

**ACUSHNET BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM**

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

I call the August 31, 2021, regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order. I want to remind all present that this meeting is being audio and video recorded. Those present were Chairman David Desroches, Selectman Kevin Gaspar, Sr., Selectman David Wojnar.

Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda only requires a single motion as follows:

Should the Board concur, the following motion may be in order:

To approve the Consent Agenda including the release of the minutes of the Regular Session Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 6, 2021 as presented.

III. MEETING MAIL

1. LETTER OF RESIGNATION FROM AMANDA BAPTISTE- BY-LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE ALTERNATE, CULTURAL COUNCIL, AND CPC COMMITTEE

The Board thanked Ms. Baptiste for her time and dedicated service to the Town. She will be missed. No Vote Taken.

2. BRIAN DONOHOE RETIREMENT LETTER FROM FIRE/EMS

Mr. Donohoe enjoyed his time working in Acushnet as a full-time paramedic/firefighter, he enjoyed working with a dedicated group of men and women who made his career memorable. The Board thanked Mr. Donohoe for his dedicated time and service to the Town. No Vote Taken

3. LETTER OF NOTICE TO RETIRE FROM FIRE CHIEF

Fire Chief/EMS Director Kevin Gallagher put in his intention and will notify you of an exact date no later than July 2022. The communication fulfills the requirement found in Section 1 (B) of the Personal Services Agreement entered

into with the Town on June 21, 2021. Selectman Gaspar motioned to accept Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

4. ROBERT BROWN HAS PLACED AN INTEREST IN BECOMING THE TOWN MODERATOR

Moderator Roger Cabral has resigned from his position and Mr. Brown is asking for consideration of his application for the position.

Selectmen Gaspar mentioned that he can't hold any other position and is not interested in leaving Zoning Board of Appeals, Selectman Gaspar knows by-laws and asks the bos to consider asking town counsel to check into the matter.

Selectman Gaspar motioned to have Counsel check into the matter before appointing, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

5. LETTER OF INTEREST FROM CHARLES LEONARD TO BE A FULL-MEMBER ON THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Selectman Gaspar motioned to appoint Charles Leonard to ZBA, as he has been an alternate, he understands that this is a 5 year appointment and will do his best, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

6. LETTER OF INTEREST FROM BRITTANY BORGES-TO BE APPOINTED TO THE CULTURAL COUNCIL, COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE AND BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Ms. Borges letter of interest states she likes giving back to the community and makes me a good candidate Selectman Gaspar motioned to appoint-Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

7. LETTER OF INTEREST FROM KELSEY JANAK-TO BE APPOINTED TO THE CULTURAL COUNCIL, AND BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Ms. Janak is responsible for all things Acushnet website and often does group organization, she feels she can be helpful to spread the word and plan town events. Selectman Gaspar motioned to appoint-Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes

8. LETTER FROM THE BUILDING INSPECTOR REGARDING APPOINTING AN INSPECTOR OF WIRES

The Building Inspector asked for an appointment due to the fact that Mr. DeCosta will be moving out of state and Mr. Knox our current inspector is doing all of the inspections and is somewhat overwhelmed. Mr. Corrigan is a licensed journeyman electrician and a resident of the Town. Selectman Gaspar motioned to appoint, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

9. LETTER FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE REQUESTING A JOINT MEETING

The Finance Committee requests a meeting with the Board to discuss changing the Town's present form of town meeting to a representative town meeting. Board of Selectman puts on the committee to make recommendations to present a balanced budget and is asking to entertain a joint meeting to review the representative town meeting. Selectman Wojnar would like discussion and has thoughts of the view of town meeting, it is an institution in essence it has been a bedrock and given citizens their chance to discuss their thoughts it is worth discussing get town meeting thoughts of it, absolutely meet with finance committee. Chairman Desroches said absolutely meet with finance and he also has thoughts with Selectman Wojnar and also Selectman Gaspar is on Board. Selectman Wojnar motioned to entertain joint meeting, Selectman Gaspar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

10. SLOCUM STREET ISSUES

Eric James 13 Slocum Street speed issues more speed signs street needs more work need to plant more trees and get speed signs.

The police have been great and it is a start doing increments at a time created a petition for the board to see the residents want the speed limits changed and with the changes Eversource has done to the street, trailers and cars are bouncing over the road.

Selectman Gaspar very familiar with speeding and has correspondence from Police Chief for a \$2500 sign. Selectman Wojnar motioned to appropriate for a for a sign, Selectman Gaspar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

Roland Pepin

4th house on the street Nye Ave people run stop sign at least once a month someone runs sign to be considered accept petition

Also asked anything new on Slocum St project it has been talked about the Town applied for a shared street grant we were declined we did not fit the scope.

Selectman Gaspar avid watcher of the Board Meetings regarding infrastructure in the 80's in 1932 was last time sidewalk might have been done most people are maintaining their property the best they can. The street is a major artery and is used as a cut through road. No Vote Taken.

IV. APPOINTMENTS

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. TENTATIVE BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING SCHEDULE

The Board agreed to move the meetings back to Tuesday's in September and the 4:00 p.m. meeting time remains. No Votes Taken.

2. DINA BRASSUER- LIBRARY DIRECTOR & HEATHER SYLVIA, COA DIRECTOR OPEN UP DISCUSSION THE COA HAS BEEN OPEN SUCCESSFULLY SINCE 6/1 LUCKILY AND NO POSITIVE TESTS SINCE.

We are asking for a mask mandate while people are in the building we service a lot of people we would like to revisit it and take your opinion first and for most. Dina Brassier very similar if there was a mandate there are a lot of people who do wear masks people would feel more comfortable if mask were worn Library Trustees think it might maybe more layer of protection for not only the staff and other people that are in the building. Month by Month put things on social media and website make majority feel better.

Selectman Gaspar not a mandate kind of person understand things going on however; we are in a very unusual time right know. To Ms. Sylvia-I appreciate your effort in the past people coming into the building doing vaccinations and testing do spend a lot of time in the building.

Selectman Wojnar maybe call it policy less transactional –be hard pressed to say no make policy masks are required is a safety & welfare of the people and no problem to wear masks in the library and council on aging, Selectman Gaspar voted to have the Library & COA masked areas. Hopefully we can stop the spread. Let's keep everyone safe.

3. WAGE & CLASS STUDY

This discussion is pretty much the library clerks and dispatch we were presented with plan and tabled 6 weeks ago.

Selectman Gaspar doesn't like going into specifics and would like this going into executive session thinks it would be better. Selectman Wojnar not ready to move on this and need a few more details how contracts to be negotiated with police and other unions.

Selectman Gaspar motioned to pay Mr. Jacobs and not vote to accept or implement study at this time, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. FALL TOWN MEETING DATE

Selectman Gaspar likes the idea of Fall town meeting type up loose ends housekeeping issues or even some ideas on solar pilots discussing things and hopefully don't end up without a quorum.

Solar pilots and pilot agreements might be the way to go we could maybe pay for the

roof at the school.

Chairman Desroches legitimize zoning issues and potential finance issues, and CPC issues if there are things we can do that we have to wait till town meeting change the course and have on the books with no budget issues and is fine with January 10th

Selectman Gaspar motioned to hold town meeting on January 10, 2022, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

Make sure to contact school & Town Clerk

2. SCHEMATICS MSBA

Town Administrator, Ms. Hebert explained if not approved would have to go out for new OPM and contractor the contract for designer services went up \$82,000.

It seems confusing for a difference of \$8200 because working with MSBA will pick up the 50 % of the increase most likely they will share. Also looked at comparable towns felt like it was the best interest for the town since the cost of lumber is going up.

Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

3. CARES FUNDING

\$2700 air filters –Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve the funding of the air filters, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

The Finance Department is looking to keep things going smoothly with the CARES funding and would like to use the temp. person for help with the checklist and forms that accompany the funding. Looking for about \$3,000 for the temporary help.

Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve the funding, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

CIVIC PLUS

Covered by cares more basic looking technology improvement , will make improvements to website. Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve the funding, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

Check with Cathy Muller –Treasurer/Collector about bill pay services a business owner, and or residents use credit cards let everyone know we need to explore that we are not exceeding the percentage rates and get updates for next meeting or October 1st..

The Police Chief is looking for portable equipment software & print machine, right now if they have someone in the cell block have to cancel gun license appointments. The Chief has spoken to other departments and they are using the same systems. Amount requested is \$9,043.13. Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve the funding, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

4. RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL PARCEL ID 17-24 A, B & C

Borrego is asking to waive the right of first refusal on the above parcel. The Town's frustration is not with you but with Eversource regarding interconnectivity.

Morse's Lane project has gone through with planning, went to conversation and

stormwater conservation and planner to make sure this project has been approved. To convert the property and requesting a waiver will have to work with assessor's office.

Assessors have no objection to this and if the BOS would like an appraisal –value of land present and full cash value.

Selectman Wojnar spoke about solar pilots doesn't want to keep assessment over what project assessed at.

90% pilot in a steady stream depreciates very quickly tax obligation is always there. Tax revenue goes into capital expenditure fund. Pilots make plenty of money and upside makes great sense.

It would be prudent for the Town going forward moving to pilots.

It's always better to negotiate Borrego–has done 50 pilots in Massachusetts and would be willing to come in and give information about the pilot program there are all sort of exemptions and use money for what we want.

Selectman Gaspar motioned to forgo our right of first refusal for Parcel ID 17-24 Morse's Lane, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

5. RESERVE FUND TRANSFERS (Planning Department)

The Town Planner needs office supplies for his new clerk. The last clerk mostly worked from home and they did not have an office supply line item. Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve up to \$2,000 as a starter kit, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes. Discussion was also made to update Planner with GIS software need to get more info on the matter.

The special project manager & temp town planner should have been paid through June 30th the amount is \$1104.55. Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

VI. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1. CITY OF NEW BEDFORD WATER/SEWER RATES

Kathy Silva came in from the DPW to explain the water/sewer rates that the city of New Bedford have raised by 7.17% increase in water rates. I like to come now once the budget is done and close out the year it gives a better analysis; water usually do 5 year average this time I did FY22 budget. \$100,000 buffer for the New Bedford line item- Kathy feels comfortable with the .15 cent increase and reevaluate next year.

NB sent notice all rate increases by March would have inclination what we would pay and now they gave us the rates from held a meeting on July 13, 2021 and went up .30 the Town should have been notified sooner of the increases.

Kathy reached out reached out to Mr. Lafonde from the City (has a good working relationship with DPW). Ms. Silva checked different scenarios and feels the rate should

go up based on numbers, we should go up in our reserve by \$165,000.00.

Selectman Gaspar approves the rates per tier, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes. Please see attached water/sewer rate fees.

Ms. Silva stated last year received \$117,000 don't know what we had at that point but feels comfortable.

Sewer pump stations why increase rates we usually know what we make

What was our surplus in May, we could be talking in our surplus account, could be over \$400,000 Selectman Gaspar motioned to not increase sewer rates for FY22, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

2. SEWER PRIVILEGE FEE

Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve 55 Club Avenue sewer privilege fee the parcel detailed has applied to the connection into the sewer system, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

3. SENIOR TAX DEFERRAL –

This deferral allows the homeowner under income guidelines to defer taxes and upon the house sale they pay the deferred tax to the Town. Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve the Senior Tax Deferral, Selectman Wojnar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

The Police Chief asked to mention the partnership from the Children's Advocacy of the month for the Multi-Disciplinary Team Jeremy Fonts & Ryan Hemphill for bringing spirit, humor and Commitment to MTD., job well done. No Vote Taken.

Discussion of current policy for DPW with Eversource and road openings. No Vote Taken.

VIII. INFORMATION ONLY

1. Under info only the Board mentioned Vacancies on appointments and Commissions: Please consider serving your community by submitting a letter of interest to the Board of Selectmen:

- ❖ Agricultural Commission – 1 Vacancy; 2 Alternate Vacancies
- ❖ Beautification Committee – 10+ Vacancies
- ❖ By-Law Review Committee – 1 Vacancy
- ❖ Community Preservation Committee – 2 Vacancies
- ❖ Cultural Council – 2 Vacancies (was put in as 2, research was done and found they can have up to 22 members)
- ❖

❖ Historical Committee – 1 Vacancy

Lucas Environmental – Invitation to comment –TCNS Notification ID# 233361 112
Quaker Lane-Vertex Towers looking to propose and construct a wireless facility. Notice
provided pursuant to the Nationwide Programmatic Agreement for the review of
Historical properties. No Vote Taken.

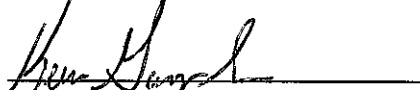
EXECUTIVE SESSION

XI. FUTURE BUSINESS

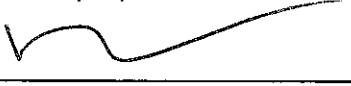
Approved:

A cursive signature of David Desroches.

David Desroches,
Chairman

A cursive signature of Kevin Gaspar.

Kevin Gaspar, Member

A cursive signature of David Wojnar.

David Wojnar
Member