

## Meeting Minutes

**Board:** Select Board / Water Commissioner's Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, April 03, 2023  
**Location:** Erving Senior and Community Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, MA 01344

**Select Board Present:** Jacob Smith, William Bembury, Scott Bastarache  
**Finance Committee Present:** Daniel Hammock, Benjamin Fellows, Charles Zilinski  
**Capital Planning Committee Present:** Benjamin Fellows, Linda Downs-Bembury, Peter Mallet, Jacob Smith

At 6:37 PM **Chairman Smith** called the meeting to order.

### Meeting Minutes of March 23, 2023

**Selectman Bembury** made a motion to approve the March 23, 2023, meeting minutes as written, **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

### Review of Trench Shield and Box Procurement

The Board briefly reviewed the Trench Shield and Box procurement with Glenn McCrory, Highway Superintendent. Two responses were received. **Selectman Bembury** made a motion to award American Shoring for \$19,800 and to authorize Bryan to execute all agreements, **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

### Review and Issuance of the 13<sup>th</sup> Water Commitment for FY2023

After a brief review and no discussion, **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to approve the 13<sup>th</sup> Water Commitment for FY2023 in the amount of \$43,472.17 for water use charges, **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

### Review Watermain Break on River Road Procurement

The Board discussed the water main break that took place on River Road on Saturday, March 25, 2023, with Peter Sanders, Chief Water Operator. They discussed the request to waive the procurement sent to DCAMM. There was an estimate from Johnson in the amount of \$7,500 to finalize the road base, paving and sidewalk and bring back to its original condition. All agreed to have Johnson complete the work as soon as possible. Peter informed the Board that in total, in the last 25 years, there have been four water main breaks. **Selectman Bembury** expressed concern, but **Selectman Bastarache** explained that at this time the cost would be too great, and they discussed getting the cost, perhaps at the time that there is a River Road paving project, of replacing all of the water pipe.

### Surplus Equipment Request- Recreation Department- 1<sup>st</sup> Read

The Select Board members reviewed conducted 1st read. No concerns.

### Insurance Advisory Committee Appointment

**Selectman Bembury** made a motion to appoint James Loynd to the Insurance Advisory Committee as the Retiree Representative, **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

At 7:06 PM the Finance Committee and the Capital Planning Committee joined the Select Board for a joint meeting.

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In the absence of Finance Committee Chair, Deb Smith, Dan Hammock nominated Ben Fellows for temporary Chair, Charlie Zilinski seconded, all in favor.

### **Review of FY2024 Budget Requests and Projected Revenue**

The Boards discussed the recap sheet and changes since the last meeting. There was discussion regarding the results in the unbalanced budget and what cuts are needed to make up for the \$85,000 unbalanced budget. There was much discussion around wages and steps and **Selectman Bastarache** recommended that changes not be made to the wage and step table. They reviewed the responses and comparisons from other towns around wages and benefits. The Board questioned whether the \$60,000 placeholder would be enough.

Finance Committee Member, Dan Hammock, raised the question about COLA and that inflation should play a part in the discussion. **Chairman Smith** expressed that they do not have a number yet and there needs to be more discussion. **Selectman Bastarache** also mentioned an idea that was presented to him that suggests a flat rate added to each step rather than a percentage. Dan Hammock expressed support for the flat rate.

During the wage, step and COLA discussion, Chief Holst joined the board, explaining that he wasn't advocating for his department as they are part of a bargaining unit, but wanted to ask the question of whether the department should expect an increase. **Chairman Smith** informed Chief Holst that this doesn't apply to them, and that the discussion would be at the bargaining table. Chief Holst also recommended that the 15 steps be cut back to fewer steps in hopes that it would keep employees from leaving after a short time.

**Selectman Bastarache** asked that anyone who will be a part of the next meeting to share ideas about how to balance the budget, ideas about wage and step, and if a flat rate or percentage is preferred. He indicated they will have step data for the next meeting.

### **Review of Annual Town Meeting Warrant Draft**

**Selectman Bastarache** expressed that he has no concerns with the content of the ATM Warrant.

**Selectman Bembury** announced a request from a Library Trustee for a change to article 15 and increase from \$3,000 to \$15,000 for the library revolving account. **Selectman Bastarache** asked Dan Hammock, as Library Trustee, if they were hitting the cap. **Selectman Bastarache** will notify Bryan Smith to make that change to the ATM Warrant.

**Selectman Bastarache** recommended no changes to elected officials' stipends. Finance Committee Member Dan Hammock made a motion not to increase the stipends of the elected officials, seconded by member Charlie Zilinski. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Pete Sanders noted a typo in article 18, indicating the article information does not match the \$150,000 article language.

**Selectman Bembury** questioned the amount of the Opioid Settlement and how the funds would be used. **Selectman Bastarache** explained that the total was still being determined but would be annually for 15 years. He informed the Board that the Board of Health are having further discussions about how to use the money for things like outreach, support to families, etc.

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### IP Mill Site Discussion

Principal Assessor, Jacquie Boyden, joined the Board to provide information from the Assessor's Office regarding the different scenarios and to discuss with the Boards what to present to the public. Jacquie explained how the shift corresponds to each concept and how it would impact the taxpayers. There was much discussion around the average house value, tax rate per \$1,000 or per \$100,00. There was discussion about Capital Exclusion and Debt Exclusion at full and half, and for three years and five years. Jacquie offered to bring more information to the next meeting.

The Select Board scheduled a joint meeting with the Finance Committee next week at 7:00PM. They did not express the need for the Capital Planning Committee to join them for the next meeting.

**Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to adjourn the joint meeting at 9:01PM, seconded by Capital Planning Committee Member, Peter Mallet. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

The Board continued the discussion regarding the Annual Town Meeting Warrant Draft. **Selectman Bastarache** asked Glenn McCrory, Highway Superintendent about the snow bylaw and mentioned the blue lights on Avenue A in Montague that warn of a snow emergency. Glenn indicated that he would reach out to Montague and ask questions. **Selectman Bembury** expressed that he would like people to also be notified by radio and/or tv news about the parking bans as he has noticed other towns do so. He was concerned that people who don't see the newspaper would likely hear it on the radio. **Chairman Smith** and **Selectman Bastarache** were not in agreement with **Selectman Bembury** regarding the additional advertisement. Glenn offered to put up the mobile signs at each end of Town notifying people of the parking ban at the beginning and the end of the season annually.

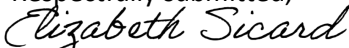
The Board left regular session at 9:21PM and announced that they would be moving into Executive Session and not returning to regular session.

At 9:25PM **Chairman Smith** announced that the Board would move into Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel...regarding the Fire Chief and the Chief of Police. Roll call vote:

<b>Selectman Bastarache</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Selectman Bembury</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>Chairman Smith</b>	<b>AYE</b>

The Board did not return to regular session.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth Sicard

Administrative Assistant