

**ACUSHNET BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
July 11, 2023**

**I. CALL TO ORDER
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Present: Chairman Kevin Gaspar, Sr., Selectman Robert Hinckley, and Town Administrator James Kelley

Absent: Selectman David Wojnar

Chairman Gaspar welcomed the room to the meeting with the Board of Selectmen on July 11, 2023 at 4:30 PM EST, and noted the absence of Selectman Wojnar due to a conflict. He continued to say that the meeting will progress without his presence. Chairman Gaspar asked for a motion to call the July 11, 2023, regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order. Selectman Hinckley motioned to call the meeting to order. Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion and all were in favor.

II. MINUTES TO BE APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

III. MEETING MAIL

IV. APPOINTMENTS

1. PAMELA LABONTE APPOINTED AS COMMISSIONER OF TRUST FUNDS

Chairman Gaspar announced a joint meeting for appointment held between the Board of Selectmen and the Commissioners of Trust Funds. Chairman Gaspar asked for a motion to open the joint meeting. Selectman Hinckley motioned to open the joint meeting. Chairman Gaspar seconded to open the joint meeting, and all were in favor. The Commissioner of Trust Funds, John Roy, motioned to open the joint meeting. Commissioner Tommy Lipsett seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Chairman Gaspar explained that a vacancy of Commissioner of Trust Funds existed due to failure to properly elect during the May 13, 2023 Annual Town Election. Chairman Gaspar noted that a notice of vacancy had been given approximately 30 days prior to the meeting to allow letters of interest to be submitted for filling the position of Commissioner of Trust. Chairman Gaspar explained there was one letter of interest, that which Mrs. Pamela Labonte submitted. Chairman Gaspar further explained that her letter reasoned her qualifications for the position; this included 18 years of banking prior to serving as Town Clerk for the past 15 years. Her letter stated that she spent a majority of her time in management during her banking career. Commissioner Roy motioned to appoint Mrs. Labonte to the position of Commissioner of Trust Funds.

Commissioner Lipsett seconded and all were in favor. Chairman Gaspar asked for a roll call vote and all voted yes. Motion passed.

Chairman Gaspar asked the Commissioners of Trust Funds if there was a motion to adjourn the joint meeting between the Board of Selectmen and the Commissioners of Trust Funds. Commissioner Roy motioned to adjourn the joint meeting between the Commissioner of Trust Funds and the Board of Selectmen. Commissioner Lipsett seconded the motion to adjourn the joint meeting, Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor. All were in favor. Chairman Gaspar asked the Board of Selectmen if there is a motion to adjourn the joint meeting between the Board of Selectmen and the Commissioners of Trust Funds. Selectman Hinckley motioned the adjournment of the joint meeting, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the said motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for all those in favor. All were in favor. Due to the vote of both parties, the joint meeting between the Board of Selectmen and the Commissioners of Trust Funds was adjourned.

2. INSTALLATION OF 1 FO POLE FOR 36 ROCK STREET

The Board of Selectmen were presented a petition from NSTAR ELECTRIC COMPANY d/b/a EVERSOURCE to install 1 FO Pole on Rock Street for power access to 36 Rock St. As noted from the EVERSOURCE Right of Way Agent, the purpose of this pole is to alleviate a portion of the cost of underground power lines. Per documentation, the petition requests approval for the installation and maintenance of underground cables, conduits, wires, and necessary equipment for distribution purposes. The property owner of 36 Rock Street, an abutter, and Jessica Elder, the Right of Way Agent, were present. Per a letter from Ms. Elder, the petition required a notice of abutters and a hearing. Chairman Gaspar asked if any abutter were present and the abutter identified herself as such. She requested the location and purpose of the pole. Selectman Hinckley presented the abutter with a map of where the proposed pole would take place. Ms. Elder informed the room that the pole will be placed in front of 36 Rock Street and therefore go underground to the building on the property. The property owner described the intended use of the structure, being a barn. Chairman Gaspar asked the abutter if she is fine with the pole, at which she responded "yes." Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the 1 FO Pole on Rock St. Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the said pole. Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion, and Chairman asked for all those in favor. All were in favor. Motion passed.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. TRANSFER OF VACATION TIME TO NEXT FISCAL YEAR

Kevin Perkins requested in a letter to carry 40 hours of his vacation time over from the 2023 Fiscal Year to the 2024 Fiscal Year. Chairman Gaspar stated that from here on forth, he will not be partial to transferring vacation time outside of

the fiscal year with the exception of positions with staff shortage. Chairman Gaspar made the exception for Mr. Perkins. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve Mr. Perkin's transfer of vacation to the next fiscal year. Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the transfer of Mr. Perkin's 40 hours of vacation time to the next fiscal year. Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion, and Chairman asked for all those in favor. All were in favor. Motion passed.

2. TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS 2023 FISCAL YEAR

Chairman Gaspar explained that at the end of the fiscal year, there are interdepartmental transfers in the budget that may take place. Chairman Gaspar listed the following first set of departmental transfers from item (a).

a. Transfer from:

Selectmen/Salaries – Admin Assistant of \$9,793

Transfer to:

Assessors/Salaries – Asst. Assessor of \$1,100

Animal Control/Salaries – Director of \$1,585

Treasurer/Salaries – Asst. Treasurer of \$1,264

Health/Salaries – Clerical of \$1,492

Health/Salaries – Clerical of \$753

Cemetery/Salaries – Temporary Wages of \$296

Park/Salaries – Maintenance of \$3,303

Explanation:

Per documentation, the need for transfer were due to vacation payback, extra pay due to interim staffing, position reclassification and reallocation of shared position with Conservation, minimum wage increase (budget level funded), and additional maintenance needs.

Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the transfers from item (a). Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the said items, Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion, and Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor. All were in favor. Motion Passed.

Chairman Gaspar introduced and listed the second set of transfers listed below in item (b).

b. Transfer from:

Inspection/Salaries – BLDG Inspector of \$2,120

Inspection/Salaries - Commissioner of \$3,220

Inspection/Salaries – Clerical of \$2,942

Veterans Benefits of \$50,000

Transfer to:

Police Salaries (Overtime) of \$58,282

Explanation:

Chairman Gaspar explained that the need of transfer was primarily due to overtime needed to cover shifts for three officers

on military leave and two officers left for the State barracks to continue their careers. He thanked our officers on military leave for serving our country.

Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the second set of departmental transfers to the police department, Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the departmental transfers in the police department, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Motion Passed.

Chairman Gaspar introduced and listed the third set of transfers listed below in item (c).

c. Transfer from:

Reserve Fund – Golf of \$40,000

Transfer to:

R&M – Equipment of \$12,500

Maintenance – R&M Equipment of \$7,500

Gasoline of \$12,500

Supplies – Golf Shop of \$7,500

Explanation:

Per documentation, operating expenses were higher than anticipated.

Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the transfers within the golf course, Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the transfers within the golf course, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the said motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Motion Passed.

Chairman Gaspar introduced and listed the third set of transfers listed below in item (d).

d. Transfer from:

Water Dept – Reserve for Unforeseen Expenditure of \$60,000

Transfer to:

Water – New Bedford Bills of \$60,000

Explanation:

Chairman Gaspar explained that the original budgeted amount was \$1,224,000 but this was lowered to \$1,154,000 due to a DOR regulation. He further explained that the DPW feels that they will need the additional \$60,000 from the Reserve to cover the June New Bedford bills. He further explained that Ms. Silva, Todd Hassett, and the Assistant Town Accountant will be working with himself on the matters since this is an issue that has not happened in previous years. He noted that the purpose of this investigation is to decrease the need to take funds from reserves. Mr. Kelley explained that the DOR would not let the Town of Acushnet anticipate the increase from the City of New

Bedford. Mr. Kelly suggested to have a discussion with the DOR, and Chairman Gaspar strongly agreed. Chairman Gaspar felt that the DOR cannot anticipate the usage versus rates set by the Town as an entity that is set from afar. He continued to state that Kathy and the DPW staff had been doing a good job in the past, and there had never been a need to have a shuffle in the budget. Mr. Kelly spoke with Mr. Hassett to have the DOR come to the Town of Acushnet to do auditing. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the transfer of funds to the Water Department, Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the transfer of funds in the Water Department, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Motion Passed.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. ROBERT ROCHA RECOGNIZED FOR DEDICATION TO CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Chairman Gaspar recognized Mr. Robert Rocha for his dedicated 21 years of volunteered time, service, and excellence to the Conservation Commission. Chairman Gaspar further noted that Mr. Rocha served as Chairman for the last 17 years. The Board of Selectmen presented Mr. Rocha with an Official Citation for his acts. Mr. Rocha took a moment to speak of his beginnings of serving the Conservation Commission. He thanked the Board of Selectmen for reappointment and the experiences he endured while serving the board.

2. SYDNEY VIVEIROS APPOINTED AS BOARD OF SELECTMEN/TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Chairman Gaspar announced the proposal for a new appointment for the role of Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator. He further explained how Mr. Kelly and Selectman Hinckley were deemed responsible for selecting a candidate for this position and turned the conversation over to Selectman Hinckley. Selectman Hinckley explained how Mr. Kelly and himself reviewed numerous applications and chose to hire a town resident who was born and raised in Acushnet. He further noted that she was looking for a job closer to home and the hiring team believed that she would do a great job completing the team in the Town Administrator/Selectmen's Office. Chairman Gaspar asked if she will be starting as soon as possible. Mr. Kelly stated that she will be starting the following day.

Chairman Gaspar asked if there is a motion to appoint Sydney Viveiros as Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator's Office as an Administrative Assistant, Selectman Hinckley motioned to appoint Ms. Viveiros as the Administrative Assistant in the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator's Office, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Motion Passed.

3. HUGO PEREIRA & LENNY LATOJO APPOINTED AS WEIGHERS AT TILCON CAPALDI/PJ KEATING

Chairman Gaspar introduced the candidates Hugo Pereira and Lenny Latojo for the appointment as Weighers at Tilcon Capaldi/PJ Keating. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to appoint Hugo Pereira and Lenny Latojo as Weighers at Tilcon Capaldi/PJ Keating, Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve appointing Hugo Pereira and Lenny Latojo as Weighers at Tilcon Capaldi/PJ Keating, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the said motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Motion Passed.

4. ZACHARY GONSOLVES NEWLY HIRED FOR GOLF MAINTENANCE

Chairman Gaspar read a letter of recommendation from the golf committee to hire Zachary Gonsolves as a Golf Maintenance new hire. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to appoint candidate Zachary Gonsolves as a Golf Maintenance new hire, Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve appointing candidate Zachary Gonsolves as a Golf Maintenance new hire, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the said motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Motion Passed.

5. DONALD SILVA NEWLY HIRED AS GOLF WEEKEND RANGER

Chairman Gaspar read a letter of recommendation from the golf committee to hire Donald Silva as a Golf Weekend Ranger new hire. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to appoint candidate Donald Silva as a Golf Weekend Ranger new hire, Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve appointing candidate Donald Silva as a Golf Weekend Ranger new hire, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the said motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Motion Passed.

6. ARTICLE 34

Chairman Gaspar recounted Article 34 as an act authorizing the Town of Acushnet to continue the employment of Call Deputy Fire Chief. He summarized the meaning of this to the room. He continued by explaining that the mandatory retirement age of Firefighters and Chief is standardly 65 years old; passing Article 34 per its stipulations of mental and physical ability would allow such Chief to maintain his position. Chairman Gaspar continued to state that Call Deputy Fire Chief Makuch may now continue serving his town and community per passing Article 34. Chairman Gaspar and Selectman Hinckley praised Mr. Makuch for his service.

Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve Article 34 and sent it to Legislative Delegation, Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve Article 34 and sent it to Legislative Delegation, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Motion Passed.

7. JEFF WHITE APPOINTED AS MEMBER OF BOARD OF APPEALS

Chairman Gaspar recounted a letter that Mr. Jeff White wrote to be appointed as an Alternate member of the Board of Appeals. Chairman Gaspar noted that Mrs. Pam Labonte, Mrs. Tania Tavares, and himself had been working to establish Terms of Expiration for members of the Board of Appeals. He further explained that Terms of Expiration do not exist for this board, and others, and the ongoing process of appointments to fill the positions had not been conducive.

Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to appoint Mr. White as an Alternate to the Board of Appeals, Selectman Hinckley motioned to appoint Mr. Jeff White as an Alternate to the Board of Appeals, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Motion Passed.

8. CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBER APPOINTMENT - POSTPONED

Chairman Gaspar postponed the review of Mr. Eric DeBarros requesting membership of the Conservation Commission. Chairman Gaspar said that Mr. DeBarros' request will be readdressed upon receiving more information. No votes taken.

VII. SELECTMAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. HAMLIN STREET CLOSURE AND UPCOMING MILLING AND PAVING

Selectman Hinckley carried over a message from the DPW about upcoming road work. He noted that the Hamlin Street bridge repair had started. He also explained that the street will be closed for the unforeseeable future. Selectman Hinckley described that milling and road paving will begin on Middle Road between D.W. White and the public schools; milling will begin on July 17, 2023 and the paving will begin approximately during the week of July 24, 2023, weather permitting. He noted that during those same dates, there will be milling and paving done, respectively, on Perry Hill Road from Mendall Road to the Acushnet/Rochester Town Line. Lastly, he mentioned that one lane of travel will be open, and the sides of travel will be alternated. No vote taken.

2. Mr. Kelley appreciated the work that the DPW did by the Town Hall with the sewer drain that collapsed in due to a small sinkhole. No vote taken.

VIII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

IX. INFORMATION ONLY

Chairman Gaspar noted that the open vacancies will be updated in the upcoming meetings.

X. FUTURE BUSINESS

1. Chairman Gaspar stated that the combined Selectman's Meeting and Soil Board Meeting is to take place on July 12, 2023 at 5:00 PM EST. The meeting will continue peer review.
2. Chairman Gaspar stated that the next regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on July 25, 2023 at 4:30 PM EST.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION


XII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to adjourn the July 11, 2023 Selectmen's Meeting. A Motion to Adjourn the July 11, 2023 Selectmen's Meeting was motioned by Selectman Hinckley, and Chairman Gaspar seconded the said motion. Chairman Gaspar asked if all were in favor, and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Approved by:



Kevin A. Gaspar, Chairman



Robert Hinckley, Member

David Wojnar, Member