

**TOWN OF DEDHAM
450 WASHINGTON STREET
DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE AND IN-PERSON
APRIL 28, 2022, 6:30 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS:

James A. MacDonald	Chair
Kevin R. Coughlin	Vice Chair
Dennis Teehan	Member
Dimitria Sullivan	Member
Erin Boles Welsh	Member

TOWN OF DEDHAM STAFF:

Leon Goodwin	Town Manager
Nancy Baker	Assistant Town Manager
Doreen LaBrecque	Administrative Assistant

Minutes prepared by Mary-Margaret Scrimger of Minutes Solutions Inc. from an audio/video recording.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Board recited the pledge of allegiance. The Chair, Mr. MacDonald, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. RECOGNITION: DEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS VARSITY SOCCER, HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS VARSITY FIELD HOCKEY, AND U14 HOCKEY

Mr. MacDonald and the Board presented certificates to each athlete for their representation of Dedham. The high school girls' varsity soccer team were undefeated and showed teamwork and exceptional work ethic. The U14 Hockey were undefeated two years ago and won against the odds this year. The DHS field hockey team played exceptionally well and strategically against strong competition and won the DBL league.

3. DEDHAM CITIZENS OPEN DISCUSSION

Ms. Elizabeth Saudenberg provided her address. She noted that she is a new Dedham citizen and was wondering if she could create a petition for sidewalks on Nedham Street in the Riverdale area. A few pedestrians have fallen because the sidewalks are in disrepair. Mr. MacDonald asked Ms. Saundemberg to call or e-mail the town manager's office.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to accept the anonymous gift of \$500 from the Olde Colony Civil War Group. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to approve the Block Party on Fox Meadow Lane on June 25, 2022, from 2:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to approve the closure of Fairview Street for the Mariposa Child Care Graduation on August 26, 2022. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to approve the Trenton Road Playground Grand Opening on May 21, 2022 with a rain date of May 22, 2022. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to approve the one-day liquor license for DLIT Gala at the Endicott Library on May 14, 2022, from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to approve the outdoor dining for Oscar's, Dedham House of Pizza, Café Tremezzo, Horse Thieves Tavern, Grateful Dedham Diner, Rapid Food, and Pancho's. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING: DISCUSSION AND VOTE FOR A NEW POLE**

A motion was made by Mr. Coughlin to continue this hearing at a future meeting of the Select Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

6. **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Goodwin addressed the LWCF grant, of one million dollars, that the town applied for. Unfortunately, the town did not receive the grant, and Mr. Goodwin will follow up with the grant officers. It was recommended that the town apply for another grant for \$400,000, which is state funded. Dr. Teehan noted that not receiving this grant does not impact *Article 13*, and noted that the park is still feasible without this funding.

Mr. Goodwin noted that there was an article to remove the cell towers on Incinerator Road. The town has been working on permits for demolition. Horizon has noted that they will no longer be on town property, and this will impact revenue streams that were allocated for demolition. Mr. Goodwin noted that there are changes to this market since the initial decision. He is unsure what the next steps will be and will continue to investigate.

Newly elected officials must complete training within 90 days of the elections. Mr. Goodwin is working to arrange this.

Ms. Sullivan asked for clarification on what the town is covering for outdoor dining. Mr. Goodwin noted that raised outdoor platforms were purchased by the town and installed by the businesses at their expense. Upgrades were the responsibility of each respective business.

The public safety building is coming along quickly.

7. **DISCUSSION AND VOTE: PRIDE FLAG RAISING CELEBRATION**

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to approve the LGBTQ+ flag raising ceremony in front of town hall on June 3, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Coughlin. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Mr. Chris Kelly, a member of the Human Rights Commission, noted that the first LGBTQ+ flag raising ceremony occurred last year and was a success. There were over 200 people who attended the event at town hall. The request is to hold this event again on June 3, 2022.

Mr. Kelly asked Mr. MacDonald to open the event. Mr. MacDonald agreed.

8. **CANDIDATE STATEMENTS: CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

The floor was opened for conservation commission candidates to address the community.

Mr. Lee Hafrey: Mr. Hafrey noted that he is an avid kayaker and uses the water trail regularly. This motivated him to begin the sustainability committee, working to protect the town resources. He wants to continue with this work by joining the Conservation Commission. He teaches sustainability in his work.

Mr. Tim Puopolo: Mr. Puopolo currently serves on the committee as an alternate. During this time, he has extended his education. He believes he brings skills in wetland science and conservation best practices. He is employed by the city of Cambridge water department. He has extensive conservation experience and enjoys learning about the subject matter.

9. **PUBLIC HEARING: DISCUSSION AND VOTE—CHANGE IN D/B/A**

A motion was made by Mr. Coughlin to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sullivan. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

A motion was made by Mr. Coughlin to approve the change in D/B/A from Dedham Square Coffee House to Orchid Seven Fusion Bar and Grill. The motion was seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Ms. Marie Yaye noted that she is the new owner of Orchid Seven Fusion Bar and Grill, originally Dedham Square Coffee House. This new restaurant will be family oriented, appropriate for dates and business meetings. The food will be fusion but with a Caribbean focus.

10. **PRESENTATION: TAX RATES**

Mr. Kevin Doyle, the assessing director, presented regarding the tax rate and property evaluations. Tax bills are sent out quarterly. The first two quarter bills are preliminary tax bills, which are estimates that add 2% to compensate for any adjustments. The bills of the last two quarters are taxes and any adjustments needed. Tax bills are calculated based on home values, and the average single-home tax bill last year was approximately \$8,000.

The Classification Hearing divides property into two categories: residential and commercial (CPI). It is possible to shift some of the residential burden onto commercial properties with a residential factor, creating a split tax rate.

The valuation process is driven by property sales from the previous year. There are different factors that influence the value such as style (bungalow, ranch), amenities (porch, pool, garage), location (primary street, dead end street), etc. For commercial properties, these are driven by market data. Both commercial and residential tax rates have gone down. However, tax bills have increased due to the increase in market value.

Assessment values change every year due to the market and other factors. The assessment value of single-family houses increased from \$550,000 to \$598,000, which resulted in an increase to tax bills of an average of approximately \$500.

Within the county, Dedham has average tax bills, average increases, and average property values. Mr. Doyle noted that commercial tax rates are the fourth highest in the county. This is an area to improve and should be considered in the Classification Hearing.

The town of Dedham has been working diligently to be fiscally responsible while keeping tax rates down. With the tax money, there have been improvements to the town that increase quality of life. Additionally, Dedham has a AAA financial bond rating, allowing low borrowing rates.

Mr. Mike Butler noted that Dedham has held the AAA financial bond rating for ten years. Within the categories that are evaluated for this rating, budgetary performance received an adequate rating in this category for AAA financial bond rating due to deficits. However, with the work of town staff, this has been improved to strong because the deficit has been decreased significantly.

Debt and contingent liability, which is long term debt such as pension, was previously rated as adequate and has increased to strong. The other categories are budgetary flexibility, cash on hand, economy, and management.

Mr. Butler noted that it is a responsibility of the town to create intergenerational equity, which means ensuring the next generation receives a comparable or better experience. Overall, assets are higher than liabilities.

Mr. Butler noted hope that the town meeting will support resuming funding of OPEB for intergenerational equity reasons. Pension liability is low compared to other towns in the county. Overall, the debt for Dedham has been high and will increase because of the bond issuance that occurred in March 2022. This debt level is common, and most towns have been increasing their debt due to favorable interest rates.

Mr. Butler noted that strategies need to be reviewed as the environment changes. Mr. MacDonald noted that a decrease of an individual's tax rate by 14 cents requires a decrease of one million in the budget. Mr. Coughlin asked how residential and commercial property values look for the next year. Mr. Doyle noted that residential property values are still increasing and commercial is also starting to increase. It was noted that with an increase to mortgage rates, the market may cool down.

There was discussion regarding the volume of not-for-profits in Dedham and if there was a way to allow them to contribute to taxes in different ways.

Ms. Boles Welsh asked if there are best practices for tax assessments and any innovative solutions that will work better for the town. She noted that although there is equity in homes, many citizens struggle with day-to-day expenses.

Ms. Sullivan asked if residential homes owned by not-for-profits are tax exempt. Mr. Doyle noted that they are. Ms. Sullivan noted that Dedham services are excellent and are paid for via these taxes. The town has been fiscally prudent.

Dr. Teehan noted that previously when extra free cash was available it was used to lower the levy. Mr. MacDonald noted that when individuals are selling their homes, they want the value to be high but they would like it to be low for taxes. Mr. Doyle also noted that some of the home values have gone up because of additions to homes. With the pandemic, people are looking at increasing amenities on their property because they spend more time at home.

11. **DISCUSSION AND VOTE: MSBA STATEMENT OF INTEREST FOR GREENLodge AND RIVERDALE SCHOOLS**

Due to his work, Mr. MacDonald noted a conflict with this item and left the meeting. Mr. Coughlin resided as Chair.

A motion was made by Ms. Welsh Boles to authorize the superintendent of schools to submit the statement of interest for Greenlodge Elementary School located at 191 Greenlodge Street in Dedham. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sullivan. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to authorize the superintendent of schools to submit the statement of interest for Riverdale Elementary School located at 143 Nedham Street in Dedham. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sullivan. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

The town was invited to the feasibility phase for the potential rebuild of Oakville Elementary School. The town has asked for Greenlodge and Riverdale to be included in this feasibility study.

Mr. John Tocci noted that Oakville was the school in the worst repair. The feasibility study allows the town to work with MSBA and create a solution. Within this funding, Oakville must be included in the project, but there are various options, and could include consolidating Oakville and Greenlodge or Oakville and Riverdale. The statement of interest must be submitted to the MSBA and this needs to be approved by the Select Board. This is to start the conversation and is not backing any specifics of the project.

12. **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. MacDonald returned to the meeting and resumed his position as Chair.

Dr. Teehan noted the desire for a session regarding the town green and *article 13*. There will be an information session next week and he encouraged individuals to attend and discuss. Additionally, he noted that the LGBTQ+ pride flag raising will be June 3, 2022. He thanked the women and men who are part of the fire department. He recently had a fire in his home, and they did an excellent job in addressing the issue. He encouraged everyone to have appropriate fire alarms in their homes.

Ms. Sullivan provided a Pedestrian Vehicle Safety Working Group updated. There may be need to have a road safety plan to identify and analyze potential challenges. Four engineering firms were interviewed and presented potential plans for Dedham. This is in early stages and there is significant work to be done.

Mr. MacDonald provided opening remarks in his position as a new Chair. He thanked Ms. Sullivan for her work as Chair in a difficult year. He thanked everyone for electing him and their confidence in his work ability. He encouraged healthy debate and wanted to keep open communication.

He noted that the pandemic impacted the community in numerous ways, especially for businesses with in-person elements. He encouraged people to keep themselves safe. He noted that the budget will be reviewed at the next town meeting. There are many people who are struggling, and they are not forgotten in the Select Board's work. He noted that it is important for the community to engage and participate in democracy.

Mr. MacDonald also noted that a working group for the town green will be selected in the week of May 4, 2022.

13. MOVE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan that pursuant to *MGL c.30A sec 21(a) Exemption 3* to move into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. The motion was seconded by Dr. Teehan. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

14. VOTE: AMERICAN FEDERATION AND STATE COUNTY MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

A motion was made by Mr. Coughlin to approve the memorandum agreement between the town of Dedham and the American Federation and State Country Municipal Employees, AFL CIO State Council 93, Local 362 town hall unit as discussed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Welsh Boles. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Abstained
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

15. ADJOURNMENT

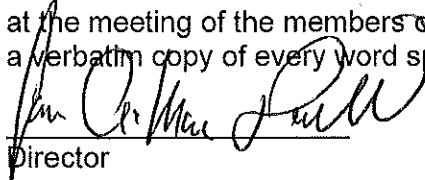
A motion was made by Mr. Coughlin to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Welsh Boles. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting of the members of the Select Board. This document shall not be considered to be a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.



Director

Director

9/22/22

Date

Date