

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.

1 CALL MEETING TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALEGENCE

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

4 DEPARTMENT/BOARD UPDATES AND REQUESTS

5 Veterans Agent – Veteran Outreach for Services

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

9 Chief of Police/ Public Safety Director– Town of Upton Emergency Plan and update on Town 10 Review of Expansion Activities at Grafton Upton Railroad

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

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

18 TOWN MANAGER REPORT/ UPDATE

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

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

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

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

30 Town Hall Bathrooms – BoS and FinCom will meet to consider a request for funding to repair
31 bathrooms. The repair solution involves cleaning and polishing the wastewater lines and
32 replacement of toilet fixtures with fixtures that have tanks. Once toilets are replaced, we can
33 open Town Hall to groups and meetings. A second part of the repairs will involve removal of
34 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 1st.

49 **Treasurer Collector:** Water sewer bills due the March 13th, excise tax bill due to the 27th.
50 VADAR migration to the cloud is scheduled and departments will not be able to use the system
51 between March 23rd until the 27th. During this time, information is read only. Walkthrough
52 with staff scheduled for March 14th. 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 in case 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 31st. 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 17th and papers must be turned in by
70 the 21st. Candidates' night will be at the Fire Station Training Room and April 20th. 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 4th, 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 1st 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 17th. 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 Dwinnell 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.**

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

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

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](#)

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.

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.

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 Dwinnell, Unanimous, Chair Simas.**

141 **MINUTES**

142 **Passed over.**

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).

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

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