

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

March 13, 2023

Town Hall, 139 Main Street, Rowley, MA

6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Robert Snow; Vice Chairman Joseph Perry; Clerk Deana M.P. Ziev; Cliff Pierce; Christine Kneeland (Town Administrator Deborah Eagan; Assistant Town Administrator Amy Lydon)

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Snow called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He said the meeting is being audio and video recorded by Rowley Community Media.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

6:00 p.m. TO 6:05 p.m. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no Public Comments.

6:05 p.m. APPOINTMENT Council on Aging Director Ellie Davis, Council on Aging Board Chair Geneva Merry, and Sara Bourque of Marshwind Landscape Design to discuss Town Hall Annex Council on Aging lawn project

Chairman Snow read the following:

Ellie, Sara, and Geneva are here tonight to provide an update on the Annex lawn project.

The COA would like to hire Marshwind Landscape Design to design and oversee the project. The COA Board has not yet voted to approve the proposed design.

The COA is planning to use the \$25,000 State Earmark Grant and supplement it with funds through a CPA application.

If the Board is in agreement with the project as presented, the Board will need to do the following either after the COA Board votes later this week, or tonight, contingent upon the COA Board's approval:

- 1) Contract with Marshwind Landscape Design in accordance with the attached two proposals*
- 2) Authorize the COA to file an application to the Community Preservation Committee as shown on the attached*
- 3) Approve the State Ethics Commission form for Sara Bourque*

Snow said it doesn't look like COA Board Chair Ginny Merry is here yet. Council on Aging Director Ellie Davis said she is not sure if Ginny is coming tonight. Davis said she

came before the Board to discuss this project when she received the \$25,000 Earmark Grant funds from the State to upgrade the COA space. She said she had a very rough sketch of the plan and has since talked with the staff and the COA Board, and the project is now for a full-fledged outdoor space. She said the current COA space is tiny and they will be able to use the outdoor space for six months out of the year, so this will double the space for the COA. She said there are two phases of the project, and the \$25,000 grant doesn't go too far. She said they asked Sara Bourque of Marshwind Landscape Design to give an idea of the project and funding, and would like to approach the CPC for additional funding.

Sara Bourque of Marshwind Landscape Design showed the design to the Board. She said she has been working with Ellie for about three weeks and they have schematics for the Board to consider. She reviewed the site issues on the plan, including the lawn being unsafe with ruts, there are no boundaries with the parking lot, there are grade changes in the back, the existing tent is far from the building, and the garden boxes are unorganized and hard to reach. She outlined the proposed phase 1 and phase 2 work which includes a shed with a barn door for easy access, a sheltered area for a handicapped portable toilet, a trellis to provide partial shade and off-season storage, a new bluestone patio, new fencing, and a new shed that was proposed by the CPC. She said the Parks & Recreation Committee would like the existing shed. She said as part of phase 2, the no slip finish bluestone patio would be installed, as well as raised garden beds, a flex lawn space and new ADA compliant paths made of stonedust with a binder product. She said the design uses the edges of the space to accommodate the septic system in the middle. She said COA members would provide plantings from their own gardens. She said drainage is important and they will need to hire a surveyor. She showed the Board the inspiration photos for the project. She said the initial estimate was conservative and the CPC suggested a new shed and they will need a surveyor. She said the CPC was enthusiastic about this vision.

Pierce asked who will maintain the toilet. Bourque said there are local services that will come weekly. Ellie said the staff will also check and clean it, like they do for the bathroom inside the building. She said they are looking for a way to lock it so that it is kept closed on the weekends. She said the cost is \$134 to \$140 per month. Pierce said we have to hold the line for expenses next year. Davis said this can be paid for using CPC money. Pierce disagreed and said CPC money cannot be used for maintenance. Davis said they have grant money they can use to cover this if Town money is not available. Ziev asked if the new privacy fence will run along Central Street. Bourque said it would be great if the chain link fence along Central Street could be removed, and the privacy fence is not being installed along the front edge. She said she would like to see this area have lighting and a line of trees installed in the future. Ziev said the fence along Central Street is in tough shape, and she is concerned about traffic and the close proximity of the area to the parking/driveway area. Davis said they met with various Department Heads to think about preventing traffic from coming in and they will work on and do this. She said the septic company also will need to access the area and they will need protection along two sides that meet the driveway and the parking lot. Snow asked about the shed. Bourque said the existing shed was built last

year by volunteers. She said the plan is for the patio area to abut the parking area. Davis said people didn't use the space last year because it was difficult for them to walk on the grass. Snow asked if new furniture is being purchased. Davis said they have some furniture already, but they want four top tables with arms so that wheelchairs can go up to them. She said these types of tables were sold out when they purchased the existing heavy picnic tables that are meant to stay outside. Snow asked if there is room in the shed for the furniture. Bourque said the shed is 12' by 17' and can accommodate the new furniture, but not the existing furniture, which can be moved under the trellis. She said there will be space to grill food, and a small refrigerator which would need electricity. Davis said they started using this space three years ago and have been able to test things out over this time. She said having this visible space will increase people's awareness of the COA, and there are no senior focused outdoor spaces in Town. She said this space won't be only for seniors. Pierce said they had raised garden beds last year and they weren't well utilized. Davis said they were well utilized, but they didn't have a big harvest due to the drought, and they will be working with the Water Department to develop a watering system. Pierce asked if there is a lot of demand and interest in these garden beds. Davis said there is a ton of interest and they use the produce in the meals. Pierce said he suggests they work out the watering issues, and he said raised beds need daily watering because they dry out fast. Snow asked if electricity is in the existing shed. Davis said no, and they will work with the Light Department on this. Bourque said the electricity is not a necessity, but it would be nice. Davis said they have to spend the grant money by June 30th. She said they are in the approval phase and they will work out all of these details. Pierce said he has a feeling the raised garden beds will not be well utilized. Davis said six were used last year and they were successful. Snow asked if the COA Board has voted on this. Davis said the timing of the meetings has been such that they haven't taken a formal vote yet, but they have seen everything. Snow said he is hesitant to vote on this until the COA Board votes on it. Pierce said there are unanswered questions, such as the cost for the toilets. Davis said she has State funds she can use to cover that cost, and the cost is for May – June only. Snow said they will have to pay for gas for the grill. Pierce asked if the bocce court area is level. Davis said they will need to survey the property and level it since it is sloped, which is part of this project. She said they are working with an expert in the area who has built bocce courts for area COAs. Bourque said the bocce court will have turf, not sand. Davis said balls roll easier on turf, the sand requires more maintenance, and the turf will last for five years. Eagan said she recommends that Davis and Bourque meet with Conservation Agent Brent Baeslack to discuss stormwater issues since they will be grading the area. She said they used a swale during the parking lot project. Snow asked Davis if she has the numbers showing how many people use the COA. Davis said she doesn't have those numbers with her, but they serve 3,000 meals per year. Snow said 49% of the Town's population is over the age of 50. Davis said it is hard for people to age in place in Rowley, and the Board will be hearing about this issue from them in the future. Snow said he thinks they should delay this vote until they know more, such as the vote of the COA Board, how much it will cost to maintain the toilet, and the plans to water the raised beds. Davis said she will use the formula grant money for the toilet maintenance.

COA Board Chair Ginny Merry entered the meeting room. She said she is from 40 Warehouse Lane and she has seen these plans and is very pleased. She said hopefully they can get this project done, and it will mean a lot to the Senior Center and it will be a safe place. She said Bourque's plans are wonderful and Davis has been working hard to make improvements at the Senior Center, and they really appreciate it. Snow said this will be tabled until the COA Board votes on this project.

6:15 p.m. PUBLIC HEARING Application filed by Rowley Veterans Association, Inc., 19 Bradford Street, by President Kevin Monahan for a Change of Officers/Directors for their Liquor License Application

Chairman Snow read the following:

NOTE: A copy of the redacted application has been included in your packet. All other supporting documentation to the application is in the file for this application.

Chairman Snow read the notice of public hearing and called for a motion to open the hearing. Chairman Snow stated that the hearing was advertised in the March 1, 2023 edition of The Daily News.

Deana Ziev made a motion to open the public hearing, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – roll call vote: Christine Kneeland – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Robert Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye.

Public hearing opened at 6:46 p.m.

Chairman Snow called the applicants forward and asks them to discuss their application.

Snow read the following:

There are no overdue taxes, water bills or electric bills at this location.

The Police Chief, Fire Chief, Health Director, Building Inspector, Town Planner and Conservation Agent did not have any comments or concerns on this application. Comments were not received by the ZBA.

Caroline Jean said she is the Manager of the RVA, and the RVA meets annually about the Board members. She said some Board members have moved, and the RVA Board decided to make these changes to the Board members. She said Kevin Monahan was chosen to be RVA President, and they are asking the Board to approve these changes.

Chairman Snow asked if there was anyone present at the meeting who would like to speak on the application. There were no people present who wanted to speak on the application.

Chairman Snow asked the members of the Board of Selectmen if they have any further questions or comments. The Board had none.

Snow called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Joe Perry made a motion to close the public hearing, Deana Ziev second, all in favor – roll call vote: Christine Kneeland – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Robert Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye.

Public hearing closed at 6:47 p.m.

Deana Ziev made a motion to approve this application, Joe Perry second, all in favor - aye (5-0).

Lydon said she will send this application to the ABCC for further review.

6:30 p.m. APPOINTMENT Rowley Veterans Committee Chairman Robert Breaker to discuss Memorial Day Parade

Chairman Snow read the following:

Chairman Snow will call Bob Breaker forward to provide an update on the plans for the Town's Memorial Day Parade.

Bob Breaker introduced Ron Huth as the Chair of the Parade work group. Breaker said they want to update the Board on the parade and get permission to use the Town Common for the ceremony. Huth said it has been a while since there has been a parade due to COVID, and they started planning for this year's parade in June. He said there is a ten-person working group for this and they have been trying to accomplish getting Veterans involved; getting kids involved, especially from Pine Grove School; and building the ceremony around the flag protocol. He said the protocol is for the flag to be at half-staff from sunrise until noon to honor those who gave their lives for our country, and then at full staff at noon to honor all Veterans. He said the Board has a letter they prepared to go out from the Veterans Committee and the Board of Selectmen to encourage Veterans to get involved, and they will be giving out commemorative coins to the Veterans who attend. He said the Principal at the Pine Grove School is sending a flyer out to invite parents and family to the ceremony at the school before the parade. He said the parade will start at Pine Grove School, head down Main Street to the Town Common, with a small group splitting off to the Cemetery to visit four graves. He said World War II veteran Nick George is the Parade Marshall, and veteran Walter Pomerleau is helping George with arranging a helicopter flyover and drum and pipes. He said Triton High School Junior Doug Alyward will be MCing the ceremony on the Town Common which will include singing from students from the Pine Grove School. He said students will also do talks at each of the war monuments. He said Alyward will do a talk about Old Nancy. He said Senator Tarr and Representative Kasner will be invited to the ceremony. He said the Scouts will do the flag raising and at sunset there

will be a salute, Taps will be played and Amazing Grace will be played. He said Marty from the COA has arranged a food truck that will serve complimentary hotdogs and refreshments.

Kneeland said she is excited to see the parade back and asked if the Selectmen will march in it. Snow said yes. Huth said they are requesting permission to have the parade. Perry said it is disappointing that there is no marching band. Bob Breaker said they will be giving out challenge coins to the Veterans that say Memorial Day 2023. He said if there are coins leftover, they will sell them to the community for \$20 each. Kneeland said she highly recommends veterans to attend the Pine Grove ceremony, and said it is a very somber event. Snow thanked Breaker and Huth.

Deana Ziev made a motion to allow the parade as outlined, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

6:45 p.m. APPOINTMENT* Conservation Agent Brent Baeslack to discuss the transfer of 42 Haverhill Street to the Conservation Commission

Chairman Snow read the following:

The Conservation Commission has been in discussions with the Board of Water Commissioners concerning the transfer of 42 Haverhill Street, which many years ago housed Well Station #1. Brent will be discussing the next steps in this process, which will require the Board to approve the request and to authorize the placement of an article on the Town Meeting warrant.

Attached:

- 1) Letter from the Conservation Commission regarding the parcel*
- 2) Letter from the Board of Water Commissioners regarding the parcel*
- 3) Draft Town Meeting Article*

Baeslack provided the Board with print-outs of two images. He said 42 Haverhill Street was given to the Town of Rowley and may have been the first drinking water well before the creation of the Board of Water Commissioners. He said the property has been protected and has recently been decommissioned by the Board of Water Commissioners. He said the property has open space characteristics and natural resources that are deserving to be protected by the Conservation Commission. He said there is a stream, extensive forested wetlands, and the wellhouse was recently taken down by the Water Department. He said there is a stockpile of soils and a concrete electrical pad which will be removed and decommissioned this spring. He said the Conservation Commission is requesting the Board of Selectmen allow the Conservation Commission to seek the transfer of this parcel to the care and custody of the Conservation Commission at Town Meeting. Pierce asked Bernie Cullen if there will ever be a need for this water. Cullen said this well was used before his time as a Water Commissioner, but he believes the water is compromised and they are not interested in

reusing the area. He said additional wells are being considered near well #2, and this area is too close to too many businesses. He said the Water Department has no use for this land. Baeslack said his understanding is that the salting of Route 133 has created the issue and it is also cost prohibitive to get this water to the Water Treatment Plant.

Snow read the proposed Town Meeting article.

Cliff Pierce made a motion to approve the article, Joe Perry second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Request from the North Shore Montessori School in Rowley to hang poetry created by the students on the trees on the Town Common in April to celebrate Poetry Month

Chairman Snow read the following:

We received a request from Patricia Cummings of the Montessori school to hang poetry on the trees on the Town Common as part of Poetry Month. They have requested this in the past.

Good afternoon,

My name is Patricia Cummings and I am the upper Elementary teacher at North Shore Montessori School in Rowley, MA. In 2019, 2020, 2021 & 2022, we were able to hang poetry students created (approved by the Rowley Board) in the town common.

We were hoping to be able to celebrate Poetry Month in April by creating poetry and images to be hung on trees and share them with the community of Rowley again. We will hang them from 4/14/23-4/24/23 so families can find time to enjoy their children's work over April break.

My email is paddy.nsms@gmail.com. We would love to have approval from the Board of Selectmen. Can you please advise me with the next steps?

Thank you,

Paddy

Tree Warden Patrick Snow has reviewed this request and has no comments or concerns.

Does the Board wish to approve this request?

Joe Perry made a motion to approve this request, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

2. Motorcycle Safety Proclamation request from Paul Cote of Riders Helping Riders

Chairman Snow read the following:

The Riders Helping Riders organization is requesting the Board of Selectmen to issue Proclamation stating that "March 25, 2023 to April 30, 2023 is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Period."

Chairman Snow read the proclamation into the record. Snow said he thinks this is important, everyone should be aware of this, and we should get the word out. He said there are a lot of new riders, especially since COVID, and people, including himself, have signs in their yards about this. Perry said his cousin was in a very serious motorcycle accident, and his is a former rider of a Harley.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to issue and sign the Proclamation, Joe Perry second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

3. Request from Police Chief Scott Dumas to appoint Chelsie Reilly to the position of Reserve 9-1-1 Tele-communicator Dispatcher

Chairman Snow read the following:

Chief Dumas requests the Board to appoint Chelsie Reilly to the position of Reserve 9-1-1 Tele-communicator Dispatcher for a term through June 30, 2023. The Board will need to vote to make this appointment.

Joe Perry made a motion to appoint Chelsie Reilly to the position of Reserve 9-1-1 Tele-communicator Dispatcher for a term through June 30, 2023, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSTAINED

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approve AFSCME Local 2905 Memorandum of Agreement

Chairman Snow read the following:

The MOA with AFSCME Local 2905 is ready for the Board to vote to approve and to sign.

The Board needs to vote to approve the MOA to sign it. It will be signed after the meeting.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to approve the AFSCME Memorandum of Agreement, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (4-0). Deana Ziev - ABSTAINED

2. Discuss Town Hall Annex office space

Chairman Snow read the following:

Debbie was working with COA Director Ellie Davis in trying to find a small private office space for the COA Outreach Worker at the Town Hall Annex. The Outreach Worker works on private confidential matters involving seniors and their families. He is often on confidential telephone calls or holding in-person meetings with seniors and their families. He current shares an office with the COA Director. The COA Director has many people coming in daily to meet with her and it has become very difficult for them to both work at the same time.

Senator Tarr graciously offered to transfer his district office space at the Annex to the COA for this purpose. Chairman Snow has been in contact with Senator Tarr about this concern. We have been struggling to find adequate office space in this building. Senator Tarr's staff will continue to meet with Town residents in one of the Library Meeting Rooms or via remote meetings.

The Board needs to vote to transfer Senator Tarr's Regional Office at the Annex to the Council on Aging for the purpose of making this room a private office for the Outreach Worker.

Snow said he was in contact with, AJ Paglia, a former Selectmen and an aide to Senator Tarr and Senator Tarr about this. He thanked Paglia and Tarr.

Joe Perry made a motion to transfer Senator Tarr's Regional Office at the Annex to the Council on Aging for the purpose of making this room a private office for the Outreach Worker, Deana Ziev second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

OLD BUSINESS

1. Approve Addendum to Employment Contract with Fire Chief/REMA Director Mark Emery

Chairman Snow read the following:

Chief Emery's contract had a provision that the Board and he would negotiate the payment terms in the second year of the contract.

The addendum to the employment contract is ready for the Board to vote to approve and to sign.

The Board needs to vote to approve and to sign the addendum. The Board will sign it after the meeting.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to approve and sign the addendum, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

2. Discuss and make determination that Lot D of 239 Main Street is not required for town purposes and may be conveyed for the purpose of creating affordable housing

Chairman Snow read the following:

Debbie and Natalie have been working on the Bradstreet affordable housing parcel with officials from MassDevelopment, Innes Associates, and Town Counsel Tom Mullen.

We have several steps to follow in creating affordable housing at this site. Tom Mullen has advised us that the first step is to have the Board of Selectmen vote to determine that Lot D of 239 Main Street is not required for Town purposes and may be conveyed under G.L. c.30B, s. 16 for the purpose of creating “community housing” within the meaning of G.L. c.44B, s. 1.

We will then have an article on the Town Meeting warrant to seek authorization to sell, transfer and convey the parcel, subject to a perpetual affordable housing restriction.

Tonight, Debbie is asking the Board to vote on the following:

The Board of Selectmen has determined that Lot D of 239 Main Street is not required for Town purposes and may be conveyed under G.L. c.30B, s. 16 for the purpose of creating “community housing” within the meaning of G.L. c.44B, s. 1.

and to vote to:

to place an article on the Town Meeting warrant authorizing the Board to sell, transfer and convey the parcel, subject to a perpetual affordable housing restriction

Cliff Pierce made a motion to determine that Lot D of 239 Main Street is not required for Town purposes and may be conveyed under G.L. c.30B, s. 16 for the purpose of creating “community housing” within the meaning of G.L. c.44B, s. 1., and to place an article on the Town Meeting warrant authorizing the Board to sell, transfer and convey the parcel, subject to a perpetual affordable housing restriction, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

3. Discuss FY 24 Proposed Triton Assessment and impact on Town Budget development

Chairman Snow read the following memo from Town Administrator Deborah Eagan:

FY 24 Budget Update

Tentative Triton Assessment Increase = \$1,171,628

Tentative FY 24 Assessment = \$12,786,918

After weighing all the factors and having discussions with the Fiscal Team members, Finance Committee Chairman Larry, and Selectman Cliff Pierce and Selectman Christine Kneeland, on how to deal with the impact of the Triton assessment, I am suggesting the following to the Board:

- 1) We planned on a higher assessment in FY 24 due to the 30+ new students. We expected the assessment to be around \$800,000, which is about \$300,000 over the prior fiscal year. FY 22 to FY 23 assessment increase was \$477,460. Unfortunately, the Tentative Budget exceeds that amount by \$371,628, because the Triton Budget is increasing by \$2.1 million and the Town's share is larger in FY 24 because the enrollment increased.*

Property Tax Base = \$17,476,299

2.5% Levy = \$436,907

New Growth = \$292,399

*Total Property Tax Revenue net of prior debt/general overrides =
\$18,205,605.*

*Property Tax \$18,205,605 – Assessment \$12,786,918 = **\$5,418,687***

Anticipated other revenues, include local receipts (\$2,300,000 est.) and State aid UGGA (\$871,666 House 1). We will have \$8,590,353 in revenue to fund all other budget lines. This examination of revenues shows that we need to look at the impact of the Triton assessment over at least a three-period year of time because the Triton budget will most likely be increasing by \$2 million or more over the next few years. In the FY 24 Tentative Budget wages are increasing by \$1.2 million, and part of that increase is due to a "correction," according to Triton Superintendent Brian Forget. Setting that aside that one-time correction in forecasting future assessments, the wages portion alone will probably be increasing by about \$1 million each year. Out of the \$50 million FY 24 tentative budget, \$30 million is wages. Unless staff is cut, which is not part of the budget plan, we need to factor in a \$2 million increase to the assessment each year, which will include a \$1 million wage increase. If Rowley's share of the Triton budget is about 33%, then we need to forecast and plan for FY 25 and FY 26 assessment increases to be at least \$600,000 per year. I am thinking that these assessments could be as high as \$900,000. It appears to us that the Town's property tax base and 2 ½ percent levy cannot keep pace with this kind of an increase. We also need to factor in a possibility that the Town's enrollment will increase due to housing developments in the Town.

- 2) For now, I feel that we should use the Triton Tentative Budget Assessment for budgeting purposes. The FY 24 Final Triton Budget will be approved by the School Committee on March 15. This would be the assessment shown in the FY24 Tentative Budget of **\$1,171,628** for a total of **\$12,786,918**, or less if the School Committee reduces this amount. I spoke with Superintendent Forget and he hopes*

to come in lower than the assessment in the Tentative Budget, but cannot commit to a firm number. We are not hopeful of any impactful reduction in the Town's assessment.

- 3) We need to make up the shortfall to cover the assessment with savings from the Free Cash account. While it is not good fiscal practice to do so, we can do this and I think we need to do this at this point, to keep the operations of the Town running for the next fiscal year.*
- 4) We need to tighten the belt on the Town budgets now and in FY 24, by putting in a hiring freeze effective immediately and no new spending next year for extra staffing hours etc., excluding raises, etc. provided for in union contracts and for the non-union staff*
- 5) We need to closely monitor the revenues over the next fiscal year (FY 24) and meet with Superintendent Forget in November or December to get an estimate on how his FY 25 budget development is going. If the Triton budget is trending toward another \$2 million + increase and the Town's potential assessment looks to be an "unmanageable" amount, then the Board of Selectmen can start discussing holding a general Prop 2 ½ override, if warranted. It would be crucial to have these discussions in January or early February, so that we can plan for a Town "A" Budget and a Town "B" Budget, should the override fail in May 2024. Deciding to override Prop 2 ½ is a major decision for the Board to make and it has to be well thought out. Asking voters to pay more in taxes is not an easy decision, especially, when they are paying down the debt for the Pine Grove School and the Police Station and Fire Station. Debt exclusion taxes eventually go away, but a general override to fund operations is a permanent increase to the property tax base. If a general override to fund the operations of the Triton School District fails, the Town will most likely have to cut Town budgets to make up the shortfall. This would not happen, however, if another Town in the District also voted down the budget.*
- 6) We also need to get more information from the Whittier School Committee on their new school building project and what the financial impact will be for the Town. We also need to be aware that the Triton School Committee is applying to the MSBA for a major renovation and repair project for the Middle School and High School. The School Committee has \$1.5 million set aside now for a feasibility study. If this project goes forward, the Schools will be requesting the Town to have a debt exclusion override of Proposition 2 ½ within the next two years.*
- 7) We will be updating the Board at future meetings on budget development.*

*Sincerely,
Debbie Eagan*

Perry said Whittier is also talking about tearing down that building and building a new school for \$400,000,000. Pierce asked if that cost would be split amongst the eleven communities that send students to Whittier. Perry said he would expect that, and it would be \$30,000,000 per community. Eagan said the MSBA would be funding part of that and we haven't received anything official from the School about this. Pierce said this is on top of the proposed renovations at Triton. Perry said yes, and that is on top of the Pine Grove renovations. Pierce asked if the Town can afford this. He said he doesn't think he will be on the Board when all of this happens. Snow said this impacts the Town and he is very concerned about this. He said during the 2012/2013 budget season, Town Departments had to submit "A" and "B" budgets and Department heads were asked to cut 2.5% across the board. He said that wasn't easy and we are heading that way again and it is frustrating. He said he watched last week's Selectmen's meeting and Triton has added more than 20 staff. Kneeland said some of those additions are through grant money. Snow said this has quite the impact on the Town. He said he listened to Superintendent Forget's presentation and the School Committee hasn't thought about the impacts to the Town, and Triton is only one entity. Pierce said the School Committee views Triton as a separate entity. Snow said the Town generates the money and pays the bills, and it doesn't seem to register with the School Committee that we are one entity, not two entities. He said the Triton agreement is in favor of the schools and the towns do not provide input into the assessments. He said he is dead against any other regionalization of services, and this is an ugly situation.

Bernie Cullen from 283 Wethersfield Street said it is very important for the Board to consider the Triton and Whittier renovation projects at the same time as this operating budget. He said he saw today that Triton's budget has been revised down by \$300,000 due to additional revenues and savings, which brings Rowley's increase to around \$900,000, which is significantly over the planned \$800,000 increase. He said he analyzed the Triton budget, which is difficult to do because the numbers are dispersed, and compared it to Pentucket. He said the main driver is teacher costs. He said he thinks they could remove four teachers in the elementary schools and still keep class sizes within the ranges in place. He said he hasn't seen a scenario from Triton showing what an \$800,000 assessment to Rowley would look like. He said the Pentucket budget is similar and the Triton finance people should be responsible for explaining the budget to the Town. He said we need a three year operating budget forecast from Triton before any change in the formula. He said it is key to look at staffing and enrollments are trending down. He said Triton should be asked to prepare a comparison analysis to other area schools.

Perry said for the last several years, typically Salisbury has been hit, then Rowley, then Newbury. He said this year Rowley was hit due to an increase of 35 students, with Newbury students decreasing by 10 and Salisbury students decreasing as well. He said at the DCC when he spoke to the other two towns, they wanted Triton to cut the

budget when the assessments were split at \$1.2 MM for Rowley, \$600,000 for Salisbury and \$400,000 for Newbury. He said he is surprised to see our assessment cut to \$900,000.

Eagan said we haven't received any official communication from Triton about an assessment of \$900,000. She said Forget was looking to cut the budget without making cuts to staff. She said Forget pointed out that Salisbury had back-to-back large increases, and an override failed the first year and passes the second year. She said the Town is limited by Proposition 2 ½ and this is supposed to support the whole Town. She said we do use savings in the budget, but this year we will need to use a lot more savings to handle Triton's increased assessment. She said we can probably get through this year, but we will need to look at Triton's 2025 and 2026 budgets. She said the Board may need to implement a hiring freeze, and with the Town budgets coming in, we will need to be careful with any requested increases. She said she thinks the 2025 budget will need a correction unless there is an override or Triton's budget number comes in lower. She said we are hearing that there is a bubble in student population at Triton, so if this stabilizes, we may be able to get through.

Christine Kneeland said there are four other preschools in the Town of Rowley, so the numbers can fluctuate. Snow said we have to use free cash to pay for the upcoming budget, but this is poor fiscal policy. Pierce said we could go for an override this year, but people pay enough in taxes and we should put this off until next year. He said we should have a hiring freeze and hold the line on any requested increases. Kneeland said the Town is growing. Snow said we have a fiduciary responsibility to live within the budget. He said he commends the Board of Selectmen about the Police and Fire Station project when we fought for that \$11,400,000 for the two buildings and that project came in \$400,000 under budget. Perry said this was done at the same time as the Pine Grove School project. Pierce asked if there is \$1,000,000 in stabilization. Snow said we have been faithfully putting money into stabilization. Kneeland said that money is for emergencies. Perry said Triton will be making another attempt for MSBA funding and he hopes it will be more successful. Kneeland said we will find out in December. Snow said with the way the Triton budget is increasing, people will balk at voting for the renovation. He said we don't see a fiscally responsible budget from the School Committee. Perry said on Wednesday there will be the vote on the final Triton budget. Eagan said Forget indicated that he couldn't get to the budget number indicated under Scenario #3. Eagan said we do have a number of jobs open, and we need direction from the Board on how to handle these positions.

Joe Perry made a motion to implement a hiring freeze, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Eagan said when budgets come in with increases, we will have to look at the bottom line because we need a balanced budget.

FY 24 BUDGETS

- Personnel
- Town Counsel
- Information Services
- Planning
- Fire Hydrants
- ADA Compliancy
- Debt

Snow said all the budgets are within the guidelines.

Personnel

Joe Perry made a motion to approve the FY24 Personnel budget, Christine Kneeland second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Town Counsel

Christine Kneeland made a motion to approve the FY24 Town Counsel budget, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Information Services

Joe Perry made a motion to approve the FY24 Information Services budget, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Planning

Christine Kneeland made a motion to approve the FY24 Planning Department budget, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Fire Hydrants

Joe Perry made a motion to approve the FY24 Fire Hydrants budget, Deana Ziev second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

ADA Compliancy

Christine Kneeland made a motion to approve the FY24 ADA Compliancy budget, Deana Ziev second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Debt

Treasurer Karen Summit said this is going down because the ban for Pine Grove School was paid off last year. She said the \$79,000 Capital Equipment bond has been paid and has been replaced with the Highway truck and radio communication. She said the debt is what it is and it is coming down. She said she doesn't think the capital requests this year will warrant the issuance of debt.

Christine Kneeland made a motion to approve the FY24 Debt budget, Deana Ziev second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

MINUTES

- February 13, 2023

Joe Perry made a motion to approve the February 13, 2023 minutes, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (3-0). Deana Ziev – ABSTAINED Christine Kneeland - ABSTAINED

- February 13, 2023 Executive Session

Joe Perry made a motion to approve the February 13, 2023 Executive Session minutes, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor – aye (3-0). Deana Ziev – ABSTAINED Christine Kneeland - ABSTAINED

- February 27, 2023

Deana Ziev made a motion to approve the February 27, 2023 minutes, Joe Perry second, all in favor – aye (3-0). Bob Snow – ABSTAINED Christine Kneeland - ABSTAINED

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Town is holding a white goods/light metal household recycling event for Town residents on April 22, 2023 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Highway Department facility at 40 Independent Street. Please check the Town's website, www.townofrowley.net for a list of items that will be accepted. For more information, call the Health Department at 948-2231.
2. The Board of Selectmen announces that a textile recycling bin has been placed in the rear parking lot of the Town Hall Annex at 39 Central Street. Residents can drop off clothing, shoes, linens, sheets, pillows, blankets, hats, duffle bags, belts, gloves, towels, draperies, handbags, tablecloths, bathrobes, and stuffed animals. All items must be dry, bagged, and placed into the bin. Please do not leave items on the ground.
3. The Town has the following board vacancies:

- **Conservation Commission**
- **Rowley Cultural Council**
- **Zoning Board of Appeals – Alternate member**

Interested residents should send a letter of interest to the Board of Selectmen.

Positions are open until filled.

ADJOURN

Joe Perry made a motion to adjourn, Deana Ziev second, all in favor - aye (5-0).

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Lydon
Assistant Town Administrator

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Meeting memo regarding 6:05 p.m. Appointment: Council on Aging Director Ellie Davis, Council on Aging Board Chair Geneva Merry, and Sara Bourque of Marshwind Landscape Design to discuss Town Hall Annex Council on Aging lawn project
2. CPC Application for Rowley Council on Aging Community Garden Project
3. Proposal #1 for landscape design services from Marshwind Landscape Design dated March 6, 2023
4. Proposal #2 for landscape design services from Marshwind Landscape Design dated March 6, 2023
5. State Ethics Commission disclosure form for Sara Bourque
6. Meeting memo regarding 6:15 p.m. Public Hearing: Application filed by Rowley Veterans Association, Inc., 19 Bradford Street, by President Kevin Monahan for a Change of Officers/Directors for their Liquor License Application
7. Current Liquor License Issued to Rowley Veterans Association Inc.
8. Liquor License Public Hearing Notice
9. Copy of Public Hearing Notice advertised in Newburyport Daily News
10. Redacted transfer application and floor plans, excluding ABCC required supporting documentation
11. Affidavit of Notice to Abutters and Others
12. Comments on Liquor License application from Police Chief, Fire Chief, Health Director, Building Inspector, Town Planner and Conservation Agent
13. Updated meeting memo regarding 6:30 p.m. Appointment: Rowley Veterans Committee Chairman Robert Breaker to discuss Memorial Day Parade
14. Letter from Rowley Veterans Committee and Board of Selectmen regarding Memorial Day Parade

15. Meeting memo regarding 6:45 p.m. Appointment: Conservation Agent Brent Baeslack to discuss the transfer of 42 Haverhill Street to the Conservation Commission
16. Letter from Conservation Agent Brent Baeslack regarding the transfer of 42 Haverhill Street to the Conservation Commission
17. Letter from Kathy Bento regarding 42 Haverhill St. Land Swap
18. Draft Town Meeting article for 42 Haverhill Street
19. Two maps handed out by Brent Baeslack at meeting
20. Meeting memo regarding General Business #1: Request from the North Shore Montessori School in Rowley to hang poetry created by the students on the trees on the Town Common in April to celebrate Poetry Month
21. Meeting memo regarding General Business #2: Motorcycle Safety Proclamation request from Paul Cote of Riders Helping Riders
22. Motorcycle Safety Proclamation
23. Meeting memo regarding General Business #3: Request from Police Chief Scott Dumas to appoint Chelsie Reilly to the position of Reserve 9-1-1 Tele-communicator Dispatcher
24. Request from Police Chief Scott Dumas to appoint Chelsie Reilly to the position of Reserve 9-1-1 Tele-communicator Dispatcher
25. Meeting memo regarding New Business #1: Approve AFSCME Local 2905 Memorandum of Agreement
26. AFSCME Local 2905 Memorandum of Agreement
27. Meeting memo regarding New Business #2: Discuss Town Hall Annex office space
28. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #1: Approve Addendum to Employment Contract with Fire Chief/REMA Director Mark Emery
29. Addendum to Employment Contract with Fire Chief/REMA Director Mark Emery
30. Employment Contract with Fire Chief/REMA Director Mark Emery dated August 22, 2022
31. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #2: Discuss and make determination that Lot D of 239 Main Street is not required for town purposes and may be conveyed for the purpose of creating affordable housing
32. Email from Town Counsel Tom Mullen regarding affordable housing parcel
33. Draft Bradstreet Property Article
34. Definitive sub-division plan showing Lot D of 239 Main Street
35. Assessors property card for Lot D of 239 Main Street
36. Map showing Lot D of 239 Main Street
37. Definitive Subdivision Plan Approval for the Bradstreet Farm, dated July 22, 2009
38. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #3: Discuss FY 24 Proposed Triton Assessment and impact on Town Budget development
39. Triton FY24 Tentative Budget Summary and attachments updated as of 2/27/23
40. Meeting memo regarding FY24 Budgets
41. Personnel FY24 Budget

- 42. Town Counsel FY24 Budget
- 43. Information Services FY24 Budget
- 44. Planning FY24 Budget
- 45. Fire Hydrants FY24 Budget
- 46. ADA Compliancy FY24 Budget
- 47. Debt FY24 Budget
- 48. Draft minutes of February 13, 2023
- 49. Draft minutes of February 27, 2023