



Town of Paxton
Board of Selectmen
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Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 4, 2024

**Meeting Location: Training Room of the Public Safety Complex
576 Pleasant Street, Paxton, MA 01612**

Members Present: Julia N. Pingitore, Chair
Kirk R. Huehls, Vice Chair
Carol L. Riches, Clerk

Town Administrator: Heather M Munroe, Town Administrator

Attendees: see Attendee List

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

CONSENT ITEMS

- 1. Approve the meeting minutes from the Regular Meeting held on March 25, 2024.
- 2. Approve the meeting minutes from the Executive Meeting held on March 25, 2024.
- 3. Approve the meeting minutes from the Regular Meeting held on April 1, 2024.
- 4. Approve the meeting minutes from the Executive Meeting held on April 1, 2024.
- 5. Approve a one-day liquor license for Anna Maria College for May 8, 2024, from 5pm to 8pm for Senior week event.
- (JP) Hearing no other comments, all consent items have been approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Warrant and Override Ballot questions discussion

- (JP) Finance voted to keep the ambulance in but roll it back to \$300,000. And voted to keep the deficit and free cash for a total override of 1,150,000. My opinion is that putting anything but the full amount out to the public is not allowing them to vote on the full issue. I would use the deficit amount of \$840,000 plus the free cash of \$500,000 and roll back ambulance to \$300,000 for a total override amount of \$1,440,000.
- (CR) I agree that we need to go for what we need so that we do not have to come back for more. I do think it will be a hard sell between now and the Town Meeting. We do have a full schedule of information meetings and it is important not to have to come back again next year.
- Motion (KH) seconded (CR) to put the total amount of \$1,440,000.00 forward for the override. Unanimous, all in favor. (KH) yes, (CR) yes, (JP) yes.**
- (JP) Now how much do we put on each override.

- (CR) When we have done overrides in the past, we have put it on the increase from the year before. Are we sure we want to put an override on the school knowing that there is little chance that another town will vote it down.
- (JP) At the round table discussion the other towns seemed to be okay with this year's budgets, so I do feel it will pass in all the other towns.
- (HM) Most if the other town were all in favor of the school number. It looks like some of them will have a problem next year.
- (CR) I would rather see us do the override on the town side and have an article just for the school.
- (JP) Reviewed the options if each article passed or failed. If the town passes and the school fails, then you still have to cut the town to make up for the school. We could do an article for the school just a yes or no and an article for the town contingent on the 1,444,000 override and another article for the Town with a cut budget. This way people can still choose to not support the school budget if that is their choice.
- (CR) I think the three articles would be clearer. The town is used to it and keeping the school separate is clearer.
- (JP) The one downside I do see to putting the entire deficit on the town and nothing on the school is you may get fewer voters out to the ballot. So, we need to make it clear that by supporting the town you are supporting the school. I think you get the opportunity if you have a separate article for the school and the town that if the school gets voted down then it goes back to the school, but the reality is it probably will not happen this year and we need to be prepared for that. If you split the deficit and one does not pass you only get half of what you need.
- **Rick Bedard** Town resident 8 Pierce Circle. Works for the Millbury school system. I like the idea of having them together, it is already embedded in the budget so in the spirit of the way we already do the school budget doing them together is what I would agree with.
- (JP) The Town meeting allows for the choice on the school and town article and the ballot questions will encompass everything under the Town budget.
- (CR) We just need to push the informational sessions and get the message out there
- (JP) We need to inform the public that the school will pass in all the other towns. The message needs to be that if all the other towns have voted and the school is passing then we need the money on this override or we are going to have to cut the town budget.
- **Motion (KH) seconded (CR) to reopen the warrant for the Annual town meeting on May 6, 2024. Unanimous., all in favor. (KH) yes, (CR) yes, (JP) yes.**
- **Motion (KH) seconded (CR) to change article #16 to be just het WRSD budget. Unanimous., all in favor. (KH) yes, (CR) yes, (JP) yes.**
- (JP) Article #17 will remain as is.
- **Motion (KH) seconded (CR) to add article #18 as a reduced services budget. Unanimous., all in favor. (KH) yes, (CR) yes, (JP) yes.**
- **Motion (KH) seconded (CR) to close the warrant for the annual town meeting on May 6, 2024.. Unanimous., all in favor. (KH) yes, (CR) yes, (JP) yes.**
- (JP) We need to set the ballot question.
- (HM) Question #1 – Proposition 2 ½ override will read as follow; Shall the Town be allowed to assess an additional 1,440,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the operating budget of the Twon for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024. Yes/No
- **(KH) seconded (CR) to approve ballot question as follows. Shall the Town be allowed to assess an additional 1,440,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the operating budget of the Twon for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024. Unanimous., all in favor. (KH) yes, (CR) yes, (JP) yes.**

- **(JP)** I want to thank the Paxton Light, Police, Fire and DPW Departments along with the Towns that offered mutual aid for all their work during today's storm.
- **(CR)** With what we have to go through in the next month I want to thank the Finance Committee. Everyone has their own opinion, but we all work through it. Thank all the Department Heads for being at the Finance Committee meeting last night.
- **(JP)** Thank you to everyone working so amicably together and thank you to the Town Administrator for all her work on the budget as well.

Town Administrator update

- **(HM)** Thank you to Laurie Becker, Town Clerk, for her assistance on getting information up on the Town website with all the budget and override information.
- A number of scheduled budget information sessions this month.
- Met with the seniors at the café for a budget discussion and will go back later in the month to meet with them again.
- **(JP)** Can we put the citizen guide to town meeting along with the budget information on the town website as well.
- **Rick Bedard** those meetings will be great. Will you have some information on if the override passes and how that will affect our taxes?
- **(HM)** There is a tax impact sheet on the website that will give you some information.

ADJOURN

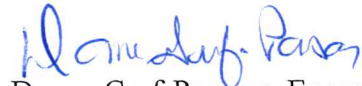
- **Adjourned Meeting at 6:59pm, Unanimous all-in favor. (KH) yes, (CR) yes, (JP) yes.**
- **The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2024, 6:00pm.**

Documents from the Meeting filed in BOS office:

Agenda

Attendance list

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Graf-Parsons, Executive Assistant

