

Jeffrey Bannon, Chair person  
Jonathan Anderson, Vice Chair  
David Hall, Clerk  
Jesse Limanek  
Wendy M. Mead



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James A. Smith, Town Manager

Town of Sutton  
Select Board

Meeting Minutes

**Minutes Accepted and filed with the Town Clerk 5-02-2023 a roll call vote of 5-0**

6:00 p.m. – April 18, 2023

Roll Call vote taken:

Members in Attendance in person:

Chairperson Jeff Bannon, Vice Chair Jonathan Anderson, Clerk David Hall, Select members Jesse Limanek & Wendy Mead

Also in attendance in person: Town Manager James Smith & Deb Jacques, secretary

Chairperson Bannon recites the Hybrid Opening Statement which went in to effect March 29, 2023

Public Forum – William Bonin 650 Central Tpk. questioned the status of the electricity contract due to end in January of 2024. Mr. Bonin heard Gov. Healy released 400 million in her supplemental budget earmarked for infrastructure (Jim replied this is the Chapter 90 money received yearly). Also mentioned was the citizens petition on the May Town Meeting Warrant- Mr. Bonin asked if there will be warrants available prior to meeting for residents to review.

Andrea Mattei- 21 Golf Ridge Drive gave her supporting opinion on the citizen's petition with reducing the building height from 70 feet to 45 feet.

James Marran 80 Burbank Road- the sponsor of the citizen's petition read the statement he provided at the previous Finance Committee Hearing on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

William Pepka of 36 Sibley Road stated his full support for the previous 2 speakers.

Arbor Day Proclamation read into record by Select person Dave Hall

Select person Hall motions to accept as presented the April 4, 2023 Select Board meeting minutes Select Person Mead seconds passes 5-0 with roll call vote.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) 226 Putnam Hill Road- Whittier Farms- Wayne & Sam Whittier are present if there are any questions. Town Manager Smith was contacted April 6<sup>th</sup> by MA Dept of Agriculture regarding the application for 226 Putnam Hill Road (75.5 acres) The dept. appraised the property at \$1,390,000. They asked if the town would contribute 5% (\$69,500.) towards this purchase. This would require a Town Meeting vote- if the Select Board approve- this would be on the Fall Town Meeting. Select person Hall asks Town Manager Smith to speak on what an APR is. Town Manager Smith replies if this is approved the property has a permanent protection on it- the land can continue to be farmed but it can never be developed. Dave is in full support. Select person Limanek fully supports this, he says once all the farmland is gone- where will our food come from – Whittier's are a multi-generational farming family. Select person Mead is in support of all the APRs that have come before the board- she agrees with Jesse- without farms there is no food. Vice Chair Anderson offers his full support this is good for the community. Chairperson Bannon offers his thanks to the Whittier family and is in support. Select person Limanek motions to approve the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) for 226 Putnam Hill Road- Whittier Farms- to be placed on the Fall 2023 Town Meeting Warrant Vice Chair Anderson seconds passes 5-0 with roll call vote.

Final FY24 Budget Update- Town Manager Smith gives a fy24 budget update showing a balanced budget. This is a \$37,819,797. Budget (an increase of \$1,640,559. Or 4.53% over FY23). We are raising the tax levy by \$1,241,799 which is 2.5% plus new growth of \$200,000. (previously excess new growth was used for capital purposes but we can no longer do this). Special Ed out of District has had a significant increase (an increase from 1 million in FY20 to \$2.5 million in FY24) We are repeating a Warrant article which gives an additional \$700,000. to the school to meet the increase in Special Ed. and continue to budget 3.6 million dollars over net school

spending. There were 12 fewer students registered for BVT but there are additional students going to Norfolk Aggie. Worc. Regional Retirement System was double the amount from the previous year-usually 9.95% but FY24 shows a 18% contribution. The 2.8 million in ARPA funds have been spent between the school waste water plant, town hall septic system replacement and the Wilkinsonville Sewer project. Health care for FY24 has a 6.4% increase. Sutton continues to pick up a bigger financial burden then what the State provides. For the FY24 budget- Sutton will pick up 75% and the state will pick up 17%. Jim reminds the board that the financial cliff mentioned over the last few years looks to be on the horizon if new growth comes in low. We may have to look at an override or cuts in services. The town continues to have solid stabilization funds (SPED, OPEB and Health Insurance). Select person Hall says it is with a lot of work from the Financial team that we are able to get here. Dave recalls in the previous year's 5 year forecast the financial cliff being discussed- with all the inflation it is now here. Dave is concerned with next year's budget- we have to find more revenue sources or cut services - an override is not something that happens quickly. Select person Limanek thanks Jim and Tim for this- this is what the financial team works on for an entire year. Jesse says most of the issues are out of our control- conservative budgeting has helped us through some rough seas. The cost of education is the lions part of our budget. Select person Mead asks if we will lose any of the ARPA funds as the Town Hall septic project is on hold- Town Manager Smith replies no it is only delayed for a few months. Vice Chair Anderson agrees most of these things are out of our control- trends are shifting – municipal budgeting requires new growth to cover unfunded state mandates. Chairperson Bannon feels the budget process has become more precarious- the issue is having to use local receipts for budgeting.

Sign final Spring Town Meeting Warrant & Annual Election Warrant- the warrant was reviewed at the last meeting- after brief discussion- board members all commend the Citizens petition and all the work done on the presentation. The Planning Board, Finance Committee and the citizen all were able to speak out about this. This is democracy at its best. Town Manager Smith informs the board that the Town Election will be shortened hours due to no contested seats. Select person Mead motions to approve and sign the Spring Town Meeting Warrant and the Annual Town Election Warrant Select person Hall seconds passes 5-0 with roll call vote

#### Town Manager Update:

- Electricity Aggregation bidding process- at the recommendation of our aggregator consultant the town has not yet entered into a new electricity supply rate as the indicative prices are trending in the low .14 and the bids came in at .15 per kilowatt. We will continue to work with the consultant until we are able to lock in a rate for the rate payers.
- Animal Inspector – Michelle Lafleche recently retired- Jesse Gannt has been hired as her replacement. Jesse works with Ed Mansfield who was our Animal Inspector a few years ago- Ed has agreed to assist Jesse with learning this job.
- Finance Committee public hearings have wrapped up- thankyou to chairperson Pat Morris and the committee.
- Russ Dion with Campanelle called today to let Jim know they are no longer in negotiations to purchase land from Randy Waterman for the proposed 40B project on Armsby Road. Russ stated there were to many obstacles. This is still an active development site with some permits already obtained – Waterman had a conversation with the town Planner regarding an over 55 development.

#### Announcement's / Round Table:

- Select person Limanek says the meat raffle at the Dudley Gendron American Post was very well attended and people were very generous. The American Legion is matching the proceeds. Currently there are 130 families & seniors using the Food Pantry. Memorial Day is coming up. Jesse visited a new business in town Founding Fathers Tactical & shooting supplies located on 146-
- Select person Mead heard a song with a lyric "Reach out your hand to those you dont know"- do right by yourself and reach out.
- Chairperson Bannon acknowledges the board is in receipt of correspondence from Daryl Cunningham.

Select person Limanek motions to adjourn, Select person Mead seconds- Roll Call vote taken- passes 5-0

Meeting adjourned 8:15 pm