

**ACUSHNET BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM  
JANUARY 22, 2024**

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2024 FEB 26 P 12:27

**I. CALL TO ORDER  
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Present:* Chairman Kevin Gaspar, Sr., Selectman David Wojnar, Selectman Robert Hinckley, and Town Administrator James Kelley

Chairman Gaspar welcomed all to the January 22, 2024 Regular Board of Selectmen meeting at 4:30 PM. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to call the meeting to order. Selectmen Hinckley motioned to call the meeting to order. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Motion passed. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. MINUTES TO BE APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
December 19, 2023 Regular Meeting**

Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from December 19, 2023. Selectman Hinckley motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes from December 19, 2023. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed.

**III. OLD BUSINESS**

Citations: Heather Chew and Donna Lake

Chairman Gaspar read the citation written for Donna Lake – former Emergency Pet Shelter Coordinator. He remarked on her efforts to formulate the most in-depth emergency pet shelter plan on the Southcoast and her work to help during the COVID-19 pandemic. A photo of the Board of Selectmen, Mrs. Lake, and Mr. Caron was taken.

Chairman Gaspar read the citation written for Heather Chew – former Director of the Council on Aging. He highlighted her 12 years of dedication to the senior citizens of the Town and her efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. A photo of the Board of Selectmen and Mrs. Chew was taken.

**IV. DPW**

DPW Contract Negotiation Report

Chairman Gaspar stated that DPW is looking to begin contract negotiations. He offered to spearhead this negotiation due previous experience with DPW contracts. Selectman Hinckley motioned to have Chairman Gaspar negotiate DPW contracts. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed. Chairman Gaspar asked Mr. Kelley to gather dates for negotiations, and Mr. Kelley stated that he has been in contact with Attorney McArdle to do so.

Proposed Guard Rails – Intersection of S. Main Street and Main Street

Chairman Gaspar explained the location of the proposed guard rail to be at the intersection of Main Street and South Main Street, by the St. Francis Xavier property. He stated that residents, as well as the priest of the church, requested to place a guard rail at this intersection. Chairman Gaspar examined the area with Mr. Menard and determined that it would fall properly on property line. For \$4200, a steel guard rail with flashing directionals can be installed. He stated that this could save a life; this will be money well spent. Selectman Wojnar agreed that a barrier placed there is overdue, but he has concerns

over aesthetics. He suggested painting a mural on the guard rail or to use concrete planters as a barrier to provide a better-looking barrier in the center of Town. Chairman Gaspar stated that the sidewalk needs repair and stated that they can do two at once and help improve safety. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to approve the placement of a guardrail or of the like, not exceeding \$4,500. Selectman Hinckley motioned approve the placement of a guardrail or of the like, not exceeding \$4,500. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed. Mr. Kelley made clear that the snowplow driver who created the latest accident was not employed by the Town of Acushnet, and Selectman Wojnar asked to please stop and inform someone if an accident were to occur. Chairman Gaspar stated that accidents in that corner are nearly constant.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

##### FINCOM Transfer

Mr. Kelley confirmed that there was nothing to discuss on this at that current meeting.

##### COA Director Interview

Chairman Gaspar explained discussions from past meetings about interview panels and interviews. He stated that there was a candidate in the audience. Chairman Gaspar read Ms. Lauren Golda's cover letter that displayed her education, life passion for geriatrics, and related work experience. Selectman Hinckley stated that he interviewed a great pool of candidates and Ms. Golda was able to answer all questions well, resulting in her being an optimal candidate. Selectman Hinckley stated that she is his first choice for COA Director position, and he is very comfortable with his decision. Chairman Gaspar stated that he was extremely impressed with her resume, and Mr. Kelley stated it is not often for someone to fit a job description and experience so well. Chairman Gaspar loved that Ms. Golda is a "home-grown" applicant. Selectman Wojnar stated that he has seen Ms. Golda in action and was impressed with her skills. Selectman Hinckley motioned to appoint Lauren Golda to the position of COA Director subject to final negotiations and within advertised salary range. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed. Ms. Golda spoke of her passion at the podium and how her relationship with her grandparents helped shape her passion. She was excited to begin working in her new role.

##### MOA/CBA Police

Chairman Gaspar clarified that the Police Contract has already been voted on and accepted; however, contractual language needed editing. Selectman explained that the document they discussed encompassed everything that was determined in the past. Selectman Wojnar stated that for the long term, all amendments and agreements should be gathered into one document so that future negotiators can have a full scope of information to refer to. He stated that this should be done for all contracts, and Chairman Gaspar agreed. Mr. Kelley stated that he will finalize working sessions with the unions and Attorney Klein. Selectman Hinckley motioned to execute. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor and all were in favor. Motion passed.

##### Allen Street Betterment

Chairman Gaspar stated that the Principal Assessor, Ms. Kelley Koska, requested for the abatement of parcels 24.177.179 and 24.166 Sewer Phase II Betterments. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to abate both parcels, 24.177.179 and 24.166. Selectman Hinckley motioned to abate both parcels, 24.177.179 and 24.166. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed.

#### VFW Restricted Music License Amendment

Chairman Gaspar stated that VFW is looking for an Unrestricted Music License, like the Century House. He showed concerns because it is located in a residential area. He mentioned keeping the license restricted, but adjusting certain permissions. Chief Farland stated that the Legion uses the fire station to have entertainment until midnight. Chairman Gaspar stated that he needs further conversation with VFW managers and does not need to make a decision that evening. Chairman Gaspar and Selectman Wojnar showed concern for the neighbors hearing instruments late at night, especially during the summer months with residents keeping their windows open. Chairman Gaspar suggested to put the idea on hold until the next meeting. No motions made.

#### Street Light Requests

Chairman Gaspar stated that the Safety Committee typically has an ultimate say in these placements. He mentioned that these placements are often done at an intersection or dangerous curve. He noted some specific requests made by residents were for Kendrick Street, corner of Keene Road and Hebert Street, and others. Selectman Hinckley stated that Hiram Street, in particular, is a safety issue with the recent trespassing and vehicle break-ins in the center of Town. He stated that families would feel more comfortable having a street light. Selectman Wojnar asked how much it costs to put in a street light, and Chairman Gaspar stated that they recently went through \$40,000 when the Town took over the street lights when they went "green," but he does not know the exact cost per light. Mr. Kelley mentioned that both hardware and location needs to be considered in placement and cost. Selectman Wojnar asked of the cost to implement a street light and suggested to implement a policy and requirement to have a street light requested since tax payers pay so much. Selectman Hinckley stated that Whelan Street leads to town property and often ATV's and dirt bikes are ridden down there at night. Chairman Gaspar agreed that due to high taxes, this should be implemented by request depending on cost breakdown. He stated that Mr. Knox handles the street lights in Town. Mr. Kelley stated that both cost and equipment must be allocated for. Mr. Kelley suggested locating the exact poles, as well. Selectman Wojnar mentioned that the light technology on Lake Street is great. Chairman Gaspar asked Mr. Kelley to put street light policy be put on the agenda for the following week and for Mr. Kelley to find out the costs for hardware and hook-up. No motions made.

#### Travel Policy

Mr. Kelley requested this be placed on the next agenda.

#### FD Radio Repeater & Alarm Receiver

Chief Farland mentioned that these memos were written before Christmas, both being imminent and in preparation for Town Meeting budgeting. He stated that the radio repeater for the Fire Department radio frequency is currently located on Mendall Road at the fire tower. The equipment is 30 years old and trees have impeded the signal. He stated that this has negatively impacted many areas and the safety of those using emergency services. He suggested for the new tower to be placed at the L&G facility alongside of the police repeater. Chief Farland mentioned that this portion of the request would sum between \$35,000 and \$40,000 for equipment and installation costs. He stated that the current alarm receiver boxes are obsolete and parts are unavailable. He stated that the total cost for the alarms would be \$105,000 and the total cost between the two projects would be \$150,000. Chairman Gaspar stated that the previous locations were the highest points in Town, and Chief Farland stated that the cell tower over L&G is now one of the highest locations. Chief Farland stated there is space reserved for the fire department on those towers. Chairman Gaspar confirmed that Chief Farland wants this for the Town

Meeting, and Chief Farland will get exact numbers by that time. Chairman Gaspar thanked Chief Farland for being proactive.

Appointment – Cheryl Hall, Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee

Chairman Gaspar stated Ms. Hall is a nice, young lady. He asked if there was a motion to appoint Ms. Hall to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee. Selectman Hinckley motioned to appoint Cheryl Hall to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed. Selectman Wojnar asked if Ms. Viveiros could provide a list of members that are on the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee and ask if they need any assistance. Chairman Gaspar asked to get them begin meeting and choose a chairman.

**VI. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Kelley provided a document from the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyer's Association with updated Open Meeting Law and procedure. He stated that unrestricted local aid for the Town is 3%, but Chapter 70 (school aid) is not 3% (similar to last year) and has proper allocations. He stated that the Governor will increase Chapter 90 funds. Mr. Kelley stated that he spoke with the Chairs of Planning and Conservation Commissions regarding plans for solar projects. They will be meeting February 10 and February 14 with the electrical company. Litigations may be terminated if concerns are understood and rectified by the solar company.

**VII. SELECTMAN ANNOUNCEMENTS**


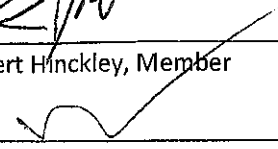
Chairman Gaspar said Planning Clerk advertisement, Assistant Town Accountant to be readvertised. Mr. Kelley clarified that the Assistant Town Accountant position has already been posted, and Mr. Hassett and Mr. Monticello are considering bringing back a candidate that has already been interviewed in hopes that he can grow into the position. Mr. Kelley stated that he will be writing the advertisement for the Planning Clerk position. He also mentioned that he may have a candidate for the Town Planner/Conservation Agent position who recently graduated and has experience in the Town of Bridgewater.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Gaspar circled back to the previously skipped Executive Session. He stated that the Board will be entering Executive Session under G.L.ch.30A§21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation (Worker's Compensation Claim # 0032102279) if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares and the Board will return to Public Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session. Chairman Gaspar asked if there was a motion to enter Executive Session. Selectman Hinckley motioned to enter Executive Session. Selectman Wojnar seconded the motion. Chairman Gaspar asked for those in favor, and all were in favor. Motion passed. Chairman Gaspar conducted a roll-call vote. Selectman Hinckley said yes, Selectman Wojnar said yes, and Chairman Gaspar said yes. The Board of Selectmen entered Executive Session.

Approved by:

  
Kevin A. Gaspar, Chairman

  
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Robert Hinckley, Member  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Wojnar, Member

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**Inventory of Meeting Documents  
Acushnet Board of Selectmen  
January 22, 2024 Regular Meeting**

**Minutes for Approval**

1. December 19, 2023 Regular Session Minutes

**Old Business**

1. Citation – Heather Chew
2. Citation – Donna Lake

**DPW**

1. *Discussion only*

**New Business**

1. TOA Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund
2. Memorandum – Re: Council on Aging Director
3. Council on Aging Director Ad
4. Lauren Golda – Cover Letter and Resume
5. Memorandum of Agreement between TOA and Teamsters, Local 59
  - a. Related emails
6. Memo: RE: Joseph & Lisa Fernandes; Allen Street Parcels 24.177.179 and 24.166 – Sewer Phase II Betterments
  - a. Betterment Schedules
7. VFW requests addition of LIVE music
8. VFW Restricted Music License
9. Street Light Requests
10. Letter from Fire Chief Farland – radio system
11. Letter from Fire Chief Farland – radio box fire alarm
12. Citizens Interest Form – Cheryl Hall

**Executive Session**

1. Worker's Compensation Claim #0032102279 – *not yet authorized for disclosure*

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