



Town of Dunstable Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

In attendance: Chairman Ron Mikol, Vice Chair Basbanes, Selectman Kieran Meehan, Town Administrator Jason Silva, Exec. Assistant Sue Fayne

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Chairman Mikol.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from 2/20/24, 2/27/24 and 3/6/24*

On a **motion** by Selectman Meehan and **seconded** by Vice Chair Basbanes, it was **voted to approve** the Meeting Minutes from February 20, 2024, February 27, 2024 and March 6, 2024, as drafted. **The vote was unanimous.**

Appointments: Affordable Housing Committee & Master Plan Implementation Committee*

Kelley Escalada, on the recommendation of the Chair of the Affordable Housing Committee Jon Hughes, was present for her appointment to the committee. She is also a member of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees.

The Board had a brief conversation about the Master Plan Implementation Committee and whether it was necessary to appoint those members who are designees from other boards. TA Silva stated that the Board has defined the committee and the representation needed, so that could be sufficient. But he said the Board could also appoint these specific members that have been recommended by the individual committees.

On a **motion** by Selectman Meehan and **seconded** by Vice Chair Basbanes, it was **voted to appoint** Kelley Escalada to the Affordable Housing Committee and Leo Tomitech, Catherine Irzyk, John O'Brien, Joe Vlcek, Alan Chase, Anne Davis, and Mike Martin to the Master Plan Implementation Committee. **The vote was unanimous.**

ARPA Reallocation - purchase of poll pads*

The Town Clerk's office has purchased Poll Pads, which are iPads with pre-loaded software, a printer, and stand that are used by Election Workers to check in voters. This eliminates the need to use the old check-in book, and hand count/tally each of the pages, reducing the possibility of errors. In addition, after each voter checks-in, a paper receipt is printed and kept as a backup. The request from TA Silva was to use \$3,200 of the available \$3,900 ARPA funds previously approved to use for the purchase of a new police cruiser to pay for these. They were used during the Presidential Primary, were well received

Approved 4/9/24



by the residents and the Election Workers and were very user friendly. Chairman Mikol asked about redundancy if there were issues with one or both of them, should we consider purchasing a backup. TA Silva wasn't sure if that was necessary but said he would connect with the Town Clerk to get her opinion and follow up with the Board.

On a **motion** by Selectman Meehan and **seconded** by Vice Chair Basbanes, it was **voted to approve** the reallocation of \$3,200, from the previously approved ARPA allocation to purchase a new police cruiser, to fund new poll pads for elections. **The vote was unanimous.**

Proposed MOU with Groton Dunstable Regional School District*

During the budget planning process with the school district, the Town Manager of Groton and TA Silva requested that the School Committee consider phasing out the use of E&D and phasing out the kindergarten fees, rather than doing it all at once in FY25. The School Committee made a commitment to do that, but there were a few members of the committee that suggested a Memorandum of Understanding be created, agreeing to what was discussed. The Chair of the School Committee sent a draft MOU which reduces E&D use to \$500,000 in FY25, \$250,000 in FY26 and \$0 in FY27 to support the Operating Budget. It also reduces the kindergarten fee over the same period.

TA Silva then reviewed draft additions to the MOU for the Board's consideration:

- *The GDRSC supports the Town of Dunstable's efforts to reduce its reliance on free cash (one-time revenues) to balance its operating budget by \$100,000 each of the next 3 fiscal years. Similar to the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, the Town of Dunstable has been using Free Cash to support ongoing operating costs which is an unsustainable practice.*
- *Both Towns of Dunstable and Groton are seeking 3-year overrides to fund the Towns' operating expenses and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District assessment. Over this 3-year period, from FY25 to FY27, if the override is successful, the Towns of Dunstable and Groton, and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District expenses will not exceed the revenues raised by the General Fund Override.*
- *Furthermore, if the override effort is successful, beginning in FY28, operating expenses of the Towns of Dunstable and Groton will increase no more than the revenue increases in each community year over year, respectively.*
- *Beginning in FY28, the Groton Dunstable Regional School District will increase its assessments to both Towns no more than the revenue increases in each community, year over year. If the override is unsuccessful, this practice will begin in FY25 in keeping with our collective efforts to maintain financial stability and sustainability.*
- *As the GDRSC reduces its reliance on E&D funds to support operational expenses, GDRSC commits to utilizing no less than 50% of its certified excess and deficiency funds annually to subsidize the capital expenditure assessments to both Towns of Groton and Dunstable beginning in FY28.*
- *Any of these clauses contained in this MOU can be waived if a majority of the parties agree.*

After a brief discussion, each of the Board members agreed with the additions drafted by TA Silva and on a motion made by Selectman Meehan and seconded by Vice Chair Basbanes, it was voted to approve the MOU with the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee as amended. The vote was unanimous.

TA Silva stated that he would share the modified draft with the Town Manager of Groton and School Committee and ask them to consider this amended version of the MOU.



Establishment of Paving Donation Fund and Acceptance of donation from National Grid*

When National Grid completed their gas line work, there was a section of Kemp St. that was not repaved due to the anticipation of the water line being installed as part of the PFAS Mitigation Project. Dave Tully worked with National Grid to provide the town with a donation of approximately \$70,000. Per the Town Accountant's recommendation, the creation of a donation account is being recommended to ensure that the money is set aside for the purposes of paving, which is the intent of the donation.

On a motion by Selectman Meehan and seconded by Vice Chair Basbanes, it was voted to approve the creation of a paving donation fund and accept a donation from National Grid for the purposes of paving, in the amount of \$70,204. The vote was unanimous.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

There were no additional topics to be discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10am.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Sue Fayne
Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator
and Board of Selectmen**