

**BOARD OF
SELECTMEN
MEETING
MINUTES**

February 21, 2023

Chair Brett Simas; Select member Stephen A. Matellian; Select member Maureen Dwinnell; Town Manager Joseph Laydon; Executive Assistant Sandra Hakala.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALEGENCE

Chair Simas opened the regular meeting at 7:04 PM an lead the pledge of allegiance.

DEPARTMENT/BOARD UPDATES AND REQUESTS

Director of Land Use & Inspectional Services – Housing Choice Designation Submission Authorization

Michael Antonellis, Director of Land Use & Inspectional Services, attended to request Board approval for submission of an application for Housing Choice Designation. He reviewed his email summarizing the funding opportunities associated with designation and a copy of the application.

Maureen Dwinnell MOVED that the Board vote to authorize the submission of the application for Housing Choice Designation.

Second: Select member Matellian, Unanimous, Chair Simas.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT/ UPDATE

The following is the Town Manager’s Report for the February 21, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting. This report summarizes the status of a number of projects that the Town is undertaking.

TOWN HALL/ GENERAL GOVERNMENT

1. VADAR Cloud Conversion: Upton is one of three remaining Massachusetts community to use older server based VADAR financial software. This requires dedicated server space on the Town’s server. The transition to VADAR Cloud will eliminate the need for dedicated server space and associated license costs by moving to a cloud-based solution. The Finance Dept is coordinating with the contractor and Staff to freeze financial processing between March 23rd to the 26th to allow for the conversion to the cloud.
2. Town Hall Sewer Back Up: Due to increased frequency of backups within Town Hall, non-supervised use of Town Hall has been restricted. The sewer lines on the ground floor of Town Hall have been inspected by a camera system to confirm the as-built plans. The Town’s engineering consultant has reviewed sewer line footage and discussed a solution with the Town’s plumbing company. The current proposal, which is being evaluated by the engineers.

- 36 3. Town Hall Parking Lot: The DPW Director has a re-striping plan for the Town Hall Parking
37 lot. The plan will allow for more efficient parking design resulting in approx. 6 more
38 parking spaces. Work is on hold as the Parklet Design Project moves forward. Since the
39 design may impact striping of the lot, Staff is waiting for more finalized plans prior to
40 restriping the lot. It would be anticipated that striping will occur in the June/July
41 timeframe.
- 42 4. Risteen Building Ramp: A site visit is scheduled for February 23, 2023 with the ramp
43 production company to review the installation location. Installation is anticipated the
44 week of March 6, 2023.
- 45 5. Procurement: The Town Manager’s Office is working on procurement documents for a
46 number of projects including but not limited to 1. Pratt Pond and Fiske Pond Water
47 Quality Study, 2. American Disabilities Act Improvements, 3. Cleaning Services Contract,
48 4. HVAC Blanket Contract, 5. Canadian Geese Control, and 6. Fire Station HVAC Repairs
49 (due to recent cold spell).
50

51 **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 52 1. Website Re-design: The Town and Civic Plus (current website vendor) are working on
53 redesigning the town website. We are reviewing other municipal sites to provide a
54 design direction. Contract expects website work to be completed in June 2023.
- 55 2. Town Hall Server: May 2, 2022 Annual Town Meeting approved \$60K for replacement
56 of the Town’s server. Town IT Staff is working with the Technology Committee and
57 RetroFit to evaluate a physical server vs a virtual server. The VADAR Cloud migration
58 will remove the last vintage server software needs for a physical server and therefore
59 can reduce server costs. A final decision of physical vs virtual will be made in the next
60 month.
- 61 3. Fiber Network: The fiber network project is on hold while supply chain issues have
62 caused a delay in availability of fiber cable. It is anticipated that fiberoptic cable could
63 be delivered during the summer to allow for work to commence.
64

65 **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

- 66 1. Grove Street Bridge: The surveyor has completed the field work and they are hoping to
67 finish the base map. Soil borings were completed, and the geotechnical report is being
68 prepared. The Engineering Contractor received the FEMA data for the hydraulic analysis
69 but need the finished survey to complete the hydraulic analysis. The above work will
70 allow for the preparation of the 25% Design Plans to be reviewed by the Board towards
71 the end of March.
72

- 73 2. Water Tank: Tighe & Bond are finalizing the contract for the project, and we anticipate
74 beginning the design within the next 2 weeks.
- 75 3. Fiske Ave: The project is a multi-year project that includes the removal and replacement
76 of existing AC water pipe and full-depth reconstruction including new drainage, granite
77 curbing, and concrete sidewalks. AC pipe removal in design stage by Wright Pierce and
78 road reconstruction being designed by BETA.
- 79 4. Grafton-Upton Railroad Sewer Project: Wright Pierce (the Town's engineering
80 consultant) is completing the engineering. A partial material list has been provided to
81 Earthworks Construction so they can begin ordering materials. Project is on track to
82 begin construction in the spring.
- 83 5. TIP Project – Main/ Hartford: Code Enforcement recently send MassDOT and Project
84 Contractor a notice of violation with ADA requirements. MassDOT has been in
85 communication with DPW Staff on timing of resolving outstanding punch list items and a
86 number of ADA compliance issues. Anticipated timeline for re-mobilization is April
87 2023.
- 88 6. TIP Project – Rt 140 Improvement: Town submitted comments pertaining to parking,
89 impact on businesses, and the design of the multi-use path around the round-about.
90 MassDOT has reached out to Staff to schedule a meeting to view comments in early
91 March.
- 92

93 **POLICE/FIRE/ EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

- 94 1. Emergency Management Plan Update: The Updated Comprehensive Emergency
95 Management Plan is complete and has been signed by all department heads and school
96 Superintendents. The Plan Update will be scheduled to go before the BOS for
97 acceptance and signatures at the March 7th meeting.
- 98 2. Fire Station HVAC: The Town Received an earmark for \$100K for HVAC improvements
99 to the Upton Fire Station. An updated quote for the repair/ replacement of the HVAC
100 Control System has been provided and the Town Manager is working with the Chief
101 Bradley and Chief Marchand to solicit bids for the work.
- 102

103 **PLANNING/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- 104 1. Housing Production Plan: The Public Forum has been scheduled for March 16 in the
105 Town hall Auditorium. Staff is working with CMRPC on outreach and logistics today. HPP
106 Steering Committee will meet March 9 to address details ahead of that forum. Public
107 notice will be sent out this week via e-blast, Facebook, and email to all survey
108 respondents. A representative from the HPP Steering Committee is reaching out to the
109 church about overflow parking.
- 110

- 111 2. Parklet: Gene Bernat (EDC) and Mike Antonellis (Town Planner) met with the Church to
112 discuss the church’s potential interest in the Parklet. The church has expressed initial
113 interest in partnering with the town to allow for an easement that would provide access
114 to the parklet through their property which abuts the parklet land. EDC is awaiting a
115 formal letter of interest from the Church. Gene Bernat, Mike Antonellis and Joe Laydon
116 (Town Manager) met with BSC to discuss next steps and the initial design proposal
117 following the meeting with the church. BSC will come back to conduct another site visit
118 and revise designs as discussed.
- 119 3. Façade Program: We are now accepting applications. E-blast went out last week. Social
120 media posting will go out this week. The Town Planner is coordinating with CMRPC to
121 discuss about next steps. We will be sending letters/flyers to businesses within the
122 target area within the next week or so and will follow up with door-to-door visits to
123 businesses to spread awareness. The Town Planner has already spoken with one
124 business owner who received the notice and is interested in pursuing the program.

125

126 **PUBLIC INPUT/BOARD MEMBERS’ UPDATES**

127 None.

128

129 **BOARD OF SELECTMEN DISCUSSION**

130 **Reopen Annual Town Meeting Warrant and Insert Articles**

131 Since the close of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, three articles are requested to be placed
132 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Articles are as follows:

133

- 134 1. Prior Year Bills – Payment of \$1,200 from PEG Account for CASTUS Invoice dated April
135 15, 2022.
- 136 2. Payment of Elected Officers from FY 2022 – \$6750 in Stipends for Eleven (11) Elected
137 Officials was not processed prior to the May 2022 Annual Election.
- 138 3. Emergency Management Professional Consultant – Request for \$25K funding of an
139 Emergency Management Consultant to conduct peer review of plans associated with
140 the Grafton Upton Rail Road.

141

142 **Steve Matellian MOVED** that the Board vote, pursuant to MGL C.39, §10, to re-open the
143 warrant for the Thursday, May 4, 2023 Annual Town Meeting, to insert the articles one (1)
144 through three (3) on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, as may be amended by Town Counsel,
145 and to immediately close said warrant.

146 **Second: Select member Dwinnell, Unanimous, Chair Simas.**

147

148 **Review of Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant**

149 The town manager suggested to hold reviewing the departmental capital requests until after
150 the CBC meeting; these articles will be reviewed at the March 7th meeting.

151

152 Mr. Matellian expressed he was not in support of purchasing a roadside mower. Mr. Westgate
153 contended its value and necessity. The Board will review the capital articles at their next
154 meeting.

155

156 **Senior Tax Work Off Policy Amendment**

157 The Board reviewed the Tax Work Off Abatement Policy amendment as follows:

158

- 159 1. To allow part time employees to participate in the program if their total hours remain
160 under the average of 20 hours per week.
- 161 2. Allow for Board Members to participate if work occurs outside of the physical
162 department/office for which they are affiliated with or with approval of the Town
163 Manager with an opinion that work does not reflect a conflict of interest.

164

165 These amendments are being proposed to reflect that Upton has employed seniors on a part
166 time basis and currently do not participate in the program thus limiting assistance available to
167 departments. Furthermore, there are Board/Committee Members that are retired and meet
168 eligibility requirements that have in the past participated in the program within the
169 Department/Office under the Board's jurisdiction, but the work occurs outside of the physical
170 space. Lack of staff within the department/ office may be negatively impacted without
171 assistance under this program.

172

173 **Maureen Dwinell MOVED** that the Board vote to amend the Senior & Veterans' Property Tax Work
174 Off Abatement as proposed.

175 **Second: Select member Matellian, Unanimous, Chair Simas.**

176

177 **MINUTES**

178 **Steve Matellian MOVED** that the Board of Selectmen approve the minutes of January 24, and
179 February 7, 2023.

180 **Second: Select member Dwinell, Unanimous, Chair Simas.**

181

182 **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

183 **Steve Matellian MOVED** that the Select Board vote to enter into executive session MGL c.30A,
184 §21 (a)(2) 1B and MGL c. 4, S. 7, To conduct strategy in preparation for negotiations with
185 nonunion personnel (Director of Public Works).

186 MGL c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, as an open meeting may
187 have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares:
188 Federal Multidistrict Litigation vs. CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, Teva, and Allergan

189

190 **Ms. Dwinell aye, Mr. Matellian aye, Mr. Simas aye**

191

192 The Board will adjourn directly from Executive Session and not reconvene in open session.

193 **ADJOURNMENT**

194 **Steve Matellian MOVED** to adjourn the meeting of February 7, 2023, at 9:14 PM.

195 **Second: Select member Dwinnell, Unanimous, Chair Simas.**

196

197 Respectfully submitted,

198 Sandra Hakala, Executive Assistant