

**Minutes
Board of Selectmen
March 10, 2025
Cotter Room
6:00 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:

- The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be on March 24th at 5 p.m.
- The Board of Selectmen will be marking the Town bounds on Saturday, 3/5, at the Whitman town line per the Perambulation of the town bounds.
- Town Meeting is April 7, 7 p.m.; Town Election is April 26th. There will be two questions. The first relates to the South Shore Vocational Technical High School. This is necessary because without that vote, we can't exclude that debt from the operations of the town, and we don't have the funds to absorb that within the confines of the town budget.
- The bids for the Fire Station/DPW facility are going to be opened on April 9th at 2 p.m., and then the project will move to the construction phase.
- On March 12th at 3 p.m. there is an auction for town-owned property, a house taken by tax title at 78 Linda Street and 862 Brockton Avenue. Next year is going to be tight, so the Town is looking to liquidate as much as possible, so we have a plan going forward for FY27.

Department Presentations

1. **Police Chief John Bonney, Introduction and Swearing in of Newly Graduated Police Officers.** The Chief has had a number of officers tell him this is an exciting time in the midst of a hiring boom trying to get us up to minimum staffing. A couple of weeks ago they had an orientation with 27 who were brought in and took their test. Sgt. Doherty, Officer White, Lieutenants Canada and Simmons held interviews with the 27 people and whittled it down to 11, and six will ultimately be hired. After background checks, the Deputy Chief and he will do more interviews before they make any offers. By the time they get an offer from the Department, they have gone through the Academy and field training; almost every single person in the Department will have had a hand in their hiring.

They are very lucky to have three new officers with them - Officer Seamus Schmidt, Officer Austin Fitz, Officer Meghan Holak. Fitz was the Academy's top scorer on the range. All three performed very well at the Academy and the Department is very proud of the efforts they have made. They were sworn in by Town Clerk Leanne Adams and received a citation from State Representative Alyson Sullivan-Almeida on behalf of the House of Representatives.

Public Hearing:

6:05 p.m. Request to increase number of vehicles from 15 to 26 Class II license of 810 Auto Motors LLC, 810 Brockton Avenue. A certified plot plan was submitted, as well as satisfactory inspection reports. Dorothy Justin from 810 Auto Motors LLC attended. There were no questions from the Board or the public. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve the request, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.

Items:

1. **Discussion and Possible Vote on a Policy for the Implementation of Trash Fees in a phased four- year program subject to Town Meeting Discussion.** Mr. Lambiase – this would be a five-year phase-in, putting it into an enterprise fund. A user fee would be set annually by the board and quarterly bills would go out to cover the cost of picking up the trash. On year one, there would be no charge to the households. The \$1.2M would come out of Free Cash because in 1991 and 2008, there were overrides specifically for trash and wanted to recognize that and help people phase into this process. The second year would be funded 75% by the Town through Free Cash, and the cost quarterly for each household would be \$24, \$12 for seniors 70 and over. In year three, there would be 50% funding by the Town; year four would be 25% funding by the Town. By year five, it would be fully implemented and would be a quarterly cost of \$97 to the average household, and \$48 for senior households.

The cost of weight tolling alone has risen 56%, and we can't afford to take that away from other services and operations. They understand it is a big change, and they are trying to make it as simple as possible. They will be having an open forum on this on March 29th at the Library at 10:30 a.m. and March 26th at 6-8 p.m. at the Senior Center. It will be the same containers and pick-up day, the same service. Mr. Donovan – they have been discussing this for a while. The cost for waste removal has far exceeded the Town's ability to absorb it in the budget. If it were kept in the budget, they would be looking for an override and looking at cuts. They are going to be looking at next year's budgets and FY27's budget is going to be very difficult. State aid is only at 1.6% and we just don't have the money. We are trying to come up with innovative ways to deal with something that is not sustainable in the budget. If you have questions, please come to either of the symposiums. Mr. Woods – they have worked tirelessly on this phased-in plan and for the senior population. Ms. Zompetti – appreciates the work that has gone into it. Mr. Lambiase – the Finance Committee, Health Department, internal Finance Team, representatives from the Board of Selectmen and School Department have worked on this. Mr. Bunker had a question about households with the second barrel. That policy will probably be discontinued. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve the policy, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.

5. **Request for Appointment: Conservation Commission, Affordable Housing Trust, Commission on Disabilities, DPW/Fire Station Building Committee.** Motion by Mr. Woods to appoint Chris O'Neill as voting member to the Conservation Commission, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous. Motion by Mr. Woods to appoint Michael Lavery to the Affordable Housing Trust, seconded by Ms. Zompetti, unanimous. Motion by Mr. Woods to appoint Amanda Languirand to the Commission on Disabilities, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous. Alex Bezanson resigned from the Fire Station/DPW Building Project on the Advisory Committee to the Town Manager. There will be financial questions coming up with the building phase, and there should be a Selectmen representative. Mr. Woods nominated Mr. Donovan, seconded by Mr. Bunker, 4 ayes, 1 abstention (KRD). Mr. Donovan accepted.
2. **Town Manager Report on FY26 Budget Process and discussion and possible vote on policy as it relates to the budget process.** Mr. Lambiase – they have a balanced budget with the use of some one-time funds that they don't like to use, but they have \$1.7M in free cash and transferring \$417,755 from the Stabilization Fund. There is approximately \$3.8M in that fund so it won't be a large amount coming out of there. We typically want to see 5% of operating so we are still in that wheelhouse. They are proposing level service budgets and making cuts in certain areas. There were things for Police and School budgets that were picked out that we were not able to provide. It is important for the committee meeting regarding the trash budget continue to meet after Town Meeting, or after the summer about what we will do for the future and how we will get through the next fiscal year.

Mr. Donovan – most of the South Shore towns are looking for overrides this year. We need to start looking into planning for FY27. He provided the Selectmen with a study done by the Pioneer Institute, who did a paper on outsourcing municipal services. We should look into certain services. There are certain mechanisms within a department that perhaps could be outsourced that could save the community money. Motion by Mr. Woods that the Town Manager is hereby directed to investigate, study and report back to the Board of Selectmen, at first meeting in September 2025, on a course of action for the possible restructuring and outsourcing of certain town services under the direction of the Town Manager for the departments located at Town Hall, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.

We have to think outside the box to help us in future years. The Board needs to be pro-active, and we want to be as transparent as possible. They are also going to be looking at state revenues to get a feel for what it looks like on the horizon for local aid.

3. **Discussion and Vote on Closing of Streets for Annual St. Patrick's Parade on Sunday, March 16th.** Chief Bonney – their focus is to keep everyone safe, and all their people will be working the parade. They have also requested resources from the Metro team, and they will have a drone team above. They just deployed a trailer camera that they got on a grant just a few weeks ago, and gave a breakdown of the rest of the resources they will have operating during the parade. He reminded people not to place chairs on the cross streets. Road closures – Washington Street, Brockton Ave at Route 18, Abington Center, Central Street west of Park Ave, Central Street at Washington Street, Washington Street at Lincoln Blvd, Washington Street at Adams, North Ave. at Wales Street, east bound Route 58 at Wales, south bound Route 58 at Monroe Street and Route 58 at Adams Street and North Ave. Street closings and times are listed on the Town's website. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve Chief Bonney's street closings, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous
4. **Minutes: February 10, 2025** – motion by Mr. Woods to approve, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.
6. **Discussion and Vote on Issuing a Cease and Desist Order for Vehicle Storage on the Property at 201 North Quincy Street and set a date for the same to be completed.** Mr. Donovan - on the advice of Town Counsel, it was suggested the Board issue a cease and desist and give them a certain timeframe. He met with the Town Manager and Building Inspector and agreed to recommend that the Board give them 30 days to clean up the property and remove all the junk cars. If they show initiative and they need additional time, authorize the Building Inspector to give them an additional fifteen days. At the end of 30 days, we go to Town Counsel and ask them to file the necessary paperwork in Superior Court. Mr. Woods – would rather 21 days than 30. Motion by Mr. Woods to give 21 days to clean up the property and bring it into compliance. At that time, if it is not in total compliance, the Board will authorize Town Counsel to file a court order to clean it up, seconded by Ms. Zompetti, unanimous. Emails regarding this situation go back to September.
7. **Request for a one-day liquor license for 10th District Brewing Co., for St. Patrick's Day Parade.** Motion by Mr. Woods to approve, seconded by Ms. Zompetti, unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion by Mr. Woods to go into Executive Session, pursuant to the provisions of MGL chapter 30A section 21 (3) to discuss strategy with respect to Collective Bargaining to wit: AFSCME COUNCIL 93, Abington, Highway, Park and Sewer Department Employees, Local 1700 and non-union personnel – DPW Director, and to reconvene, seconded by Ms. Djusberg. Roll call vote:

Ms. Zompetti, yes; Mr. Bunker, yes; Mr. Woods, yes; Ms. Djusberg, yes; Mr. Donovan, yes.

The Board returned to Open Session. Motion by Mr. Woods for a three year agreement for AFSCME Council 93, Abington, Highway, Park and Sewer Department Employees, Local 1700 – 1st year 2%, 2nd year 2.5%, 3rd year 2.9% and adjustment of some stipends, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.

Motion by Mr. Woods to approve the agreement of DPW Director John Stone, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is **March 24th at 5 p.m.**

The Annual Town Meeting is Monday, 7 p.m. The Board will met at 5:30 p.m. The Board's next meeting will be April 28th after the election and there will be re-organization.

Motion by Mr. Woods to adjourn at 6:55 p.m., seconded by Ms. Zompetti, unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hurst