



Town of Abington

OFFICE OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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Minutes
September 11, 2023
Board of Selectmen
Cotter Room
6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Alex Hagerty, Chair, Kevin Donovan, Tim Chapin, Kevin DiMarzio, Suzanne Djusberg

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silence held for Joanne Curtis, Nicholas Marzocca, and in Remembrance of the lives lost during the September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attacks (attached).

Public Announcements:

- Melissa Cook, Chairman, Abington COPES, announced the 2nd Annual 5K Road Race and Walk, Sunday, September 17, 2023, at 9 a.m., at the Woodsdale Elementary School. On September 21st, Rockland Cares is holding a vigil at Rockland High School at 6:15 p.m.
- Mr. Hagerty – the Plymouth Suicide Prevention Coalition reached out to Town Hall to put together a proclamation which will go up on the website. September is suicide prevention month.
- Mr. Donovan – extended congratulations to Coach Jim Kelliher who is the first coach in Massachusetts history to be the head coach in the same high school for 50 years. On Saturday, October 14th, there is a Special Town Meeting at 9 a.m. at the Abington High School to deal with the Fire Station/DPW building project; and Saturday, October 21st a special election at the Beaver Brook Elementary School from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. will be held for that question that was considered at Town Meeting.
- Mr. DiMarzio – re social media postings on Facebook. Explained meeting procedures, information, agendas, discussions and Open Meeting Laws. He has supported both the Fire Station Building Project and DPW Building Project from the beginning. There will be a project update ahead of the Special Town Meeting. This is the proper channel that allows stakeholders to speak in person and have their questions, comments and/or concerns heard and answered. He will not take any information from Facebook posts nor should the public as we have meetings to discuss these things.
- Mr. Hagerty – Southfield Redevelopment Authority will hold a meeting with the Planning Board on Monday, October 18th at 6 p.m. at Town Hall re proposed zoning changes at the former NAS. On September 19th, the developer will be at the Senior Center to present the zoning changes. The SRA will be coming before the Selectmen on Monday, September 25th at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the proposed zoning changes for the former NAS.

There were no Public Comments

Public Appointments:

6:35 p.m. Request by Mass. Electric Co. dba National Grid and Verizon New England, Inc. to install three JO poles on Brockton Avenue, including wires and fixtures, and remove two JO poles on Brockton Avenue. Motion by Mr. DiMarzio to open the hearing, seconded by Mr. Chapin, unanimous. There was no representative present. The Board had no issues, and there were no problems from the inspecting departments. Motion to close the hearing made by Mr. Donovan, seconded by Mr. Chapin, unanimous. Motion to approve made by Mr. Donovan, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio, unanimous.

6:40 p.m. Request by Mass. Electric Co. dba National Grid and Verizon New England, Inc., to install two JO poles on Bedford Street, including wires and fixtures, and remove one JO pole on Bedford Street. Motion to open the hearing made by Mr. DiMarzio, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous. Mr. Donovan – paperwork seemed to be in order and made a motion to close the hearing, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio, unanimous. Motion to approve the hearing made by Mr. Donovan, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio, unanimous.

Action/Discussion Items:

1. Joseph Cotter, Eagle Scout – explained he is going to build an information kiosk at the compost site of what materials can be brought to the site, hours of operation, costs. The Building Inspector has approved his building permit. He held a car wash and raised \$800 for the project, with \$45 in expenses. He has been working with Cape Cod Lumber to get the lumber supplies donated, has called Dig Safe. Will be calling the DPW to help install it so it's safer. It will be parallel on the outside of the fence. Mr. DiMarzio – sounds like a great project and thanked him for his efforts. Motion by Mr. Donovan to approve the project, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio, unanimous.
2. Motion by Mr. Donovan to approve the August 9, 2023, minutes, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, 4 ayes, 1 abstention (Mr. DiMarzio).
3. Request to appoint R. Andrew Burbine as Alternate to Zoning Board of Appeals and Town of Abington representative to NAS Board of Appeals. Mr. Donovan – Mr. Burbine's qualifications speak for themselves and thanked him for coming back to the ZBA. Motion by Mr. Donovan to appoint Mr. Burbine as Alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals and Town of Abington representative to NAS Board of Appeals, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.
4. Update on Fire/DPW Building Committee, Derek Haimaidi, Chair; and possible vote on STM Warrant Article. The Committee has gone on for about four years, originally charged with planning, designing and developing a new fire station, then added on the same for the DPW. It came in at \$58.3M, for a full-size modern day fire station and full-size DPW. Although it is what the town needs, it came down to the cost with a lot of senior residents not able to afford this. They tapered things down to \$38.5M which will provide a scaled-back fire station, but still able to survive at least 75 years. The DPW had to take a cut, but it is enough to cover what needs to be done right away. The DPW buildings that store apparatus rain inside, and the salt sheds are collapsing. This plan would give them more square footage than they currently have and have all the apparatus covered and new salt sheds.

Mr. Hagerty – asked what DPW was getting. An apparatus storage facility to house all the vehicles inside, two roof canopies, new salt sheds. The two mechanic bays will be staying where

they are. The new building will be 2,500 s.f. larger than what we currently have. The basketball courts will be moved.

Bill Dodge – will there still be offices from Town Hall located in the building? No. What cuts is the Fire Department making? DPW was given money for a feasibility study to see what they needed from the money given at Town Meeting to Fire. When DPW was added to the original project, it came to \$70M. They made significant cuts and scaled back 11,107 s.f. and dropped 8.5M off the cost of the building, which got it down to \$55M. Costs crept up to \$58.5M over the year due to materials.

Mr. Donovan – he was appointed as the Town Manager liaison, representing retirees, to the Committee. He felt \$58M was not feasible for seniors on a fixed income and that \$38.5 would be more reasonable. The buildings will be structured so that they will be able to be added on to in the future as money becomes available. He explained finances. If this is approved, both current fire stations will be sold, and he would suggest North and Center School as well.

Mr. Haimaidi – there are health concerns with the working and living conditions in the fire station, which is old and outgrown, with the apparatus so close to living quarters with contaminants. Newer fire apparatus may not fit in the building. There is only one shared bunk room and shower for males and females. As far as DPW, there are holes in the roofs, the salt sheds are partially collapsed.

Mr. Lambiase - once the fire stations are vacated, they will be decommissioned, and this Board will declare them surplus and put them up for auction.

Ms. Djusberg – agrees we need this. If we wait, everything will go higher cost-wise. Will vote yes for this.

Mr. Donovan made the motion that the Board of Selectmen go on record for recommending favorable action on Special Town Meeting Article 5 for \$38.5M for the Fire Station/DPW Building Project, seconded by Mr. Chapin, unanimous.

Mr. Hagerty thanked the Committee for its hard work.

Mr. Haimaidi – all the information on the project is on the website under InvestinAbington.com with a tax calculator. If anyone has any questions, they can contact him – his contact information is on the website. He will drop off hard copies of the information to the Senior Center.

The basketball court will be moved and will be coming before the Board for discussion.

5. Adam Gunn, VSO, regarding Abington SAVES. He applied for and received \$50,000 from ARPA and is receiving applications during September for up to \$1,400 to qualified Abington residents and outlined the criteria. Applications are on the website or are available at the Senior Center. Proof must be provided of income and assets; Adam will be the only one to view the personal information. What is currently being done couldn't be done without the support of the Veterans' Services Advisory Council and veterans' organizations, as well as many volunteers.

He thanked Wayne Norling for setting up a third computer in the sitting area of the Veterans' Services Department. They will be starting a kiosk to check in veterans to get their information, but also for volunteers to check in and out. There are now four volunteers coming in on a weekly basis. Carol Davey, a volunteer, has scanned all the death records for our veterans for the last 30 years. Thanks again to Wayne Norling who put 600 files into an Excel spread sheet, they are finding widows who weren't receiving the care, check support and relief of property taxes if their spouses died from service related disabilities. Abington is truly special with all its volunteers.

6. Request from South Shore Recycling Coop to appoint Chris Schultz and Eddie Murphy as Abington's representatives. Motion by Mr. Donovan to appoint Chris Schultz and Eddie Murphy, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio, unanimous.
7. Town Manager Report:
 - In August we received the final report from the Inspector General re DPW with suggestions, many of which had already been implemented, which were mentioned.
 - A resignation was received from Tim Warner of the Conservation Commission. The vacancy will be posted on the website with the Board's approval. Motion to approve made by Mr. DiMarzio, seconded by Mr. Chapin, unanimous.
 - The plan for the two school buildings is to seek bids for redeveloping to be used as mixed income housing. One problem is being able to ensure an adequate supply of water for a viable project. He is collaborating with the Water Department – estimating they would need approximately 2,200 gallons/day for Center School and about 7,000 gallons/day for North School. Once we are assured of the water, we will go forward with the bid process. We have started on the RFP. He may have something to go out to bid within six months, hopefully sooner.
 - The boiler in the library needs to be replaced with an estimated cost of \$85,000. We've issued a bid package and there has been significant interest. Final bids are due September 20th. The project will hopefully be done by the end of November.
 - A new generator was installed and will be able to supply Town Hall with 100% power during any power outages. The project cost was \$100,000 which was funded by the Holbrook Communication Center. Final connection will be on Thursday, September 21st. Town Hall will not have power that day and phone lines will be out of service other than the Police Station; 911 will still work. Residents will be notified in advance.
 - The Town was recently assigned an AA bond rating.
 - The Central Street Bridge will be open at the end of the day Tuesday, 9/12.
8. Motion by Mr. Donovan to enter into Executive Session in accordance with MGL c.30A, §21 to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, and not to return to open session, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio. Roll call vote: Mr. Donovan, aye; Ms. Djusberg, aye; Mr. DiMarzio, aye; Mr. Chapin, aye, Mr. Hagerty, aye. (7:35 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,


Nancy Hurst

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Joanne Curtis

Joanne Curtis, a long-time resident of Abington, passed away on August 10, 2023, at age 92. Joanne was raised and educated in Abington, graduating from Abington High School in 1947. She was employed by American Airlines for many years and had a very long and successful career at the Stone Zoo.

During her retirement years, she was heavily involved in the community of Abington, specifically the Senior Center. She was a member of the Senior Center Committee and worked diligently and tirelessly in obtaining a senior center for the Town. She was a long-time member of the Council on Aging and enjoyed her newsroom clerical duties while working on the monthly Senior Informer. The Senior Center meant everything to Joanne, and her family is very grateful for all their support over the years.

Joanne was one of the kindest people you could ever meet, and she will be sorely missed.

Nicholas Marzocca

Nicholas "Nick" Marzocca died on September 4th at age 85. He was a longtime resident of Abington, becoming an Abington patrolman in 1972, and spending most of his 37-year career as a detective for the Abington Police Department. He received "Abington's Best" in February 2001, for his dedication to the Police Department, his common sense, and his concern for others.

Nick enjoyed woodworking, fishing and boating. He leaves behind a wonderful family and friends and will be missed by all who knew him.

ABINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING – September 11, 2023

MOMENT OF SILENCE: 22 years ago, pure evil and tragedy struck our nation. 2,977 innocent lives perished in the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks at the World Trade Center in New York, Shanksville, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. We mourn September 11, 2001 to never forget the thousands of lives lost and their families, the heroic first responders who risked and sacrificed their lives to save others, and the nearly 10,000 who suffer with cancer attributed to the toxic exposures from that terrible day. We are reminded even through the darkness of 9/11, of the resilience of our country and our community; people coming together to grieve, comfort, and love one another. In Abington, we remember Abington resident, Jeffrey Coombs who was a passenger aboard Flight 11. To Christie Coombs, wife of Jeffrey Coombs and founder of the Jeffrey Coombs Memorial Foundation, we commend you for your continued devotion to enrich our community, its youth and help make the world a better place. Let us remember the souls we lost on that fateful day 22 years ago and in their memory come together and love one another. Please join in a moment of silence.