

**BOARD OF  
SELECTMEN  
MEETING  
MINUTES**

**March 7, 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**

**Veterans Agent – Veteran Outreach for Services**

Patrick Morris, Upton’s Veteran’s Agent spoke to the services that are provided by the Veteran’s Agent and his outreach effort to notify town veterans of services he can provide.

**Chief of Police/ Public Safety Director– Town of Upton Emergency Plan and update on Town Review of Expansion Activities at Grafton Upton Railroad**

Police Chief/ Public Safety Director Michael Bradley reviewed the Town’s Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. The Plan can be found on the [Town’s website](#).

Chief Bradley will also discuss Town efforts to review expansion plans at the Grafton Upton Railroad and safety measures town officials require to ensure the safety of residents and businesses.

**TOWN MANAGER REPORT/ UPDATE**

The following is the Town Manager’s Report for the March 7, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting.

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**Town Manager:** The Town Manager reviewed the following topics:

Town Website Redesign – A staff committee reviewed design elements of various websites to provide guidance for the design team with Civic Plus. Departments should review their pages to update, edit, or remove content. Pages will be migrated on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Time sensitive content will not be brought over (news, job postings, calendar items). The anticipated launch date is June 29<sup>th</sup>. Training will be late May/early June. A request to the community will go out to submit photos for use on the town website through a web form.

Town Hall Bathrooms – BoS and FinCom will meet to consider a request for funding to repair bathrooms. The repair solution involves cleaning and polishing the wastewater lines and replacement of toilet fixtures with fixtures that have tanks. Once toilets are replaced, we can open Town Hall to groups and meetings. A second part of the repairs will involve removal of paper towel dispensers and installation of hand dryers. In the meantime, we are continuing to

35 limit use of town hall to those groups that are staff supported. I ask that staff check bathrooms  
36 prior to leaving to make sure nothing is bubbling out of floor drains or toilets.

37 Electrical Aggregation - The Town of Upton is continuing its work to finalize its electric  
38 aggregation program but at this time it is not available. The Board of Selectmen engaged  
39 Colonial Power in March 2021 to work with the town to prepare and finalize a Community  
40 Aggregation Plan. The Town submitted its petition to the Department of Public Utilities in  
41 March 2022 to request approval of the aggregation plan. Most recently in November, the  
42 Department of Public Utilities held a public hearing on the aggregation plan. In order for the  
43 Town to be able to select a vendor to run the aggregation program, we must get approval from  
44 DPU. Our consultant who is working with Upton to get approval of the aggregation plan  
45 estimates does not have an anticipated date for DPU's approval of the plan. Once Upton  
46 receives notice of approval, we will advertise to go through a selection process. It is hoped the  
47 town can select a supplier by early fall. Our consultant did state that it is anticipated there will  
48 be a significant decrease in supplier costs for the spring term that starts May 1<sup>st</sup>.

49 **Treasurer Collector:** Water sewer bills due the March 13<sup>th</sup>, excise tax bill due to the 27<sup>th</sup>.  
50 VADAR migration to the cloud is scheduled and departments will not be able to use the system  
51 between March 23<sup>rd</sup> until the 27<sup>th</sup>. During this time, information is read only. Walkthrough  
52 with staff scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup>. Moving forward with Employee Forward, pushing  
53 information to the vendor, if people don't have information in the system, it will impact paying  
54 employees. Police and Fire will not be part of the initial effort. Departments will be provided  
55 with a list of who's information is needed. Working to revise the process for paying stipends for  
56 elected officials. Bylaw requires it to be paid prior to the May election. The form will include a  
57 box incase elected officials want to waive receiving the payment.

58 **Conservation:** Staff and the Commission has been working with Five Forks Farm on installing an  
59 irrigation pond to supply water for irrigation of flowers. Lack of water impacts their operations.

60 **DPW:** Last week, the department was called out to treat roads for two storms and has used  
61 approx. \$185K out of the budgeted \$260K. Salt Shed is under half full. Department is doing  
62 pothole patching. Community Center is online for water and sewer. Active in tree removal, but  
63 nearing end of the Department's \$47K annual budget. Will be blocking off the parking lot at  
64 Risteen Building for the delivery of the handicap ramp on Wednesday and for installation on  
65 Thursday.

66 **Town Clerk:** To date, just under 500 dogs have been registered, which is more than has been  
67 registered to date in years past. Late fee after May 31<sup>st</sup>. There are 20 open positions on the  
68 ballot; no papers have been pulled for Selectmen, Planning Board, Finance Committee, or  
69 Recreation Commission among others. Deadline is March 17<sup>th</sup> and papers must be turned in by  
70 the 21<sup>st</sup>. Candidates' night will be at the Fire Station Training Room and April 20<sup>th</sup>. Stipend  
71 letters will be going out to elected officials. Staff and board members are required to do a state  
72 ethics training, notification will go out after the election.

73 **Elder and Social Services/ COA:** Departments should contact ESS/COA staff for getting help  
74 through the senior tax work off program.

75 **Police/ Fire:** Comprehensive emergency management plan is before the Board of Selectmen for  
76 approval. Plan was last approved in 2011. Department Staff is reviewing expansion plans. Also  
77 working with GURR on their hazardous materials management plan. Police Dept. is up for  
78 reaccreditation, which will occur this fall. Fire Dept has one recent graduate from fire call  
79 academy, who will then be going to EMT training. Two are in paramedic school, three more are  
80 potentially going to the next call class. Fire Dept is working on standard operating procedures.  
81 Dept has seen increase in calls to support adjacent towns.

82 **Code:** 6 Milford Street has a new landlord and there are some structural issues. Good news is  
83 that the new owner is communicating with the Code Enforcement Office, and they want to  
84 work to resolve issues. Other complaints received include junk in people's yards. Building  
85 haven't seen a lull in permit activity.

86 **Recreation:** Hiring for Kids@Play ends March 31st. They are still looking for lifeguards and a  
87 beach director. Interviewing for a yoga instructor to have on board for when the Main Hall at  
88 Town Hall opens back up. Met with friends of library on ways to collaborate on programs and  
89 activities. Working with DPW and their engineer to locate a tent location.

90 **Board of Health:** A clinic was held on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup>, 37 people came. Majority were kids,  
91 which is the age group in Upton that is not up to date receiving vaccinations and boosters.

92 **Library:** Library has seen an increase in program attendance. Lots of questions on the new  
93 community center. Still on track on May 1<sup>st</sup> for opening of library and playground.

94 **Planning:** Town was approved for interim compliance under MBTA Communities and therefore  
95 maintain eligibility through Dec 2025. Submitted for housing choice designation. Compliance is  
96 based on housing production over the previous 5 years. A new department specialist started  
97 this week in the Land Use & Inspectional Services Dept primarily supporting with Planning  
98 Board, Conservation, and CPC. Not many new applications before the Planning Board, they  
99 continue to meet on Governors Landing and East Street Estates. The Planning Board will hold a  
100 public hearing on zoning articles and citizen's petition on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Staff is meeting with the  
101 consultant on the Warren Parklet this Thursday to review the parklet design. Housing Forum is  
102 next Thursday 6 pm to 8 pm. Met with DOT on the Rt 140 design.

103 **Human Resources:** Insurance rates and they have gone up considerably, 8.9%, the largest  
104 increase in several years. To offset it, we are looking at bringing in a vision plan. If 10% of  
105 membership to take the plan, health insurance cost will be decreased by 0.5%. Dental  
106 Insurance went down 6.3%. Open enrollment will come out in May. There is an ATM Warrant  
107 article for a compensation and classification study to look for external and internal fairness.  
108 Staff will put out an RFP and hope to have true cost for ATM. Scholarships will be announced in  
109 a couple of weeks.

110 **Maureen Dwinell MOVED** that the Board vote that the Board vote to approve and sign the  
111 Town of Upton Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

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

113

#### 114 **PUBLIC INPUT/BOARD MEMBERS' UPDATES**

115 Mr. Matellian announced he will not be seeking another term.

116

#### 117 **BOARD OF SELECTMEN DISCUSSION**

##### 118 **Presentation of FY2022 Financial Audit Report – Roselli, Clark & Associates**

119 The Town's audit firm of Roselli, Clark & Associates presented the results of their FY 2022  
120 Audit. The audit report is available on the [Town's website](#)

121

##### 122 **Review of Department Articles on Annual Town Meeting Warrant**

123 The Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee reviewed the Articles that are being  
124 presented by Town Departments for consideration at the May 4th ATM. The Board will vote on  
125 which of these Articles are to be included on the Warrant. Board/Committee Sponsored Articles  
126 will also be reviewed at the March 21, 2023 meeting.

127

##### 128 **Reserve Fund Transfer Request – Town Hall Bathroom Repairs**

129 Included in the Board's meeting packet is the Finance Committee form entitled "Reserve Fund  
130 Transfer Request." The request, being made by the Town Manager and DPW Director, is for  
131 repairs to the ground floor bathrooms and wastewater lines. Included in the packet is the  
132 request form, an email from DPW Director Dennis Westgate, and a quote from the Town's  
133 plumbing company. The Finance Committee voted to approve the request.

134

#### 135 **COMMITTEE/ BOARD APPOINTMENT/RESIGNATION**

##### 136 **Resignation – Economic Development Committee**

137 **Steve Matellian MOVED** that the Board of Selectmen vote to accept the resignation of Steven  
138 Rakitin from the Economic Development Committee, with regrets.

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

140

#### 141 **MINUTES**

142 **Passed over.**

143

#### 144 **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

145 **Steve Matellian MOVED** that the Select Board vote to enter into executive session MGL c.30A,  
146 §21 (a)(2) 1B and MGL c. 4, S. 7, To conduct strategy in preparation for negotiations with  
147 nonunion personnel (Director of Public Works).

148

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

150

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

152

153 **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

156

157 Respectfully submitted,

158 Sandra Hakala, Executive Assistant