

Minutes
Board of Selectmen
October 28, 2024
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:

- Mr. Donovan congratulated Heidi Hernandez, Tim Leonelli and the Abington High School Marching Band Champions for the first place win in their class at the State Championship with a score of 89.4 which had them outscoring bands twice their size.
- There is a regional water survey being conducted by the Old Colony Planning Council on drinking water quality, environmental protection and affordability and reliability. There is more information on the OCPC website.
- On November 18th , 7 p.m. in the Cotter Room, Town Hall, the Open Space and Recreation Committee is holding a meeting to discuss the Open Space and Recreation Plan that is being sponsored by the Old Colony Planning Council.
- The Presidential Election is November 5th and polls are open from 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. Early voting is still available at the Town Hall during regular business hours with the last day for early voting on Friday, November 1st from 8:30-12:30 p.m.
- The Veterans' Appreciation Day at the Council on Aging is on November 6th at 10 a.m. if you are a veteran.
- The DAR will hold a dedication ceremony on Saturday, November 9th at 11 a.m. at Mount Vernon Cemetery to dedicate a plaque to all veterans of all wars that are interred at the Cemetery
- On Monday, November 11th the Veterans' Day Tri Town Parade will step off from Beaver Brook Elementary School behind the American Legion and finish at Railroad Street.
- Special Town Meeting is on Monday, November 25th at 6:30 p.m. at the Abington High School.

6:00 p.m. Fire Chief Jack Glynn – Update on FEMA Response and Firefighter Awards.

In response to the 500 N. Quincy Street fire, he had nominated firefighters for the Firefighter of the Year Award with the State. They all received letters of appreciation from the State. The firefighters who received letters from the state were: Deputy Chief Jarrod Driscoll, Captain Kevin Finch, Firefighter/Paramedic Chris O'Toole, Firefighter/Paramedic Derek Haimaidi, Firefighter/Paramedic Joshua Nix, Firefighter/Paramedic Michael Musticchio and Firefighter/Paramedic Matthew Barry.

Captain Chris Cotti and Firefighter/Paramedic Chris O'Toole were both activated in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Chris O'Toole was activated for a disaster medical assistance team setting up area hospitals and treating. Captain Cotti was with FEMA Task Force 1 involved with a lot of search and rescue. Chris O'Toole was active for 14 days, Captain Cotti was active for 22 days. Chief Glynn was proud of what they did and for making a difference. The Board thanked them for their level of expertise.

Chief Glynn pointed out they had another CPR save which is due to the Department's incredible skill. The paramedic program started over 27 years ago and has made a difference in people's lives. He was the first paramedic the Town hired. They have been doing training with the Police Department and both departments have worked together in difficult, tragic situations.

Chief Bonney – this is an awesome opportunity to grow together as a public safety team in this town. In the seven weeks he has been in town, he couldn't be more impressed with his team. So far this year, the Department has responded to 9,000 calls for service, over 500 arrests, responded to 616 crashes and had almost 2,00 car stops.

The recent car crash was one of the toughest scenes he's seen. Officer Helena Rezendes has a huge heart and found out it was the young girl's birthday who was hurt in the crash and went out birthday shopping the following day because the mom hadn't left the young girl's bedside. That is the kind of heart our Police Department has. They do Coffee with a Cop at the Sr. Center and the High School; they had a bowling event that raised \$3,000 in conjunction with the Fire Department for Beaver Brook School. Over the last couple of weeks, Officer John Sayers was awarded a Gold Award from AAA for his efforts in traffic enforcements. They have not released it because they are waiting for photographs from the U. S. Attorney's office. Lt. Justin Simmons received an award from the U. S. Attorney's office at the Federal Reserve in Boston last week for his investigation into COVID scams. He and a member of Homeland Security put a woman away for five years for stealing millions in COVID scams. They had a drive for supplies

for people impacted by Hurricane Helene. He was so proud of how the community responded. Deputy Chief Postell and Lt. Canada made the trip down with the supplies. It was a massive group effort. Margaret Frost and JoAnn Gillis packed constantly; Sgt. Doherty wrapped pallets. Mr. Donovan expressed the Board's thanks to Officer Rezendes, Lt. Simmons and Officer Sayers on their achievements. There were two off-duty non-Abington first responders that lived in the area that he has written to their chiefs – Tropper Scott Drinkwater and Firefighter Menz of Weymouth – that jumped in before the rest of us got there, and they will be receiving awards from the Abington Police Department.

Deputy Chief Postell – Police Efforts for North Carolina. Was humbled by the outpouring of support to folks in his home state of West North Carolina. He thanked the members of the Fire Department who went to North Carolina as part of the rescue team. The support from Abington and the area was amazing and reinforces what the chiefs have said about the foundation of this community, and he is proud to be part of it. The prayers and resources were well received by the people of West North Carolina, and they received a thank you card today from the Grace Baptist Church in Marion, NC, one of the distribution points for resources. He thanked the Board and the community for their support. The Board thanked Deputy Chief Postell and Lt. Canada.

FY2025 Tax Classification Hearing, Deputy Assessor Jolanta Briffett. Ms. Briffett gave a very thorough presentation (attached). There were no questions. Motion by Mr. Woods for a single tax rate, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.

Show Cause Hearing: Over permitted number of vehicles. Mr. Donovan explained the procedure that would be followed.

Vito Vatalaro, Vito's Auto Center, 135 Bedford Street – Witnesses were sworn in. Mr. Donovan read the letter sent to Mr. Vatalaro. The # of vehicles was down to 20 today. Mr. Vatalaro – has 20 on the lot, but some of them are parts cars and not even 12 are for sale. He has to be able to park cars to take parts off them to make a car. There are stickers on the cars that are not for sale. Jason Harris, Building Commissioner – they did the annual inspection and up until today, he was not in compliance. Nick Jenks did several inspections; there are 20 vehicles there now. There appears to be enough room for an increase if that is what the Board chooses to do. Mr. Vatalaro has been very respectful and willing to work with them. Police Chief Bonney - doesn't have any concerns at this point.

Motion to close the hearing made by Mr. Woods, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous. Did a violation occur? He has less than 12 cars for sale. It was suggested that the license be modified and delineate that there should be "X" amount for parts and no more than 12 for sale. Motion by Mr. Donovan that a violation occurred. Ms. Zompetti questioned the violation. Mr. Woods seconded the motion. It was his idea to do the car counts. Based on the Building Commissioner saying he had been respectful and worked with the department, he made the motion to modify the license. It looks like he has some room and will look to clarify the car count. Mr. Vatalaro – has been there for 30 years and never had any problems before. Unanimous on violation. Motion by Mr. Woods to modify the license to include 12 cars for sale and no more than six for parts, two for employees, total of 20, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.

Action/Discussion Items:

1. **Status update on 201 North Quincy Street.** The Building Commissioner has been working with the owner of the property who has multiple violations on the property. They are not associated with the Class II license. We got notified that the owner of the Class II license has had his bond revoked, and we sent him a letter that he has until Friday to replace it. They have ten days to come into compliance starting on the 25th. If they are not in compliance, they will have to cease and desist. Mr. Donovan suggested the Building Commissioner serve Mr. Dessaps with the Police that he can no longer conduct business if he doesn't comply. Mr. Goulston should be made aware of this also. Mr. Harris – 201 N. Quincy has failed numerous inspections, one of which is life and safety. Mr. Goulston was unaware of the subletting within his property and has spoken with his tenants.

Mr. Goulston believes he is under the protection of 40a. It was explained to him by the Building Commissioner that the property was not subject to the protection of 40a for the alternative uses and cannot be used as a canopy for the property. In the meantime, he was notified that the bond had been revoked. Mr. Donovan suggested sending Mr. Goulston a letter explaining the town's position – the property has not passed life and safety inspections, and the Building Commissioner has concerns. Mr. Woods made the motion to authorize Town Counsel to work with the Building Commissioner in terms of the property at 201 N. Quincy Street for enforcement action, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.

2. **Liz Shea, Town Planner, requests the Board to review and take a vote to adopt the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan.** By adopting this plan, it will help public

safety obtain grants. Ms. Shea thanked the people who helped during this process – Paul Bunker, John Nuttall, John Stone, Jeanne White, Kelly Johnson, Lindsay Wright, Jodie Hurst, Melissa Chiocca, Andrew Nocon, Jason Harris. FEMA and MEMA have approved it. Motion by Mr. Woods to adopt the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, 4-1-0 (Mr. Bunker abstained). Mr. Woods congratulated the Planning Department on the grants that have come in.

3. **Lisa McGovern, Veterans' Benefits Administrator, to recognize Troop 41.** Ms. McGovern recognized Chris Schultz and the scouts who have supported quite a few veterans' projects. Bob Pratt put together the PowerPoint presentation (attached), who was also an Eagle Scout. She mentioned forming a Veterans' Banner Committee to set up about 100 banners across Abington on 50 power posts. The banners would be up for two years, then would be taken down and given to the families. Then the next round of banners would go up. They would be doing this under the supervision of the VSO and the Veterans Advisory Council. They expect it to take the Committee about three years. It will be a two-person committee. Mr. Donovan thanked Troop 41 for all its hard work.
4. **Pam Howe, Abington Affordable Housing Trust Committee, regarding Center School.** Two studies have been done on the property under the Surplus School Building Committee. Mr. Lambiase – an RFP came out for the Center School. It would keep the open space wooded area as town open space. They have some good interest in it. He will be checking them with the Town Planner. After reviewing, they will make a recommendation to the Board. Ms. Howe and Ms. Delany – hadn't realized there was going to be a vote on the sale of the Center School at the last Selectmen's meeting and thought the two schools would be sold together. Wishes the boards were more in communication with each other. Mr. Donovan – there was no conscious attempt by anyone to exclude anyone; it was voted on at two town meetings. He trusts the opinions that were in the studies, and suggests we move forward from there.

Ms. Zompetti – part of this RFP would be affordable and senior, so the Affordable Housing Trust would be included down the road. Mr. Lambiase - there is an affordability component to the RFP and explained it. Mr. Donovan – the proposers will come before the Board and the Affordable Housing Trust will be invited. There will be a full presentation for the public.

5. **Requests for appointment:** Affordable Housing Trust, Bruce Hughes; Community Preservation, Meredith Fuller; Abington Cultural Council, Anne Nugent; Council on Aging, Patricia Leahy. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve the requested appointments, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.
6. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve **September 23, 2024, minutes**, seconded by Ms. Zompetti, unanimous.
7. **Status update – former Selectman, computer and keys.** They have been returned as of today and are in good order.
8. **Motion by Mr. Woods to set the Warrant for the STM November 25, 2024,** seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous. The Finance Committee recommended all three articles. Warrant attached. Article #, motion to approve by Mr. Donovan, seconded by Mr. Woods, unanimous. Article #2, motion to approve by Mr. Donovan, seconded by Mr. Woods, 4-1-0 (Ms. Zompetti). Article #3, motion to approve by Mr. Donovan, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.
9. **Vote to declare miscellaneous vehicles and equipment as surplus and available for disposal in accordance with MGL 30b.** Motion by Mr. Woods to authorize the Town Manager to add or delete any items and approve the surplus for disposal, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.
10. **Vote on Exemption Municipal Employee Disclosure Forms.** Ms. Zompetti recused herself and left the room during this discussion. Motion by Mr. Wood to approve the following list of employees who have submitted Exemption Municipal Employee Disclosure Forms who are working the elections, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous: Jodie Hurst, Nancy Hurst, Liz Shea, Mary Rogers, Amanda Zompetti, Lindsay Wright.

Motion by Mr. Woods to adjourn at 7:22 p.m., seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous. The next meeting of the Board will take place before the Special Town Meeting on November 25, 2025, at 5 p.m. or 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hurst
(Rev. 11/25/2024)