

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD MEETING  
MAY 25, 2022**

**PRESENT:** Daniel W. Trabucco (Chairman), Tracy Marino (Vice-Chairman), John G. Brown, Jr. (Clerk), Rebecca Coletta (Selectwoman), Steven Ciciotti (Selectman), Jason Viveiros (Fire Chief), David McPhillips (Veterans Agent), Linda Osborne (Town Memorial Committee), Dana Bean, Chief Richard MacDonald, Deputy Chief Wendy LaPierre, Deputy Chief James Shea, Erin Obey, Marcie Walsh-O'Connor, Robert DeMarzo, Stephen Curley, Carly Levy, Patricia Pflaumer, Brooke Musial, Shanna Townley, Dale Harrison, Pam Barone, Carol Dodge, Chris Ciano, Angelina Aarons, Erin Petti, Sarah McNulty, Debbie VanRiper, Renee Nicastro, Claudia Cusciano, Donna Casey, Debbie Flanagan, Allison Glennon, Viacheslav Kozhebrodskaya, Charles Gionet, Joan Ciampa, Susan Moore, Nicole Zanetti, Kristi Cullinane, Michelle Burt, Mark Ames, Karen Ames, Larissa Curley, Brooke Musial, Mike Quinn, Linda MacDonald, Sarah MacDonald, Susan Runne, Elin Flashman, Deb Flanagan, Vicky Panacy, Art Egerton, Sabrina Chilcott (Assistant Town Manager), and others.

At 7:00 pm Mr. Trabucco opened the meeting with the Chairman's statement and requested a moment of silence for the victims and families of the Buffalo grocery store and Uvalde school shooting.

Ms. Marino announced that the Household Hazardous Waste Day event will be at the Pembroke Recycling Center on June 4, 2022, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. For more information and to register, please visit the main page of the town website.

**INTRODUCTION OF FIRE CHIEF JASON VIVEIROS**

New Pembroke Fire Chief Jason Viveiros was present before the Board as they introduced him to the residents of Pembroke. Mr. Viveiros began his career thirty years ago in fire service and began as a volunteer firefighter in Swansea; went to paramedic school and worked in Fall River as a paramedic. He spent the majority of his career as a firefighter/paramedic in Sandwich until 2014 when he became the Fire Chief in Halifax. He introduced his wife Darlene and stated they have three children and one grandchild; he thanked the Town Manager and the members of the Department who came out to show their support and he looks forward to working for the residents of Pembroke.

**TOWN MEMORIAL COMMITTEE: MEMORIAL DAY PROCLAMATION**

Town Memorial Committee Chair Linda Osborne member and Veterans Agent David McPhillips advised that the parade is back in person, stepping off from the old Arrow Restaurant and proceeding to the center with remarks planned to begin at 10:30 am. Mr. McPhillips' read the Governor's proclamation honoring May 30, 2022, as Memorial Day.

**DANA BEAN: REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FOR FALL TOWN MEETING ARTICLE TO ADOPT MGL C. 59 §15, 22H**

Mr. Dana Bean was present to explain the Brave Act and advise that Pembroke has yet to adopt Section 22H of MGL c. 5 Section 59 and he requests that the Board consider sponsoring an article in the fall on behalf of Pembroke's Gold Star families. It is a tax abatement act for families of service members who die in the line of duty. Mr. Trabucco stated that he would be in favor of the Board sponsoring the article versus requiring a petition article. Ms. Marino, Mr. Brown, Mr. Ciciotti and Ms. Coletta concurred.

**VOTE TO ACCEPT DONATION/GIFT FROM PEMBROKE PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION: A/V EQUIPMENT, \$25,000**

Mr. Robert DeMarzo and Mr. Stephen Curley were present before the Board as President and Treasurer of the Pembroke Library Foundation, a group founded to be able to assist with larger projects on behalf of the Pembroke Library. The Library Trustees have voiced a need for a better video and sound system in the room in which this meeting is being held. Julie Thompson of PACTV put together a list and cost estimate of items that would be required to make it state of the art, and the Foundation is donating the \$25,000 in funding to the Trustees to improve this town asset. Mr. Curley stated that the new system will have the dual capability of enhancing the sound in the room for participants as well as the sound captured in the recording. Mr.

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Ciciotti moved to accept the donation of Pembroke Public Library Foundation of a wireless sound system, an 84" smart TV, mixing and computer equipment for the Pembroke Library, approximate value \$25,000. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

### **VOTE TO ACCEPT MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2022**

Ms. Marino moved to accept the minutes of May 4, 2022; Ms. Coletta seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

### **PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE CONCERNING COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT**

Mr. Chenard has submitted a schedule of updates and forums for the Board's consideration to review the project in greater depth and share with residents detail on the process, the steps taken to date and status of the cost projections and bidding process; updates to occur June 8 and June 22 with forums earmarked for August 9 and August 23.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE: UPDATE ON COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES & BOARD DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE TO DISSOLVE COMMITTEE**

Chair Carly Levy was present to provide an update on the DEI Committee and their three subcommittees activities to date. The main committee has met five times, the subcommittees a total of nine times to date; they have developed ground rules, a process of how to speak to each other, and how they learn and grow. The subcommittees were formed to accomplish the main tasks set out by the Board and definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion were developed. They are building common language and understanding and have had speakers who have shared their experiences and are discussing data collection and possibilities for public forums. Discussion of steps taken by each subcommittee was provided. Ms. Levy concluded by stressing the importance of the Committee's work and the need for continued conversation about these topics now and in the future, acknowledging that there are strong feelings both for and against the formation of the Committee. Discussion ensued. Ms. Marino and Mr. Ciciotti asked questions about the current Committee continuing their work as a private committee instead of a town committee; Ms. Levy stated that as a town committee transparency is enhanced, and they are accountable to the Select Board for oversight. Mr. Trabucco stated that the Board will be deliberating and considering a vote to dissolve the DEI Committee as a town committee and encourage them to continue as a private committee; Ms. Coletta stated she would like public comment before deliberation takes place. Mr. Trabucco asked participants to share comments and observe the ground rules for public hearings in Pembroke, addressing comments to the Chair. Ms. Pam Barone of Elm Street stated that town meeting voted to disband the DEI Committee and the Select Board overrode that vote and she would like the Board to listen to the town. Ms. Carol Dodge of West Elm Street stated that the article was nonbinding, she doesn't agree with everything the Committee stands for, but she feels that Pembroke needs this Committee. Chris Ciano of Chapel Street stated he feels that the Committee is needed, valued and he believes that the Committee serves the interests of minority populations so they can feel seen and heard and cited the Emancipation Proclamation, the Nineteenth Amendment, and the ADA. Kyra from Edgewater Drive stated that she is new to town and that she is disappointed that this is up for debate in this beautiful town. Erin Petti from Valley Street stated that the Committee is not something to fear, and uncomfortable things deserve a closer look. Angelina Aarons stated that differences are okay and not something to fear, the Committee is a way to validate peoples differences and provide opportunities to learn about others. Sarah McNulty of Birch Street stated that she is an educator, and they focus on celebrating differences and maintaining an open mind and she wants the town to be a place that moves forward, and the DEI Committee is a part of that. Debbie Van Riper of High Street stated that the town was in the media for statements made at prior meetings and the media and others will not highly regard voting to dissolve the DEI Committee. Renee Nicastro stated that she moved to Pembroke in 2003 with her biracial family and they had not experienced any discrimination until the debate in social media began on this DEI Committee and the remarks were delivered by proponents of the Committee; she cited examples. Claudia Cusciano of Hobomock Street stated that she is a Latina who has lived in two other countries where there was no sense of community; she came here to live in a town where she feels like a part of the community, feels safe and has not once felt excluded, discriminated against, or felt unsafe. Donna Casey of Abigail Lane stated that the DEI

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members are part of a Facebook group called Pembroke for Racial Justice which is a closed group that is not open to the community, highly selective of their membership, and openly discriminate against members of the community without knowing the people with whom they disagree. The DEI Committee Chair is an administrator of the Racial Justice group and four other Committee members, and a Select board member are part of this group lending concern to the possibility there is crossover. Debbie Flanagan of Oldham Street stated that she feels the residents of Pembroke have been ignored by the Board in the past and that the residents largest concerns stem from a national political agenda coming to town and being weaponized against the towns most innocent residents. Allison Glennon of Old Cart Path Lane stated that she checked out a book from the library that contained a paper with hateful speech contained upon it and the DEI Committee needs to continue. Viacheslav Kozhebrodskaya of Edgewater Drive stated he moved to this country thirty years ago from Ukraine and has been in Pembroke for nineteen years; he stated that has never been discriminated against and cautioned that theological and political struggles can become dangerous when ideology is introduced to a government role. Charles Gionet of Edgewater Drive stated that there is strength and support in Pembroke for those in need and it is inclusive. Robert DeMarzo of Stagestop Lane stated that there are misconceptions of Pembroke that should be cleared up as Pembroke is no different than any other town and in many ways is far more inclusive and kinder than others; good citizens who have volunteered in town for decades have been slandered. Joan Ciampa of Center Street stated that she thanks Ms. Levy and her Committee for all of their hard work, and she wishes her grown children had been exposed to more diversity growing up in Pembroke, and she stated that the Committee is a wonderful idea. Susan Moore of Washington Street stated that she has experience with DEI Committees as part of her corporate culture, but she has attended the meetings to date and is disappointed with the DEI Committee's actions and believes it should not be overseen by local government. Nicole Zanetti of Elm Street stated that equity for others doesn't take anything away from others, there is no financial cost to the town and that divisiveness is coming from the opposition. Kristi Cullinane of Misty Meadow Road stated that change is inevitable, and each person needs to get to know each other better; she recommended that those opposing the Committee come and join to hear each other and continue to be a great community and listen to each other's experiences. Michelle Burt of Station Street stated that no one here is against a DEI Committee, but whether or not a DEI Committee is a government committee, or a private committee and she stated that she is here because the Board overturned a town meeting vote. Mr. Trabucco asked for Board input. Mr. Brown stated that communication is key, and he supports the mission of the Committee, but the last year has detracted from other projects and objectives that require attention. He concluded by stating that the Committee has accomplished a lot and needs to continue forward. Ms. Marino stated that she helped create the Committee and the ideas were well intentioned and good ideas. Ms. Marino stated that she supports a committee but there is not enough faith in the Committee for it to be able to be productive. Ms. Marino spoke with many in the community including Committee members and the feedback was widely disparate, leaving her to question the possibility of the Committee's success on their mission as a town committee. Mr. Ciciotti echoed what Ms. Marino said, stating that it could be successful as a private entity, particularly where the opposition is the Committee's creation as a government Committee. Ms. Coletta stated that diversity protects the minority from the will of the majority; if people have experiences that the majority group doesn't have, it is about honoring those experiences versus driving them underground. By creating the Committee as a public group, the group would be transparent and wouldn't exist in the shadows, and Ms. Coletta cited other town Committees that exist to serve issues important to the residents. Discussion ensued. Mr. Ciciotti moved to dissolve the DEI Committee; Mr. Trabucco seconded the motion. The vote was 3/2 in favor with Brown and Coletta opposing the motion.

## **REVIEW COMPLAINTS RECEIVED REGARDING TOWN MEETING'S POTENTIAL COVID EXPOSURE**

Ms. Chilcott stated that the Board of Health Chair came to the Town Manager on May 12, 2022, to draft a public statement to advise the public that there was a potential for COVID exposure at town meeting after he was informed via social media that an attendee at town meeting had posted their COVID positive status. The following statement was issued at 3:20 pm from the Town Manager's office in conjunction with the Town Manager: "This statement issued by the Town of Pembroke in conjunction with the Pembroke Board of Health, Please be advised: it is believed that there was an attendee present that tested positive for COVID at

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the May 10, 2022 town meeting. As a reminder, free test kits are available at the Town Hall, Pembroke Library and the Senior Center. If you are experiencing COVID like symptoms, please contact your physician for a PCR test and take COVID precautions until you receive the results of your test. For more information about COVID, please visit the town website linked to the CDC guidelines

at: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guida...>". The Town Manager's office received three complaints; at the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting the Chair advised that he would allow public comment to hear from the residents regarding these complaints, but engaging in dialogue is not recommended as there is no action item posted for this evening. J.P. McGrath from Mattakesett Street stated that he is opposed to mask mandates and business closures. Donna Cannone read a statement from 9:51 pm through 9:56 pm stating that anyone with COVID had the opportunity to remain sequestered and vote from the cafeteria where there was a second moderator instead of casting their vote from the auditorium. At 9:56 pm, Ms. Cannone identified the author as Patrick Chilcott. Ms. Coletta stated that after five days of symptoms and quarantine, DPH requirements include masking in public and the past COVID protocols at town meeting of secondary moderator and voting from the cafeteria was not in effect, and she reminded the residents that all residents have a constitutional right to vote that cannot be superseded. Ms. Chilcott verified Ms. Coletta's statements as accurate and stated that the author was incorrect; no mechanism for voting from the cafeteria existed on May 10, 2022.

At 10:04 pm Ms. Marino moved to adjourn; Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

#### **MATERIALS & EXHIBITS**

Letter, R. DeMarzo for Pembroke Library Foundation (TM Office)  
One Day Liquor License Application, Skin Design Aesthetics (TM Office)  
Vacancy Application, M. Delmonico (TM Office)  
Draft Minutes of May 4, 2022 (TM Office)  
Complaint, D. Harrison (TM Office)  
Email, C. Norton (TM Office)  
Email, L. Norton (BOH/TM Office)