Parcel 1 on Deed recorded in Book 10479 Page 252.

Mr. Ouellette inquired if this land abuts any Town Property, Mr. Hartnett answered no.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to release the property from Chapter 61A, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- e. Request from Jeff Bull, Landing Commission to approve and sign the contract with GZA Geoenviromental, Inc. out of Providence, RI, for the Hix Bridge Landing Design.

Mr. Hartnett noted the contract is for \$111,517 of which \$76,000 will be funded by the Seaport Economic Development Grant and the balance of \$35,517 will be funded by the 50k ARPA earmark from Rep Schmid, he recommends approval

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the Contract with Geoenvirmental, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- f. Request from Chris Leonard, Marines Services Director to open the Bay Scallop Season on October 15, 2022.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to open the Bay Scallop Season on October 15, 2022, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- g. Request to fund the following requests with local or Bristol County American Recovery Plan Act funds:

Fire Department –	(2) Four wheel drive vehicles	\$112,000
	(1) Pickup truck with plow	\$ 70,000
School Department	(2) Multi-use passenger vans	\$130,000

Planning Board	Route 6 Zoning Study/Amendments	\$ 35,000
		Total \$347,000

Mr. Hartnett noted these requests would go to Bristol County first, he feels the Fire Equipment will be covered he's not so sure about the vans, the Rote 6 Zoning has a chance. Mr. Brewer mentioned there is no clear guidance on this, and the town could be on the hook for expenditures if these requests are not excepted by Bristol County. These funds are supposed to be linked to Covid, Ms. Shufelt added and/or infrastructure. He feels the school vans will not be covered.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to submit the above mentioned request to Bristol County, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- h. Request from Matthew Armendo, Board of Health Director to review and approve the plan to install restrooms at the transfer station.

Mr. Hartnett and Mr. Armendo have looked into different options to provide restrooms at the transfer station. The Board of Health is recommending portable restrooms for the remainder of this year and next year. At the cost of \$6500, and to purchase a portable hot water sink at the cost of \$1500.

Ms. Ryden addressed the board to request ARPA Funds to make these purchases, the funds were previously allocated for a Public Health Nurse and to purchase a trailer.

Mr. Hartnett recommended to use ARPA Funds this year, then to budget for next year.

Mr. Brewer recommended bringing these expenses to the CIPC.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to improve the Portable Restrooms installation, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board vote 5-0 in favor.

- i. Request from the Cemetery Department to use up to \$6,500 of Perpetual Care Funds to provide portable restrooms at the cemetery.

Mr. Hartnett addressed the board stating that this situation is similar to the transfer station, to get them through the remainder of the year, while other options are being reviewed. Mr. Hartnett will be meeting with representatives from Diman to see if they may be interested in doing some of the long term work.

Ms. Boxler questioned if the employees can go to the Fire Station or the Police Station, Mr. Hartnett answered the facility has to be within 90ft of the work place.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the use of Perpetual Care Funds up to \$6,500 for the portable restrooms, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- j. Request from Chris Gonsalves, Highway Surveyor to sign the Contract with Rochester Bituminous for the 2022/2023 Town Roadway Paving Improvements.

Mr. Hartnett noted the contract is for \$1,054,700 with \$562,700 from Chapter 90, \$457,266 from Winter Recovery Assistance Program and \$50,000 Article for Point Work.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the Contract for Rochester Bituminous, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- k. Request from Chris Leonard, Marine Services to use \$4,944 from the town's grant matching funds account to match the Seaport Economic Council's Grant for new shore power pedestals at the Town Dock.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to use \$4,944 from the town's grant matching funds for the shore power pedestals at the Town Dock, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

- l. Request from Maury May, Vice Chair Economic Development Task Force to hold Winter Markets at the Annex Gym on November 12 & 19, and December 10 & 17, 2022, to

authorize the banner over Main Road and to request the Recreation Commission waive its \$150 fee for use of the Annex Gym, or at least lower it to \$50.00 a day.

Ms. Stewart addressed the Board, stating that although she is in support of the Farmers Market, it is her job to defend the revenue stream of the recreation department and waving or lowering the fee would hurt the recreation department, they do waive the \$100 deposit for the Farmer's Market. Mr. Ouellette questioned what other town entities pay to use the space, Ms. Stewart answered that the fee is waived for the Town Clerk and the Board of Health when they use the space. After lengthy discussion, it was suggested by Mr. Valcourt and Ms. Shufelt that the fee not be waived. Ms. Boxler stated that maybe a compromise could be met, maybe down the middle.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to keep the fee as is, with no reduction and to approve the Banner, seconded by Ms. Shufelt. The Board voted 4-1 in favor, Mr. Ouellette voted against the motion.

6. Town Administrator Report
Green Communities Grant

A grant application was prepared for filing with Green Communities for funding to replace the Town Hall steam heat system and the window air conditioners. The grant would provide funding to install air-to-air heat pump systems. The system will consist of wall-mounted units in the basement, floor-mounted units on the first floor and ceiling mounted air handling units for the second floor. The request is for \$500,000 and the proposed match will be approximately \$125,000. Different funding sources for the match are being considered including CPA funding, capital improvement funds and funds from the Towns energy rebate account. This work will also include much needed electrical upgrades in the building. Once installed there will be an increase in the cost of energy needed to heat and cool the building due to the increase in electric use but maintenance costs should decrease.

Energy Aggregation

The Town of Westport is under contract with electricity supplier Constellation, offering electricity to residents and businesses at a fixed rate that will not change through December 2023. A vast majority of Westport households participate in the program and others can still enroll. There is a significant benefit to joining the program, as of November 1, 2022, the default residential Basic Service supply rate will be \$0.33891/kWh, which is significantly higher than the standard Westport supply rate of \$0.10470/kWh. Residents and Businesses can enroll or switch rate options at any time online at MassCEA.com/Westport or by calling (883) 461-0813.

7. Approve Minutes

a. September 26, 2022

MOTION by Ms. Boxler to approve the September 26, 2022 minutes, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.

8. Report on Bill Warrant

Ms. Boxler noted there was a set of voided checks due to a printer error, other than that it was in order and signed.

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

Ms. Boxler – working toward hiring a Executive for the Housing Authority

Mr. Valcourt – LTBC meeting on Tuesday to review reports, discuss and come to conclusions

Mr. Ouellette – Infrastructure, still working on the ins and outs, looking into project manager, mission statement.

Mr. Brewer – COA Meeting, no concerns, looking at long range planning, there is a private Override Committee, the general public is not aware of the private citizens group. The Selectmen should invite the group in to discuss and update the Board.

Mr. Brewer also brought up Jim Hartnett's performance review and Town Administrator Goals.

Ms. Shufelt – Internet Advisory Committee is close to making final report, still working on take rate, distribution costs, predicting how many subscribers. Climate resiliency hasn't met, but they are working on grant funding. The School Building committee no longer meeting weekly.

10. Comments and Statements

11. Boards/Committees/Commissions Vacancy List

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

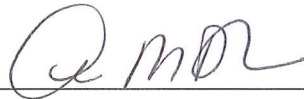
Adjournment

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to adjourn at 8:10p.m., seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor.



Paula M. Brown
Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____



Ann Boxler, Clerk
Select Board Member

- 1 285 Briggs Rd Pole Request
- 1 Appgeo Pole Location
- 1 WPD 285 Briggs Pole Request Rec
- 2a Holy Ghost Club
- 3a COA – Fontaine
- 3b WPD - Chicca Appointment
- 3c Sue Brayton Appointment Request
- 3e Highway Department Appointment Request
- 3f 5a 5b Town Clerk Requests
- 4a 2023 Meetings
- 4b Cable Advisory
- 4c1 10112022 Budget Memo BOS
- 4c2 FY22 Local Receipts 6-30-22
- 5c 61A Marcotte

5c 278 Drift Rd Chapter 61A Plan
5d 61A Gay
5d Division Road Chapter 61A Plan
5e 23-137 Contract 2022
5e 23-137 F Proposal - Approach to Services and Project Delivery - revised 9-29-22
5f Harbor Master - Scallop Season
5g ARPA Fire Vehicles 7-27-22
5g ARPA School Vans 4-6-22
5g ARPA Zoning Funds Request 9-28-22
5g Zoning Funds Request 9-28-22
5h BOH Restroom
5j Highway Dept. Appointment
5k Marine Services - Seaport Grant Matching Request
5l Economic Development - Winter Market
7a 09262022 Minutes
BOH Ryan Furtado
TA 1 Westport Green Comm Comp Grant application Oct 22 rev 1
5g ARPA School Vans 4-6-22