

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

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
O'BRIEN MEETING ROOM, 3rd FLOOR AND VIA TELECONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 29, 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

Minutes prepared by Lisandra Colley 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, Mr. James A. MacDonald, presiding as Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. OPEN DISCUSSION

The Board expressed gratitude to Ms. Rita Mae Cushman and her family for their 50-year tradition of creating joyful holiday displays. They shared personal memories, highlighted the positive impact on families, and mentioned the tradition of taking photos with Santa Claus. They also discussed attendance at the upcoming display at Ms. Cushman's house on December 4, 2023.

3. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Goodwin updated the Board on the status of the barn that burned down several years ago. After prolonged discussions, the insurance company settled for just under \$800,000, which was less than expected. The town engaged Dore + Whittier, an architecture firm, to design the new barn. However, initial cost estimates were around \$2.8 million, far exceeding the insurance settlement. With just over \$600,000 remaining from the insurance settlement after initial expenditures, Mr. Goodwin discussed plans to simplify the design and use a prefabricated building to stay within budget. He will present the updated designs to the State Commission in January, 2024. The proposed prefabricated building would be about 2,000 square feet with three bays and a gable roof with a cupola. Mr. Goodwin also noted that Dedham Civic Pride had been involved in the discussions, and he committed to continuing to engage with them and other stakeholders to meet community needs.

Mr. Goodwin discussed the contract renewal process with Coastal Ambulance, proposing a five-year term with a two-year extension due to their excellent service. He assured the Board that the new contract is comparable to the old contract. Additionally, Mr. Goodwin informed the

Board about the ongoing budget process and capital expenditure reviews. He highlighted the town's efforts to reschedule a meeting on emergency housing and the transition to a new email address for the Select Board. He also shared updates on grant applications and significant progress towards the goal of raising half a million dollars in private fundraising for the Town Green project.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion duly made, it was voted to approve the consent agenda, including:

- **gift acceptances (\$100 from Daughters of the American Revolution for Endicott Estate; \$5000 from Dedham Rotary to COA);**
- **annual Menorah Lighting & Car Parade on December 12, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.;**
- **one-day license (MBACC Open Studios, December 9, 2023, and December 10, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.);**
- **approval of 268A Exemption for Annalisa Ray Block Party on Carol Drive on December 9, 2023, from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.;**
- **approval of Meeting Minutes before December 14, 2023: July 13, 2023, July 17, 2023, November 13, 2023, and the Executive Session Minutes before December 13, 2023, and April 18, 2023.**

Motion carried.

5. PUBLIC HEARING: FISCAL YEAR 2024 CLASSIFICATION HEARING

On a motion duly made, it was voted to close the public hearing. Motion carried.

On a motion duly made, it was voted to continue classification for the town of Dedham. Motion carried.

On a motion duly made, it was voted to approve the tax shift of 1.75 for the fiscal year 2024. Motion carried.

Mr. Mike Polito led the public hearing for the fiscal year 2024 classification alongside the Board of Assessors and the Director of Assessing, discussing the continuation of the classification system that allows different tax rates on residential and commercial properties. The Board of Assessors recommended the maximum tax shift of 1.75. They explained the concept of tax shift, where residential and commercial/industrial properties are taxed differently, aiming to distribute the tax burden more equitably. For the fiscal year 2024, the shift means residential properties will cover approximately 70.08% of the tax burden, while commercial, industrial, and commercial/industrial properties will cover about 29.92%.

The total assessed property value for the fiscal year 2024 was \$7.415 billion, with residential properties making up \$6.147 billion and commercial properties \$978 million. The average single-family home value increased to \$739,506, resulting in a residential tax rate of \$12.50 per \$1,000 of value and a commercial/industrial property tax rate of \$25.88 per \$1,000 of value. This shift in rates would result in a typical homeowner's tax bill rising by \$663. The town needs to raise \$109 million in taxes for the fiscal year 2024, a 7.74% increase from the previous year.

The discussion also delved into the classification of multi-unit housing under residential properties and the assessment methodologies for different property types. The Board raised concerns about the rising tax burden on homeowners and the need for a detailed analysis of spending increases to maintain financial stability and a favorable bond rating. The potential impact of tax increases on different demographics within the community was highlighted, with

calls for transparency, accountability, and responsible decision-making from elected officials and committees.

6. **CANDIDATE INTERVIEW AND VOTE: STUDENT POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

On a motion duly made, it was voted to approve Princess-Adanna Nwachukwu as student representative to the Human Rights Commission. Motion carried.

The Board inquired about Ms. Princess-Adanna Nwachukwu's background and motivation for joining the Human Rights Commission. They also asked her about future plans and learned that she is interested in the science field and is considering her college options.

7. **PUBLIC HEARING: REQUEST FOR WINE AND MALT RESTAURANT LICENSE**

On a motion duly made, it was voted to approve the issuance of a wine and malt license for Bangkok Thai Street Food d/b/a 29 Bistro, 29 Bryant Street, Dedham. Motion carried.

On a motion duly made, it was voted to approve the appointment of Natthasit Nimitsakulchai as manager of record for 29 Bistro. Motion carried.

The Board discussed the request for a wine and malt restaurant license for 29 Bistro. The owner, Natthasit Nimitsakulchai, shared his experience in the industry, highlighting his training in Cambridge and managing Sweet Rice Thai Sushi in Charlestown. Mr. Nimitsakulchai explained that the license would meet customer demand for beer and wine, which is expected to boost sales. The Board advised him to consult with Sergeant Sullivan, the alcohol compliance officer, and the town manager's office for guidance.

8. **DISCUSSION AND VOTE: CALL FOR LIQUOR HEARINGS**

On a motion duly made, it was voted to schedule compliance failure hearings for Capital Grille, Il Massimo, Dedham House of Pizza, TGI Friday's and Hooters in January, 2024. Motion carried.

9. **DISCUSSION AND VOTE: DATE TO CLOSE THE WARRANT FOR 2024 SPRING TOWN MEETING**

On a motion duly made, it was voted to close the warrant for the 2024 Spring Town Meeting on February 16, 2024. Motion carried.

The Board discussed closing the warrant for the Spring Annual Town Meeting, suggesting February 16, 2024, as the closing date for the meeting on May 20, 2024. They clarified that the opening date for the next warrant occurs subsequent to the conclusion of the preceding town meeting. The Board further explained that the public can submit warrants via email, mail, or hand delivery, ensuring they are dated upon receipt. They instructed that warrants must be submitted to Ms. Nancy Baker by the stipulated deadline for inclusion in the Spring warrant book.

10. **DISCUSSION AND VOTE: RENEWAL OF ALL LICENSES FOR 2024**

On a motion duly made, it was voted to approve the renewal of the following licenses for 2024 in the Town of Dedham: All Alcohol Restaurant and Package Store Licenses; Wine and Malt Restaurant and Package Store Licenses; Innholder, Veterans and Club Licenses; Common Victualer Licenses; Classl, II and III Licenses; Second-Hand Dealer

Licenses; Sunday and Secular Day Music and Dancing Licenses; Entertainment Licenses; Automatic Amusement Licenses; Theater Licenses. Motion carried.

The Board discussed ensuring compliance with criteria for alcohol licenses and timely payment of license fees. They emphasized that licenses would only be issued once all requirements, including taxes, were met, and the responsible office would verify everything before issuance. Concerns were raised about the consequences for those who fail to pay on time, with suggestions that the police department could intervene if licenses were not obtained by the deadline. The Board sought clarification on the process of notifying license holders about payment deadlines, with assurances that reminders were regularly sent out well in advance.

Ms. Nancy Baker discussed the periodic evaluation of license fees, acknowledging that it had been around 10 years since the last assessment. Mr. Goodwin reported that the Finance Director was currently reviewing fee structures across various departments, including the Select Board's fees, to ensure they remained competitive while contributing to local revenue.

11. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

On a motion duly made, it was voted to approve the creation of a District Improvement Financing (DIF) Oversight Committee comprised of two members of the Select Board and two members of the Planning Board. Motion carried.

The Board discussed the ongoing DIF project, focusing on its objective to stimulate economic growth within the town's commercial areas. They deliberated on the project's potential to increase property values in specified districts and reinvest a portion of the resulting value increment into district enhancements. Following this, a proposal emerged to establish a DIF Oversight Committee tasked with monitoring the planning and execution of the project, underscoring the importance of providing assistance and supervision to ensure the project's effective implementation.

The Board discussed upcoming community events and initiatives, such as the Menorah lighting ceremony, a meeting regarding the school building rehabilitation project, community dinners for veterans, and the annual Toys for Our Town event. Finally, the meeting concluded with a motion to enter executive session for discussing strategy related to collective bargaining or litigation.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion duly made, pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a): (1) Subsection 3 – To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. Motion carried.

13. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and carried unanimously, it was resolved that there was no further business of the Select Board to transact; the meeting was closed.

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.

Chair, Select Board

June 27, 2024

Date Approved