

**ACUSHNET BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM  
AUGUST 22, 2023**

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

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

Chairman Gaspar welcomed the room to the meeting with the Board of Selectmen on August 22, 2023 at 4:00 PM EST. Chairman Gaspar asked for a motion to call the August 22, 2023, regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order. Selectman Hinckley motioned to call the meeting to order. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor.

**II. MINUTES TO BE APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

1. August 8, 2023 Regular Session

Chairman Gaspar stated that the first order of business was to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2023 Regular Session meeting. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the August 8, 2023 Regular Session minutes. Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the August 8, 2023 Regular Session minutes. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion, and Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor. All were in favor. Motion passed.

**III. MEETING MAIL**

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Purple Heart Recipient Coins Invoice

Chairman Gaspar announced that the Purple Heart Ceremony is to take place on Saturday, August 26, 2023 at 10:00 AM at the Acushnet Veteran's Memorial Park. He asked if there was a motion to approve the invoice expenditures of \$175 from the celebrations budget for the Purple Heart Medallions. Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the invoice expenditures of \$175 from the celebrations budget for the Purple Heart Medallions. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor.

2. Historical Commission Firebell Rock Sign

Chairman Gaspar read the verbiage of the sign that will be placed on Keene Rd. The history and stories of the Firebell were mentioned on the sign. Ms. Pauline Teixeira, of the Historical Commission, and Selectman Wojnar added more remarks regarding the efforts it took to produce this sign. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the placement of the sign commemorating Firebell Rock by the Historical Commission. Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the placement of the sign commemorating Firebell Rock by the Historical

Commission. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed.

3. Senior Application for Tax Deferral Form 97

Chairman Gaspar explained that this tax deferral is approved on an annual basis for this individual. He asked if there was a motion to approve the senior tax deferral that was present before the Board in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 41a. Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the senior tax deferral that was present before the Board in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 41a. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor and all were in favor. Motion passed.

4. Acushnet Creamery Event Permit

Chairman Gaspar announced that the Creamery is looking to host a Movie Night and described its details. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the Event Permit for Acushnet Creamery of 264 Main Street, Acushnet for its Movie Night as presented, subject to a schedule of the events. Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the Event Permit for Acushnet Creamery of 264 Main Street, Acushnet for its Movie Night as presented, subject to a schedule of the events. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed.

5. Cultural Council Committee

a. Amendment from 8 members to 9 members

Chairman Gaspar stated that Ms. Labonte informed him that the Cultural Council used to have 22 members in 2015, but in that year, it was voted to only have 8 members on the Cultural Council. Chairman Gaspar explained that an even number of members is problematic for voting, so the Board is looking to increase the number of members from 8 to 9. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to amend the number of members of the Cultural Council from 8 members to 9 members, with no alternates, effective August 22, 2023. Selectman Hinckley motioned to amend the number of members of the Cultural Council from 8 members to 9 members, with no alternates, effective August 22, 2023. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed.

b. Citizen's Interest Form from Charlene Correia

Chairman Gaspar stated that the Board had yet received a letter of resignation that would allow Charlene Correia to be appointed to the Cultural Council, so her appointment could not have been made at that time.

6. Golf Management Committee

a. Chain of Command

Mr. Kelley explained the Chain of Command is as follows: the Golf Management and Operational Committee has a sub committee called the Greens Committee. He stated that the Greens Committee will handle the day-to-day operations and staffing. Mr. Kelley stated that he

was made aware that the Greens Committee feels that the staff are not listening to their direction, so the Town Administrator was contacted. He was asked to bring this forth to the Board of Selectmen to reinforce the Chain of Command. The Greens Committee felt that there were contractual approvals that went forth without the approval of both the Greens Committee and Golf Management Committee. Chairman Gaspar stated that he could understand the frustration from this, and stated that it is important that the committees work together, as their behavior is unacceptable. He asked that if something is requested to be done, it should be done. Selectman Wojnar asked if there was a motion to reinforce the rules that have already been set in place, although he felt the motion was redundant. Selectman Hinckley motioned to reinforce the rules that have already been set in place. Chairman Gaspar seconded the motion and asked for those in favor. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Selectman Hinckley stated that everyone needs to work together to benefit the Town. If something becomes bothersome, communicate with your supervisor and he can then bring that issue to the committees. He stated that maturity is necessary to work in the best interest of the Town and its people. Chairman Gaspar agreed and felt that there has been a lack of respect.

b. ATM Machine

Chairman Gaspar stated that from his understanding, the ATM Machine was installed without the permission from the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Golf Management Committee, nor Greens Committee. Dana, the Golf General Manager, was present to speak on the topic. He stated that during outings, players often need cash for the events and are sent to Scuttlebutts to use their ATM. Dana stated that the ATM does not cost the golf course anything, if anything it gives the golf course a transaction credit, and Dana gave reasoning for needing the ATM. Dana stated that he was willing to house the ATM on a trial basis and placed it in a protected location. Selectman Wojnar stated that this was a great idea. Mr. Kelley stated that this is a Chain of Command issue. Dana said that he does not have a problem removing the machine; however, it has been successful from the start since someone was already waiting to use it while it was being installed. Selectman Wojnar stated that Dana was hired as the General Manager, and he is responsible for making business decisions to better the course. He understands that there was a Chain of Command issue, but Dana was doing something to better the golf course. Dana apologized for any disrespect he may have caused by implementing the trial ATM. Chairman Gaspar stated that this should have been brought forth to the Committees to cover any bases, especially since this could be an insurance problem. He stated that it can be a good asset for a business, but frustrations arose due to the lack of communication and protocol. Chairman Gaspar and Dana agreed that they could see valid points from both sides. Chairman Gaspar asked Mr. Kelley to look into the insurance needs for the ATM. Dana asked for clarification on how the Golf Committee and Greens Committee work. Mr. Kelley and Chairman Gaspar essentially said that the Greens Committee runs the daily operations, while the Golf Management committee works more on the business side. Chairman Gaspar thanked him for what he has done over the past 21 years, and he asked that the employees of the golf course work together.

c. Golf Carts

Chairman Gaspar confirmed that the carts are gasoline-operated and will continue to be. Dana explained that the carts are of different models from different years due to the uncertain economy and budgeting reasons. He stated that the course needs to look uniform for customer perception, so they have been slowing ordering the same models in a lease-to-own manner. He stated that the course is now in a financial position to do this. Chairman Gaspar asked for the breakdown of the carts, as there should be 72 carts in the fleet. Dana stated that the course is leasing-to-own 42 carts. He said that there were 20 carts for the first rotation, 14 carts for the second rotation, and then doing the same 20 carts at a time. Selectman Hinckley stated that they are essentially cleaning up the rotation. Dana described the maintenance protocol for the carts. He stated that the insurance aspect would allow for the new and old carts to have covered repairs and maintenance. Chairman Gaspar stated that this will be discussed again at the next meeting. Chairman Gaspar thanked Dana for attending the meeting. A resident in the audience stated that he does not understand why the Town would hire a General Manager to run the business if the boards/committees are not allowing him to do so. He felt that the manager should be allowed to run the course without micromanagement. Mr. Kelley stated that this is not a business, it is a government. No action was taken.

7. Chairs of the Conservation Committee, Planning Board, and Board of Health

Chairman Gaspar explained that the packet of information given to him regarding the chairs of the Conservation Committee, Planning Board, and Board of Health were given to him shortly before the meeting began, so he felt that approving something without review would not be a wise decision. Mr. Kelley briefly explained that the packet consisted of forms, flowcharts, and descriptions of actions to be done before the planning board. He discussed with the Conservation Commission and Board of Health to formulate a similar document of their own. He said what was included were forms from other towns for their Building Commissioner's office. Mr. Kelley stated that the goal is to make the Building Commissioner's office in Acushnet to be a "one stop shop" for all of the materials needed from various departments to conduct new construction in Town. This packet would describe applications, procedures, and meetings needed for this.

Selectman Wojnar thought this was a great idea. He stressed the importance of being given all the needed information at once, instead of piece-mailing each step of the process. Selectman Hinckley stated that having a checklist would be helpful, and the residents in Town will appreciate this. Chairman Gaspar stated that he has wanted something like this for over a decade, and he is proud that Mr. Barbola and Mr. Kelley worked together to formulate this. He said that he would like the respective Chairs of the departments involved to send feedback and materials that are necessary for this to happen.

Selectman Wojnar asked if there is software that the Town uses for the residents to know where their application is in the que. Mr. Kelley stated that it will be provided online and progress of the applications would be viewable there. Chairman Gaspar stated that was a great idea. Mr. Kelley stated that tablets may be used to help the process. Selectman Wojnar asked for demonstrations to be conducted when this becomes up and running. Chairman Gaspar announced that no action was taken for this topic.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Letter of interest from Eric Debarros for Conservation Commission**

Chairman Gaspar read Eric Debarros' Letter of Interest that described his skills and qualifications. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion. Selectman Hinckley motioned to appoint Eric Debarros to the Conservation Commission. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed.

Chairman Gaspar announced that Mr. Debarros will be replacing Mr. Rocha, at which his term expires in 2024. Selectman Wojnar spotted Jim from the Conservation Commission in the audience and asked him of his experience on the Commission. Jim stated that he enjoys being a member and has learned a great deal from this new experience. Selectman Wojnar reminded Jim that he can inform the Board of any concerns and feedback that he may feel the need to share. The Board thanked Jim for his service on the Board.

## **VI. DPW**

### **1. Storm drains/flooding**

Chairman Gaspar read of all the roads that were reported to be affected by excessive storm water flooding.

#### **a. Lisa Ave.**

Chairman Gaspar described the photographs provided of the flooding on Lisa Avenue and Pope Park.

#### **b. Middle Rd.**

#### **c. Mulberry St.**

Chairman Gaspar described the photographs provided of the flooding in front of and around homes on Mulberry St.

Chairman Gaspar asked Mr. Dan Menard to speak on these flooding issues and what the DPW will be doing to address the issues. Mr. Menard stated that there has been historical rainfall in the recent weeks. He stated that the pipes on Lisa Avenue would need to have engineering done to increase the size because the output of the water could be detrimental to other areas. He stated that another pipe travels directly under the baseball fields at Pope Park, and the pipes can handle normal rainfall. Chairman Gaspar stated that Scout's Pond is the out-spout for this drain pipe. He agreed that out-put water issues could arise with doubling the size of the pipe. Mr. Menard stated that several other out-spouts lead to Scout's Pond, as well. Chairman Gaspar asked if Lisa Avenue could connect to the storm water pipes on Main Street, and Mr. Menard said he was unsure if there were basins for this area. A resident in the audience stated that he had seen similar issues on South Main Street by the quarry due to the State shrinking the size of the pipes leading to the Acushnet River. Chairman Gaspar made clear that the storm drain engineering done 40 to 50 years ago was made to suffice the town how it was, not accounting for the growth that Acushnet has seen decades later. He said that the problem has been inherited due to the increase of impervious surfaces from development. Chairman Gaspar

stated that basin cleaning is conducted annually and suggested using hydrant flushing to help clean out sludge in the storm drains with the use of the new tanker truck from the Fire Department.

Mr. Menard stated that Mulberry Street is not an accepted street in Town. He said that the drainage swale has been cleaned out, and the pot holes on the road have been repaired as needed. He stated that the road is level around the homes that were flooded and suggested putting another catch basin by there. However, he claimed that he would be unsure of the Board's decision since this is an unaccepted road. Selectman Hinckley showed the Board a photograph of a home on Mulberry that is "in the perfect storm location." Mr. Menard stated that he would be interested in paving this road to help with future maintenance.

Chairman Gaspar suggested scoping the pipes on Lisa Avenue and like-roads to help save costs in investigating the issue. He stated that Mr. Menard should focus on accepted roads. Mr. Menard stated that he would consider engineering a larger pipe on Lisa Ave to connect to Park Ave, leading to Scout's Pond. He is looking to avoid destroying the park and baseball fields. Chairman Gaspar asked Mr. Menard to look into that idea.

Selectmen Hinckley stated that the concern on Mulberry Street should be great due to the number of residents on that road, as their driveways flood greatly during lighter rain showers. Chairman Gaspar asked Mr. Menard to investigate Mulberry Street, as well. He stated that he could make estimates for basins on that street.

Chairman Gaspar stated that the pipe on Middle Road needs to be increased because of safety hazards. He stated that Police and Fire have had to rescue vehicles from that flooding area. He stated that it is important to allocate Police and Fire for other needs instead of not fixing the drainage issues.

## 2. Street Sweeping

Chairman Gaspar asked Mr. Menard to confirm that the Town owns a street sweeper that is over 20 years old and works very inefficiently. Mr. Menard stated that the DPW spends more time repairing the machine than the amount of time it runs for. Chairman Gaspar emphasized the safety issue of having residual dirt and sludge from a street sweeper that operates ineffectively and unreliably. Selectman Wojnar stated that "autonomous street sweepers" exist. Chairman Gaspar asked Mr. Menard to investigate the prices for purchasing a new machine, versus leasing a street sweeper, versus hiring a daily rate street sweeper. Chairman Gaspar stated that he would rather see the Town spend a little extra for a quality sweeper, and a resident in the audience stated that the townspeople would appreciate seeing a cost breakdown.

## 3. Pedestrian Signs

Mr. Kelley stated that a safety audit was conducted on South Main Street with the MassDOT. He stated that the pedestrian signs on South Main Street are not functioning due the solar panels not facing the sun. Kathy from the DPW stated that these can be fixed free of charge from the company who installed them. Chairman Gaspar stated that call needs to be made.

#### 4. ADA Crosswalks

Mr. Kelley stated that during the MassDOT safety audit, several crosswalks were not ADA complaint. Mr. Menard stated that he recently had the crosswalks near the church redone up to compliancy; he stated that the DPW prepped the site for the crosswalks and contracted for installing the plates and pouring the cement. Chairman Gaspar asked if the uncompliant crosswalks can be covered by DPW funding, at which Mr. Menard confirmed they could. Mr. Kelley stated he will provide Mr. Menard a list of the crosswalks that need to be redone. Chairman Gaspar emphasized doing the crosswalks by the Town Hall and Wing Lane, and Mr. Kelley stated that Slocum Street will need to be addressed first. Mr. Menard stated that he will do these projects during the week to not disrupt the Mass services at the church.

#### 5. Anthony St.

Chairman Gaspar stated that the expenditures for Anthony Street have already been approved from Chapter 90 funding. Mr. Menard stated that the contractor who will be providing the reclaimed asphalt service is difficult to get ahold of. He stated that he had called him over the last 3 weeks. Steve from Murray Reclaiming is Mr. Menard's point of contact, and Mr. Menard had left him multiple messages. Mr. Menard explained that this is a small project for this company, but reclaiming is pertinent for this road due to the home elevations. He said that the job should take less than a week, so his goal is to have this done by the end of September. He stated that the alternative is the DPW digging out the material and grading, which would be less efficient and more costly. Chairman Gaspar asked if Mr. Menard could do his best to hear from Steve since several complaints have been made about this issue and the delays.

### **VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Kelley stated that his first report pertained to budgeting and the Fall Town Meeting. The State budget net increased to the amount of \$8,440, the local revenue is to be monitored, new growth has yet to be certified by the Assessor's office, and the tax rate will be determined after the Fall Town Meeting. The free cash flow is \$1,563,235, and Mr. Kelley cautioned the Board that \$935,422 of that amount is compiled of one-time issues, investment revenue, excess excise revenue, and cash variance from the Treasurer/Collector's office from cleaning up the books. He stated that their sewer enterprise earnings are \$1,525,000. He stated that there is monitoring of the receipts and the revenue should be greater than the estimates. However, State assessments were higher and made this a wash. He stated there will be funding for the Fall Town Meeting for a new street sweeper or drainage corrections.

Mr. Kelley announced that there are vacancies remaining. There will be an interview during the beginning of September for the Town Planner position. The facilities/maintenance department hired a custodian for the COA. The Building Commissioner is looking to advertise for a local inspector and a parttime building commissioner. The Town Administrator's office re-advertised for the Treasurer/Collector position, as being in discussion for another interim.

Mr. Kelley stated that he conducted a meeting with the Cranberry Growers and the Lake Street Committee Representative and came to the conclusion of not using an herbicide, and instead

using a picker to remediate the weeds. He stated that there is new lighting on Lake Street in the parking lots. Talks are in the works for installing security cameras.

Mr. Kelley stated that the Apple-Peach festival had already been discussed, and the parking concerns were addressed. Selectman Wojnar wanted to clarify where the parade will span. The Board would like to be involved in the parade. Selectman Hinckley thanked Mr. Andrew Cioper for his involvement and answering of questions.

#### **VIII. SELECTMAN ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Gaspar told the townspeople to have a great Labor Day weekend, but reminded them to be safe. Call for a ride if you need one!

#### **IX. INFORMATION ONLY**

#### **X. FUTURE BUSINESS**

1. Chairman Gaspar announced that Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 6 PM will be the continuance of the Soil Board public hearing regarding the Bylaw. It will be located at the Council on Aging.
2. Chairman Gaspar stated that the next regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 12, 2023. The meeting will take place in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

#### **XI. APPOINTMENTS**

Chairman Gaspar called a recess subject to the Chair to deliver the FAYB League's Major and Minor Teams Champions Citations. Chairman Gaspar, Selectman Wojnar, Selectman Hinckley, and Fairhaven Chairman Leone Corey congratulated and spoke on the behalf of the winning teams. The gentlemen passed out citations and took photographs. Chairman Gaspar called the meeting back into session, once more.

#### **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Gaspar read as follows:

"Executive Session - M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a): Subsection 3 - To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares and the Board will not return to public session – Supervisory Unit/United Steelworkers/Union President - CBA Negotiations and/or Department of Labor Relations Cases."

Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a vote to go into Executive Session. Chairman Gaspar asked for a roll call vote. Selectman Hinckley said yes, Selectman Wojnar said yes, and Chairman Gaspar said yes. The Board entered Executive Session.

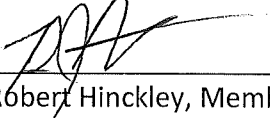



### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to adjourn the August 22, 2023 Selectmen's Meeting. Selectman Wojnar motioned to adjourn the August 22, 2023 Selectmen's Meeting, and Selectman Hinckley seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Approved by:

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Kevin A. Gaspar, Chairman

  
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Robert Hinckley, Member

  
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David Wojnar, Member