

APPROVED

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
HARWICH, MA

2023 JAN 19 A 11:46

RELEASED

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN HALL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023
6:00 P.M. - REGULAR MEETING
REMOTE PARTICIPATION OPTIONAL**

SELECTMEN PARTICIPATING: Michael MacAskill, Larry Ballantine, Julie Kavanagh, Mary Anderson and Donald Howell

ALSO PARTICIPATING: Town Administrator Joseph Powers

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. MacAskill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fire Chief David LeBlanc was present and stated that this afternoon he received a letter from the Baker-Polito Administration about being approved for a \$2000 grant for the Senior SAFE program and a \$3800 grant for the SAFE program.

Community Center Director Carolyn Carey was present and announced that they had over 85 people in attendance of their winter solstice drumming circle, which was their last event for 2022. The next events planned are a large Yankee gift swap scheduled for January 10 and then a free bicycle information session on January 11. Tea with Me will be held on January 13. There will be many events planned for February, which is the Community Center's birthday.

Cultural Center Director Kara Mewhinney was present and provided a program update for the next few weeks. Events include a stitchology class for kids, a couple of primer paint series and portrait groups. A public art show is scheduled for January 14 from 3-5 p.m. Additional programs will be introduced in February. The Seaside Marketplace is now accepting applications for 2023. The Cultural Center is also accepting rolling instructor proposals for 2023 programming. Advertising for events is done on 204sisson.com, the town website, social media and any press that will hit the media.

Noreen Donahue was present to speak as a resident. For the New Year, she is seeing many budget factors coming forward much earlier than in recent years. She thanked everyone for their hard work. Ms. Donahue feels that recommendations can only be enhanced by adding tax payers into the conversations. She went on to read a document that she prepared regarding school refunds and the current free cash amounts. Ms. Donahue would like to see us think outside of the box and consider different types of projects to support this cash windfall. At a previous meeting, Ms. Kavanagh had suggested on programming assistance for preschool and early childhood education, with Ms. Donahue thinks would be one of the best ways to help the community as a whole. Ms. Donahue also talked about using free

APPROVED

cash for work force housing seed money. She added that perhaps this would be the year that we stay under the 2.5% increase.

- A. Board of Selectmen meetings will resume to weekly meetings – next meeting, January 9, 2023

Mr. MacAskill announced that the Board will be resuming their weekly meeting schedule with the next meeting scheduled for January 9, 2023.

- B. Committee Vacancies

Ms. Anderson read the list of existing committee vacancies and encouraged residents to apply for a committee, even if there isn't a current vacancy.

Mr. Powers announced that our Housing Advocate Brianna Nickerson will now be offering office hours. Hours will be listed on the town's website under housing advocacy. Hours will be on Tuesday from 2:30-4:00 at Ms. Nickerson's office and Fridays from 11:00-12:00 at Town Hall.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Vote to approve Board of Selectmen
Meeting minutes: 1.12.2022

Mr. Howell moved to approve the consent agenda with the minutes being approved as amended, 2nd by Mr. Ballantine and approved 5-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Vote to use \$3,400 Opioid settlement funds to support the Save a Life Tour (SALT)

Youth Counselor Sheila House was present remotely.

Mr. Ballantine commented that this is a tremendous program and that it should be supported. Other Board members agreed with this comment.

Mr. MacAskill stated that this program has been here before and that it was always supported by a grant. He wondered if the grant was applied for and not received. He also commented that there are human services grants every year for Harwich and that sometimes they aren't not used specifically for Harwich programs. Mr. MacAskill stated that he will support this request, but that we should continue to try and obtain grants when possible.

Mr. Ballantine moved to use \$3400 of the opioid settlement funds to support the Save a Life Tour (SALT), 2nd by Mr. Howell and approved 5-0-0.

- B. Approved Sustainable Fishery Management Plan for River Herring Harvest at the Herring River, Harwich

Brad Chase from the State Division of Marine Fisheries was present to take questions and describe the status of Harwich's herring fishery management plan, which was approved by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Division in November. Harwich now has a plan and can harvest herring if they would like. It would be the decision of the town if they would like to manage a harvest in 2023. There would need to be a coordination with local law enforcement, state law enforcement and local departments on how to manage the harvest. There has been no harvest in Harwich since 2005. Mr. Chase stated that there is a spawning run counter at the Bells Neck Herring run. The approval would allow for a 10% time series which means that 57,000 herring could be taken over the 5 week season. It also allows for 600 permits to be issued. Mr. Chase stated that non-residents would be allowed to obtain a permit because this is a state program. It is recommended that there be a 4 to 1 permit ratio of residents to non-residents. Mr. Chase went on to say that there has been a down turn in the run in the last 2 years. At this point, it is really a question of if the town wants to manage a harvest for this coming spring and the state will support whatever direction the town goes in.

Mr. Ballantine feels that this is a great plan and doesn't see why we shouldn't move ahead with it.

Mr. Howell noted his concerns about the downward trend and he is not sure that he would support the original plan. He added that he would be open to alternatives rather than the 10% taking. Mr. Chase responded that 10% is the maximum allowed, adding that he is not concerned about the trend, that it is natural for runs for fluctuate. Mr. Chase did state that he does think it would be a little soon to seek the 57,000 fish in 2023.

Mr. MacAskill stated that comment received from the Natural Resources Director is to wait another year.

Ms. Anderson shared the same concerns as Mr. Howell with respect to the decreased numbers. She asked if we are set up to manage this program. Mr. Powers responded that it would depend on what the programming is but it would be fair to say that we may rely on volunteers if we were looking to do a one day program.

Ms. Kavanagh agreed about management of the program and asked if a permit would still be required if the program was a day or a week. Mr. Chase responded that it would be the choice of the town and that the town could chose to host a cultural event simply to recognize the importance of the herring run.

Mr. MacAskill suggested bringing this back next week for the Board to vote on a proposed plan.

Mr. Ballantine agreed with bringing this back, but stated that he would not be qualified to develop a plan. Mr. MacAskill responded that he would work with the applicable staff to go over scenarios.

C. Vote to approve the permit renewal for the Mooring Servicing Agents for the calendar year 2023

Mr. MacAskill stated that even though these are 3 year contracts, they will need to be voted every year.

Mr. Howell reminded the public that a contract is not being awarded to these agents and that the state owns the underlying water. We are licensing agents to deploy moorings on behalf of the town and we are not leasing anything to them.

Ms. Kavanagh moved to approve the permit renewal for the Mooring Servicing Agents for the calendar year 2023, 2nd by Ms. Anderson and approved 5-0-0.

D. Vote to appoint John Rendon to the Barnstable County Dredge Sub-committee with a three year term January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2025

Mr. Howell moved to appoint John Rendon to the Barnstable County Dredge Sub-committee with a three year term January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2025, 2nd by Ms. Anderson and approved 5-0-0.

E. Discussion on Chatham Road and Route 39 Intersection Recommendation of Traffic Safety

Mr. MacAskill stated that this was brought up to him a few weeks ago and that this was a recommendation from 2018. Mr. Powers had said that this was originally sent to him as a capital request to add into the capital plan. Due to it being a public safety concern, it was unsure why it would need to go into the capital plan. Back in 2018, the owner of the property on the corner lot was amenable to giving the town a piece of land to make this happen.

Mr. Powers stated that this was originally contemplated to be a capital item for road improvements. At this point, the conversation would need to continue with Town Counsel and the property owner, and then involve DPW to see what would be needed to do the work.

Mr. MacAskill feels that if we can pay for t-base on Bells Neck Road, that we can make these improvements. The Board agreed with this comment.

Noreen Donahue was present and commented that she did hear conversations over the last couple of years of alternatives to this intersection. Suggestions included signage, blocking off the end of Chatham Road and diverting traffic town Lovers Lane.

Traffic Safety Committee member Jerry Beltis was present and provided history on this request. At the time of the original request, the property owner was okay with giving the town the land, and then they called back and wanted money for it. There are other options to this which include the town doing an eminent domain or a permanent easement. Making that end of Chatham Road

a one way and diverting traffic onto Lovers Lane could be problematic to the owners on Lovers Lane.

Mr. MacAskill asked Mr. Powers to follow up with the Police Chief and staff to verify information discussed tonight.

Art Bodin was present and stated that he has lived at this intersection for the last 20 years. He came to this meeting because he was under the impression that there was a plan in motion. Whatever can be done will be great, but Mr. Bodin asked that whatever is done, that we try and slow down traffic in that area.

Water Wastewater Superintendent Dan Pelletier was present. He stated that depending on where this project happens, he may try and piggy back in some water main work.

Mr. Howell stated that this is a quintessential intersection problem of the Northeast and that most of the ones that he has seen have been addressed and this one continues to fester and is a problem with the 45 degree angle.

F. Vote to approve the temporary closure of Ember Pizza, Inc. d/b/a Ember – 600 Route 28

As a point of order, Mr. MacAskill stated that the establishment sent a letter informing the Board that they were going to close, not asking for permission. The Board has always approved these requests, but the process is for the establishment to ask for the vote, not to state that they will be closing.

Mr. Howell moved to approve the temporary closure of Ember Pizza, Inc. d/b/a Ember – 600 Route 28 from January 4, 2023 through January 24, 2023 for minor renovations, cleaning and upkeep, 2nd by Ms. Anderson and approved 5-0-0.

G. Vote to approve a Special Permit Application for one day entertainment and one day wines and malt – Cross Rip Gallery – January 14, 2023, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 204 Sisson Road

Ms. Kavanagh moved to approve a Special Permit Application for one day entertainment and one day wines and malt – Cross Rip Gallery – January 14, 2023, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 204 Sisson Road, 2nd by Ms. Anderson and approved 5-0-0.

H. Vote to approve the Committee Appointments recommended by the Interview Committee:

1. Kenneth Dickson – Board of Appeals – Alternate member – Term to expire June 30, 2024
2. Mark Martello – Golf Committee – Full member – Term to expire June 30, 2023
3. Sophia Pilling – Conservation Commission – Alternate member – Term to expire June 30, 2024

Ms. Kavanagh moved to approve the committee appointments as recommended by the Interview Committee as listed above, 2nd by Ms. Anderson and approved 5-0-0.

4. Arthur Bodin – Harwich Housing Committee – Full member – Term to expire June 30, 2024

Mr. Howell stated that he has known Mr. Bodin for many years and will vote for this appointment. Mr. Howell went on to say as a member of this committee, it is very important to act as a committee and have everyone involved. The expectation is that everyone has a strength and that members should play off each other and work within the committee structure for the committee to be successful.

Ms. Kavanagh moved to approve the committee appointment of Arthur Bodin as a full member to the Harwich Housing Committee with a term to expire on June 30, 2024, 2nd by Ms. Anderson and approved 5-0-0.

I. Updated list of Miscellaneous Committee Appointments

Mr. Howell stated that this list is exactly what he was looking for.

J. Annual Report from the Community Center Facilities Committee

A report from the Community Center Facilities Committee was provided in the packet.

Mr. Ballantine emphasized on the detail of the report and all of the work that the committee does each year to benefit the town.

Mr. Howell stated that this committee does a really nice job of flushing out activities for the public.

Ms. Anderson stated that she is very impressed with the committee and the Community Center as a whole.

Ms. Kavanagh agreed that the committee does a great job and added that the activity that the fitness room gets is amazing.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Board discussion on 204 Sisson Road; Votes may be taken

At the last Selectmen's meeting, the Board discussed the recommendations from the Finance Committee that were sent in a detailed packet to the Board. The Board was asked to review the recommendations to see if there were any that might want to be considered.

Ms. Kavanagh stated that she is impressed with what the 204 Sisson Road building has become and the cultural designations that we have received. She added that she does not see a lot of necessary changes being needed, but would be willing to listen to any specific changes that are proposed. The other route discussed was some kind of municipal use for the building. If we go that route, Ms. Kavanagh would like to make sure that the municipal aspect is kept separate from the cultural portions of the building.

Ms. Anderson agreed that we have a good thing going and commented that we have an excellent Cultural Director that was just brought in and that she should be left alone to manage the building with the Town Administrator. Ms. Anderson stated that she does not understand what the issue is with this building and asked if the other buildings in town have a strategic plan. Ms. Anderson knows that the Cultural Director has had preliminary conversations with PAYOMET who would potentially love to use the space in their off-season.

Mr. Howell stated that he largely agrees with Ms. Kavanagh and Ms. Anderson but still has some concern on his part. He would like to have a better idea of who would be occupying the space and for what purpose. Before Town Hall was built, before the High School was built, there was a vision for both of the buildings.

Mr. Powers said that he has tried to be consistent in his statement in that the auditorium is not different than other rooms of this size in other buildings in town.

Ms. Kavanagh feels that we won't know what might need to be changed until the Cultural Director is given the opportunity to work to bring in various opportunities. This all goes back to empowering the person that was hired to do their job.

Cultural Director Kara Mewhinney was present and expanded on her thoughts regarding use of the auditorium. When you are working with mixed use municipal buildings, you are going to seek people to rent your space for various productions. The upgrades that are being requested are basic ones that will accommodate whoever uses the space. Rent can be raised when more aspects of the building are upgraded. It idea is to use this as a mixed use space and invite everyone to come in and rent the facility and fill the calendar with events.

Mr. MacAskill noted that when we first embarked on this in 2016, a fair amount of investigation was done to find out what else was in the market place, and it was found that there really wasn't much.

Mr. Howell asked if the auditorium will also continue to be used as mix use with the cafeteria. Ms. Mewhinney responded that the idea was to utilize the space as a multi-purpose cafetorium, adding that there are a variety of different floor plans that we can pitch.

Mr. Howell was hoping to put off the auditorium part of the upgrades until funding was flushed out a bit more. He would like to see a substantial part of the large amount of free cash go back to the tax payers by possibly buying down the debt load that we have incurred.

Mr. MacAskill stated we are looking at a total number of 1.9 million dollars for 204 Sisson Road. The total to bring the auditorium online in tonight's packet shows potential revenue. We need to continue to look at how the spaces in the building can be used to bring in revenue to offset costs.

Mr. Ballantine put together comments that were provided to Mr. Powers. He feels that the information that has been put together is good. Mr. Ballantine wondered if there are areas that we should be working on and others that we should not because other towns might be able to do it better. He added that there may be potential to develop some kind of a regional plan and wondered if we have reached

out to any other groups. Mr. Ballantine would very much like to, in addition to all of our good work, have a formal committee look at the regional solution practice. From a financial aspect, Mr. Ballantine would not hesitate to having a business plan to have an idea of what the revenues and expenses would be in order to help with decision making. There is a lot of support for this building, but we need to be able to clearly explain what the revenues and expenses are. The other point Mr. Ballantine would argue is that there is a large percentage of the rough floor plan that shows space being used for municipal purposes. He would like to see much more thought given to that. Any space in that building that is used for municipal purposes takes away from any cultural activities in the building. Mr. Ballantine would like to have a disciplined financial discussion and relate that to our staffing need discussions going forward.

Mr. MacAskill concluded that Mr. Ballantine is looking for a breakdown and more detail on the cost analysis and asked if the Board would have any problem with that. Ms. Kavanagh responded that she has no problem with the request, but want to make sure that both cost positives and cost negatives are looked at. Mr. Powers added that he can work with Mr. Ballantine on his request and has raw reports that can be provided.

Ms. Mewhinney stated that for the town to qualify for cultural grants that we need, 51% of the space needs to be used for cultural activities. She asked that stakeholders in the building be involved in ongoing discussions as it is important for them to have a voice and say in the matter. Mr. Powers added that the town also needs to recognize that 31% of the building needs to be used for government operations in order to be insured and recognized as a useful municipal building.

Ms. Anderson said that at least one tenant from 204 Sisson Road has sent an email with concerns about the floor plan layout. The layout shows their current studio labeled as municipal use. Ms. Anderson wants to be sure that the information provided is just a plan and that before anything is done, the people who currently have space rented are included in the discussion.

Mr. Howell asked if 31% is the threshold for municipal use and insurance, how the community center is insured as most of that building is used for council on aging. Mr. Powers responded that 100 Oak Street, Harwich Community Center is known to be completely a municipal building, which is why it is covered by MIIA. There have been statements and documents relied upon in the past that referred to 204 Sisson Road as a private building or private property. 204 Sisson Road is a municipal building that can go anywhere in zoning and do as governments do. The Board agreed as a consensus that they believe that 204 Sisson Road is and has been a municipal building since 2014. Mr. Powers feels that we are meeting both the 51% cultural and 31% municipal requirements for 204 Sisson Road.

Mr. MacAskill is not sure why the Board would want to hamstring Mr. Powers to come up with a more definitive plan for the building than what we have right now rather than continue to task him to filling the building with activities. The fact that we have this building is a blessing. He added to mothball the building and not use it is not an option. We are making progress with this building and are doing more every year. Mr. MacAskill commented that a Finance Committee member went outside of any vote and asked a consultant for a proposal was so outside of their lane and someone needs to remind them of what the Finance Committee should be doing. He added that watching the last Finance Committee was like the Board of Selectmen did not exist.

Mr. Ballantine sees nothing wrong with asking Mr. Powers to justify the spaces going forward. Mr. Powers responded that the operational cost analysis that he did was in response to a board directive several months ago. The analysis was to try and give everyone a level of comfort with the operational costs going forward as we have laid them out and the purposes of the operational expenditures. The question of space use is an ongoing one as well is the question of how many tenants we will have versus the operational needs of the town versus revenue.

Mr. Howell wanted to be very clear that his expectation is that the stakeholders will be included in discussions on what is aspirational and what else do they see occurring in the building. Mr. Powers responded that from his perspective as the Town Administrator, the stakeholder conversations could happen at the Board level.

Mark Kelleher was present and wanted to speak as a resident, not a member of the Finance Committee or Capital Outlay Committee. On his own, he saw a lack of information so he solicited 2 engineering companies for a capital needs study. He received a price from one company and sent it to the Chair along with a template of some of the work that they have done. There is another proposal that is expected and hopes that they will be considered because they cover a lot of things that are being discussed. Mr. Kelleher stated that he is coming at this as a person who has visited the Cultural Center and wants it to succeed, but thinks that we owe it to the people to provide full disclosure.

Mr. Powers outlined the town's request for proposal process.

Mr. MacAskill noted that the proposal received provides Mr. Kelleher's name and that he is a member of the Finance Committee. Mr. MacAskill made it very clear that the Board of Selectmen are the policy makers and that the Finance Committee was not given any direction to do this. The request through the Town Administrator through the department heads is funding of 1.9 million dollars for very specific items in the building.

B. Board discussion on the Fiscal Year 2024 – 2028 Capital Outlay Plan and Fiscal Year 2024 Capital Budget; Votes may be taken

Ms. Anderson asked where the refund money from the schools is located, noting that discussion was had about returning some funds to the tax payers. Mr. Powers responded that Town Counsel indicated that the actions of the October 2022 Town Meeting were as presented to meet the boards desire to further give back. The Board directed Mr. Powers to work with Town Counsel and have counsel draft a warrant article for Annual Town Meeting to appropriate or otherwise fund some action for the benefit of the tax payers.

Finance Director Ann Marie Ellis was present and stated that this free cash is everything that was done in FY22. The result of the reduced assessment from the schools will hit for FY23. When you set your tax rate that is where the give back for the tax payer would be with a lower rate. Yes assessments have increased, but there would be a lower tax rate.

Mr. Howell stated that setting the tax rate has virtually no benefit to the tax payers. Ms. Ellis responded that you would take your valuation that you have on the bills that went out and multiply that by last year's rate and then you will see what will actually be saved.

Noreen Donahue was present and feels that if we have somehow given relief to the tax payers, it needs to be communicated in a much different way than we have.

Mr. Howell respectfully disagreed with comments made and stated that relief will depend on what is adopted. What he talks about going back to the tax payer is real money, like paying off a note.

Richard Waystack was present and commented that trying to explain taxation to the general public cannot be done tonight. He reviews senior exemptions and hardship exemptions that are reviewed by the Board of Assessors as well as provided a brief description of overlay accounts.

Mr. MacAskill stated that no matter what, taxes are being increase based on the real estate market. Mr. Waystack responded that some tax valuations will go down. The school money is being absorbed and there are funds to be utilized to help the citizens of the community.

Mr. Howell said that he is talking about the picture that we would up with over 7 million dollars in free cash. He wants future conversations on giving back money to the tax payer.

Mr. Powers took a moment to acknowledge the work of department heads, especially Sarah Eaton, our IT Director. Her 2nd day on the job, Mr. Powers tasked her to build a capital plan for IT as it was sorely needed. Ms. Eaton did an exceptional job on this project.

Mr. Howell commented that for every single one of these items being discussed, he will be asking if they were in last year's year 2 plan.

1. Information Technology Capital Submissions; Votes may be taken

Mr. Powers reminded the Board that there has been no IT capital plan prior to this year.

IT Director Sarah Eaton was present and reviewed her request as outlined in the packet.

Mr. Ballantine commented that his plan is desperately needed and that he is very excited about the Open Gov permitting software that is coming online. He asked Ms. Eaton if her sense is that she can pull all of the departments to use the same processes and streamline to use the same technology. Ms. Eaton responded yes. Mr. Ballantine went on to ask if we will be adding to the existing Open Cape for fiber optics. Ms. Eaton responded that she has been in discussions with Open Cape and that there is a state grant opportunity that will be opening up in March for fiber optics in town buildings.

Mr. Howell would like to find a way to lessen repetitive data entry when it comes to the website. Ms. Eaton responded by reviewing the new Civic Plus Platform, which is more streamlined and cohesive.

Ms. Anderson applauded Ms. Eaton for her efforts and asked if the committee On Board program is included in her request. Ms. Eaton responded that On Board is happening now. File documents have been sent to On Board for them to upload and the program should be coming on line in the next couple of weeks to a month. Ms. Kavanagh asked if the On Board program has the capability of reaching out to the public. Ms. Eaton said that the program Ms. Kavanagh is referring to is the Community Engagement Concept and that they are still working on a potential funding source for it.

Ms. Kavanagh thanked Ms. Eaton for putting together such a comprehensive package.

Ms. Howell stated that there are lifetime licenses and renewable subscription licenses. He asked if Microsoft 11 would be something more ongoing where we would be looking for licenses as they lapse. Ms. Eaton responded that she has been working on funding work station replacements for those that don't have Microsoft 10 or 11, which comes with licenses. Her goal is to make sure that everyone is running off of Microsoft 11. If any computers are not able to be upgraded, they would be earmarked to be replaced first.

2. Water/Wastewater Capital Submissions; Votes may be taken

Mr. Powers stated that the Water/Wastewater Superintendent is willing to discuss the wastewater infrastructure, recognizing that it is the responsibility of the Board and Town Administrator. A large part of this is on the town side, rather than on the Water/Wastewater Commissioners.

Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dan Pelletier was present and stated that the numbers that were submitted back in August were at the beginning of the height of inflation. GHD should be able to have updated numbers to us in a month or so. We have also just received the draft intended use plan (IUP) from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which identifies all of the projects that they intent to fund in the upcoming year. Phase 2 of the sewer project and the dry pipe on Route 28 were listed in the to be funded category. Unfortunately, the other water main project did not make the cut. In October, Mr. Pelletier and the Board had discussed gravity versus low pressure for Route 28. Costs for this should go down from the proposed 7 million dollars because we will be using a low pressure system for Route 28. The Route 28 water main project has been broken up into 2 sections. MA Department of Transportation will be repaving from Division Street to Herring River. With that, Harwich will be a non-participatory member of their project which will offer considerable savings to use with respect to construction as we will not need to use flow able fill or controlled density fill. Mr. Pelletier went on to say that we do also have the new well source exploration phase 2 that is complete to test wells, install the pumping tests, procurement oversight, final source reporting and permitting to complete the next phase of the project. Pavement management is also included in FY24 which would be looking to repave the access roads to the well fields.

Mr. Howell commented that the Clean Waters Board meeting is being held later this week. He noted that it is important for Harwich to get into the queue for approvals. Mr. Pelletier stated that the final IUP is expected to be released in February. The trust had advised that when the final IUP is released in when we should also be provided with a better understanding of what our principal forgiveness will be. As soon as all of the information has been received, Mr. Pelletier will then work with the Town Administrator and Finance Director to understand what the tax implications will be.

3. Fire Department Capital Submissions; Votes may be taken

Fire Chief David LeBlanc and Deputy Fire Chief Craig Thornton were present and reviewed their capital submissions as outlined in the packet. One item being requested is a mini pumper truck in the amount of \$350,000. This was presented to the Board last year with the hope of getting grant funding. It was approved at Town Meeting for the match, but unfortunately, the grant funding was not approved by the federal government. Deputy Chief Thornton went on to review what the mini pumper truck is and how it operates. This truck would be replacing a 2005 F250 forestry unit that has some wear and tear on it. Chief LeBlanc noted that they have dropped their fleet size and that they are trying to keep it on the smaller size.

Mr. Howell commented that it is important that we do these things and asked about costs and timing. Chief LeBlanc responded that the current time to build a full size truck right now would take 40 months. The engine that was purchased 4 years ago was bought for \$550,000 and now would cost around \$900,000 to 1 million dollars. Prices and build times are through the roof. The department plans these trucks on a 20 year replacement schedule. Chief LeBlanc stated that there is no relief in sight from the manufacturers. Mr. Howell wanted it on the record for the public to see that this is not an easy request to be able to wait a year or 2 for approval.

Mr. MacAskill asked if the dive gear is in this year's request. Deputy Chief Thornton responded that it is in the FY24 request. They had boringly requested via a memo to the Town Administrator, \$15,000 for ballistic gear which would be to put vests for EMT's and paramedics on each ambulance. They were able to procure that funding through a grant and decided to pursue other options for the \$15,000. All of the existing dive equipment is 10 years old and the expected life span is 5-10 years. Mr. MacAskill asked if this request could wait until FY25. Deputy Chief Thornton responded that it would be appropriate to order everything now based on build times and availability. Chief LeBlanc added that he has 10 members on staff that are some level of divers and that he would rather not wait an extra year if it were his choice. If we buy the equipment now, we can outfit all 10 with new equipment now and not rely on other funding sources.

Deputy Chief Thornton noted that the total for dive equipment replacement is \$36,580. Mr. MacAskill noted that the amount is under the \$50,000 threshold and wondered if it could be addressed through the budget. Mr. Powers responded that would be another way to look at it and that there would be no objection from him or Capital Outlay Committee on it.

Chief LeBlanc asked if an article could be put on the Town Meeting warrant with a funding source of free cash. Mr. Howell responded that was his thought as well.

4. Police Department Capital Submissions; Votes may be taken

Mr. Powers stated that there is no reference to police vehicles in the capital plan. 2 cycles ago, it was in the capital budget and then it was determined that vehicle replacement should be in the operating budget. At this point, the cruisers would be contained in the FY24 operating budget request of the Police Department.

Police Chief David Guillemette and Deputy Chief Kevin Considine were present to review the capital submissions as presented in the packet. There is \$51,000 listed under equipment replacement which would be for taser replacement and replacement of level 4 rifle plates/hard body armor. The \$20,000 request under technology replacement is for the IT upgrade for the emergency operations center (EOC). This was originally listed under FY25 but Capital Outlay Committee felt that it was a priority and moved it to FY24.

Mr. Ballantine asked if they have discussed their IT request with our IT Director. Deputy Chief Considine responded that the upgrade would strictly be to the EOC and has nothing to do with fiber optics. Mr. Ballantine responded that he would be more comfortable if they had a brief discussion to make sure that we are on the same page. Mr. Powers commented that those discussions have already occurred at the staff level. Ms. Eaton was involved in the discussion and it was her recommendation that because this is a standalone project, that it would not be part of the IT budget.

Mr. MacAskill asked how many cruisers are in the plan for replacement. Deputy Chief Considine responded that they are looking at 3 cruiser replacements for this year.

Mr. MacAskill asked why the cruisers are in the operating budget and not the capital, remember that the Board had said last year that they are capital items. Mr. Powers responded that he remembers that differently from last year and that there has been ongoing discussion between capital and operating. For Mr. Powers, as we are going to be talking with the Bylaw Charter Review Committee on charter changes, he hopes that we can build a capital plan that matches what the Division of Local Services says. You will see that the cruisers will be added going forward because they have a durable life that exceeds the 5 year plan at minimum and the dollar threshold is lower. Right now, this is a policy decision and/or a philosophy.

The Board had a brief discussion on capital verses operating budgets.

5. Any and all request on Capital Plan; Votes may be taken

No discussion was had.

Noreen Donahue was present and stated that she would be disappointed if the boiler replacement at the Cultural Center was not attached to a green communities grant amount. Mr. MacAskill responded that the Board has discussed green communities at previous meetings and that it is the intent of staff to go that direction.

Ms. Donahue commented that the font size of the document is a little hard to read especially where there is a lot of information provided.

Mr. Ballantine stated that he would like to see the police cruisers in the capital plan.

Ms. Anderson said that she doesn't see the reason to keep police cruisers in the operating budget.

Ms. Donahue commented that another part of previous conversations was that cruisers are almost considered disposable. By 3 years, they are burnt up and that they are not something that you are investing in like other capital items.

Mr. Howell moved that the police cruisers purchases/replacements be moved into the capital plan and removed from the operating budget, 2nd by Ms. Anderson and approved 5-0-0.

CONTRACTS

- A. Vote to approve a per diem employment contract with Robert Lawton for Interim Treasurer/Collector services

Mr. Howell asked that the Board be given a heads up when it comes to items of this nature, so that they can have the information before the public sees it.

Ms. Anderson moved to approve a per diem employment contract with Robert Lawton for Interim Treasurer/Collector services, 2nd by Ms. Kavanagh and approved 5-0-0.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Powers reported that he has executed a contract with Atlantic Construction and Management for the Brooks Academy Museum foundation work. The contract is not to exceed \$75,000.

Mr. Powers announced the hiring of Thomas Yarbrow as a maintenance manager for the DPW disposal area.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

Mr. Howell recognized Ellen Powell, Phil Gaudet, Maddyline Hastings, Jon Idman, Amy Bullock, Carol Coppola, Dana DeCosta, Paula West, Nancy Knepper, Pam Paine, Patty Sampson, Anita Doucette, Lee Ames, Donna Molino, Foster Banford, Tom Telesmanick, Rain Ryder, Eric Eldredge, Ginger Farrell, Rick Buttrick, John Mitchell, Bobby Hadfield, Robert Currie, Justine Walortz, Matthew Eldredge and Sean Peache as staff who gave their time to the town and dedicated their service to us. Mr. MacAskill added Rick Campbell and Mr. Powers added Patricia Macura to the list of recognitions.

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Howell moved to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Selectmen, 2nd by Ms. Anderson and approved 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Clarke
Recording Secretary

