

**Board of Selectmen Agenda
Municipal Center Resource Room
Tuesday, March 7, 2023**

7:00 PM

- Call to Order
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Chairman Announcements
 - Citizen's Forum
-
1. Public Hearing – Pole Petition area of 11 Manchaug Street – Possible Votes
 2. ARPA Discussion – Possible Votes
 - Vote on School Security (from 1/17/22 Executive Session)
 - Joint Meeting with Water Commissioners Regarding W/S Projects – Possible Votes
 3. Discussion with Open Space Committee & BOS Vote on Chapter 61B / Walnut Street
 4. RFQ Designer Services for Public Buildings / BFCC Recommendations – Possible Votes
 5. Review Audit Services RFP Draft – Possible Votes
 6. Discussion on Compensation Reform – Possible Votes
 7. Review Warrant Articles – Possible Votes
 8. Meeting Minutes – Possible Votes
 9. Town Administrator's Report
 10. Open Session for Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting
 11. Executive Session
 - a. Contract Negotiations
 12. Adjournment

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Note: Times are estimates unless denoted as a Hearing.

The Town of Douglas is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023
MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: Chair Kevin Morse, Vice Chair Mike Fitzpatrick, Tim Bonin, Hal Davis, Matthew Wojcik Town Administrator, Lisa Freeman Executive Assistant, and Matt Benoit Community Development Director (remote)

Chair Kevin Morse called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

(0:08 TS) Pledge of Allegiance

(0:28 TS) Chairman Announcements: NONE

(0:31 TS) Citizen's Forum: NONE

1. (0:38 TS) Public Hearing – Pole Petition area of 11 Manchaug Street – Possible Votes
(0:50 TS) Motion to open the public hearing made by Tim Bonin, seconded by Mike Fitzpatrick. All members in favor.
The pole petition is to install one JO pole on Manchaug Street installing new pole 14-50 approximately 71 feet south of existing pole 15 and in line with poles 14 and 15. There are no issues with the Tree Warden/Highway Superintendent or Police Department. Conservation questioned the distance from the wetlands and with the GIS map the distance looks to be approximately 25 feet. Mike Frasier from National Grid stated that it was requested by the town to remove a tree guy at 11 Manchaug Street, and while he was out at the site he noticed that their service wire trespassed over the neighbors at 13 Manchaug Street and this will correct that. The conservation concern was forwarded to Steve Zisk and he had not responded prior to the meeting.
(4:00 TS) Motion to close the public hearing made by Hal Davis, seconded by Tim Bonin. All members in favor.
(4:10 TS) Motion to approve the pole petition presented made by Hal Davis, seconded by Tim Bonin. All members in favor.
2. (4:40 TS) ARPA Discussion – Possible Votes
 - (5:40 TS) Vote on School Security (from 1/17/22 Executive Session)
The request is for \$225k of ARPA funds and nothing has changed from the discussion in the executive session.
(6:48 TS) Motion to encumber \$225k from the ARPA funds for the schools security system made by Mike Fitzpatrick, seconded by Hal Davis. All members in favor.
 - Joint Meeting with Water Commissioners Regarding W/S Projects – Possible Votes
The board is holding this discussion until the Water/Sewer Department is present to discuss this matter.
3. (7:20 TS) Discussion with Open Space Committee & BOS Vote on Chapter 61B / Walnut Street
Mike Fitzpatrick recused himself.
The Open Space Committee is present along with Matt Benoit / Community Development Director, to discuss the reason why the committee feels that the town should purchase the property on Walnut Street. For the purposes of open meeting law two of the committee members are presenting, Becky Gallagher – President of Bay State Trail Riders stated they see

open space as an investment for the town. The committee feels that it would be nice to open this space up to be used by residents that want to walk their dogs safely, along with other uses. There is a driveway going across another piece of property that is in Chapter 61 now. The committee is looking to take lot 1 out of Chapter 61 and the plan the committee was looking at shows them wanting to put an easement on lot 2 to get to lot 1. Since they are not asking to pull out lot 2 from Chapter 61 the committee was questioning the legality of that easement. Ms. Gallagher also mentioned that there is a possibility of making a parking lot on that piece of property for a trailhead. The committee took a survey of residents asking how important it is to have trails available within walking distance from their homes, and the response from residents was extremely important. Mr. Davis asked if anyone knew whether the seller was indifferent to the land going to the town or to a developer. Mr. Benoit stated that he does not know the answer to that, but he stated that this property has been listed live for 123 days and he just reached out to the realtor to see there has been any offers, but the listing does state that the land still has to be taken out of 61B once the purchase and sale is executed. TA Wojcik asked Mr. Benoit what the impact will be on the ANR approval if this lot were to be purchased by the town. Mr. Benoit stated that it wouldn't impact the ANR. TA Wojcik asked if this lot were owned by the town what impact it would have on the developability of the other lots. Mr. Benoit responded that it wouldn't have an impact on the other lots. The Board asked how the committee was thinking about funding this request, and they stated that they could try and get some grants in the future but for right now the town would be on the hook for the purchase of this property. The Board then stated that this would have to go to town meeting and be voted on. Lisa Freeman did contact the owner to let them know that the town is having another discussion about the purchase of the land. The Board discussed this to be a viable option at this point with having time to put in on the warrant for town meeting, and being able to get a funding source within the time frame. Mr. Benoit stated that he found out that the listing is still active so anyone can still submit offers at this time. One of the open space members stated that she did call the realtor and was told there is a deposit currently on the property. The deadline for the town to make a decision on this is April 12th, the committee asked if they could call up Metacomet Land Trust to talk about the possibility of them for funding help. Mr. Davis suggested he would like to put this off to the next meeting and give the open space committee time to see if they can come up with a funding source. Lisa Moczynski president of the Metacomet Land Trust stated that she would be happy to go to the board to see if there are any resources that they could share if the town wanted to move forward with this purchase. The board asked TA Wojcik if this could go on the warrant for town meeting and he responded that yes they could put a place holder for it. TA Wojcik asked the committee members hypothetically if the town had a limited amount of funding resources available, is this property a priority or is there another parcel they would like to see purchased over this one. The committee stated that currently there is no other land for sale that they are aware of, but they stated it is on their agenda to come up with a priority list. TA Wojcik asked if the existing town property was put together with this piece and how much could go to conservation from Thomas Circle if the existing plan were built. Mr. Benoit stated that combining the Thomas Circle open space and the current town-owned property along with the property being discussed would be a total of about 63 acres altogether. The board decided to put this off till the next meeting so the committee can gather the information and the board will contact town counsel as well. No vote taken.

- (41:20 TS) Joint Meeting with the Water Commissioners Regarding W/S Projects – Possible Votes

(42:40 TS) Motion to reconvene the Water/Sewer Department meeting made by Keith Bloniasz, seconded but Robert Josey, all members in favor.

Bob Sullivan listed the projects he had proposed, which included the Main Street water lines. This is the main artery for the town water system, and a lot of additional funding would have to be applied in order to make that project happen. Another project was running sewer lines up to the town common, but after some calculations it would be like a hundred year payback to install the pipes, or just running water to the highway barn estimated between 2 – 3 million. The third proposed project was upgrading the water main for Depot Street. Discussion at the last meeting was getting the commissioners to give their opinion on the projects. The original estimate for the Depot Street was a little over 2 million, but they have not gotten an engineering estimate yet. If the project comes in under 2 million, they could potentially use retained earnings for the amount over the ARPA funding. If it comes in over 2 million they would probably be looking at borrowing, which means it would have to go to town meeting. The consensus is to get Depot Street done because it is the project that would be financially viable for the town to do at this point.

(59:00 TS) Motion to encumber 1.6 million of the ARPA funds for the purpose of upgrading the water line on Depot Street made by Mike Fitzpatrick, seconded by Tim Bonin. All members in favor.

(59:35 TS) Motion to close the Water and Sewer meeting made by Keith Bloniasz, seconded by Colin Haire, all members in favor.

4. (1:00:30 TS) RFQ Designer Services for Public Buildings / BFCC Recommendations – Possible Votes

Shirley Moczynski / Chair of the Building and Facilities Construction Committee stated that the committee reviewed 5 proposals. The 3 finalists were Weston and Sampson, Context and RGB, with no particular rating between the 3 choices. TA Wojcik stated that they called their listed references today. He recommends that RGB be removed from further discussion due to a not so good reference feedback and previously known unreliability of the vendor. TA Wojcik received two good references for Context and they are well known for their work with fire stations, the town of Milton highly recommends Context. The town of Middleboro and Hopkinton highly recommends Weston and Sampson. The board discussed back and forth the 2 companies that are still in the running and the differences between the two and what would suit the town best. Mr. Morse stated that he is familiar with Weston and Sampson because they have done projects for Comcast and he believes they would be a good choice.

(1:23:15 TS) Motion to appoint Weston and Sampson for the design services made by Hal Davis, seconded by Tim Bonin, all members in favor.

5. (1:23:45 TS) Review Audit Services RFP Draft – Possible Votes

TA Wojcik suggests that the Audit Committee schedule a meeting next week to discuss and review a draft RFQ which TA Wojcik is nearly done with.

6. (1:26:05 TS) Discussion on Compensation Reform – Possible Votes

TA Wojcik stated to the board that they will have a finalized package for the warrant on compensation reform on March 21st. He wanted to go over where the budget stands for this project, and is happy to say that he can present the compensation reform as part of a balanced budget. Mr. Bonin asked if they could be provided with some figures before the 21st when they will be voting on it. TA Wojcik responded that after tomorrow he will be able to show numbers and figures to the board.

7. (1:33:00 TS) Review Warrant Articles – Possible Votes

Matt Benoit stated that the Flood Plain Bylaw was brought to their attention by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and these edits are being done by 14 other communities in the Quinebaug Water Shed. These edits essentially must happen for annual town meeting and if they do not the town risks losing its town wide flood insurance. These edits have been reviewed by town counsel and DCR on multiple occasions, including the latest feedback that the towns bylaw was in full compliance with what they were asking for.

(1:37:33 TS) Motion to refer the flood plain bylaw to the planning board made by Hal Davis, seconded by Tim Bonin, all members in favor.

The next article is for a road acceptance for Cobblestone Lane and Meeting House Lane, which was brought before the board for fall town meeting of 2022, and the board approved it to be on the spring town meeting warrant. The developer hired Attorney Henry Lane to represent him in this matter and provided the planning board with a letter to request these two small cul-de-sacs of the Stonegate subdivision accepted for town meeting. The town has had this reviewed by Jeff Walsh at Graves Engineering where a few items were identified which the developer did correct. The Highway Department, the Building Commissioner as well as Matt Benoit himself did a final site walk and felt the roads were ready for public acceptance.

The next article is from the fire department and they would like to request a warrant article to raise and appropriate \$60,000 out of the ambulance receipts for appropriation to fund a new cruiser for the fire chief. Ms. Lovett handed the board a report showing the funds for the ambulance receipts for appropriation to show the ins and outs of this account and what it was used for. TA Wojcik wanted to state for the record that the public needs to understand that ambulance receipts do not cover the full cost of running the ambulance service, but it is a significant offset. Ms. Lovett was suggesting that maybe there might be a more appropriate way to fund this request because she feels that the ambulance receipts should be used for ambulance purchases, and this is a fire vehicle request. TA Wojcik stated that if it doesn't get funded here then it will have to go back in the funding cycle for next year's requests because it doesn't make the cut for capital and it did not make it on the ARPA funding list, and there is no room in the budget for it this year. The Board, Finance Director and Town Administrator discussed this being in the operating budget versus a capital item and the pros and cons of that. The board seems to be in agreement that it should be in the operating budget. The board is going to have the Fire Chief come to their next meeting and present his case in response to this request.

The next item is an ambulance salary account transfer at special town meeting and Ms. Lovett will handle that as a budgetary transfer. Ms. Lovett will discuss it with the chief and assistant chief and will ask them if they have any funds in their other budget lines that it can be taken from first.

8. (1:22:20 TS) Meeting Minutes – Possible Votes

(2:24:20 TS) Motion to approve the executive session meeting minutes of December 20, 2022, and retain made by Mike Fitzpatrick, seconded by Tim Bonin, all members in favor.

(2:25:30 TS) Motion to approve the open session meeting minutes of January 3, 2023, made by Tim Bonin, seconded by Mike Fitzpatrick, all members in favor.

(2:26:50 TS) Motion to approve the executive session meeting minutes of January 3, 2023, retaining all made by Tim Bonin, seconded by Mike Fitzpatrick, all members in favor.

(2:27:22 TS) Motion to approve the open session meeting minutes of January 17, 2023, as amended made by Tim Bonin, seconded by Mike Fitzpatrick, all members in favor.

9. (2:28:40 TS) Town Administrator's Report

TA Wojcik stated he will be finalizing the budget, compensation reform proposal, and any other lingering loose ends with the capital budget. They received the preliminary budget figure from BVT late this afternoon which was a larger amount than what he had in his budget, but not so large as to derail the budget process. If there is any money left in the black at the end of the budget balancing process TA Wojcik will put that into Highway because he took quite a bit out of highway expenses (specifically Tree Warden and Snow and Ice) to get to this point. TA Wojcik received written notice this morning and needs to put the Selectboard and Finance Committee on notice that the town is now deficit spending snow and ice, and that will affect the amount of free cash.

TA Wojcik said the towns energy advisor is calling him and telling him he should renew the towns energy bulk purchase contract within a period of time and he stated to the board that he will trying to get the best rate and term he can for the town.

There was also a meeting today about the town's bond rating and what the bond rating would be if the town were to borrow within the next year or so. The recommendation that Jeanne Lovett, Cheryl and himself will bring to the board is to switch from Moody's to Standard and Poor's because it would give the town a stronger bond rating. There is opportunity in this report from S&P in the next year to year and a half for the town to improve its score if the town puts in place financial policies and then demonstrates that we are in compliance with best practices.

10. (2:39:57 TS) Open Session for Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

Mr. Bonin stated that the aggregate gentleman thinks that he will be coming to see the town soon.

11. (2:41:10 TS) Executive Session

a. Contract Negotiations

(2:41:15 TS) Motion to move into executive session for the purposes of contract negotiations then to leave executive session for the purpose of adjournment made by Tim Bonin, seconded by Mike Fitzpatrick. Roll call vote – Tim Bonin, Mike Fitzpatrick, Kevin Morse and Hal Davis all in favor.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Bonin made a motion at 9:41pm to leave executive session and return to regular session for the purpose of adjournment. Mr. Fitzpatrick seconded the motion, all in favor. Roll call vote: Fitzpatrick - aye, Bonin - aye, Morse - aye, Davis - aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephenie Gosselin
Recording Secretary