



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

**Monday, March 31, 2014**

**Meeting Location: John Bauer Senior Center 17 West Street, Paxton, MA 01612**

Members Present: John F. Malone, Chairman  
Peter Bogren, Jr, Vice Chairman  
Julia N. Pingitore, Clerk  
  
Carol L. Riches, Town Administrator

Attendees: Attendee List

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

### **Budget meeting with Department Heads**

- Chairman Malone thanked everyone for coming.
- **(PB)** As of March 18<sup>th</sup> we were looking at a deficit of \$283,267. The Finance Committee has since made some cuts and with \$100,000 on an override they have ended up at a balanced budget with a 2% COLA increase.
- **(JM)** I would like to look at another approach so that the departments get what they need. An override will not pass in Paxton and we need to make this up some other way.
- **(PB)** The 2% COLA is based on FY14 salaries and pay raises will go above that afterwards.
- Jay Conte expressed a concern on how this would affect the Fire Inspectors increase that went into effect last November.
- **(CR)** The merit raises are separate from COLA. The COLA should be put in place and then a merit raise if it is warranted.
- Deb Bailey stated that she would like to provide Lois Shorten with a merit increase.
- **(JM)** Questioned if an evaluation had been done for Lois.
- Deb Bailey replied that she had not done one with her.
- **(JM)** Get with Carol and she will work with you on getting an employee evaluation done.
- **(JM)** Snow and ice was reduced by \$30,000.
- **(PB)** Originally \$30,000 was added so they have selected to increase it by \$10,000 each year instead.
- **(JM)** Reduce blacktop by \$100,000.

- **(PB)** Originally it was zero.
- Mike Putnam stated that the budget was changed to \$150,000 and the Finance Committee cut it back to \$50,000. Chapter money is not going to increase.
- **(JM)** The repairs to public building account have been cut.
- **(CR)** That was for repairs to the Town Hall. It's okay to cut that.
- **(JP)** Is there a less expensive way to repair the ramp?
- **(CR)** We are just paying for supplies. Bay Path is doing the work for us.
- **(JP)** Is there some type of grip that can be put on it?
- Jerry Ryan recommended a grip paint that can be put down that will make it non-slip.
- **(JM)** I think for \$5,000 we should fix it before we run into a problem.
- **(JM)** A cut to dispatcher's salary and uniforms.
- Chief Desrosiers stated that he had submitted 2 different salary studies to the Finance Committee showing that Paxton is already on the lower side of the pay scale, but I have not heard anything back yet.
- **(JM)** Would that slow the employee turnaround if the wage was more compatible?
- Chief Desrosiers replied that it would slow it down.
- Chief Conte also remarked that it would be nice to retain good dispatchers.
- Chief Desrosiers also remarked that the dispatchers are dressed uniformly. They check on prisoners at times and are a direct extension of the police department and should be presented as such.
- **(CR)** It was mentioned by a Finance Committee member that they should go back to the department head and let them decide where the cuts should be made.
- **(JM)** The increase to the Assessors budget is due to an increase in hours and not a pay increase.
- Deirdre Malone expressed that the Auditor expressed that we need to increase our stabilization account if we are looking to increase the town's financial rating.
- **(JM)** We need to shoot for asking the school to cut 2.3 million, and then we can adjust up or down depending on what we do with our budgets.
- **(PB)** There is a difference between level funding and level assessing.
- **(JM)** I would like your opinion of what is reasonable to ask of the school and see what we can afford to cut. The tax rate cannot continue to go up because we are going to hit a ceiling soon.
- **(JP)** The cuts that we have made in the past are becoming more visible. For example the cuts that we have made to DPW for road repairs.
- Mike Putnam replied that he has had a number of phone calls from people asking when their roads are going to be repaired.
- **(JM)** We need to work towards a plan. We need a three to five year plan from the school so we can project ahead.
- Dee Malone questioned what percent of the budget has the school been in past years.
- **(PB)** They typically run around 50%.
- **(JM)** We may see a reduction of about \$400,000 in school transportation but that is only \$40,000 to Paxton.
- **(JP)** We need to find a happy medium with the numbers we have put up and some from the school.
- **(PB)** The school can draw this out so we have to be careful.

- **(CR)** An override from the Board of Selectmen would need to go to the Town Clerk by April 7<sup>th</sup>.
- **(PB)** We could set up a meeting with the school for Thursday. Should we move to cut anything?
- **(JM)** Let's wait until after the meeting on Wednesday and then decide.

### **Meeting Minutes**

- **Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from March 18, 2014. Unanimous, all in favor.**

### **April licenses**

- **Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to approve the April licenses as follows. Unanimous, all in favor.**

JLC Donuts	Weekday Soft Drinks
Robinson Greenhouses	Nursery Stock & Florist
Howe's Farm Stand	Nursery Stock & Florist
	Jam/Syrup/Honey/Bread/Candy/Seeds License
	Fruit & Vegetable Stand License
Pleasant View Nursery	Nursery Stock & Florist
Paxton Sports Center	Weekday Soft Drinks
Paxton Marketplace	Weekday Soft Drinks
Theo's Restaurant	Weekday Soft Drinks

- **Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to delete the wording weekday from the future license. Unanimous, all in favor.**

### **Employee Handbook**

- **(PB)** I question the three days leave for bereavement of immediate family members. That just seems awfully quick.
- **(JM)** I agree
- **(JP)** Should we building in an exception or just change the number of days we give?
- **(CR)** I would just change the number.
- **(JM)** Go to five days.
- **Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to change the bereavement leave for immediate family members from the current three days to five days. Unanimous, all in favor.**
- **(PB)** Is it twenty hours a week to get health insurance?
- **(CR)** Yes.
- **(PB)** Do we have employees that work less than 30 hours and get health insurance?
- **(CR)** Yes. I will check to see if twenty hours is mandatory for health insurance.
- **(JM)** Let's hold off on voting for the updates to the handbook until Carol can check on the health insurance information.

### **Town Administrators Update**

- Spencer Rescue Squad Inc.

As the Board is aware I have been working with Spencer Rescue Squad Inc. to finalize the accounts. At Town Counsel's suggestion a settlement agreement was drawn up and Spencer Rescue Squad Inc. is willing to accept this agreement once it is signed by the Board of Selectmen. I would therefore ask that you please take a vote to sign this document.

- **Motion (JP) seconded (PB) to accept and sign the settlement agreement as written. Unanimous, all in favor.**

### **Town Administrators evaluation**

- **(JM)** The cumulative score from all three board members for the Town Administrators evaluation came to 91.42% satisfaction with her job. I feel that a merit raise should be provided in light of the outstanding work Carol has done.
- **(PB)** When Carol started she took less than our former Town Administrator and we should look at a merit increase.
- **(JP)** Since Carol has a contract can we give a raise outside of the renewal?
- **(JM)** We have given past evaluations but have never given a merit raise. I would like to suggest a 6% merit increase.
- **(CR)** Replied that was too much with the current budget situation.
- **(PB)** We could negotiate this in October when her contract is up.
- **(JP)** I agree.

### **Review warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting**

- **(CR)** The Town Accountant has recommended updating how we present article #1. This will make it easier to see the sources of funding, and other towns have gone to doing it this way as well.
- **(PB)** The word "attached" are we okay with that?
- **(CR)** Yes, the budget will be attached.
- **(PB)** Can we change the ambulance fund numbers if the date for the Annual Town Meeting changes?
- **(CR)** Yes, we are not tied into these numbers. It was also suggested that we do the school numbers separately as well.

#### **Article 1.**

Town Budget

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #1. All in favor.**

#### **Article 2.**

Wachusett School budget

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #2. All in favor.**

#### **Article 3.**

Bay Path School Budget

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #3. All in favor.**

**Article 4.**

Water Tank

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #4. All in favor.**

**Article 5.**

Water Enterprise

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #5. All in favor.**

**Article 6.**

Senior Center Restrooms

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #6. All in favor.**

**Article 7.**

Free Cash.

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #7. All in favor.**

**Article 8.**

Fire Dept. Pumper Truck

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #8. All in favor.**

**Article 9.**

250th Committee

Jack Malone recused himself from this vote.

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #9. All in favor.**

**Article 10.**

Stabilization

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #10. All in favor.**

**Article 11.**

Solicitor/Canvasser bylaw

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #11. All in favor.**

**Article 12.**

Medical Marijuana Dispensaries

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #12. All in favor.**

**Article 13.**

Chapter 90

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #13. All in favor.**

**Article 14.**

Revolving Accounts

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #14. All in favor.**

**Article 15.**

Post-Employee Benefits Liability Trust fund

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept this as article #15. All in favor.**

**Close Annual Town Warrant**

- **Motion (PB) seconded (JM) to close the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Unanimous all in favor.**

**Open Warrant for Special Town Meeting**

- **Motion (PB) seconded (JM) to open the warrant for the Special Town Meeting. Unanimous all in favor.**
- **Article 1.**  
Fire Department Transfers  
**Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to accept the article as written. All in favor.**

**Close Warrant for Special Town Meeting**

- **Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to close the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting. Unanimous all in favor.**

**The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 14, 2014 at 7pm.**

**Adjourned Meeting at 8:50pm, Unanimous all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Graf-Parsons, Administrative Assistant

**Documents filed with Meeting Minutes:**

Agenda

Attendance list

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

Town Administrators Update

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Peter Bogren, Jr.  
Chairman

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John F. Malone  
Vice Chairman

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Julia N. Pingitore  
Clerk