

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

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD MEETING
APRIL 12, 2023, 6:30 P.M.**

MEMBERS:

James A. MacDonald	Chair
Dr. Dennis Teehan	Vice-Chair
Dimitria Sullivan	Member
Erin Boles Welsh	Member
Josh Donati	Member

TOWN STAFF:

Leon Goodwin	Town Manager
Nancy Baker	Assistant Town Manager
Doreen LaBrecque	Assistant to Administration
John Arnett	Director of Finance

Minutes taken by Mary-Margaret Scrimger of Minutes Solutions Inc. from a recording

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order. The pledge of allegiance was said.

2. SWEARING IN

The Town Clerk swore in Dr. Dennis Teehan and Mr. Josh Donati.

Dr. Teehan thanked the voters for electing him back on the Select Board and thanked the candidates that were unsuccessful. He reminded citizens that the work must be done through respect, even when opinions differ. He addressed the negative aspects of this election cycle, which he requested be ended. Mr. Donati thanked everyone who participated in the election.

3. REORGANIZATION OF THE SELECT BOARD

On a motion made by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Dr. Teehan, it was resolved to appoint Mr. MacDonald as Chair. Motion carried.

On a motion made by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh, it was resolved to appoint Dr. Teehan as Vice-Chair. Motion carried.

4. DEDHAM CITIZENS – OPEN DISCUSSION

Mr. MacDonald noted that 30 minutes would be put aside for this agenda item and speakers would only be provided three minutes to speak.

Ms. Susan Butler addressed the smear attack that recently occurred against her in connection to the election.

Mr. David Sheehan noted that he worked on Ms. Butler's campaign. He noted that smear campaign against Ms. Butler was tragic, as her character is exceptional.

Ms. Yolanda Spiro noted that she has concerns that people can say anything in elections without any recourse. Additionally, she had concern regarding the School Committee making incorrect decisions.

Mr. John Tocci noted that there is a joint School Committee meeting regarding the construction of the new elementary school on April 26, 2023.

Mr. Goodwin noted that the Town has consulted legal counsel and messages did come from the Town regarding some of these incidents.

5. **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Goodwin congratulated the Board members who recently won their position. The Public Safety Building has been confirmed by the architects to be fit for its intended purpose. The fire department will move into the building soon. There is a tight timeline to demolish the old fire station. The police move will occur approximately a week after the fire department and then the demolition of the old police station will begin. This is a significant moment for the Town. The reserved Keystone parking spaces are no longer needed and the signs will be removed soon.

The Town is working on the budget, and there is an attempt to provide level service to the Town via this budget. However, this would be a 5.6% increase. As a result, the Town has been trying to reduce the budget by a total of \$1 million. This is being done by a reallocation of resources. The increase is 4.75% at this point.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

On a motion made by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh, it was resolved to approve the consent agenda including the block party on Fox Meadow Lane on June 17, 2023, and Richards Street on June 22, 2023; one-day licenses to DLIT on May 13, 2023; the July 4, 2023; MBACC on April 15 and 16, 2023, and Raffle Night on April 28, 2023; acceptance of gifts including \$500 to the Youth Commission and two oil paintings to the Endicott Estate valued at \$1,000; and permission for the community piano at the Blue Bunny from May 27, 2023, to September 30, 2023. Motion carried

7. **DISCUSSION WITH OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE CHAIR BOB LOPORTO**

This was deferred.

8. **PUBLIC HEARING – REQUEST FOR ISSUANCE OF ALL ALCOHOL RESTAURANT LICENSE TO TAVERN IN THE SQUARE**

On a motion made by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh, it was resolved to close the public hearing. Motion carried.

On a motion made by Ms. Boles Welsh, seconded by Dr. Teehan, it was resolved to approve the issuance of an all alcohol restaurant license to Tavern in the Square with Mr. Shawn Salter as the manager of record. Motion carried.

Ms. Steffani Boudreau, representative for the Tavern, addressed the Board. She noted that the request is for an all alcohol restaurant license and approval of Mr. Shawn Salter as manager of record. Seating capacity is 297. Mr. Salter has been in a restaurant management

position since 2001. He has had experience with liquor licenses within his career. Mr. Salter noted that there is a corporate culture to serve appropriately, for over-serving and under-age serving, etc. The Board recommend that Mr. Salter connect with the liquor compliance officer in Dedham.

9. DISCUSSION AND VOTE: DEDHAM RETIREMENT BOARD

On a motion made by Dr. Teehan, seconded by Ms. Sullivan, it was resolved to approve the request for a 2% COLA increase for retirees. Motion carried.

Ms. Shannon MacKenzie, the town's accountant who sits on the Retirement Board, addressed the Board. She noted that the intent of this presentation is to give an additional 2% of COLA to retirees. This needs to be approved by the Select Board. This will not impact the assessment until 2029. It was noted that this comes from the pension fund, not the Town's budget.

10. FY22 EXIT INTERVIEW: POWERS AND SULLIVAN

Ms. Renee Davis, partner in charge of the independent audit of the town's financial statements, presented. The objective of the audit is an independent review of the financial controls and ensuring that they are appropriately displayed. Different aspects are tested. Government and regular auditing standards are followed. The results of the FY22 audit is a clean one. There were no significant deficiencies found in the audit. This is an improvement from FY21, where one was found and has been resolved.

The general budget for FY22 was \$123.8 million. There was the intent to use \$1.7 million from the reserves. The general fund revenue came in at \$2.7 million higher than budgeted as a result of tax liens, penalties, and interest. There was an investment income loss in the general fund as a result of the timing of the markets. Expenditures were under budget by \$3 million, demonstrating strong budgetary controls. There was a budgetary fund balance, excluding the stabilization fund, of over \$15 million. Including the stabilization fund, this number was \$24.3 million. There was \$16.9 million of bond proceeds and a \$661,000 premium associated with this.

Regarding the Sewer Enterprise Fund, there was over \$7 million in revenue. There were no issues with the Sewer Enterprise Fund. Pension liability is measured as of December 31, 2021. The markets at this point were very different than they are currently. It was 100% funded at that time. This will decrease, as has been demonstrated by the market. Pension and OPEB are the largest liabilities for the town. Pension has a significant structure to ensure it is appropriately funded. For OPEB, which is health insurance for retirees, it is pay as you go. There is an unfunded liability of what people have earned and not taken yet, which is recorded on the financial statements. This is measured as of June and was impacted by the market change. The unfunded overhead liability went from \$1.5 million up to \$78.6 million.

Regarding grants, there was an increase due to COVID-19 related grants. There needed to be a risk assessment to determine which grants needed compliance work done and which grants are considered to be major grants. There are different sources of COVID-19 such as ARPA, ARPA via the county, etc.

Regarding prior-year comments, full cash reconciliation and credit real estate and personal property receivables have been partially resolved, as there are some immaterial items that still need to be resolved. Ms. Davis noted that the Deposit and Investment policy has not been resolved. There is more focus on this currently in the industry. Reconciliation of escrow accounts is partially resolved and should be fully resolved this year. Comments regarding purchase orders, department head invoice approvals, outstanding checks, and retirement withholdings are unresolved.

There was discussion regarding statutory debt limit for Dedham. Mr. Arnett noted that he will confirm what it is. There was discussion regarding levy capacity and financial health. Ms. Davis noted that there is flexibility in the levy capacity and there is strong financial health. Mr. MacDonald noted that, with the impending financial downturn, it is important to ensure that Dedham has a plan for this.

There was discussion regarding the unresolved comments. Mr. Arnett noted that there have been changes to workflow so that these issues cannot occur going forward. Significant strides have been made. As these are long-term issues, they are taking significant time to address.

11. DISCUSSION AND VOTE: JUNETEENTH FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

On a motion made by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Boles Welsh, it was resolved to approve the flag raising ceremony in honor of Juneteenth on June 19, 2023. Motion carried.

12. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

The Board thanked everyone who ran in the election and participated in the election. Mr. MacDonald also noted that families are impacted by people being actively engaged in the community. Sports games, wedding, etc. are missed due to elected official responsibilities. He also asked that the senator or his team be invited to a meeting to discuss pending issues.

13. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Dr. Teehan, seconded by Ms. Sullivan, and carried, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting moved into executive session.

DISCLAIMER

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

_____	November 29, 2023
Chair, Select Board	Date approved