



Town of Paxton  
Board of Selectmen  
697 Pleasant Street, Paxton, MA 01612  
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## Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 30, 2023

**Meeting Location: Public Safety Complex, 576 Pleasant Street, Paxton, MA 01612**

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

Town Administrator: Heather M. Munroe, Town Administrator

Attendees: see Attendee List

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. We will enter into Executive Session and will return to the regular meeting only for the purpose of adjourning.

### UPDATE FROM TOWN COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

- **Cate McCourt**, Library Trustee, new staff, new programs, book clubs, chess clubs, author visits, spice club. Our funding sources come from the town and state aid as long as we meet certain criteria and trust fund money. The building is owned by the trustees so we try to use trust funds versus tax payer money for upkeep. The friends of the library is a side organization that sponsors a lot of programming as well.
- A lot of online access using library card. We have reciprocal borrowing with other towns.
- Circulation numbers are back up to pre covid and curbside service is still available. Offer printing services.
- Always room for more people for anyone that wants to be involved.
- **(JP)** Is there public access to computer?
- **Cate McCourt**, yes people can use our computers.
- **(JP)** Is there a telescope that can be borrowed from the library?
- **Cate McCourt**, yes we have a telescope that can be borrowed.
  
- **Jeff Cormier**, Recreation Committee, currently basketball programs are in process. Dodge ball to follow, mini sports program and the music program this spring.
- Projects – the roof at Klingele and Wentworth fields that need replacing about \$10,000 each which will be paid through the revolving fund.
- Water issue with Little League, we decided to approach the Water Commission to install a well to pay for the water rather than having Little League pay for it. We will be installing the well at a cost of about \$10,000 to \$15,000.

- We are still working on the Centerfield lighting project. Ready to put together a proposal to the town for Wentworth field. Looking at raised plant beds or a walking track. Meeting with the school as well to get their input.
- Recent expenses. Pump for Klingele field. Moved pole at the bottom of the sledding field. Install a shed at Kingsley field over the pump. \$7,000.00.
- **(JP)** For Wentworth field I have two suggestion that came to mind. One being a skate park and the other would be a dog park I have heard these suggestions for town residents.
- **(CR)** Discussed having liquor on town property.
- Jeff Cormier, during summer concert series it would be a good opportunity to have food trucks and breweries come in to help bring in addition revenue and build up the community exposure.
- **Anita Fenton**, Council on Aging, our mission is to advocate for and provide services for our towns senior citizens. The Committee consists of 9 full member and 3 associate members. We work with the COA Director. Recently lost a long-time member of the Committee, Alice Crowley. Our next meeting is March 1<sup>st</sup> at 9:30am. Curtis Hammer creates our newsletter. This is important for our seniors because a lot of them do not use technology. We help to maintain the new art gallery at the COA.
- **(JP)** What are the requirement to be a friend of the COA.
- **Anita Fenton**, Dave Wheeler is the chairperson of the Friend of the COA and can be contacted directly if anyone is interested.

#### **Finance Committee to discuss the Finance Committee Bylaw**

- **Rich Fenton**, The Finance Committee has not had an opportunity to review as a whole the suggestions that have been presented so tonight is just opinions from the members that are here. The reason this is being reviewed is because currently Finance Committee members cannot be on any other committee in town.
- **Motion (CR) seconded (KH) to leave section 1.2 as is. Unanimous, all-in favor.**
- **Motion (CR) seconded (KH) to leave section 1.3 as is. Unanimous, all-in favor.**
- After discussion on section 1.6 and 1.7 the following two motions were made.
- **Motion (CR) seconded (KH) Finance Committee members may serve on a Select Board established committee. Unanimous, all-in favor.**
- **Motion (JP) seconded (CR) to keep section 1.6 in that the Finance Committee can reorganize according to the committees organizational bylaw. Unanimous, all-in favor.**
- The remainder of the document was reviewed with the notes that the Town Administrator had made. The Town Administrator will supply this document with the suggested changes to the Finance Committee for review at a regular meeting.
- **Motion (CR) seconded (KH) to leave section 3.7 as is. Unanimous, all-in favor.**
- **(JP)** The Finance Committee can submit any changes that you think are needed and then we will go through it again and send it over to town council.
- **Mark Love**, I would like to see this given some priority.

#### **CONSENT ITEMS**

- 1. Approve meeting minutes from the Regular meeting on January 30, 2023.

- 2. Approve request from the Paxton Lions to hold their annual town wide yard sale on the Town Common on May 20, 2023, from 7:30am to 3pm.
- 3 Approve request from the Paxton Lions to hold their annual toll road event at the Town Center on April 8, 2023, from 8am to 12pm.
- (JP) Are there any objections to any of the consent items? Hearing no comment. Items 1 through 3 are approved.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Town Administrators Goals

- (JP) The goals are well written. I have a couple I want to add. We should be working on goals annually and they should pertain to the upcoming year. Most of these are in the current year. DPW and consistency are further out. Smaller goals to fall within the upcoming year.
- (HM) Some have components that are this year, and some are long range. I can provide a modified version of goals for the next fiscal year.
- (JP) No changes to anything existing. I would like to add, seek to promote a positive work environment, I don't want to miss the human component. Community engagement, financial management, capital plan review and update, communication.
- (KH) Foster teams to work together.
- (JP) We'll make these updates and approve them at the next meeting.

## NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Vote to call the Town Caucus on March 6, 2023.

- (JP) Annual Caucus at Paxton Center School on March 6, 2023
- Motion (KH) seconded (JP) to set the Town Caucus for March 6, 2023. Unanimous, all-in favor.

### 2. Discuss the trash fee for 33 Crowningshield Drive and 309 Pleasant Street

- (JP) These are two residents that the owners recently passed away. Our past policy has been that we wait 12 months before a request to cancel a trash fee can be made, so I'm asking that we make an exception for these two.
- Motion (CR) seconded (KH) to approve the cancellation of the trash fee for 33 Crowningshield Drive and 309 Pleasant Street. Unanimous, all-in favor.
- (JP) We will need to revisit this policy again after budget season.

### 3. Discuss the extension of sanitary sewage agreement for 1 Woodland Drive

- (JP) This is one of a couple properties on a sewage agreement.
- Motion (KH) seconded (CR) to approve a twenty year extension of the sanitary sewage agreement for the owner of 1 Woodland Drive and the separate agreement with the City of Worcester, with the owner of 1 Woodland Drive being responsible for all legal fees. Unanimous, all-in favor.

### 4. Discuss possible article for Annual Town Meeting to address liquor on Town property.

- (JP) Looking to revisit the 1991 article that states no person shall consume alcoholic beverages on town property.
- Jeff Cormier, I would not strike down the entire bylaw but we should allow alcohol on town property.

- **(HM)** I have an email out to legal to make sure we are reading this properly. We may have to just make reference to chapter 138. I don't think it is a major overhaul. The rest of the bylaw would stay intact.
- **(CR)** I would like to restrict it so we don't have all alcohol.
- **(KH)** I do think Paxton is missing out on a lot of opportunities by not allowing us to have a beer truck for town events. The brewery has to provide insurance to serve on town property. We should reach out to neighboring towns to see how they handle this.
- **(JP)** We should restrict it to beer and wine, they need to be tips certified and have an insurance binder.
- **Motion (KH) seconded (CR) to have the Town Administrator work on the article to allow alcohol on town property for the Annual Town Meeting. Unanimous, all-in favor.**

**SELECT BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**

- None

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**Boards, Committees, Commissions**

See the Town's Website for openings.

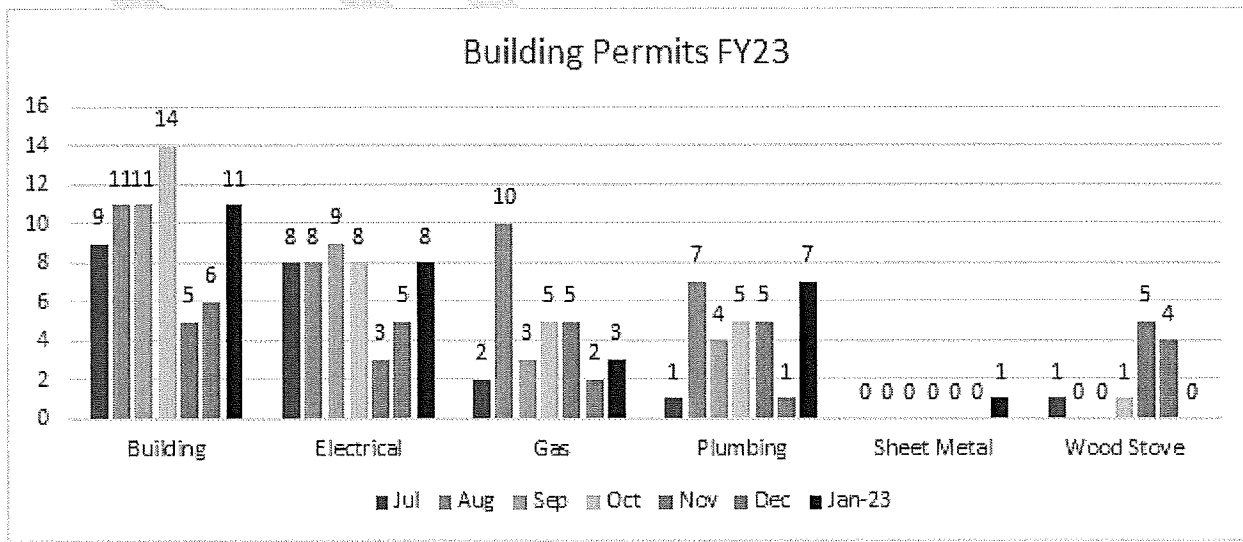
**COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS**

Check out the Town's Website for the latest programs.

**DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES**

**Building Department**

In January we saw an increase in permits from December's low of 18 up to 30 in January. Of those permits, 11 were building related. In FY23 thus far we have had 68 building permits pulled.



### **Conservation Commission**

The Con Com has voted to make a contingent offer for the Conservation Agent position to Doug Dillon.

### **Public Safety Building**

The Select Board have begun to use the Public Safety Building Training Room to host and broadcast the Select Board meetings live. On February 8, the Finance Committee held their first meeting at the Public Safety Building. The policy on use of the Training Room can be found on our website [here](#).

### **School Budget (WRSD)**

The Town's Town Administrators involved sent a letter to the WRSD Superintendent this past week, advising that the Towns' had a limited bandwidth for no more than a 4% assessment increase. WRSD is holding a joint meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> to review their budget with all Towns, TA's, and Fin Coms.

### **Town Administrator**

The DPW hired an outside contractor to assist with tree debris removal from Town properties and trees that have fallen into the roadways. The Paxton Municipal Light Plant was kind enough to let us use their chipper to catch up on tree branches that had fallen during the last storm. During the weekend of the 4<sup>th</sup>, we had some cold temperatures that caused several pipes to freeze in residences and which resulted in substantial flood damage. The Building Commissioner condemned one such home that currently had no occupants on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Our Fire, DPW, and Building Commissioner have been working with other related matters as they arise.

## **FINANCES**

### **Annual Audit**

Our Auditors completed their Audit of our FY22 books in early February. We will be setting up a meeting for the Auditor to visit with the Select Board and Finance Committee to review their findings. After this meeting, the Audit documents will be made available on the Town's website for anyone to view.

### **Bond Rating**

In February, Donna Couture (Treasurer) and Larissa and I met with our Moody's representative to complete an interview and allow an opportunity for Moody's to apply their new formulas to the Town of Paxton. Moody's issued their official report on the 7<sup>th</sup> and scored Paxton the same as previous, Aa3 rating. To view the official press release from Moody's, please click [here](#).

### **FY24 Budget Process**

The FY24 budget process is well underway. The Finance Committee has started reviewing budget and met with the Library and COA on the 8<sup>th</sup> at the Public Safety Complex for the first time. Our staff have been working on updating and obtaining the most current information and figures for the FY24 budget.

### **Grants**

Newly Awarded:

None at this time.

Active/Status Update:

**Community Compact (IT) Grant** – Grant funds were awarded in December in the amount of \$115,000 to support conversion to records management system, including scanning and electronically filing many of the Town’s files to relieve storage burden and make files more user friendly and searchable.

**Community Compact Grant “HR Procedures”** – Turnover in staff at Collin’s Center. Working with them to finish up the project. In Progress

**DFS Firefighter Safety Grant** – FD was awarded for \$15,500 for a grant for turnout gear which they applied for in October.

**Early Education & Care** – The Recreation Department has received a grant for \$3,250 a month towards the Before/After School Program starting in October. (9/2022)- In Progress

**MIA Risk Management Grant** – We were awarded half of the funding for the cost of chain saw safety kits (chaps, etc.), bucket truck communication gear, and cybersecurity simulation and testing costs for staff for a total of \$5626.53 out of the total \$9,237.50 applied for in September.  
**MIA Wellness Grant** – Partially Complete.

**Office of Grants & Research** – The Police Department received a grant with funding from the National Highway & Traffic Safety Administration in the amount of \$19,921 (9.2022) – In Progress.

**SAFE Grant** – FD applied for and were awarded a grant in the amount of \$5,400 for safety education.  
Shared Streets Grant- In Progress.

**Small Bridge Grant (2019)** – Planning Grant Black Hill Road, in progress.

**State Earmark of Funds** – Senator Gobi and Representative Ferguson had contacted my office early this summer to inquire if there were projects related to economic development in which we could use funding. They submitted legislation that would support \$75k for redoing our Zoning Bylaws and \$125k related to our DPW building. We received notice on Friday that the earmark totaling \$200k was approved. Funds will be required to be used and projects completed by June 30, 2026.

**United Way** – The Recreation Department applied for and were awarded funds in the amount of \$5000 for additional after school/out of school programming.

**Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Salt Reduction Grant** – We were awarded the 50/50 matching grant for a polar flex system, that if awarded would reduce the cost of the item, which is originally \$6,700, in half.

Applied for:

**Ambulance Certified Public Expenditure Program** – FD applied for reimbursement for Medicaid/Mass Health ambulance billings for the prior Fiscal Year 2022, with the amount requested at \$62,566.

**Assistance to Firefighters Grant-** FD applied in January 2021 for \$450,000 for a Water Tanker. Funding to awarded through December, no word yet.

**Procurement:**

Completed:

Pending:

- **Security Cameras (Paxton Center School)** – Working with the School to complete this outstanding project and purchase from the State Bid list.

To do:

- Cable Access Software
- Records Building – Fence
- Security Cameras (Paxton Center School) –
- Town Common area drainage (WRAP funding)
- Trash Collection
- Tivnan Field Lights (materials only)

**JOB OPENINGS**

Police Officer

**PROJECTS**

**Updates**

**Town Building Phone Upgrade** – We are now working directly with TPX on this project. Phones are installed in most offices. We are working on navigating any wiring challenges, as well as confirming the correct accounts and lines to port over. The phones will be arriving early February and we should have training and a complete switchover prior to the end of February.

**Cybersecurity-** We will be implementing Multifactor authentication as well as utilizing phishing tests (paid for through a MIIA grant) for all employees with emails.

**ADJOURN**

- **Motion (KH) seconded (CR) to leave the regular meeting and entered into Executive Session at 10:05pm and we will return to the regular meeting for the purpose of adjourning. (KH) yes, (CR) yes, (JP) yes.**
- **Returned to Regular Session at 11:55pm**
- **Adjourned Meeting at 11:55pm, Unanimous all-in favor. (KH) yes, (CR) yes, (JP) yes.**

The next meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2023, 4:30pm.

**Documents from the Meeting filed in BOS office:**

Agenda

Attendance list

Town Administrators update

Meeting minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Graf-Parsons  
Executive Assistant

DRAFT