

**Minutes  
Board of Selectmen  
March 24, 2025  
Cotter Room  
5:00 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Kevin Donovan, Chairman, Suzanne Djusberg, Roger Woods, Paul Bunker, Amanda Zompetti, Scott Lambiase, Town Manager

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Announcements:**

- Congratulated Acting Building Commissioner Nick Jenks who just completed his third test to be certified as a Building Commissioner; he will be certified by the International Code Council. We wish him well and look forward to having him transition as the permanent Building Commissioner.
- A reminder that April 4<sup>th</sup> is the retiree luncheon at 11:30 a.m. at the Council on Aging.
- Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 8 a.m. the Selectmen are conducting the perambulation of the bounds for the town. It will begin at the Whitman/Abington town line and will be locating and marking all the town bounds as required by statute.
- Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. is the Annual Town Meeting at Abington High School.
- Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> is the Annual Town Election, and you can vote absentee early at the Town Clerk's Office if you cannot make it on the 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> is the town-wide Abington Celebrates yard sale. The last day to be included on the map is April 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Department Presentations**

1. **Community Preservation Committee-Presentation of FY 26 Recommendations to Town Meeting.** Rachel Collins, Chairwoman – gave some background on the Committee and how it operated. Abington adopted the CPA in 2016, our surcharge is 1.5% and has been able to fund over 60 community projects. The Committee is made up of members from Park & Rec, the Planning Board, Historical Commission, Affordable Housing Trust, Conservation Commission and interested community members. They meet twice a month from August/September through January/February to discuss projects with community members.

This year transfer of funds for projects will go to the Affordable Housing Trust so they will have money for things they want to make happen; money has been allotted for the Green Wave Connector Trail, which comes out of the Open Space Recreation bucket; Griffin Dairy came to them for funds to finish putting up their fence which comes out of Open Space and Recreation; last year and this year they had money for the Green Street Playground, an extremely well used community park; updating the Island Grove snack shack; and then the street hockey court and playground at Arnold Park. Because of reserves they had from last year, they also had money for the softball fields update and there is a bond on the Memorial Field project. Town Meeting can either approve or disapprove the budget; they can't amend it. Their meetings are all open and you are welcome to attend.

2. **DPW Director John Stone** – gave an overview of his Power Point presentation (attached). Reviewed intersections. The worst is Randolph/Chestnut Street/Old Randolph Street. The second is Route 123 at Route 18 by Sub Galley; the state is going to take care of that, and it is slated for 2028. Hancock/Chestnut is the third worst.

Groveland and Linwood – the state just came out with a new program to install four-way stops at intersections that meet certain criteria. It would have to be a vote of the Board. That is the fourth most dangerous intersection in the town according to this survey.

Hancock/Chestnut – it is the third most dangerous intersection in town. There will be no direct cost to the Abington taxpayers. It is being paid through the state. There will be a round-about which was approved in 2016 through a federally funded program to make intersections safer. The project will run about \$7M with bid openings scheduled for late September with construction beginning next year and will take about two years. Last year they did the Washington Street side.

Washington/ Adams/Shaw – they have applied for a grant and feel this is a dangerous intersection.

Randolph/Chestnut/Old Randolph – is the most dangerous intersection in town according to the OCPC survey. This would have no direct cost to the Abington taxpayers except for the design which was funded through town meeting a couple of years back. There will be a traffic signal. There will be ADA-compliant ramps, refuge islands for pedestrians, some new sidewalks, bicycle accommodations, which have to be put in now to be able to get any type of grant. This should be done in 9/2027.

Centre Avenue Bridge - the state inspects all bridges whether they are town-owned or state-owned to make sure they are safe. They applied for a grant for design for \$100,000, designed it and applied for a grant for construction and got that grant and have gone out to bid last year and had no bidders. They are going out again this year, and so far, 12 companies have pulled plans. It won't be as intensive as the Central Street Bridge. This will be no cost to the taxpayers.

Summer Street Sidewalks – they were awarded a \$500,000 grant to fill in the gap where there is no sidewalk on Summer and for permitting and design. After that, they will apply for a construction grant.

John gave a run down of snow and ice events. The crew had to go out about 20 times.

Fleet List – they now have a lot safer equipment for the guys to use. There are some things they may need to replace next year.

A Tree Removal List was provided, as well as a Sewer Rate Survey to show where we stand rate-wise. Abington is in the bottom third. As far as Sewer Capacity is concerned, Abington is allowed a 1,500,000 daily allotment from Brockton; our daily average is 1,071,203. Our allotment from Rockland is 110,000, and our flow to Rockland is 62,452.

Work is being done on the Walnut Street Pump Station. A list was included of items that need to be taken care of under the 10-year stormwater permit and MS4 permit.

They are well below average for work force per capita compared to other towns. There are 4.6 workers per 5,000 residents. They are struggling to get things done. If anything is added, something has to come off the list.

**Recreation – Kelly Johnson**

Eager Beaver has gone up steadily over the past ten years other than COVID. Revenue has steadily increased. They are changing pool hours to better accommodate usage trends. They are switching to an outside vendor for swim lessons. They have moved all camp activities to at-camp activities instead of field trips. They are increasing fees slowly to match other towns and updating facilities. The Recreation Survey results were reviewed. The Capital Plan list was reviewed.

**Items:**

1. Minutes: March 10, 2025, motion by Mr. Woods to approve, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.
2. Trash Fee Information Meeting on March 26, 2025, at the Senior Center. There is an informational meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at the Senior Center and Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. at the Library for people with questions re the proposed trash fee program that is before Town Meeting on April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. Trash has come up about \$500,000 in the last few years, a 56% increase. The first year, the town will fund it 100%. The **attached sheet** shows the breakdown of phased-in years two to five, with discounted rate for seniors 70+.
3. Review Ballot Questions for the Annual Town Election on April 26, 2025. #1 pertains to South Shore Vocational Technical High School, which passed in all the communities in the vocational district including Abington. Abington has to take a vote to exclude that debt to build a new vocational high school because the town doesn't have the funds to come up with that within its current budget. #2 will be to approve Charter amendments that were approved at the last Town Meeting.
4. Town Manager Report on FY26 Budget Process and discussion and possible votes on policy as it relates to the budget process. A balanced budget will be brought before Town Meeting; it's been one of the most difficult budget years he has been involved in. It is a level service budget. It was necessary to use a small portion of stabilization money and free cash to balance the budget. There were multiple requests for manpower and items that had to be removed. Going forward there will be even more difficult decisions, and the budget process will be started even earlier. Using onetime funds is not a sustainable solution. This Board is doing everything it can selling properties and surplus equipment to stretch our money.

Mr. Donovan – We are one of the few towns around without having to go for an override - Milton \$9.5M; Duxbury \$5.8M (failed at the ballot); Hanson \$3M; Norwell \$5.1M; Hanover \$3.5M; Whitman \$2.5M. We are beginning the planning process for next year. He had brought up the Pioneer Institute Study on outsourcing some town services at the last meeting and directed the Town Manager to look specifically at Town Hall to see what services could possibly be outsourced. We are looking at things differently, preparing for the next fiscal year. This Board needs to take the lead in the budget preparation process. Motion by Mr. Donovan that it is the Policy of the Board of Selectmen that the Town Manager is hereby directed to amend the FY 26 Operating Budget in the Selectmen's Office to reduce the employees in said Office by one so as to request funding only for two full-time employees and to make the appropriate adjustments in the Requested Budget forthwith and transmit the same to the Finance Committee prior to presentation at the Annual Town Meeting, seconded by Mr. Woods, unanimous.

We are going to be in dire financial straits in the future and are trying to get ahead and start in our own department. They anticipate the Town Manager coming back after Labor Day with more suggestions that they may enact in the current fiscal year. They are going to prioritize departments next year. State aid is only at 1.6%, which is down from a high of a couple of years

ago of 17.9%. We want to be able to tell people that we've done everything that we can to make this work. Ms. Djusberg – decisions have not been made lightly and thanked everyone who has worked so hard on this – the Chairman, the Town Manager, Finance team and Finance Committee.

5. Discussion and vote to accept the deed of 20+ acres land donated from the Trufant Family. Town Counsel has looked into the deed, and it is in its final form. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve the deed and transmission to Town Meeting to accept the donation, seconded by Ms. Zompetti, unanimous.
6. Discussion and Vote on Selectmen Recommendations for Articles in the Warrant for the April 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Town Meeting.
  - Article 1, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 2, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 3, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 4, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 5, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 6, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 7, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 8, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 9, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 10, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 11, M/Donovan, S/Zompetti, unanimous
  - Article 12, M/Donovan, S/Zompetti, unanimous
  - Article 13, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 14 – discussion to not sell the house and keep the land and reinsert the article to demolish the house and keep it with the SVGCC. M/Donovan to reconsider Article 14 and move to insert the language to demolish the house, S/Woods, unanimous. M/Donovan to substitute for property to be demolished and funds to come from the SVGC, S/Woods, unanimous. Selectmen recommend favorable action.
  - Article 15, M/Donovan, S/Djusberg, unanimous
  - Article 16, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 17, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous
  - Article 18, M/Donovan, S/Djusberg, unanimous
  - Article 19, M/Donovan, S/Woods for reconsideration, unanimous. M/Woods to insert 75, S/Djusberg, unanimous. Selectmen recommend favorable action.
  - Article 20, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous. Mr. Donovan would like Town Manager to get a certification from the Department Head of the Assessing Office to indicate that any assessing of property is done if someone took out a building permit and a certificate of occupancy is issued. Just because the land is rezoned doesn't mean that it will be assessed as that.
  - Article 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, M/Donovan, S/Woods, unanimous. The Board of Selectmen defers to the Planning Board.
  - Article 26, M/Zompetti, S/Woods, unanimous
7. Vote on Used Article License Renewals. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.

Motion to adjourn at 5:58 p.m. made by Mr. Woods, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hurst