

PRESENT: Select Board Members Margaret Scarsdale, Tony Beattie and Mark Mathews; Town Administrator, Andrew MacLean; Executive Assistant, Tracie Looney

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Pledge of Allegiance was said. Ms. Scarsdale announced that the remote meeting is being recorded for re-broadcast by Pepperell Community Media and being remotely attended by audience members via GoTo Meeting.

1. AGENDA PACKET (Please see the following link to documents related to agenda items below.)
https://town.pepperell.ma.us/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_03022022-3215?packet=true

2. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted to accept and release the following minutes as amended:

- October 25, 2021
- January 10, 2022
- January 24, 2022
- February 14, 2022

3. BILL AND PAYROLL WARRANTS

Since the last meeting the Select Board have approved the following payroll and bill warrants:

- January 17, 2022 payables warrant #33B was signed for \$190,122.27
- January 17, 2022 payroll warrant #34A was signed for \$279,970.67
- February 23, 2022 payables warrant #34B was signed for \$217,159.93

4. SELECT BOARD APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

Appointment: PFAS Task Force Committee

The Pepperell Select Board created a PFAS Task Force on June 14, 2021. This independent task force will research options and make recommendations on things Pepperell can do about the PFAS levels in Town water. Resident Stephen Themelis filled out a Citizen Activity Form to fill the vacancy on the PFAS Task Force Committee.

On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted to appoint Stephen Themelis to the PFAS Task Force with the term to expire on December 31, 2022.

Appointment: Invasive and Native Plant Advisory Committee

The Invasive and Native Plant Advisory Committee was established on February 22, 2021 by the Select Board in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Part 1, Chapter 132, and guidance issued by the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group. The Committee consists of seven members appointed by the Select Board, with at least one member also holding the title of Conservation Commissioner. Resident Marc Basti filled out a Citizen Activity Form to fill the vacancy on the Invasive and Native Plant Advisory Committee.

On a motion made by Mr. Beattie and seconded by Mr. Mathews, it was unanimously voted to appoint Marc Basti to the Invasive and Native Plant Advisory Committee with the term to expire on December 31, 2022.

5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Written Submittals: Charter Communications Memo

Audience Comments: Pepperell Fire Chief noted that three Pepperell Firefighters graduated from the Massachusetts Fire Academy Call/Volunteer Recruit Academy on Tuesday March 1st. FF Matthew Landino, FF Chris Macleod, & FF Joshua Matthews successfully completed the rigorous 240 hours training program over the last 4 months 2 nights a week and several weekends. Completion of this program demonstrates a commitment to the department and the community as a whole.

6. DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Bill Greathead Remembrance

The Select Board acknowledged the one-year anniversary of the passing of William Greathead.

6.2 ARPA Budget Decision Process

The Select Board is to make determinations on American Rescue Plan Act and submit a budget to the US Treasury by April 30, 2022. The Board has been gathering input from multiple sources including two public information sessions, discussions with staff, capital program analysis, and by reviewing Master Plan priorities. The Select Board discussed how to choose public input ideas. The Board currently has received over 65 ideas totaling \$10 million dollars. The Town has \$3.62 million to spend. Board members were also asked to create a list of their individual priorities to help facilitate the decision process. Jennifer Thompson, the Town's ARPA Consultant, was in attendance to discuss with the Board her recommendations on spending the ARPA monies.

- On a motion made by Mr. Beattie and seconded by Mr. Mathews, it was unanimously voted to authorize the spending of up to \$130,702.00 of American Rescue Plan Funds on the following initiatives:
 1. \$6002.00 for COVID-19 Antigen kits
 2. \$59,700.00 for Engineered plans for the rotary Complete Streets grant application
 3. \$50,000.00 for the Massachusetts Historical Commission Capital Grant match
 4. \$15,000.00 for Capital Strategic Consulting for ARPA consulting and compliance (Authorization of spending on these items was time sensitive. The grant match will be returned to the ARPA account for the Town to re-appropriate, if the grant is not awarded.)
- On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was moved to authorize \$1.8 million of the ARPA funds to cover the second step of the planning of the safety complex.
- An amendment was made to this motion. On a motion made by Mr. Beattie and seconded by Ms. Scarsdale, it was voted to move the spending of \$1.8 million of the ARPA funds to the Town Meeting. Ms. Scarsdale and Mr. Mathews- Nay, Mr. Beattie – Aye. Motion does not carry.
- The Board returned to the first motion. Ms. Scarsdale and Mr. Mathews – Aye, Mr. Beattie- Nay. Motion carries.
- On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted to prioritize one-time items like capital equipment or infrastructure upgrades.
- On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted to consider items that require annual funding like increased staffing.
- On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted that spending that is eligible for other grant funding is not considered to be having ARPA funds used.
- On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted to utilize the Master Plan spending as the Board prioritizes the ARPA funds.
- On a motion made by Mr. Beattie and seconded by Mr. Mathews, it was unanimously voted to not give ARPA monies to businesses.
- On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was voted to support non-profits with ARPA money. Mr. Beattie and Ms. Scarsdale- aye, Mr. Mathews – nay. Motion carries.

Mr. Beattie will take on the task of looking further in to the criteria for non-profits to be eligible for receiving ARPA funds.

- On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was voted to use ARPA funds for premium pay. Mr. Mathews and Mr. Beattie – nay, Ms. Scarsdale abstained

6.3 Annual Town Meeting Start Time

On 02/14/2022 the Select Board set the Annual Town Meeting dates for May 9th and 10th. A start time needs to be added to the decision. The extension of remote meetings through July 15, 2022, signed by the Governor in February, also allows us to consider changing quorum to no more than 10%.

On a motion made by Mr. Mathew and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted to set the Annual Town Meeting start time at 7:00 PM on May 9th and May 10th, 2022.

6.4 Permission to Deficit Spend Snow and Ice Budget

Snow and Ice is the most unpredictable budget in the General Fund. As such, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts allows the Town to deficit spend this account, with the permission of the Select Board and the Finance Committee. The Town may cover the deficit with account transfers, reserve funds, free cash or other stabilization funds.

On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted to allow the Town to deficit spend the Snow and Ice account for Fiscal Year 2022.

6.45 Two Items Not Anticipated But Time Sensitive

Stretch Code Letter of Support

On February 24th the Town received a request from State Senator Mike Barrett to send a letter to the DOER and members of the legislature who are deciding on changes to the Stretch Code. This request is time sensitive in that the voting is to take place on March 9, 2022, before our next Select Board Meeting.

The Stretch Code is an existing set of building regulations relating to energy efficiency and conservation in building development. This letter argues that the proposed changes do not go far enough to help move Massachusetts toward its 'Net Zero' goals. The Town Administrator asked the Board if he should create a letter to be endorsed by the Board and sent in as requested.

On a motion made by Mr. Beattie and seconded by Mr. Mathews, it was voted to have the Board provide edits to this draft letter to the Town Administrator, that the final draft be reviewed by the Board individually, before it is sent to DOER and the legislative committee Chairs.

NMRSD School Committee Letter on Budget

The Towns of Ashby and Townsend asked on March 1, 2022, if we would write a letter to the North Middlesex Regional School District asking them to consider adjustments to their proposed budget. The School Committee is scheduled to vote the budget on March 7th.

Last week, a letter the Select Board endorsed, was sent to Senator Kennedy advocating for the additional education funding. Pepperell recently hosted a meeting with the three district towns, the school committee, and the superintendent on this topic. Margaret Scarsdale and the Town Administrator spoke with the MMA Legislative leader on education issues, Jackie Lavender-Bird.

The Town Administrator is prepared to create a letter asking the school district to consider further reductions in their budget, advocate for the use of their Excess & Deficiency funds to reduce town assessments, and to offer to continue lobbying the legislature for increased Chapter 70 and school transportation funding. As this letter needs to get to the school committee promptly, the TA asked the Board to endorse this message or direct the TA to take a different path.

On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted to direct the Town Administrator to create a letter to the North Middlesex Regional School District school committee advocating for a more appropriate budget for FY2023 using the outline provided tonight.

6.5 Future Meeting Topics

The Town Administrator reviewed upcoming topics for the next Select Board meeting.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Select Board Reports

The Select Board members gave the following updates:

Chair Scarsdale reports the following actions:

- Coordinated the budget discussions between the Ashby/Townsend/Pepperell Select Boards, Finance Committee, School Committee, a working group that was formed on the last call, and our State Senators

Clerk Beattie reports the following actions:

- Worked with the Agricultural Commission on their survey regarding a commercial kitchen and food hub
- Worked with the TA regarding personal development
- Met with Fire Chief Borneman and discussed the use of ARPA funds

Member Mathews reports the following actions:

- Weekly meeting with MPIT team
- Met with the Executive Director for the Chelmsford Housing to discuss affordable housing opportunities
- Attended NMCOG meeting
- Worked with Town Human Resource Generalist, Judy Palumbo, regarding the Town Administrator contract

7.2 Town Administrator Reports

The Town Administrator did not present a report at this meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Mathews and seconded by Mr. Beattie, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracie Looney, Executive Assistant

APPROVED:

Mark Mathews, Chair

Tony Beattie, Clerk

Chuck Walkovich, Member

Approved: April 11, 2022