

**Board of Selectmen Agenda
Municipal Center Resource Room
Tuesday, August 15, 2023**

7:00 PM

- Call to Order
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Chairman Announcements - Commendation for Steve Zisk
- Citizen's Forum

1. Public Hearing / Pole Petition 114 South Street – Possible Votes
2. Road Use / Midtstate Massive Ultra Trail Event – Possible Votes
3. Review & Discuss Sign Request for Douglas Orchard & Farm – Possible Votes
4. Douglas Pickleball / Request to put a Storage Box on Town Property – Possible Votes Review
5. Review Job Description & Pay Rate for Council on Aging Van Driver – Possible Votes
6. Flag Policy for Town Buildings 2nd Reading
7. Meeting Minutes – Possible Votes
8. Town Administrator's Report
9. Open Session for Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting
10. Executive Session
 - a. *Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 22(f), Minutes of Meetings – Review of Executive Session Minutes – Possible Votes*
 - b. *Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6), To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. Interest in Real Property – Chapter 61 Parcels Orange St. & Southeast Main St.*
 - c. *Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(3), To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. Potential Litigation*
 - d. *Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2), To conduct strategy sessions in preparations for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. Contract Negotiations – Fire Chief*
 - e. *Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2), To conduct strategy sessions in preparations for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. Contract Negotiations – Town Administrator*
11. Adjournment

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Note: Times are estimates unless denoted as a Hearing.

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

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2023
MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: Chair Kevin Morse, Vice Chair Mike Fitzpatrick, Tim Bonin, Ross Smith, Max Postma, Matthew Wojcik Town Administrator, and Lisa Freeman Executive Assistant

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

(0:10 TS) Pledge of Allegiance

(0:25 TS) Chairman Announcements – Commendation for Steve Zisk

The Select Board would like to thank Steve Zisk for his service to the town as Conservation Agent for the past 23 years and to wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Mr. Morse would like to thank Vice Chair Mr. Fitzpatrick for running a smooth meeting in his absence.

(1:05 TS) Citizen's Forum – Justin Pitcherello lives in Attleboro, MA but owns property in the town of Douglas, and would like to comment on the Chapter 61 agenda item for executive session. TA Wojcik stated that he can make his comments, but the board cannot respond. Mr. Pitcherello is an abutter to some of the parcels listed and asked if these will be talked about in open session and Attorney Rich Bowen responded that it would be impossible at this point to comment on whether and when any part of it will become public. Mr. Pitcherello has been following the activities and recognizes that there is a possibility of a rather large development that might take place as result of those activities and his concern is the magnitude of this development and would like to offer his support to the town if they so choose to move forward with their right of first refusal on any of these lots in question. Another town resident that lives on Orange Street stated they would also support the town in their right of first refusal.

1. (5:40 TS) Public Hearing: Pole Petition 114 South Street – Possible Votes
(5:50 TS) Motion to open the public hearing made by Mike Fitzpatrick, seconded by Max Postma. The vote passed unanimously.
Mass Electric Company dba National Grid and Verizon New England Inc. is requesting permission to locate poles, wires, fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures along and across South Street, to install one JO pole on South Street installing new pole 48-84 to support existing pole 48 and to serve a new house located at 114 South Street. There are no issued from Community Development, Conservation or the Police Department, and Highway is requesting the pole be a minimum of three feet from the edge of the roadway. Al Galvin a design engineer with National Grid stated this is for a new house set far back and needs to have a new pole for the services.
(8:25 TS) Motion to close the public hearing made by Mike Fitzpatrick, seconded by Ross Smith. The vote passed unanimously.
(8:55 TS) Motion to approve the pole petition for 114 South Street made by Max Postma, seconded by Mike Fitzpatrick. The vote passed unanimously.
2. (9:20 TS) Road Use / Midstate Massive Ultra Trail Event – Possible Votes
The Avaya remote connection was having issues.
(18:00 TS) Motion to approve the road use for the Midstate Massive Ultra Trail Event as presented in the packet for October 7th and 8th made by Tim Bonin, seconded by Mike Fitzpatrick. The vote passed unanimously.

3. (18:35 TS) Review & Discuss Sign Request for Douglas Orchard & Farm – Possible Votes
The applicants are not present but there is a letter in the Select Boards' packets. Mr. Fitzpatrick stated that what was discussed at the last meeting was the original permit approved back in 2018 or 2019 and it was for a temporary/seasonal sign from April to November for their farmer's market. What was expressed to Mr. Socrat was that because of the growth of the business it no longer is a directional sign and has become an advertisement type sign. There were two complaints from a resident about the sandwich board sign. The towns bylaw states that signs should not be allowed on memorial squares, cemeteries, telephone utility poles or shade trees unless it's associated with the normal operation of that site or purpose. Mr. Fitzpatrick stated that he has no issue with the original approval of the wood sign, but not the sandwich board sign. Mr. Bonin stated that he is not in agreement with the sandwich boards either, but feels that it is a business in town that needs to be supported and would not be opposed to something that meets the Board's and town's concerns and that would help the business owner. Mr. Fitzpatrick feels the signage should be kept to the directional location of the business and if the applicant felt strongly about defending the sandwich board sign, then they would have been present at tonight's meeting. Mr. Smith being a small business owner in town as well, stated that he agrees with Mr. Bonin and that there should be some sort of solution and feels that maybe there can be some further discussion on this matter to come up with a solution that might fit everyone's concerns. Mr. Postma agrees with Mr. Fitzpatrick that allowing this could open up trouble for the town with having over 200 small businesses in town and the number of possible signs being placed. There was some misunderstanding about what signs were being discussed and Mr. Smith stated that he is in opposition to the sandwich board signs, especially if it were to be up year-round. There was discussion back and forth between the board members about the signs.
(30:40 TS) Motion to approve the sandwich board signs for Douglas Orchards on Depot Street and Southeast Main Street made by Mike Fitzpatrick, seconded by Max Postma. Ross Smith and Tim Bonin in favor, Mike Fitzpatrick and Max Postma opposed. The vote did not pass. Kevin Morse asked Lisa Freeman to let Mr. Socrat know that the sign request did not get approved and perhaps they can find something that works under existing sign approval.
4. (31:50 TS) Douglas Pickleball – Request to put a storage box on town property – Possible Votes
Donna Greer / Pickleball representative stated that they would like to thank the town for allowing them to make use of the outside court and they are requesting to be able to get a 24x24x48 inch job box to store some of their equipment in outside over near the police trailer. Mr. Fitzpatrick's concern is if the police department has any issues with the area in question, and TA Wojcik stated that his concern is that the highway department stores their snowblower over in that area. Ms. Greer suggested putting the box on the other side of the court near the dumpster, and she would also speak with the highway and police department as to where it can be placed.
(35:45 TS) Motion to all the Douglas Pickleball to place a storage box on town property consistent with the wishes of Highway and Police as to the placement made by Tim Bonin, seconded by Max Postma. Tim Bonin, Ross Smith, and Max Postma all in favor, Mike Fitzpatrick abstains.
5. (38:50 TS) Review Job Description & Pay Rate for Council on Aging Van Driver – Possible Votes
Patrice Rousseau from the Council on Aging stated that they have the van, and it was delivered yesterday from Indiana, and she would like to post the positions of two part-time drivers and potentially one per diem driver to make sure there is always coverage. She has spoken to TA Wojcik about the pay rate and step and has submitted a job description. Mr. Morse's wife is one

of the applicants for one of the positions, so he recused himself from the discussion. Ms. Rousseau stated that she has already had a lot of interest in the position. TA. Wojcik stated that in this case they will assign a temporary wage rate until town meeting has the opportunity to act upon it in November. This position will start at a miscellaneous grade 2 step 8 which is \$18.55 an hour and that is the rate for the Board to approve.

(42:40 TS) Motion to approve the rate of pay presented tonight made by Max Postma and amended to include the job description included in the Boards packet made by Tim Bonin, seconded by Ross Smith. The vote passed unanimously.

6. (44:51 TS) Flag Policy for Town Buildings 2nd Reading

There are no changes made since the last reading.

7. (45:15 TS) Meeting Minutes – Possible Votes

No meeting minutes to vote on.

8. (45:20 TS) Town Administrator's Report

- The town will likely be the subject of a Worcester Telegram and Gazette story regarding the warehouse construction and the utility project associated with it that included bringing natural gas into the town, at a time when that is a controversial decision politically at certain levels of government. Douglas's stance on the matter is that it is not controversial for the town. The town has a job to do which is to develop the economy and provide a way to support the town's ongoing operations, provide jobs for our residents and to participate in a more general modernization of the economy. TA Wojcik stated as the interviewee for the town that he made it clear that the town's story is that there were a number of minor factual mistakes in the Globe's story that needed to be corrected. The one TA Wojcik will continually put in front of people is that the theory on the part of some people is the town, Eversource and the developer CRG, somehow conspired to make the natural gas application some sort of secret. TA Wojcik stated that there is nothing true about that and that the natural gas franchise application is a public process from beginning to end. In the discovery part of the process all documents are provided to all interested parties and a hearing officer swore in witnesses in public and heard public testimony from our legislative delegation as, well as town officials both elected and appointed. The opponents testified against it, which the hearing officer ruled most of that testimony out of order because it didn't deal with the specifics of the application. The most notable piece of this is that the Attorney General's office did not oppose the Douglas franchise application, so then Attorney General Healey chose not to take a position on this and her only position on the Douglas project was to support it because Mr. Minarik put her on the spot at a Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce breakfast where she pledged to help Douglas.
- All the walls are up at the Cubes at Gilboa, bridge work is coming to a close and the roof is going up on the structure. They are still very much on track to have this building opened up late this fall. The town is working hard to work with the towns granting agencies to clarify some of the funding streams to free up money that is being held in contingency for parts of the project that are already completed and get the paving done.
- The town is still going through the procurement process, so all the funds that were approved at May town meeting and the ARPA projects are being pushed out the door. The procurement went out for the Highway dump truck on the statewide contract with a new snowplow, the contract for the sidewalk tractor that was approved by town meeting, and the command vehicle for the Fire Department that was approved from ambulance receipts account.
- The town has also secured the assistance of Weston and Sampson with the architectural engineering component of the HVAC project at the fire station.
- TA Wojcik is still working on goals for department heads and hoping for the next Select Board meeting to have a rough draft of all the goals expected from the departments.

- TA Wojcik is grateful for Mr. Zisk and his long-standing and outstanding service to the town of Douglas. This was a part-time position and the goal going forward is to change the service profile and make this particular function of town more accessible to customers during the day time hours. TA Wojcik stated that it is his intention to hire a well-known consult agency to work for the town for about 60 days on a contract that is worth below \$10k so it does not have to be procured. This firm is presently providing conservation services to the town of Sutton and they have the capacity to help Douglas right away and is significantly qualified. The town will post the position and see if they get any applicants and at the same time also post an RFP for a longer-term consulting contract that is required to be competitively bid and compare the results of those and pick the solution that is best for the town.

9. (58:40 TS) Open Session for Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting. NONE
10. (58:55 TS) Executive Session
(59:10 TS) Motion into executive session for the purposes of reviewing executive session minutes, discussion of real property for Chapter 61 Parcels Orange St. & Southeast Main St, discuss potential litigation, discuss contract negotiations with the Acting Fire Chief John Furno, and Town Administrator Matthew Wojcik and then to leave executive session for the sole purpose of adjournment made by Tim Bonin, seconded by Mike Fitzpatrick. Roll call vote – Max Postma, Mike Fitzpatrick, Kevin Morse, Tim Bonin and Ross Smith all in favor.
11. Adjournment
Mr. Fitzpatrick made a motion at 11:36 pm to leave executive session and return to regular session for the sole purpose of adjournment, Mr. Bonin seconded the motion, all in favor. Roll call vote: Fitzpatrick – aye, Postma – aye, Morse – aye, Smith- aye, Bonin – aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephenie Gosselin
Recording Secretary