

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

December 15, 2020

Virtual Meeting

Chairman Brett A. Simas; Selectman Maureen Dwinnell; Selectman Stephen A. Matellian; Town Manager, Derek S. Brindisi; Executive Assistant, Sandra Hakala

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Upton are being conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Upton will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. We will strive to provide access to such meetings via a link to call in, or other similar option. In the event we are unable to accommodate the same, despite best efforts, we will post recorded sessions of the meeting as soon as possible following the same.

As a preliminary matter, this is Brett Simas – Chair, Board of Selectmen. Permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me.

- Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative. *Stephen Matellian, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye,*
- Staff, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative. Derek Brindisi, Town Manager aye, *State each staff members' name.*
- Anticipated Speakers on the Agenda, please respond in the affirmative. *None*

Public Comment

None

Approval of Meeting Minutes; November 17 December 1

Motion #1: Motion made by Selectman Matellian to approve the November 17 and December 1 meeting minutes.

Second: Selectman Dwinnell, Unanimous, Chairman Simas
Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Guest Presentations

[Governors Landing \(a proposed residential development off 140\)](#)

Jeff Roelofs, outside counsel, the FAFSA Real Estate and Development and Sean Malone outlined the proposed plan:

- The Central Mass Regional Planning Commission has designated this area of opt in as a priority development area, the primary obstacle is the lack of water and sewer. The property is located off Milford St. going towards Milford, in between Rt. 140 and the railroad tracks that are over near Grove St.
- Previous efforts to develop the same area years ago to a single-family residential development and Fafard had secured the permits to do so but the economy tanked so it was never built.
- The town's housing production plan states there is now an increased need for more moderately priced housing options including a strong demand for senior housing.
- Upton's Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Affordable Housing Trust have been developing various scenarios for the development and ultimately came up with a concept for a mix of townhouses and senior housing.
 - Senior housing would be designated in the Single Residential C District and would consist of ten single family three-bedroom homes as well as 100, two-bedroom units in 50 duplex buildings.
 - Eight affordable units would be developed offsite.
 - Approximately 19 acres of the development would be protected open space.
 - In the General Business District, a total of 48, two-bedroom townhouses would be constructed. Benefits resulting from the new development would include an estimated \$750,000 net annual revenue that would include property tax, auto excise tax, and building permit fees.
- Various options for water and sewer connections were discussed:
 - connecting to the pumping station on Station St. from Milford St.
 - connect via "cross country" through the railroad's property.

The Selectmen had several questions and concerns regarding the project including the low number of affordable units, and the architectural design of the townhouses presented, among others. Mr. Brindisi asked if in the future commercial development might be a better option in the General Business District zone. DPW Westgate also voiced concerns with the water and sewer connections, needed noting up to \$1 million worth of renovations to the Station St. pumping station might be needed to handle the new development. Mr. Simas noted the Town's interest in putting in infrastructure along 140 and will have additional discussions with town officials to see what the next steps are.

[FY 22 Budget Planning Process](#)

Kenny Costa, Finance Director presented the budget planning process and trends that lead him funding estimates for the impending FY22.

- **Home values** increased 100,000 between 2013 and 2021 a steady increase in home values, almost 32%. Home values have gone up, does not mean that the town has brought in more money.
- 24.86 million dollar budget -the largest cost is education, 57%; second is the town services at 31%, library, police and fire, public safety, general government, etc.; and the last is fixed costs, which is 12%, and that makes up debt service, pension, insurance for health and building, also payroll taxes and state assessments.
- **Education Budget Trend** Based on past trends, it is estimated nearly \$600,000 overall increase to the schools' budgets, or 4.9 percent, for a total of \$14,582,973 for fiscal year 2022.
- **Public Safety Budget Trend** - FY22 Total Police, Fire and Emergency Management Department Budget - \$3,254,606, Increase of \$116,150 and 3.70% from FY21
- **Fixed Costs Trends for FY22**
 - FY22 Pension Appropriation for the Worcester Regional Retirement System is estimated to be \$703,000 for the General Fund portion. The increase is estimated to be approximately \$69,700 or 11% from FY21 budget amount of \$633,584.
 - FY22 State & County Charges are estimated to be \$67,701 and an increase of \$290 from FY21.
 - FY22 Debt Service expenses are estimated to be \$405,000 and a decrease of \$22,000 or 5% from FY21. Much of the decrease is due to the recent refunding of the Town Hall Renovation and Water Bonds.
 - FY22 Payroll Taxes - Medicare & Unemployment expenses are estimated to be \$117,000 and an increase of \$3,000 or 2.6% from FY21.
 - OPEB (Other Post-employment Benefits) The liability increased by \$673,440 or 9.4% from the last year's actuarial valuation.
- **Tax Levy** - 2.5% Automatic Increase \$532,880 New Growth \$250,000 (est.)
- **FY22 Total Projected Expense Budget \$25.6MIL**
 - The Town had a successful budget building process in FY21 amid the pandemic. The Town has budgeted conservatively for revenues and expenses in which has proven to serve the Town well to weather the storm in FY21, FY22 and the future.
 - Free Cash as of July 1, 2020 - \$2,130,536
 - The Town recently refunded bonds of \$5.5MIL that will realize savings of approximately \$548,000 over the next 14 years.
 - The Town was able to secure a AA+/Stable rating from S&P. (Second best rating to a AAA)
 - General Stabilization "Rainy Day" Fund – current balance totals \$2,029,183
 - S&P rating agency will review the Town's General Stabilization "Rainy Day" Fund balance and calculate if it is 10% of the FY22 budget. The Town has appropriated \$500,000 annually the last 2 fiscal years and will look for the Town to continue to add to the fund.

Board Discussion Items

Motion to Renew Annual Licensing

Common Victualler - BVT

Motion #2: Motion made by Selectman Dwinnell to approve the Common Victualler BVT renewal application.

Second: Selectman Matellian, Unanimous, Chairman Simas
Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Class II - Lakeside Machine

Mr. Matellian recused himself from the class II renewal process.

Motion #3: Motion made by Selectman Dwinnell to approve Class II renewal application for Lakeside Machine.

Second: Chairman Simas, Majority Action of the Board
Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye

Motion to Appoint [Technology Committee Member](#)

Motion #4: Motion made by Selectman Matellian to appoint John Bouthiette to the Technology Committee.

Second: Selectman Dwinnell, Unanimous, Chairman Simas
Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Motion to Accept Donation to Council on Aging: [COA Donation](#)

Motion #5: Motion made by Selectman Dwinnell to accept a very generous donation of \$100 from Senator Michael Moore for the COA "To-Go-Christmas Dinner".

Second: Selectman Matellian, Unanimous, Chairman Simas
Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Motion to Accept [Updates to the Personnel Policy & Procedure Manual](#)

Motion #6: Motion made by Selectman Dwinnell to approve the updates as presented to the Personnel Policy & Procedure Manual.

Second: Selectman Matellian, Unanimous, Chairman Simas
Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Motion to Approve [Snow Plowing on Private Ways](#)

Motion #7: Motion made by Selectman Matellian to approve the 2020-2021 snow plowing private ways document prepared by the DPW Director.

Second: Selectman Dwinnell, Unanimous, Chairman Simas
Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Review and Approve Use of Town Hall Policy

Motion #8: Motion made by Selectman Matellian to approve the updated Use of Town Hall Policy.

Second: Selectman Dwinnell, Majority Action of the Board
Brett Simas, nay, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Mr. Simas dissent was to only to the use of alcohol at Town Hall.

Town Manager Report/Updates

- Covid - the reason why we had a spike, like many other communities is because of the Thanksgiving holidays. It is projected that we're going to see another spike two week there after the Christmas holiday.
 - The states now waiting for the vaccine to be approved by the FDA, expecting that to take place in the next couple of weeks, which will then have a delivery within 24 to 40 thereafter.
 - We have noticed that we have had more infections among amongst the staff in the previous two weeks.
- Met with the Cemetery Commissioners with the cemetery wishes, to engage them in the process of what it would mean if the town were to take their recommendations
03:09:03 - 03:09:12
- Met with Open Space Committee and Conservation Committee members to talk about the acquisition property and would aim for a closing date of June first, 2021.
- Closed on 0 Grove Street and by the end of this week, the vehicles will be removed, and trailers should be gone by the end of this week as well.
- And then, lastly, a grant for approximately \$16,000 from MIIA to be used to conduct a capital lease analysis of townhall, fire station, and police station. This will be a full analysis of all of the capital equipment, so the HVAC systems, everything down to the doors and the windows, and the replacement cost.

Adjourn Meeting

Motion #9: At 10:18pm Selectman Dwinnell made motion to adjourn.

Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Respectfully submitted, Sandra Hakala, Executive Assistant