

**Board of Selectmen  
Open Meeting of March 15, 2023  
Seekonk Town Hall, 100 Peck Street  
BOS Meeting Room**

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Members Present: Justin Sullivan, Chris Zorra, Adam Petronio, David Andrade, Michael Healy  
Town Administrator: Shawn E. Cadime

Chairman Sullivan opened the joint meeting at 6:02 p.m.

**Board and Committee Openings**

D. Andrade read the Board and Committee vacancies into the record.

**Community Speaks** – N/A

**A. Consider the Conditional Offer of Employment for Aric Emond for the position of Patrolman 3rd Class**

Chief Enos requested a conditional offer of employment to Aric Emond.

S. Cadime stated his recommendation was as stated by the Chief Enos.

**A. Petronio made a motion to appoint Aric Emond to the position of full-time Police Officer for the Police department subject to and conditioned upon his successful passage, as determined by the Town Administrator, of the following: 1) Completion of a satisfactory background check; 2) Physical Examination, with drug screening; 3) Psychological Screening; 4) Execution of the Recruit Officer repayment agreement; 5) MPTC Physical Fitness test; 6) Obtain and maintain a Massachusetts License to Carry; 7) Fulfillment of all statutory requirements set forth by the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission to become a Certified Law Enforcement Officer; 8) Successful verification of the National Decertification Index; 9) Successful passage of the civil service physical ability test; 10) Completion and passage of an MPTC or approved ROC Police Academy; it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

**B. Consider the conditional Offer of Employment to Paula Roy for the position of Senior Secretary for the Fire Department**

Chief Lowery requested a conditional offer of employment to Paula Roy

S. Cadime stated his recommendation was as stated by the Chief Lowery.

**A. Petronio made a motion to appoint Paula Roy to the position of senior secretary with Seekonk Fire Department subject to and conditioned upon her successful passage, as determined by the**

**Town Administrator, of a pre-employment background and CORI check, physical examination, drug screening, and completion of all pre-employment paperwork; it was seconded by D. Andrade, was unanimously approved.**

**Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

**C. License Hearing: to consider the request for an Annual Mobile Food Truck license for Timothy Spaulding**

Applicant, Timothy Spaulding, summarized his request for an annual mobile food truck license.

**D. Andrade made a motion to approve the request for the annual mobile food cart license for Timothy Spaulding; it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

**D. Public Hearing: to consider the request from National Grid to install one JO Pole at 69 School Street**

Chair Sullivan advised the Board this item has been tabled since the pole is located on state property.

**E. Public Hearing: FY24 Departmental Fees**

**A. Petronio made a motion to open the public hearing at 6:09 p.m. it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Roll Call Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

Michael Healy-Aye; Adam Petronio-Aye; Chris Zorra-Aye; David Andrade-Aye; Justin Sullivan-Aye

Mr. Cadime summarized the changes made to the fees:

- Animal Control: Central Avenue veterinary fee increased \$1.00 and a \$20 late for fowl registration.
- Board of Selectmen: pole relocation application increased from \$40 to \$50; new \$100 fee added for amendments made to an existing liquor license; and a request to eliminate the seasonal alcohol license fee.
- Parks and Recreation: fees have been streamlined; fees will be instituted for the concession stands at Cole Street and Water Lane; there will be a key deposit which will be returned to them upon return of the key; per player fee; increase rental fee for a utility shed; Porta John fees; and field rental fees. The Board discussed who is, and would be, responsible for the concession stand equipment (was the item donated or purchased by the Town). Brittney Faria said fees collected will help cover the costs for annual inspections.
- Public Works: \$0.50 increase for bulky waster stickers; \$0.50 increase for appliance stickers; \$10 increase to bulky waste passes; \$65 mattress collection and recycling fee which was approved November 9, 2022; increase of \$6.99 for the annual trash fee; \$0.07 increase for large trash bags and

\$0.05 increase for small trash bags. Mr. Cabral stated there is only one year left for the trash contract and he anticipates a significant increase.

- Town Clerk: marriage application increased from \$25 to \$30; perpetual care for cemetery lots increased from \$300 to \$350 and non-residents from \$500 to \$550.
- Building Department: increase to fees for weights and measures which come from the state.

The following Departments did not propose any fee changes at this time: Board of Health, Collector's Office, Conservation Commission, Fire Department, Human Services, Planning Department, Police Department, Tax Assessors' Office, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

No one from the public was present to speak in favor or in opposition of the fees.

**A. Petronio made a motion to close the public hearing at 6:38 p.m. it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Roll Call Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

Michael Healy-Aye; Adam Petronio-Aye; Chris Zorra-Aye; David Andrade-Aye; Justin Sullivan-Aye

**A. Petronio made a motion to approve FY24 Department Fees; it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Roll Call Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

Michael Healy-Aye; Adam Petronio-Aye; Chris Zorra-Aye; David Andrade-Aye; Justin Sullivan-Aye

**F. Consider the approval of the 2023 Seekonk Speedway Rules and Regulations**

Edward St. Germaine stated he would like to utilize the stadium for more family friendly events, such as concerts, tribute bands, opening bands, rodeos, and drive-in movie nights). The stadium has a limit up to 3,000 people.

Mr. St. Germain asked that the following language on Speedway's entertainment license be added "race and live entertainment events" and include, "*all ticketed non-racing live entertainment events must meet public safety standards determined by the Seekonk Police and Seekonk Fire Departments. These events will be evaluated on an individual basis based on the type of entertainment, allowed ticket sales capacity, and footprint of that event. Public Safety Approval must be in place 30 days before the scheduled event.*"

D. Andrade said he was concerned with potential noise.

Mr. St. Germain said he has no intent on becoming a concert venue. He intends to remain primarily a motor sports venue but music/concerts may be added.

Chair Sullivan asked what time the races end.

Mr. St. Germaine said mid-week events typically end at 9:30 p.m.; Fridays by 11:00; and Saturdays by 10:00. He said they will stay between the same perimeters to be respectful of their neighbors.

**D. Andrade made a motion to approve 2023 Seekonk Speedway Rules and Regulations with amendments; it was seconded by A. Petronio, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

**G. JOINT MEETING WITH THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE: School Department budget presentation**

School Committee Members: Chair Erin Brouillette and Vice-Chair Kim Sluter

Also present: Dr. Rich Drolet, School Superintendent  
Jill Brillhante, School Business Administrator  
George Kelleher, Director of Student Services

Dr. Drolet presented the School Department's FY24 budget. Majority of the budget goes towards newly proposed positions for special education. Other increases include technology and digital learning, transportation and energy costs.

Jill Brillhante presented the FY24 Assumptions:

- State Aid (Chapter 70) increased from \$578,354 to \$7,754,87\*
- Foundation budget increase of \$1,340,234 to \$25,865,535\* (figure based on foundation enrollment of 2,067 students - Pre-K calculated at 0.5 per student)  
\*Per Governor's initial budget, funding amounts subject to change as Commonwealth releases future updates.
- Rising energy costs affecting FY23 and FY24 budgets due to supplier contracts rolling off and the surge of natural gas prices.
- Transportation - additional Middle School route
- Special education out-of-district tuitions
- Technology (software)
- FY24 budget proposal: \$36,355,816
- FY23 to FY24 budget comparison: 2.98% overall increase from local aid.

Dr. Drolet said the number of elementary school students stayed the same, middle school students increased, and the number of high school students decreased.

Jill Brillhante provided the notable increases for FY24:

- Special education out-of-district costs: increase of \$329,744
- Transportation: increase of \$195,052
- Technology software: increase of \$129,119
- Rising energy costs: projected increase of \$119,000

A. Petronio asked how COVID affected the developmental delays in students.

Dr. Drolet said they started to see an increase before COVID. They have steadily increased over the past 5 years.

D. Andrade asked what type of delays have they seen with COVID.

Mr. Kelleher said more services are needed in speech and occupational therapy due to having less playgroups and difficulty communicating with masks.

Dr. Drolet said the projected budget for the newly proposed positions total \$281,590.

- Newly Required Positions by mid-FY23: Elementary School Adjustment Counselor (AES/MES); Elementary Special Education Teacher (AES); Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (SES/MES/MHS/SHS); Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (Flex, Elementary Program AES); Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (Pre-K/Early Elementary AES); and Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (Upper Elementary AED/MES)
- Newly Proposed Positions FY24: Community Coach for Transitions Academy; Special Education Teacher for new lower elementary school program for students with complex neurological and developmental disabilities; Special Education teacher for new life skills program at HMS; and LPN for Transitions Academy
- FY23/FY24 Seekonk Transitions Academy

A. Petronio asked what percentage of the budget is for full-time salaries compared to other costs.

E. Brouillette answered approximately 70% of the budget. She said since their initial discussion at the quad board meeting, they thought their staffing levels were what they needed, however since that time, more children have been added.

M. Healy asked if the proposed new bus route was included in the budget.

Dr. Drolet answered yes.

M. Healy asked for clarification of the costs from the new carried over positions from FY23 and the proposed FY24 positions.

Ms. Brilhante said they hired them mid-year, going into the new year. The additional costs for the four mid-year hires for FY24 is \$166,584 and \$231,921 for five new hires.

Dr. Drolet said they removed the SRO position but would like to revisit it again next year. They tried to keep the budget at 3%.

M. Healy asked what percentage of increase were they requesting for FY24.

J. Sullivan answered 4.06%. He understands costs have gone up, but last year local aid request was for a 1.4% increase and this year it is 2.98% with 20 less students. The school received more money from the state, the proposed circuit breaker increased from \$900,000 to \$1.5M (71% increase), and received an increase in Chapter 70 revenues with less students.

Dr. Drolet said they received more Chapter 70 money due to the needs of the students (lower income, more students on IEPs, ESL students). They are trying to meet the needs of the students and have mandated services. They tried to bring forward a reasonable increase and feel the positions are needed. They removed the SRO from their budget and tried to scale back, but if they scale back more, more students might go out-of-district.

J. Sullivan asked how much of this cost was driven from 24 to 20 students per classroom.

Dr. Drolet said in that past five years, elementary class sizes went from 30 to 20-21.

J. Sullivan asked how many staff members were added to have the numbers decrease.

E. Brouillette said some positions were reallocated.

Dr. Drolet said within the past 5 years they have added 5 positions a year for a total of 20 new positions. Half of them were to reduce class sizes and half went to special education.

J. Brillhante said a state requirement to the schools need to spend a certain amount of the budget on special education to maintain the maintenance of effort. If they go under the requirement, they may take it away.

C. Zorra asked if it would make sense to buy another activity bus for athletics, field trips, etc. to try to save money on transportation costs.

J. Brillante said an activity bus costs about \$80,000. It would save money on field trips, but the teacher positions were needed more.

M. Healy said the school's proposed budget is \$1.3M increase over the previous year. At the beginning of this budgeting process, the Board anticipated a 2.5% increase, however, the increase is now 4.06. He asked how the Town side would sustain the increase if the Board approves the school's budget as presented.

S. Cadime said there would be a budget gap of approximately \$720,000. If approved, the Town would have to figure out where to take the reductions from. The Town has upcoming building projects, the school department has a feasibility study being done, and Tri County will be presenting the Town with their updates. Mr. Cadime expressed concerned with the sustainability of the increases.

E. Brouillette said their budget was built on a needs base not a wants base budget.

**H. Financial Policy for a newly created School Capitalization account**

S. Cadime proposed a financial policy for a newly created school capitalization account. Mr. Cadime utilized the Town’s Capitalization account to create a draft the School Capitalization account. The capitalization policy for the town reads as follows: “the Town shall maintain a special purpose Capital Stabilization Fund that shall serve as a funding source for the Town’s capital improvement plan, including any associated debt service. The Town shall have a goal to maintain a Capital Stabilization Fund equal to a minimum of three percent (3%) of the prior year’s tax levy. Until this target has been reached, a minimum of \$200,000 will be appropriated from the general fund operating budget each fiscal year to this fund. Each fiscal year, as pay as you go capital is expended from the Fund, the Town shall replenish the funds to the targeted policy goal.”

The following policy is a *draft* for the School Department Capital Stabilization Policy. The highlighted areas can change depending on turn backs “The Town shall maintain a special purpose School Department Capital Stabilization Fund that shall serve as a funding source for the School Department’s capital improvement plan, including any associated debt service. The Town and School Department shall have a goal to maintain a School Department Capital Stabilization Fund equal to a minimum of three percent (3%) of the School Department’s prior year’s budget appropriation. An annual minimum balance of 3% shall be maintained. Each fiscal year, as pay as you go capital is expended from the Fund, the Town shall replenish the funds to the targeted policy goal. The School Department will endeavor to turn back to the Town \_\_\_% of appropriation surplus at the end of each fiscal year for the Town to fund the School Department Surplus. Funding of the stabilization account shall not occur until the School Department turn backs have been certified as free cash from the Division of Local Services.

FY 23 budget  
 $\$30,859,506 * 3\% = \$925,785.18$  minimum balance

E. Brouillette stated since they do not have any funds built into their budget, it will take awhile for them to reach the 3%. She also stated they still want to continue to use some surplus funds to offset Special Education. Ms. Brouillette stated should would discuss the School Department Capital Stabilization Policy with the School Committee.

D. Andrade asked Dr. Drolet how they were marketing rental requests for the turf field.

J. Brilhante said recreation leagues were reaching out but the schools come first.

D. Andrade said renting the field during off hours and off season would provide money to put into the funds.

The Board offered several suggestions to promote turf field rentals.

**I. Consider signing the Annual Town Election Warrant**

**C. Zorra made a motion to approve the Town Warrant as presented and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign; A. Petronio seconded, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

**J. Consider the letter of resignation from Thomas DeTora from the position of Full Time Emergency Telecommunications Dispatcher**

**D. Andrade made a motion to accept the resignation of Thomas DeTora; A. Petronio seconded, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

**K. Consider the approval of minutes from February 15, 2023; and March 1, 2023**

**A. Petronio made a motion to approve the Open Session meeting minutes of February 15, 2023 and March 1, 2023; it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Vote: 5-0 all approved**

**COMMUNITY SPEAKS:**

Doreen Taylor, 175 Bradley Street, asked the Board if they were aware of how much money the School Department spent on capital items but was taken out of operating money over the past fiscal year. She said Dr. Drolet informed her that during the FY21-22 budget, it was \$452,466. She said she agrees with the stabilization fund, however, she thinks the warrant article should have provided more information. If the schools say they need more money, they move money around every month. She suggested having a forensic audit and set a minimum requirement of what the expectation of return from the schools will be.

J. Sullivan said Dr. Drolet informed them some of the items were paid by ESSER funds and some money was spent on the heater/boiler at the Hurley Middle School. They have turned back money in varying amounts in the past, but now they will have the stabilization policy.

D. Taylor said the priority should be a need not a want. The priority should have been the heater/boiler at the Hurley Middle School before the Aitken School Expansion. D. Taylor said she is concerned Town services will be affected.

Inez Najas, said her property is located behind the South End Fire Station and was not notified the fire station would be located on School Street, but she did receive notice for the pole petition.

J. Sullivan said Item D on tonight's agenda was not discussed since the Board does not have jurisdiction on a state road. He explained the proposed South End Fire Station has been discussed for approximately 5-6 years. The building has not been approved and is at the design phase.

M. Healy said the South End Fire Station will act similarly to Banna Fire Station. Typically the lights and sirens will not be on when they leave the station.



**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:**

- A. South End Fire Station Building Committee – They met in person to discuss flooring, cabinets, and design options.
- B. Department of Public Works Building Committee – They met Monday and narrowed the bids to two from four. The committee will be meeting next Wednesday to make final decision. They will present their decision to the Board at the next BOS meeting.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS**

- A. Accounts Payable Warrant
- B. Bristol County Advisory Board (M. Healy) – N/A
- C. Aitken School Expansion Building Committee Report (C. Zorra) – The Committee has concerns with the warranty on the roof.
- D. 540 Arcade Avenue Building Committee Report – (S. Cadime) The elevator is functional and he is optimistic it will be completed this year.

**Adjournment**

**D. Andrade made a motion to enter into executive session to A) to discuss the deployment of or strategy regarding security personnel or devices pursuant to MGL c 30A, § 21(a) (4); B) pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares: Federal Multidistrict Litigation vs. CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, Teva, and Allergan; and C) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation pursuant to MGL c 30A, § 21(a) (3) (Veronica Brickley v. Town of Seekonk, et al, MCAD, Docket No. 21NEM02915/EEOC Docket No. 16C-2022-00571) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town; it was seconded by A. Petronio, and unanimously approved.**

**Roll Call Vote: 5-0 all in favor**

Michael Healy-Aye; Adam Petronio-Aye; Chris Zorra-Aye; David Andrade-Aye; Justin Sullivan-Aye

Respectfully submitted,  
Adam Petronio, Clerk

Prepared by:  
Kristen L’Heureux

**Items Distributed at the March 15, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting**

- Memo from Chief Enos for conditional offer of employment to Aric Emond
- Memo from Chief Lowery for conditional offer of employment to Paula Roy
- Mobile Food Cart Application from Peter Timothy Spaulding
- National Grid and Verizon pole petition
- FY24 Department Fees
- FY24 Proposed School Budget
- Proposed 2023 Seekonk Speedway Rules and Regulations
- Memo from Town Clerk, Florice Craig, with the Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- Draft meeting minutes from February 15, 2023 and March 1, 2023