

SELECT BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 31st, 2025, 7:00 PM

Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229

900 Main Street, Millis, MA 02054

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rosenfeld called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

The following persons were present Chair Ellen Rosenfeld, Vice Chair Erin Underhill, Clerk Craig Schultze, Town Administrator Mike Guzinski and Assistant Town Administrator Karen Bouret-DeMarzo.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Rosenfeld kicks off the meeting by giving an update on the online permitting, which is now up and running, payments have been received, and people are happy with the outcome. This is something Chair Rosenfeld has been pushing for three years.

Tonight's Middle/High School Project update is related to an article that discusses how well-off school districts are being hit hard by the rising costs of school building projects. This is a state-wide issue, and it is not getting any smaller, which we can see as Milton is preparing for a 9.5 Million Dollar Override. The article can be found here:

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/03/27/metro/milton-schools-budget-override-deficit/#:~:text=A%20fiscal%20crisis%20in%20the,and%20required%20a%20town%20bailout.>

The next update is from the Consultants over at Vertex, the Millis MS/HS Team has submitted its preferred schematic report at the end of February. Moving right along in the MSBA process.

Sel. Schultze speaks on behalf of writing an education plan, and how that is what the MSBA relies on to fund the school. They want to build a school to support an educational plan with overarching philosophy. Something they have complemented us on in both the Clyde Brown Project and now again with the MS/HS Project. Sel. Schultze also notes that although we have submitted, there will be continued price modifications up until at least October of 2025.

Chair Rosenfeld gives an update about their attendance at the legislative hearing at UMass Amherst. The hearing was informative, and it was very full, which was the goal of the hearing. There will be another hearing held on April 8th in Boston as well as Via Zoom. Attendance is highly encouraged.

The Friends of the Millis Library are hosting a book sale, April 4th through April 6th. The preview sale will be held from 6-8PM on Friday night for friends only. Saturday everyone is welcome from 9AM-1PM, Sunday the sale is from 1-3PM.

Millis Beautification Day will be held on Saturday April 12th from 9AM until Noon. This event is rain or shine, and everyone is required to sign a waiver to register. Participation is encouraged and appreciated!

Jim McKay, DPW director, said that if you fill a bag with garbage on beautification day, call the DPW and they will come to you to pick it up. 508-376-5424.

III. SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS & HEARINGS

25-058: Capital Planning Committee Recommendations for 5/5/25 Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Barry, chair of the capital planning committee, presented his committee's draft of the May 2025 Report. This report is comprised of various capital requests put forth by department heads, the committee then uses a rubric to rank and score each request, being lower, medium and highest priorities. The rubric has a variety of categories that score the project keeping in mind public safety, integration with broader projects, and the overall benefit of these projects being implemented in town. Currently there are five ranked "highest", one ranked "Medium" and one ranked "lower".

Mr. McKay stood up to ask some clarifying questions as he had some confusion about the rating system. He made a note about the current rust situation on the truck, and how once the frame is welded there really is no going back. He brought photos of the trucks condition to present to the Board.

Regarding the MS/HS Renovation project Mr. Barry speaks about the Capital Planning Committees meeting with the School Building Committee. He notes that in their report this is the largest capital request, as it is currently \$123 Million of total capital and 2/3 is related to the schools.

25-059: A Municipal Moment- Stormwater Enterprise Explained

Mr. McKay spoke about the Stormwater Enterprise bill explained. Going back to 2015 when the EPA and MassDEP determined that cities and towns along the upper Charles River were polluting the water in Boston. As Boston cleaned up, they realized the issues were starting

elsewhere. This ultimately forced towns to start cleaning the phosphorus load, that comes from a variety of things. Fertilizers and car emissions are two very common carriers that get into the water that are highly pollutant. In recent years, the construction across town has implemented catch basins to ensure there are limited numbers of pollutants entering into the water.

Since 2003, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in conjunction with the MA Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP) has issued Millis a permit to discharge municipal stormwater. That permit regulates the operation and maintenance of the system and requires minimum controls to manage stormwater quality. The permit is scheduled to be renewed every five years, with planned incremental changes in permit terms to establish much stricter water quality protection requirements over time, which will be more expensive.

All property owners with developed land (whether residential, commercial, institutional, or public) in Millis are billed. As a policy determination, the Town is billing once annually in the Fall (October/November timeframe). The bill is unrelated to property value, or water/sewer use, but rather the impervious areas they own and the runoff it contributes.

25-060: Consider Request to Place Clothing Donation Bin at Library Parking Lot

Meghan Gavigan, treasurer of the Friends of the Millis Public Library, spoke about her request to place a donation bin for clothing behind the library in the parking lot.

An 8x16 foot prefabricated wood frame shed; the company would be responsible for coming monthly to collect the donations. The friends of the MPL would then receive some of the donated proceeds. They estimate that this will generate an additional \$50-\$200 per month for fundraising for the Friends of the Millis Public Library.

Sel. Underhill moved that The Board approve the request by the Friends of the Millis Public Library to place an 8x16 foot clothing donation shed adjacent to the library parking lot as shown on the attached photo for a period of two years with consideration for renewal. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

25-061: Consider Request to Install Fence & Wind Screens at Softball Field

Derek Phinney, the athletic director, spoke about installing a fence at the town softball field as well as wind screens being added to the backstops and one of the dugouts. He makes note that the facilities here in town are not up to the same level as other towns in our league may have. He wants to ensure that it is aesthetically pleasing to better the

atmosphere. Lastly, he sees this as a branding opportunity for both Varsity softball and Millis Youth Softball Programs here in town.

There was also mention of putting a plaque on the score board at the softball field to honor former Selectmen Chris Smith, as the scoreboard was his daughter's senior project. The scoreboard will be dedicated to the Smith family on a small plaque and will be added at some point during the season.

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board approve the request by The Millis Public Schools Athletic Director to install a fence, and a windscreen as described at the Town Softball Field. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

25-062: Appointments

- *PCB/ SBC Member*

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board approve Al Vautour as a member of the Permanent Building Committee with a term expiring June 30th, 2027, and as a member of the School Building Committee until completion of the MS/HS School Project. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

- *Millis Cultural Council Member*

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board appoint Nina Jean-Jacques to the Millis Cultural Council with a term expiring June 30th, 2028. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. OPEN SESSION ITEMS

25-063: Vote to Award Contract for Complete Streets Improvement to Beta Group, INC.

DPW Director Jim McKay requested The Board approve and allow the Town Administrator to sign the notice of the award for the following contract, Beta Group, INC. The contract amount will not exceed \$30,400.00. The project involves complete streets improvements at several locations to be funded by a grant received by the Town from MassDOT's Complete Streets Program.

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board approve and authorize the Town Administrator to sign a contract for design and construction of complete streets improvement at three locations listed on the Scope of work to Beta Group INC for an amount not to exceed \$30,400. The locations are Village Street and Himelfarb Street, Middlesex Street at Ridge Street and Main Street Route 109 at Exchange Street. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

25-064: Vote to Approve 5/12/25 Election Ballot Question- Amend Charter to Change Town Clerk Position from Elected to Appointed

Mr. Guzinski states that if the change were to occur, the Town Clerk would be a town employee and treated as department head. They would likely be a member of the union, and it would follow the same process as hiring another department head, this would become a full-time salary position.

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board approve the ballot question language for the May 12th Town Election as follows “shall the Town of Millis vote to amend its Home Rule Charter to have its elected Town Clerk become appointed Town Clerk of the town?” Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

25-065: Discuss/Approve Personnel Plan Updates

Mr. Guzinski typically makes recommendations to the Board as part of their overall budget process to make equitable changes to the Town’s Personnel Plan. These changes would be approved by the Town Meeting as part of article 7, these changes are made to ensure that employees are covered by the Personnel Plan are compensated and treated in a manner which is equitable to most of our employees which are covered by union agreements. His recommendations are as follows:

Adjust the Steps within Grades 11, 16 and 17 so that there is a 2.5% increase between all steps to match the newly signed SEIU agreement.

Remove Step 1 on the step scale and add a new Step 10 with a 2.5% increase as was done in the newly signed SEIU agreement.

Increase the Longevity payment amounts by \$100 to match all recently negotiated collective bargaining agreements.

Update Bereavement Leave language by adding “grandchild” and “domestic partner” and increase bereavement period from 3 days to 5 days for “immediate family” as reflected in several of the newly signed collective bargaining agreements.

Add a yearly stipend of \$5,200 for the legally mandated Public Records Officer position.

Add a 2.5% COLA in FY26 to the positions as outlined in the enclosed Personnel Plan to match most of the recently signed collective bargaining agreements.

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board approve the personnel plan language changes as listed effective 7/1/2025. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

25-066: Open 5/5/25 annual Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Guzinski asks the Board to again open the May 5th, 2025, annual town meeting warrant.

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board open the May 5th, 2025, annual town meeting warrant. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

25-067: Discuss, Add/Remove ATM Articles

The changes to be made to the draft warrant are as follows:

Added language to article 12- Tri-Board Committee, Craig wishes to mandate that they meet 4 times per year

Elimination of Article 13- After further review with Town Counsel it’s been determined that Town Meeting authorization is not needed for this.

The removal of article 16 as it was a duplicate article

Sel. Schultze suggests article 8, the capital plan, he wants to consider removal of the Chevy Blazer.

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board edit article 8 to remove the building inspection Chevy Blazer inspection vehicle from the article. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

The final request of Mr. Guzinski is for the Board to hold a special meeting on Monday April 7th, especially for the annual town meeting warrant and FY26 budget.

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board eliminate the following articles from the May 5th, 2025, town meeting warrant, article 13 and article 16. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

Closed 5/5/25 AM Warrant

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board close the May 5th, 2025, annual town meeting warrant. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

25-068: Vote to Ratify Collective Bargaining/Employment Agreements:

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board ratify the following collective bargaining agreements and employment agreements effective July 1st, 2025:

- *Professional FF of Millis, Local 4704*
- *MA Coalition of Police, Local 171*
- *Millis Police Association Dispatchers*
- *DPW AFSCME Council 93*
- *SEIU, Local 888*
- *Police Chief's Employment Agreement*

Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

25-069: Review/Approval of Request for Signage for Millis Beautification Day

Sel. Underhill spoke on behalf of the Millis Lions Club, to place signs across town to spread the word about April 12th beautification day.

Sel. Underhill motioned that The Board approve the request by the Millis Lions to place yard signs advertising the Millis Beautification Day at the following locations

Park Road near the directional sign behind town hall, in front of town hall at a distance from the veteran's monuments, intersection of Plain and Village Street, Towns Corner Route 115 and Orchard Street, Intersection of Curve Street and Exchange Street across from the American Legion. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Chair Rosenfeld polled the Board, Sel. Underhill- Yay, Sel. Schultze- Yay, Chair Rosenfeld- Yay. The motion passed unanimously.

25-070: Board/ Committee Liaison Updates

Chair Rosenfeld attended the sewer meeting; she has no updates to share other than her attendance at the UMass Hearing of the Ways and Means Committee.

Sel. Schultze attended the capital planning meeting which he already shared about, and he also attended the finance committee meeting, which was focused on the HR Position.

Sel. Underhill has no updates to share.

25-071: Review/Approval of Water/Sewer Commitment

There was no discussion of Water/Sewer.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION & ADJOURNMENT

Sel. Underhill motioned to enter executive session at 9:08 PM to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the government's bargaining or litigation position (Fire, Police, DPW, and SEIU) only emerging to adjourn. Sel. Schultze seconded the motion. Sel. Rosenfeld polled the Board, Schultze – yay, Underhill – yay, Rosenfeld – yay. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Samantha Beaudry