

**Board of Selectmen
Open Meeting of April 12, 2023
Seekonk Town Hall, 100 Peck Street
BOS Meeting Room**

Members Present: Justin Sullivan, Pam Pozzi, Chris Zorra, Michelle Hines, Michael Healy
Town Administrator: Shawn E. Cadime

Chair Healy opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. He asked the Board to move the first community speaks after Item E to allow for the pinning and award ceremonies to take place.

M. Hines made a motion to move community speaks after agenda item E; it was seconded by J. Sullivan, and it was unanimously approved.

VOTE: 5-0 all in favor

A. Swearing in and badge pinning ceremony for Firefighters Elizabeth Santoro, Aaron Bento, and Hayden Gallagher

Chief Lowery presented Firefighter Santoro who was sworn in with the Town Clerk, Florice Craig
Chief Lowery presented Firefighter Bento who was sworn in with the Town Clerk, Florice Craig
Chief Lowery presented Firefighter Gallagher who was sworn in with the Town Clerk, Florice Craig

B. Award Ceremony for Police Department

Chief Enos and Captain Jardine recognized the following Officers for their selfless actions as police officers.

Recognition of Service:

- East Providence Sergeant Diogo Mello
- East Providence Corporal Kevin Feeney

Public Service Award:

- East Providence Richard Officer Cordeiro

Life-Saving Award:

- Officers James Nelson
- Officer Jason Valderama
- Officer Douglas Hood
- Officer Dennis Pereira
- Officer Eric Schoonmaker

Exceptional Service Award:

- Detective Keith Perry

Chief of Police Medal:

- Officer David Mahoney
- Officer Timothy Bartucca

C. Recognition and Proclamation for National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

M. Hines presented the National Public Safety Telecommunications Week Proclamation.

Director Donna Wunschel recognized the members of the Communications Department: Ron Rickey, Jodi Pacheco, Nick Rondeau, Melissa Zasowski, Thomas Desserres, Taylor Cordeiro, Kelly Magill, Abigail Lafleur, Ryan Burke

D. Recognition and Proclamation for National Library Week

M. Hines presented the National Library Week Proclamation.

Library Director, Kate Hibbert, thanked the Board and recognized her dedicated staff.

E. Consider the conditional offer of employment for Adeline Bellesheim for the position of Conservation Agent

S. Cadime stated the interview panel (Carol Days, Kristin Kearney, Nathan Socha, and himself) met with Ms. Bellesheim. Adeline has extensive experience with wetland delineations, site inspections, plan review, and the Wetlands Protection Act. Mr. Cadime asked for the Board to consider a conditional offer of employment to Adeline Bellesheim.

M. Hines made a motion to appoint Move that the Board of Selectmen appoint Adeline Bellesheim to the position of Conservation Agent, 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 J. Sullivan, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

Adeline Bellesheim was present and thanked the Board for the opportunity.

Community Speaks

School Committee member Emily Field, 100 Fairway Drive, stated the school department received more Chapter 70 money for FY24 due to the change in demographics. She feels with the budget presented, the schools will have budget cuts in programs and staff.

Jackie Glum, Aitken Elementary Art Teacher stated she was in opposition of art programs being cut since ¼ of the students take art. She does not think students should have to pay to price.

Cheyenne Frausto, 1169 Newman Ave, said she realized it is not up to BOS to cut the arts but did ask the Board to reconsider 2.5% increase and not the 1.7% increase they were given.

Marybeth Pilon, 380 Woodward Avenue, stated she is a parent of a Star student, as well as educates Star students. She feels it is imperative that there is an art program. The arts allow special ed students to engage with their peers.

F. Public Hearing: To consider whether the Town will exercise the Town's right of first refusal pursuant to G.L. c. 61B, §9 to purchase six (6) parcels of land in Seekonk, located at 34 Hammond Street (Map 10, Lot 305); 0 Hammond Street (Map 10, Lot 306); 291 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 307); 297 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 308); 303 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 309) and 0 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 310), containing 6.46 acres

M. Hines read the public notice into the record.

C. Zorra made a motion to open the public hearing 6:50 p.m.; it was seconded by J. Sullivan, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

Chair Healy asked if anyone was present to speak in favor or opposition of the applicant.

Brian Trendell, 42 Hammond Street, an abutter to the property, stated he was concerned with the impact to the wetlands and conservation land.

Scott Harris, 12 Alice Drive, said the proposed area will affect surface water, as well as the water table. The land would also expand existing conservation land that abuts the property.

Teresa Helgerson, 356 Chestnut Street, asked the Board to consider the land for open green space.

Nathan Helgerson, 356 Chestnut Street, said there is water underground in the area that runs all the way to the Gristmill. He said the land is wet, water runs into the street, and freezes in the winter.

C. Zorra made a motion to close the public hearing 6:58; it was seconded by J. Sullivan; and it was and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

C. Zorra asked if the CPC would be funding the purchase of the land.

S. Cadime said the recommendation at Town Meeting will come from the CPC.

M. Hines said if the Board votes on the approval, there will be an article on the Town Meeting Warrant and it will require a vote at Town Meeting.

The Board discussed the site plan with abutting land/properties.

J. Sullivan made a motion to exercise the Town’s right of first refusal pursuant to G.L. c. 61B, §9 to purchase six (6) parcels of land in Seekonk, located at 34 Hammond Street (Map 10, Lot 305); 0 Hammond Street (Map 10, Lot 306); 291 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 307); 297 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 308); 303 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 309) and 0 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 310), containing 6.46 acres; it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

G. Consider the request from the Holy Ghost Brotherhood of Charity to waive the strict compliance of the requirements from the “One Day Special Event” Bylaw and to conduct the Annual Procession from Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church to the Holy Ghose club in Rehoboth, Ma in August

M. Hines read a letter from Rosemarie Reis, Secretary for the Holy Ghost Brotherhood Charity of Rehoboth requesting a waiver of the one-day special event permit. They have been doing this Procession for many years. They are not proposing any changes.

P. Pozzi asked for clarification of the procession.

M. Healy explained they close down the road in sections in the vicinity of Mount Carmel Church and proceeded to Wilmarth Bridge in Rehoboth.

M. Hines made a motion to approve the request from the Holy Ghost Brotherhood of Charity to waive the strict compliance of the requirements from the “One Day Special Event” By-law and to conduct the Annual Procession from Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church to the Holy Ghose club in Rehoboth, MA in August; it was seconded by J. Sullivan, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

H. Consider the request for a Place of Public Amusement License for Seekonk Lodging, LLC, d/b/a Ramada Inn, 213 Taunton Avenue

Attorney Bo Akers from Brainsky Levinson was present on behalf of the Ramada Inn. Sonail Patel, manage is also present. The events will remain to be the same weddings, showers, etc. hours of operation will remain the same Mon – sat 8-1 and Sunday 10-1 am

J. Sullivan made a motion to approve the request from the Seekonk Lodging, LLC, d/b/a Ramada Inn for a Place of Public Amusement License; it was seconded by M. Hines, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

I. Consider the request from Farm Fresh R.I., for a One Day “Special License” under M.G.L. c. 138 § 14 to pour liquor at the “Asparagus Fest” to be held on May 7, 2023 at 4 Town Farm, 90 George Street

Nicole Ayers Director from Farm Fresh RI said the event will be held at Four Town Farm. They are a Non-profit organization and has worked with Chris Clegg at the farm previously. They have also applied with Board of Health. The hours will be from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

M. Hines made a motion to approve the request from Farm Fresh RI for a One-Day Special License to pour liquor at the “Asparagus Fest” to be held on May 7, 2023 at Four Town Farm with certificate of insurance provided; it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

J. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

M. Healy asked if the BOS had any questions.

M. Hines asked if any there were any changes made to the budget that he had presented.

S. Cadime said no changes were made. He explained comments about the schools’ program cuts are inaccurate. A 3% increase was proposed to the School Department. At the quad board meeting, the Town asked the school department to prepare a 2.5% increase and that is how the Town moved forward. The town still provided 3%.

M. Hines said the Board received numerous emails regarding cut to the school budget. She wanted to clarify, if anything was cut, that it was coming from the School Department, not the Town Administrator or the BOS. She said anyone concerned they should voice their concerns politely. Budget discussions go on throughout the year.

J. Sullivan said the budget process starts in September/October. The Town increased the budget and contributed additional ARPA funds to the schools. The School Committee and Superintendent need to have a sustainable budget.

The Board discussed other topics of the operating budget such as maintenance of buildings, parks and recreation mid-year hire, and capital items.

J. Sullivan made a motion to approve the FY24 Town Operating Budget; it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

K. Approval of the Warrant for Spring Town meeting; and
L. Assign Warrant Articles; and
M. Make Recommendations on Warrant Articles

- Article 1: Officers and Committee reports - M. Healy will read the warrant article.
The Board recommends the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 2: Budget - J. Sullivan will read the warrant article.
The Board approves the Budget. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 3: Collective salaries and stipends – P. Pozzi will read the warrant article.
No recommendation. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 4: Transfer and appropriate from free cash or available funds – M. Healy will read the warrant article. The Board recommends the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 5: Yearly appropriations of Ambulance receipts – C. Zorra will read the warrant article.
The Board recommends the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 6: Appropriate \$100,000 from free cash to fund a feasibility study on the existing library building. M. Hines will read the warrant article.
The Board recommends the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 7: Annual CPA appropriations and reserves – Community Preservation Committee will read the warrant article.
The Board recommends the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 8: Annual surplus requirement – P. Pozzi will read the warrant article.
The Board recommends the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 9: Snow and ice- C. Zorra will read the warrant article.
The Board approves the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 10: Authorize BOS to appoint a Medeiros Farm Committee consisting of 7 residents for the purpose of overseeing the Medeiros Farm project – Community Preservation Committee will read the warrant article.
The Board approves the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 11: Appropriate \$150,000 for the Medeiros Farm Committee to seek, hire, and direct a consultant to develop a master plan for the Medeiros Farm - Community Preservation Committee will read the warrant article.
The Board approves the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 12: Appropriate free cash or available funds to fund the cost elements of the CBA agreement between the Town and International Association of Firefighters Local 1931 - M. Hines will read the warrant article.
The Board will make a recommendation at Town Meeting. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 13: Appropriate free cash or available funds to fund the cost elements of the CBA agreement between the Town and Seekonk Communications and Clerical Union - J. Sullivan will read the warrant article.
The Board will make a recommendation at Town Meeting. Vote: 5-0 all in favor
- Article 14: Mr. Cadime asked to withdraw this article. They agreed to batting cages, increase outfield 4 fencing, flag poles, signage. If further repairs are needed, the committee will come back at the end of season. The Board agreed to withdraw Article 14. Vote: 5-0 all in favor

Article 15 will change to Article 14: Appropriate \$560,000 for the purchase of 6 parcels of land located at 34 Hammond, (Map 10, Lot 305); 0 Hammond Street (Map 10, Lot 306); 291 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 307), 297 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 308); 303 Chestnut (Map 10, Lot 39); and 0 Chestnut Street (Map 10, Lot 310) – J. Sullivan will read the warrant article, if CPC does not to read the article.

The Board recommends the article. Vote: 5-0 all in favor

J. Sullivan made a motion to approve the Warrant for Spring Town Meeting with the recommendation to the following: withdraw Article 14, amend Article 15 to include CPC, Article 4 HVAC/ventilation, and Article 10 adding clarification of “committee,” it was seconded by M. Hines, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

N. Sign the Warrant

Once the corrections/amendments are made to the Warrant, the Board will sign it.

O. Consider renaming Field 5 on Water Lane

M. Healy asked to withdraw this Agenda Item.

J. Sullivan made a motion to withdraw rename Field 5 on Water Lane; it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

P. Accept the resignation of Lisa Parker as Technical Administrative Assistant for the Police Department

P. Pozzi asked how many years Lisa worked for the Town.

S. Cadime answered for over twenty years.

M. Hines said she did speak with Lisa. It was a difficult decision for her but her new position pays more money.

P. Pozzi asked to discuss at a future meeting employee retention and exit interviews.

S. Cadime said currently in the public sector it is difficult to attract and retain employees. It is a competitive market for employees. He agrees that discussions should be had on how to be competitive, as well as financial sustainability. The turnover rate has been consistent, and overall, 50% of town employees have worked for the Town for more than ten years.

M. Hines said she has seen employees being approached from outside venues seeking their employment and there are times the employee is not looking.

J. Sullivan made a motion to accept the resignation of Lisa Parker; C. Zorra seconded it, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 5-0 all in favor

Q. Consider the approval of minutes from March 29, 2023

C. Zorra made a motion to accept the March 29, 2023 as presented; it was seconded by M. Healy, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote: 2 in favor, 3 abstentions (M. Hines and P. Pozzi (newly elected officials) J. Sullivan (absent from meeting))

P. Pozzi mentioned the Board and Committees openings were not read at the beginning of the meeting. She also asked if someone from each committee could attend a meeting to provide information about the committee.

M. Hines read the Board and Committee openings: Board of Health (2 BOS), Capital Improvement Committee (2 BOS. 2 MOD); Commission on Disability (5-13 BOS); Cultural Council (2 BOS); Economic Development Committee (5 BOS); Energy Committee (4 BOS); Finance Committee (1 MOD); Historical Commission (3 BOS); Recycling Committee (1 BOS); Zoning Board of Appeals (1 alternate).

COMMUNITY SPEAKS:

Tom Pavlovich from Hayley Court, asked the Board to reconsider Article 14 of the Warrant. No one from the league is in favor of postponing the article. Three fields need major renovations (safety and drainage). He recommended \$150,000 - \$200,000 to have qualified people to fix the fields.

S. Cadime said DPW has spoken with the League President.

Mr. Pavlovich said the league president said there were things that could be prioritized but he did not agree to postpone it for another six months.

M. Healy asked if the Board would like to reconsider Article 14.

Mr. Cadime suggested the Board not reconsider Article 14 since the recommendation was made from Parks and Recreation and DPW, as well as the League's President. He stated he is not appreciative of the accusations and how the league is treating the Department Heads.

M. Hines asked if the fields were maintained and will continue to be maintained by DPW.

Mr. Cadime answered yes. They have committed to the fence, flag pole, batting cage, and stone wall/signage. As far as the caps and hornets' nest, those things will happen. DPW does a phenomenal job maintaining the fields.

P. Pozzi suggest maintaining the safety of the fields and not to have the fields go backwards.

M. Hines made a motion to not reconsider Article 14 for the Spring Town Meeting Warrant; it was seconded by J. Sullivan, and it was voted: 4 approved/1abstention (P. Pozzi).

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

- A. South End Fire Station Building Committee – They met today to discuss the IT design.
- B. Department of Public Works Building Committee – The next meeting is April 18th.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

- A. Accounts Payable Warrant - signed
- B. Bristol County Advisory Board (M. Healy) – There was nothing new to report.
- C. Aitken School Expansion Building Committee Report (C. Zorra) – the Chairperson is trying to put a meeting together and hoping to present final financials to the Board in May.
- D. 540 Arcade Avenue Building Committee Report (M. Hines) – Drywall, taping, and plastering are being done.
- E. TV9 Liaison Report (M. Healy) – attended the April 10th meeting. Five members were present along with the executive director, Kevin. They have recorded thirty-seven productions. An executive session was held.

Adjournment

J. Sullivan made a motion to enter into executive session and reconvene to open session for contract approval at 8:42 p.m.; A) to conduct a strategy session with respect to negotiations with the United Steelworkers Supervisors Unit Local 9517-09 per MGL c 30A § 21(a) (3) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town; B) to conduct a strategy session with respect to negotiations with the United Steelworkers Clerical Unit Local 9517-10 per MGL c 30A § 21(a) (3) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town; C) to conduct a strategy session with respect to negotiations with the Seekonk Public Library Employee Association, MLSA, AFT Massachusetts, AFL-CIO per MGL c 30A § 21(a) (3) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town; D) to conduct a strategy session with respect to negotiations with DPW AFSCME Council 93 per MGL c 30A § 21(a) (3) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town; and E) consider approving the Executive Session minutes of March 29, 2023; it was seconded by M. Hines, and unanimously approved.

Roll Call Vote: 5-0 all in favor

Justin Sullivan-Aye; Pam Pozzi-Aye; Chris Zorra-Aye; Michelle Hines-Aye; Michael Healy

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle A. Hines, Clerk

Prepared by:
Kristen L'Heureux

Items Distributed at the April 12, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting

- Memo from Chief Lowery – pinning/swearing in ceremony
- Memo from Chief Enos – award ceremony
- Memo from Carol-Ann Days for conditional offer of employment for Adeline Bellesheim
- Letter from Attorney Michael Levinson – the Town's right of first refusal
- Request from Holy Ghost Brotherhood for One Day Special Event
- Public Place of Amusement License application from Seekonk Lodging, LLC, d/b/a Ramada Inn
- One Day Special License to pour alcohol from Farm Fresh RI
- Spring Town Warrant for May 8, 2023
- Memo from Parks and Recreation Coordinator, Erica Harris-Grimes
- Draft open session meeting minutes for March 29, 2023