

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD MEETING  
March 8, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Daniel W. Trabucco (Chairman), Tracy Marino (Vice Chair), John G. Brown, Jr. (Clerk), Rebecca Coletta (Selectwoman), Steven Ciciotti (Selectman), William Chenard (Town Manager), Sabrina Chilcott (Assistant Town Manager), Erin Obey (School Superintendent), Mary Beth Brust (Assistant Superintendent), Lance Kennedy (School Committee), Susan Bollinger (School Committee), Bob DeMarzo, Elin Flashman, and others.

At 7:00 pm Mr. Trabucco opened the meeting with the Chairman's statement.

Mr. Brown reminded the public that the Council on Aging was hosting a blood drive on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Marino announced that there would be a training on March 20, at the library with Plymouth County Suicide Prevention. She announced that community clean up would take place on April 22, and on May 7, the annual fish fry would take place at the Herring Run.

**SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT: ERIN OBEY, PEMBROKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Ms. Obey presented the school's FY24 budget. She highlighted the adjustment between the FY23 and FY24 budget, with next years budget having increased just under \$2 million. She discussed the drivers for the increases, including collective bargaining agreements, special education tuition, transportation contracts, and special education pre-buy. Discussion ensued regarding special education and the cost. Ms. Obey discussed the focus areas for the FY24 budget, including achievement goals. Technology goals and social emotional support goals. She also discussed what the breakdown had historically been as the schools relate to the town budget, noting that it had decreased a small amount. Discussion ensued regarding the benefits portion of the town budget. Ms. Obey discussed in depth how Pembroke compared to other districts in the area. Ms. Obey detailed the grants that the school had received to supplement the operating budget. She did state that the committee was working to close the funding gap for the budget that still existed. Mr. Kennedy spoke to the board regarding the budget and what the future would look like for the school budget. Ms. Bollinger stated that because of the shortfall, there were many things that could not be done as far as programming. She asked to work with the Town Manager for earlier planning with the schools regarding the upcoming budget and report back to the board.

Mr. Chenard stated that he agreed with the school's budget for FY24. He discussed that the way to increase the school's budget would be an override. He stated that it is his error in not collaborating with the schools earlier, as in his prior positions in municipal government, the schools had their own lane as far as budgeting. He would like to improve that relationship. Mr. Chenard discussed line items, such as healthcare, that increased more than 2.5% which was not favorable for the town's budget. Ms. Coletta stated that it appeared that the town was receiving more funds from the previously passed override that was supposed to ensure proper funding for schools, she asked Mr. Chenard to explain. Mr. Chenard stated that the school budget does increase by more than 2.5% each year, and for the schools to receive more, the town would have had to make significant cuts on the town side. He stated that the funding on the town side showed the funding of shared services including healthcare, benefits, and pensions, which had increased about 5%. Ms. Obey clarified that when the override passed, the schools present budget is where it was forecasted to be. Ms. Coletta requested a breakdown of those shared services. Mr. DeMarzo and Ms. Obey discussed the pre-buy option for special education.

Mr. Ciciotti and Mr. Chenard discussed options were available to help bridge the gap with the schools. Mr. Chenard stressed that new growth would help going forward. He stated that free cash could be spent, but it is advised against by the DOR, but the free cash should be used for capital items. He encouraged the schools to put one-time projects on the capital plan for that reason. Ms. Obey stated that they have taken two positions and combined them into one to help bridge the gap.

**SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT: KAESTLE BOOS ASSOCIATES, INC.: PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING PRESENTATION**

Mr. Chenard introduced Todd Costa and Sean Schmigle who were present from Kaestle Boos Associates to present the plans for the public safety building. Mr. Schmigle began with an update including results from a

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traffic assessment, department programming updates as well as groundwater observation at both sites and test pits that were completed. Mr. Costa summarized to the board what the process had been up to this point regarding meeting with the department heads to figure out the needs of each department. Mr. Schmigle presented the layout of each building, respective of where each department would operate out of. The Washington Street site consisted of police and fire operations with an auxiliary building; the Monroe Street facility would be fire operations only. Mr. Schmigle noted that the application to move the Turner House was approved the week prior. Mr. Mark Ames asked if the current fire station building on route 27 could be moved to the substation location to save money; Mr. Chenard stated that the primary use for that station is the food pantry, and to move the building would essentially remove the food pantry from use. Chief Viveiros stated that the main function of that fire station was a call station and would not support use of a full-time fire station. Mr. Costa stated that the building would be extremely costly and almost impossible due to the construction of the existing building. Mr. Schmigle detailed the anticipated construction cost (\$42,160,000), equipping costs (\$5,980,000) and indirect soft costs (\$13,000,000) for a total budget of \$61,140,000. Mr. Schmigle stated that he was comfortable with these numbers staying as presented.

Mr. Cogliano asked if the article was tabled until October, if the bids would still go out in June 2024, Mr. Chenard stated it would delay the bid process even further. Mr. Cogliano stated that more information was needed for the public before the vote could happen. Mr. Holland asked to see architectural renderings of the project, Mr. Schmigle stated that architectural renderings would be the next step. Mr. Ciciotti noted that the drawings were inspired by the Mansfield Public Safety Building so residents could look at that building for a better idea of the building planned for Pembroke, but it was a rough inspiration and would look different. Ms. Coletta asked if funding could be requested at the annual town meeting for architectural renderings and then place the building article on the fall town meeting warrant, Mr. Chenard stated that that had not been considered to keep the process progressing. Ms. Holland asked for clarification on when the project began, Chief MacDonald stated that it had begun then but the building went from two separate buildings for police and fire and has combined them. She asked if the town is still three more years out from construction, Mr. Chenard stated that if passed in the spring, construction would begin in fall 2024. Mr. Chenard stated that there would be public information sessions by the end of March.

Discussion ensued regarding if the \$61 million article doesn't pass, the options that would keep the project moving forward. Mr. Quinn asked the board if there was a plan going forward for projects; the board responded that over twenty years, the main building projects had been looked at but the ones that formed committees are the ones that have moved forward. Ms. Coletta also stated that the larger projects are considered after looking at what large capital items are coming off the rolls. Mr. Chenard stated that the capital plan analyzed the next 10 years and the needs of departments in that time frame including school buildings that would need renovations.

Mr. Trabucco asked the architects what the next steps were in the project, Mr. Costa stated that the project needed to fund for any further steps to be taken. He stated that he and Mr. Schmigle were available to attend public information session. Mr. Ciciotti expressed his concern regarding the project especially regarding the cost of relocation of the Turner House. Discussion ensued regarding the Turner House and the future of it. Mr. DeMarzo suggested that if the Turner House was considered for demolition, that the public safety building be named 'The John Turner Public Safety Building'.

## **SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT: FY24 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

Mr. Chenard reviewed departmental budgets in depth. He began with the police department budget. Mr. Chenard noted that salaries were all contractual. He reviewed general expenses from the department noting that the bottom line increased \$16,000. Chief MacDonald reviewed some specific lines that board members asked about. Mr. Chenard reviewed the fire department budget. He noted that the salaries are contractual for this department as well. He noted that training has increased so that firefighters could participate in proper trainings related to their jobs. Ms. Coletta asked if the two new stations are built, would staffing change, Chief Vivieros stated that a staffing study had not been completed yet. Mr. Chenard reviewed general expenses and stated that the large jump was in vehicle maintenance as vehicles were beginning to age. Mr. Chenard review the emergency management budget, noting that it is a small budget, primarily funding the stipends of the directors and some basic expenses.

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Mr. Chenard reviewed the department of public works. He noted that salaries are also contractual for this department; water is not included in this budget. General expenses were reviewed. Mr. Chenard reviewed the snow and ice budget. He noted that the line is overspent every year and is the only fund allowed to be overspent.

Mr. Chenard reviewed the municipal inspection budget, with salaries being contractual and set by wage and personnel. He reviewed the general expenses, the majority of funds used for the online permit system. Mr. Chenard reviewed the town wide electricity budget; he noted that the town's solar field was a large benefit to the town.

### **BOARD ACTION: VOTE RECOMMENDATIONS ON ROUTINE ARTICLES: TRUST FUNDS, REVOLVING FUND LIMITS, SERVICE ANIMALS LICENSE FEES, ANNUAL REPORTS, & ELECTION ARTICLE**

Ms. Coletta moved that the board recommend favorable action on articles six, eight, eleven, fifteen, and sixteen, Mr. Ciciotti seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

### **BOARD ACTION: VOTE TO ACCEPT RESIGNATION OF MATTHEW RUSHING FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Mr. Ciciotti moved to accept the resignation of Matthew Rushing from the Advisory Committee, Ms. Marino seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

### **BOARD ACTION: VOTE TO DECLARE VACANCY AT REQUEST OF CHAIR: RECYCLING COMMITTEE**

Ms. Coletta moved to remove Molly Rosen, formerly Molly O'Neill, and declare her seat with a term to expire in 2024, vacant in accordance with Article IV Section 7, Ms. Marino seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

### **BOARD ACTION: VOTE TO DECLARE VACANCY AT REQUEST OF CHAIR: CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Ms. Coletta moved to remove Sandy Gremlach from the Conservation Commission and declare her seat with a term expire in 2025, vacant in accordance with Article IV section 7, Ms. Marino seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Public Safety Building Update: Mr. Chenard was going to work with the numbers given and get financial impact information to the public.

**Community Center Update:** Mr. Chenard stated that change orders were minimal. He stated that footings were in, the elevator shaft was scheduled for the following week. Mr. Chenard stated that he was working to organize a groundbreaking event which was a smaller event, the topping off event to be larger. He also stated that steel would come in during April.

### **LIAISON UPDATES**

Ms. Coletta discussed the dam project at Luddams Ford, with the project moving forward. The next phase was to design of what dam removal would look like. Work was expected to start in April. Ms. Coletta stated that the project lead may door knock, Mr. Chenard stated that they would need to inform the police when that was to occur.

Mr. Ciciotti updated the board on the master plan steering committee. He stated that meetings were every other week, public participation encouraged.

### **COMMUNITY COMMENT**

Mr. Chenard recognized the Town of Pembroke's youth hockey participation in the state championship games during the prior weekend.

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At 10:30pm, Mr. Trabucco read the upcoming issues and asked for motion to adjourn, Ms. Coletta moved it, Ms. Marino seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

**MATERIALS & EXHIBITS**

Public Safety Building Presentation (TM Office)

FY24 Budget (TM Office)

Annual Town Meeting Warrant (TM Office)

Resignation Letter M. Rushing Advisory (TM Office)

Pembroke Schools Budget Presentation (TM Office)