

**ACUSHNET BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

- I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- II. MEETING MINUTES
- III. JOINT MEETING – 4:00 P.M.

Joint meeting with Board of Assessors, both boards chose Robert Brown to fill the vacancy on the Board of Assessors. Mr. Brown served as an assessor in the past and currently serves on the Zoning Board of Appeals as well as in the Housing Authority. There was a roll call from the Assessors and the Board of Selectmen. All yes votes.

- IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

AFSCME, Police, Fire, DPW contract negotiations – The board motioned to go into executive session and return to open session with a roll call vote. All yes votes.

- V. APPOINTMENTS

Representative Paul Schmid & Representative Bill Straus did not attend.

- VI. FINANCIAL DEPARTMENTS

Report on Findings and Procedural Changes in the Accounting Department and the Treasurer/Collectors Office

Interim Town Accountant, Todd Hasset, along with Interim Treasurer/Collector, Marilyn Thompson and their assistants along with Town Administrator, James Kelley, reviewed the Town's finances and discussed multiple issues. Some concerns go back 10 years and other issues are imperative. Ms. Thompson said that the cash has not been balanced since February and it should be done on a monthly basis so that they can find their mistakes or oversights. She also stated there are a ton of unreconciled items that went back years. She and the team started with June 30th's numbers from the bank to move forward, and will work

towards clearing up the old entries as best as they can. She brought up 6 points in total.

Mr. Hasset recognized the FY22 budget and discussed all issues involved as well as financial plans moving forward.

VII. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1. Water/Sewer Rates

Kathy Silva mentioned to the board that the 5 year projection water budget will be in a negative unless rates are raised. The reason being the Town didn't increase the rates in a few years as New Bedford kept raising the fee. Ms. Silva said raising the rates by 60 cents would be acceptable. The sewer fund, however, has a surplus, so Ms. Silva suggested freezing sewer rates. The board voted to approve both actions. Selectman Gaspar made the motion, Selectman Hinckley seconded. Motion passes.

2. Hamlin Street Bridge – Ms. Silva brought up the project. The DPW will be meeting D.O.T. on 9/27/22 and we will have more information on the timeframe at that time.

3. Senior Deferral – The Board every year reviews senior property tax deferrals, application is for a resident who applied and qualifies. Selectman Gaspar motioned and Selectman Hinckley seconded it. Motion passes.

4. Bulk Item Pick -up – Ms. Silva mentioned that the department is having issues with not having enough employees as well as needing an additional \$30K for the event. Ms. Silva said that because of low staffing within the department and staff that is on the older side that bulky item pick up will not resume. The board discussed a variety of options and will look into the matter.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. CPC Articles Review

The Board discussed several projects approved by the Community Preservation Committee for use of the Community Preservation Act funds that will be on the Special Town Meeting warrant.

The school department applied for \$125,000 to update the basketball and tennis courts. They also want to replace the bleachers at the middle school. Selectman Gaspar suggested they recycle the wood from the old bleachers. To be voted on at a future meeting.

Allen Decker from Buzzards Bay Coalition asked the Board for CPC funds for groundwater protection, under the open space provisions of the CPA. The work is to be done at a 77-acre property in the southeastern part of Acushnet, bordering Mattapoisett. The property will also be opened to the public for passive recreation. Mr. Dakin, a former Selectman, asked about the access to the property, Mr. Decker said it has not been acquired for access from Acushnet but could be accessed from Mattapoisett at this time. The matter will be brought up at a future meeting.

FALL Town Meeting Warrant Approval – The Board of Selectmen were looking at articles to finalize the warrant for fall Town meeting.

The Board discussed the Town Meeting warrant to approve and finalize for the October 17, 2022 meeting. Board went through articles approved. The Board is recognizing Gerard Bergeron for his 50 years of service with the Town in multiple Capacities-Fire, EMS, EMA, School Committee. Board approved Selectman Gaspar motioned, Selectman Hinckley seconded.

#1 through 7 were approved articles which includes repurposing funds to fiber optic grant which will allow us to have equipment in buildings updated and update phone systems. All Town Buildings will be able to drop phone bills and Comcast. Which will save the town funds. School looking to make upgrades for fields, bleachers etc.. for recreation.

Article 8 passed with a hold regarding Buzzards Bay Article for Open Space. Article 9 & 10 & 11 for collective bargaining agreements.

Article 12 & 13 – Town Counsel mentioned if solar article doesn't go forward it could change the dynamics. Attorney General normally doesn't allow a 2nd moratorium. The Planner could not be here tonight and we will go over the articles at our next meeting.

2. Maintenance/Facility Department – No Discussion.

3. Golf Course Committee

Golf Slicer-Seeder Purchase (Capital Budget) and Trailer Purchase (Article 9 – May 2019, Town Meeting)

Ed Isaac from the Golf Advisory Committee discussed a warrant article asking for \$300,000 from the Golf Enterprise fund for a seeder and new trailer. Selectmen thanked Mr. Isaac for his duty to the Golf Committee. Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve, Selectman Hinckley seconded, all in favor.

a. RFP Golf Study

Selectman Gaspar motioned to have the golf committee look for RFPs for a study. Selectman Hinckley seconded it and all were in favor.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. AFSCME Contract Ratification – The Board of Selectmen voted to ratify the contract as presented, Selectman Gaspar made the motion, Selectman Hinckley seconded it, and the motion passed.
2. Guillotte Street Right of First Refusal (LIP Program Deed Restricted Property)
The Board motioned to forgo the right of first refusal on the potential resale for a deed restricted home and the affordable unit. The state could start to begin marketing on the home. Selectman Gaspar motioned, Selectman Hinckley seconded it, motion passed.
3. Notice of Intent to Retire from Gerard A. Bergeron (Notice to Hire)

The selectmen accepted the resignation notice for retirement for Mr. Gerard Bergeron from the fire department which he served for over 50 years. They discussed ways to honor him publicly for his tenure with the Town.

4. Police Department
 - a. Part time Dispatcher Hire

Chief Richmond discussed the schedule gap of several shifts per week and requested to hire a part-time dispatcher to fill the gap. Board approved request.

- b. Patrol Officer – Call for List

Chief Richmond also asked to hire three full time police officers. The department has two officers deployed with their National Guard units, and is also aware of some soon to be retirees. Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve the three full time officers. Selectman Hinckley seconded. All were in favor.

- c. Police Gift Fund

The board accepted the anonymous \$5000 donation. The Chief will take care of the paperwork.

5. Historical Commission Appointment – The Board motioned to appoint Mr. Larsen to the Historical Commission, he has lengthy information for the commission. Selectman Gaspar motioned and Selectman Hinckley seconded, all were in favor.

X. INFORMATION ONLY

XI. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

XII. MEETING MAIL

XIII. FUTURE BUSINESS

Selectmen's Meeting September 20, 2022 time TBD

Selectmen's Meeting September 27, 2022 4:00 p.m.

October 11, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

October 17, 2022 Town Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment



David Wojnar, Chairman

Kevin Gaspar, Sr.

Robert Hinckley
Board of Selectmen