



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Veronica Kell, *Chairman*
Chaz Sexton-Diranian, *Vice Chairman*
Theresa A. Morse, *Clerk*

R. Eric Slagle, Town Administrator

RECEIVED
MAR 07 2023

TOWN OF TOWNSEND
TOWN CLERK

I. PRELIMINARIES:

- 1.1 Call the meeting to order and roll call.
- 1.2 Pledge of Allegiance
- 1.3 Announce the meeting is being tape recorded.
- 1.4 Chairman's Additions or Deletions.

1.5 Public Comment

- 1.6 Review/Approve the meeting minutes for September 20, 2022, Jan 10, 2023, Jan 17, 2023.

Topic: Board of Selectmen

Time: February 7, 2023 18:00 Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Board of Selectmen meeting called to order at 6:08 p.m. with Chaz Sexton-Diranian, Veronica Kell and Theresa Morse present in person.

Pledge of Allegiance recited.

Veronica Kell announced that meeting is being recorded, is live on channel 9 and will be on the Town's YouTube channel afterwards.

Addition: 3.0 clerical addition for a prior Meeting Hall appointment; 3.1 and 3.3 exact dates for the appointments.

Deletions: 2.1. Meeting with State Representative and State Senator moved to 2/21/23.

None

Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to approve meeting minutes for September 20, 2022. Motion was passed with all in favor. Veronica Kell mentioned to the Town Administrator that the Cable Advisory Committee contract renewal will be up in 2025 for Comcast Contract as a follow up.

Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to approve meeting minutes for January 10, 2023 with checking the spelling on Tighe & Bonds spelling of last name. Motion was passed with all in favor. Veronica Kell advised the spelling for Louis Soracco, Tighe & Bond Engineer should be checked.

Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to approve meeting minutes for January 17, 2023. Motion was passed with all in favor. Veronica Kell noted that 3.4 where Eric Slagle is mentioned should be moved to 4.1.

- ### II. APPOINTMENTS AND HEARINGS: 2.1
- (6:10) Meeting with State Representative State Senator

Rescheduled to 2/21/23.

2.2 (6:45) Meeting
with Townsend
School Committee
Representatives

Randee Rusch and Jessica Funaiole were present in person. The Board of Selectmen asked to have regular visits and updates from the School Committee Representatives as well as expressed the hope for the Schools to increase working better with the Townsend Recreation Department going forward in areas of Public Relation and Education Planning.

Randee Rusch stated that the issue is that this is not a one Town district and the money spent is pooled money. Short talk about a possible connection that benefits the communities for TCAM to work with the Highschool as in the past. Pepperell Media has sponsored in the past in Nissitit as well.

The Board made clear that budget talks need to be unified amongst the Schools and the Town as a mutual effort, especially in terms of an override. A Schools PR message regarding the override has not been discussed yet and a formal discussion has not been made on how an override will be promoted on the School side of things, however State funding is not enough. The message of the Schools are that they are trying to provide the students with the best education and chance in life. Pandemic had added extra stress socially and regarding schoolwork catch up and get the recovery required extra services. The Superintendent can cut and has indicated to cut staff and services for the students if the budget can't be passed. Areas that don't affect children gets checked first, administration etc. It was projected that enrollment is on a decline with about 21 more students, but additional students may come back from homeschooling. As classrooms get up to 28 students Paraprofessionals get added to the classroom and at 30 the classroom gets split up. District choice policy is that students can choose but won't receive transportation for that, the parent must provide their own. The School Committee has the authority to send the children to Pepperell and Ashby but has not used this yet, as it is a drastic measure. On March 6, 2023 voting on budget is planned and will potentially be higher, than what it will be in the Town Meeting, however the Board of Selectmen has to go by numbers on March 6, 2023. The process of cutting and adjusting goes through May. Randee Rush will start talks with the Schools to promote the override needed for funding and for the Superintendent to have a presentation for the community. The Chair made clear that the Town also needs a part of a budget to function. If numbers come in too high the Towns may be forced to cut Streetlights or Town government. R. Eric Slagle will also have talks with Superintendent Morgan to work on override promotion. A district wide override would probably be the case. In case of the override not passing, all parties will need to go back to take another look at the budget and come back with another override suggestion. The Representatives agreed to have a better working relationship with the Town going forward and express this to the rest of the School Committee.

III. APPOINTMENT OF
OFFICIAL/PERSONNEL:
3.0. Clarification
Cheryl Aldrich
Appointment

Clarification of Cheryl Aldrich appointment from 01/17/2023 meeting, as the Senior Center Appointee to the Meeting Hall Gallery Committee through June of 2024. Per email from Kathy Spofford to Veronica Kell, there are three openings, one for a term to expire in 2024 and two to expire in 2025. There are 5 positions for this Committee, one Representative from Library, one from

	<p>Senior Center and 3 at large appointments. Now there is one opening on the Meeting Hall Committee. Posting for the Library appointment.</p> <p>Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Theresa Morse to amend the appointment for Cheryl Aldrich from the last Board of Selectmen meeting of 01/17/2023 to entail that Cheryl Aldrich will be part of the Meeting Hall Gallery Committee as a Senior Center Appointee effective until June 2024. Motion was made with all in favor.</p>
3.1 Appoint Rachel King to Meeting Hall Gallery Committee for a 2-year term to expire June 2025.	<p>Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to appoint Rachel King to the Meeting Hall Gallery Committee as the at large position for a 2-year term to expire June 30, 2025. Motion was passed with all in favor.</p>
3.2 Appoint 3 members to continue to serve on Patriot RECC	<p>Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to appoint 3 members to continue to serve on Patriot RECC – Police Chief, Fire Chief, and BOS appointee (Michael Grimley) through Dec 31, 2023. Motion was passed with all in favor.</p>
3.3 Appoint Ann Valacer to the American Flag Committee	<p>Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to appoint Ann Valacer to the American Flag Committee for a term to expire on June 30, 2026. Motion was passed with all in favor. Veronica Kell noted this was a 5-member Committee and this was a replacement for a resignation received in May 2022.</p>
3.4 Appoint Natalie Call as (VSO)	<p>Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to appoint Natalie Call as Veteran Services Officer (VSO) effective February 7, 2023. Motion was passed with all in favor.</p>
IV. MEETING BUSINESS:	
4.1 Further discussion of 182 Warren Rd property.	<p>Veronica Kell screenshared MAP31 Lot 36-0 its 11.94 acres and Mass GIS two natural heritage and endangered species overlays on, the entire lot is priority habitat. 182 Warren Road was taken by Tax Title, is currently owned by the Town and recommended by Town Properties to be sold. as to clarification where the area would be to cut off a buildable lot of about 3 acres, it was clarified it is a space where there is an existing building. Further Discussion as to how Habitat for Humanity worked and would be considered as an always affordable unit for the Town with a deed restriction. Possibilities of a grant paying for a survey will get investigated. Discussion as to 4 possible Motions entertained as an idea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion to survey the property for cut off about 3 acres. • Motion to explore with Habitat for Humanity for rehab or tear down and rebuilding on the existing footprint. • Motion to talk to Fish and Wildlife to see if they would be interested in purchasing the back part of the property that abuts the Wildlife Management area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion if they are interested to take any funds from the sale of that property to be directed in the Affordable Housing Trust for future affordable housing. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to explore for property 182 Warren Road with Habitat for Humanity and Fish & Wildlife for interest in the property. Motion was passed with all in favor. <p>Public comment made by Mike Velasco on zoom , he stated lives next door to the property and gave some background to the property. He explained there were collapsed buildings, a squatter situation in the past, oil tank, well and tires on the property and wanted to make clear that a tear down will not be inexpensive. The Board appreciated the feedback and stated they are aware of that situation.</p>
4.2 Discuss Highland St parcel transfer 27-56-0 to Cemetery and Parks Dept.	<p>Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to transfer Parcel 27-56-0 from Town Properties to the Cemetery and Parks Department. Motion was passed with all in favor.</p> <p>Roger Rapoza Cemetery & Parks Superintendent spoke remotely. As cremations are becoming more and more needed and used, with this Parcel people can spread ashes by a rock or a tree without much interruption. Access will be between Bradley Household and Lorden Oil with 6-8 useable acres, one road and everything else walking paths.</p>
4.3 Vote to join MART for the purpose of a bus from Townsend to the Fitchburg Intermodal Center and motion for the BOS Chair to send a letter to MART with the Board's request to join.	<p>MART is the Montachusett Area Regional Transit. Townsend used Lowell Regional Transit, but Townsend is adjacent to the Fitchburg Line. Townsend can join both. A vote from the Board of Selectmen and a letter to MRTA will be needed to join them. If the Town would decide they would still be member with no fee but no service neither. If the Town joined now, bus shelters could be paid for with a grant which are lined up through MART already. Transportation Task Force formed a Transportation Sub Committee. Park and Ride with bike racks, runs twice a day to the Fitchburg line, two runs of busses back and forth, charge by the hour for the driver with a possible lot behind Town Hall with a bus shelter in it on Jeffs Street for pick up and drop off and additional parking at Jeffs Street lot and temporarily behind Town Hall until permanent funds will be available were ideas discussed. Approximate costs would be around \$40,000 for the year for the 4 runs. MART authorized the Town to charge riders. Short discussion as to the Town offering it for free for the direct transit link from Town Center to Fitchburg Center to be able to connect to the Commuter rail, other bus lines or go to the Fitchburg State. Survey will be put out for the Public.</p> <p>Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to join MART for the purpose of having a bus line from Townsend into Fitchburg and additionally for the Board Chair to send a letter to MART with the Board's request to join. Motion was passed with all in favor.</p>
4.4 Consider request to form a town committee to raise	<p>Karen Clement was present in person and asked the Board to establish a Town Committee with 3 members with staggered dates 1-year, 2-year, 3-year with renewal. Karen Clement gave some background to the playground, which is over</p>

funds for
maintenance of Kids
Country Playground

20 years old, funding available does not cover everything. The playground is currently structurally sound but \$100,000 needed to make the playground handicap accessible. The goal would be to raise about \$20,000 a year as additional funding. Town Administrator R. Eric Slagle will find out if other steps need to be taken besides the vote.

Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Theresa Morse to establish a Kids Country Playground Committee, as a 3 member Committee with staggered dates of 1,2,3 year term and if necessary, proceed with any other requirements to formalize that establishment. Motion was passed with all in favor.

Laura Shifrin spoke remotely as to history of the playground and stated that the TBA provided structures in the past.

4.5 Mandatory
Referral from ZBA for
5 Ryan Rd.

The Board of Selectmen commented as follows: The Board supports affordable accessory apartments in Townsend and defer to the expertise of the ZBA.

4.6 Discuss funding
affordable housing in
Townsend with
placement of
Community
Preservation Act
(CPA) vote on ATM
warrant.

Discussion as to funding affordable housing in Townsend with placement of Community Preservation Act (CPA) vote on ATM warrant. With every registry transaction a percentage of the CPA fund goes to the State. The funds would get disbursed for all the Towns that are signed up for the CPA. CPA of the Town will get matched once a year with State funds. The Community preservation act (CPA) has not been passed in Townsend thus far. A joint meeting with the Housing Authority is planned for March 14, 2023. The Boards will make recommendations and the Board of Selectmen will put it on the warrant. The vote from the Town Meeting warrant would be on the statewide ballot in November.

V. WORK SESSION:
5.0 ARPA Projects

Short Discussion as to ARPA Projects and overall ARPA funding.
The Board reviewed documents on the SharePoint and documents handed out in meeting. ARPA excel reviewed line by line.

- FEMA funding is dropping off as the Town is moving out of the pandemic situation.
- The ARPA money for the bridge will not get spent this fiscal year.
- Affordable Housing Trust money has been moved to Unibank.
- Mass Trails Grant submission was made. ARPA funds were part of the match for that.
- Stormwater Management to clean all the storm drains.
- Election expenses for clickers for the elections didn't come in yet.
- TEO is the only outside entity.
- Disinfectant purchase should now go under ARPA 15 if it is for COVID cleaning. ARPA 19 did not fund cleaners but only salary was funded. ARPA 15 Other COVID related expenses will end when it runs out the end of the year and Facilities will be informed.
- Public Safety has not tapped into ARPA 18.

5.1 Town
Administrator
Updates and Reports.

- ARPA 20 Conservation Agent Wages were for the hour increase
- ARPA 21 COA Assistant Director Wages numbers didn't move yet although approved, R. Eric Slagle will check with COA Director Karin Moore.
- Online Permitting Status: Online permitting for the Building department printer is on a lease. Payments can now be taken online. Kiosks are in planning. Flashing on the website, R. Eric Slagle will check with Eric Chartrand. ARPA will be revisited in the first Board of Selectmen meeting in July. Community Services Coordinator will bring to the Board of Selectmen in July the goals for the next year.

TEMA reorganization: Shirley Coit Director of TEMA resigned a few weeks ago. R. Eric Slagle had a meeting with Bryan Kennedy Deputy Director of TEMA and Fire Chief Gary Shepherd to talk about restructuring the TEMA oversight. The TEMA director would report directly to the Fire Chief as an entity under the Fire Department, like in other municipalities. TEMA has a separate budget currently and will be rolled in as a separate line under the Fire Department. If there is an emergency in Town, the Fire Department will get first notice. R. Eric Slagle authorized TEMA equipment usage to the Fire Department over the last months to address emergencies. R. Eric Slagle will look details and procedure for a possible Bylaw change and rename the position with a job description change under the Fire Department for an appointment by the Board of Selectmen. The Board okayed to proceed to address a Bylaw change and job description change.

RFP for Shared Streets: For bike lanes in Timberlee Park, all documentation was received.

RFP for Buildings: R. Eric Slagle started the RFP for the buildings mentioned below available for later leasing from the Town. Title 5 and Septic must be considered. Harbor Fire Station has a lack of parking. ADA compliant with elevator or ramp. The Board agreed with suggestions of the Town Administrator to narrow it down as follows:

Library: Retail/Commercial/Office shell divided in 3 spaces

Harbor Fire Station: Museum/Display Space

Central Fire Station: - Build out for a small café with display space along the walls.

R. Eric Slagle is to investigate and come back with recommendation to the Board on the 21st of February.

DLTA grants were submitted to MRPC on 02/07/2023.

Green Communities Grant reporting was finished.

Facilities to coordinate with Robert Beauchamp about the Capital requests.

5.2 Reports from
Board liaisons.
5.2.1 General Government
5.2.2 Elected Boards
5.2.3 Public Safety

Theresa Morse:

- Green Communities program, a company will look at the Boiler systems, Town Hall, Library.
- Capital Planning: 2/8/2023 meeting at 5PM. Budgets of Department heads are brought forward. Facilities, Water and Highway will be spoken to and Fire and Police the next meeting after. The Capital Planning may put information on the Clear Gov portal in the future.

5.3 Announcements,
Communications,
etc.

5.4 Next meeting -
February 21, 2023, 6
pm.

5.5 Review and sign
payroll and bills payable
warrants out of session.
VI: EXECUTIVE
SESSION:
none

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

- Finance Committee: Kathy Spofford presented her budget for the Town Clerk.

Chaz Sexton-Diranian:

- Water Department: Water Service Deluxe Corp flushing of the system discolored the water for the next few days through magnesium and iron from the pipes. Water Department is open for questions.
- Recreation Department: Big thanks to the Recreation Department
- R. Eric Slagle shared the news as to the Recreation Department looking for funding to provide free childcare for the Annual Town Meeting in May.

Veronica Kell:

- Townsend Affordable Housing Trust: Bylaw for the Housing Trust needs to be put in place. Voting on amendments of the Trust document itself in two places, which needs to be approved by the Trust and Board of Selectmen. All resignations and appointments to the Trust must be filed with the registry as well.
- Nothing on Public Safety. Consolidated Fire Contract soon.
- Bay State Forestry cutting at Townsend Rod & Gun.
- Unutil Controlled Outages Webinar.
- UPWP Grant is coming up on February 28, 2023 possible intersection study at Proctor Road, draft at next meeting on 02/21/23. Veronica Kell will contact Brad Harris on that.
- The Board directed R. Eric Slagle to approach Sterilite Corporation and MASS DOT for permitting to see if a crosswalk with rapidly flashing lights will be installed.
- Community One Stop for Growth: Expression of Interest due March 17, 2023: all crosswalks ADA compliant, Brownfields, Playground equipment were ideas expressed.

Next meeting February 21, 2023, 6 p.m.

Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Veronica Kell to review and sign payroll and bills payable warrants out of session. Motion was passed with all in favor.

Motion was made by Theresa Morse and seconded by Chaz Sexton-Diranian to adjourn at 9:13 p.m. Motion was passed with all in favor.

Recording of meeting found

at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wixhimRZPQ&list=PLQpCwUSpXeCa-inxdzK0jQMgEx3wCFBbE&index=1&t=2729s>

Minutes submitted by Sabrina Moore on 02/21/2023.

