

Jonathan Anderson, Chair person  
David Hall, Vice Chair  
Jesse Limanek, Clerk  
Jeffrey Bannon  
Normand Champigny



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James A. Smith, Town Manager

Town of Sutton  
Select Board

Meeting Minutes

**Minutes Accepted and filed with the Town Clerk 7/11/2023 with a roll call vote of 5-0**

6:00 p.m. – June 20, 2023

Roll Call vote taken:

Members in Attendance in person:

Chairperson Jonathan Anderson, Vice Chair David Hall, Clerk Jesse Limanek, Select members Jeffrey Bannon & Normand Champigny.

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

Public Forum –

John Belcufine 75 Leland Hill Road- There have been large trucks on Leland Hill Rd recently- they could be using it as a cut through from Central Tpk. To 122A could we post signs that it is not a truck route. Also could highway trim the over grown brush on Leland Hill Road. Town Manager Smith states we will have Police and Highway take a look at the request for no truck route signage and Highway for the overgrown brush.

Christine Watkins-65 McLellan Road is here to mention the fundraising efforts for the Manchaug Playground. The group has held fundraisers throughout the town- they have raised \$31,000. so far if anyone would like to donate- the website is Suttonrec.weebly.com

Select person Hall motions to accept as presented the June 6, 2023 Select Board meeting minutes Select Person Bannon seconds passes 5-0 with roll call vote

Board & Committee Reappointments- Select person Limanek reads the list (attached to final minutes) of reappointed board & committee members. The Select board all take the time to thank all the volunteers we appreciate all who serve present and past. Select person Limanek motions to approve as read reappointments made by the Select Board and the Town Manager select person Bannon seconds passes 5-0 with roll call vote

Correcting the license approval procedure for underground propane tanks at 17 Gilmore Drive- Vice Chair Hall recuses himself- Town Manager Smith informs the board that during an environmental study for the sale of this property it was discovered that the proper licensing authority (Select Board) under MGL Ch. 148 Sec 13 had not signed the authorization. The Fire Chief at that time signed all the permits. This dated back to August 2003. The request for the current Select board to sign comes from Fire Chief Matt Belsito and District Chief Robin Dresser. They have no issues and state in a letter the tanks were installed properly and permitted but they were not properly licensed. Select person Limanek assumes when the tanks were installed they were inspected- there are no leaks, they are in proper working condition- this is needed for a clear title. Select person Bannon asks if this license covers replacements. Select person Champigny asks about longevity of these tanks from an EPA stance but feels this is just a matter of formality. Chairperson Anderson feels it is a housekeeping issue. Select person Bannon motions to approve the Chairperson sign the corrected licensing approval (Form FP-002) as requested by Fire Chief Matt Belsito and District Chief Robin Dresser for (5) 1,000-gallon underground UST propane tanks located at 17 Gilmore Drive Select person Champigny seconds passes 5-0 with roll call vote Dave rejoins the board

5-year Financial Forecast- Town Manager Smith states these have been done twice a year for the last 7 years- this allows us to look beyond the current budget season and plan for the future. The assumptions use information which show the average increase in payroll, Worc. Regional assessment increases, Health care increases, new growth (\$200,000.) and TIF roll offs, placeholders for BVT & Norfolk Aggie & SPED. Also used is the Tax Levy Assumptions which is our largest source of revenue. Out of District SPED costs have shown a substantial increase (1.3 million increase over a 3-year period) but shows potentially a big decrease between FY25 & 26. Town Manager Smith says there is a possibility of a debt override. Vice Chair Hall thanks Jim and Tim for the good job to prep for

things to discuss. The next fiscal year seems ok before the possibility of an override- Dave says having the big bubble in the sped cost and then seeing it fall off – an override for that purpose does not make sense. This does show long term issues (a 2-million-dollar deficit in 2029). Dave states if we are looking at an override we need to bang the drum early so people understand it. Tim states in 2026 there is \$600,000. Rolling off from debt exclusion and if we go for a \$600,000. Override- that would not make a big impact on the residents. New growth & budgeting new growth- how conservative is this forecast- are we still conservative? Tim states we still are conservative. Dave says with the situation like it is when changes occur and you point out where the concerns are as there may be big issues down the road unless the numbers improve. Select person Limanek begins by saying there (referring to Dave's comments) is the transparency- we as a board at how open and transparent we are. Jesse states this is just a projection to try and keep residents informed. How did we do between last year and this year – Jim replies we were close. Jesse asks why Norfolk Aggie is higher per child then BVT- Tim replies because we are not a member town of Norfolk Aggie. Superintendent Kim Roberts-Morandi states schools have to offer an agricultural school choice. The SPED assumption – will that drop due to aging out- Jim replies yes- it is a few students dropping off. Jesse asks about cuts- Jim replies we have not yet had the conversation- there are still so many unknowns- we will figure a course of action when we need to. Select person Bannon asks if this is a - worst case scenario? Down side risk is lower than the upside risk. Tim replies we have leveled head counts at BVT and Norfolk Aggie as well as Out of District- if those counts go up it throws all this off. Worc. Regional & health Ins. The Revenues are conservative. We make our best guess with the future and things can change. Jeff says in the school dept. we transferred 1.9 million to the school this year- is there a structural deficit that needs to be addressed. Jim replies there are deficits on both sides. Jeff goes on to say the unfunded mandates and the whole issue of out of district spending – no idea why this is not a state funded expense. Tim states if we eliminate positions at the high school you are eliminating options. Then the students may choose to go to one of the other available schools. What an appropriate override amount would be is hard to calculate. Jeff discusses the cost of BVT- Tim states the school committee for BVT is made up of parents and prior students from BVT- they get what they want. Also mentioned was the Circuit breaker formula. Superintendent Roberts Morandi is asked to provide the definition of what circuit breaker is. Jeff also mentions we should stay away from using 1x income as we would not be sending the right message to new administration coming in. Jeff means when Jim and Tim retire. Jim states we are looking at all areas- we do not want to set the town up for failure once we walk out the door. A \$600,000. Override will not solve the problem long term- we are trying to create balance we do not want to set the town up for failure. Select person Champigny says it's a moving target- at the end of the day we are dealing with variables that are just too unpredictable- long term the likely event will be developers developing new housing units maybe 5,6, 800 hundred new units- would that take into consideration more population and all the services- is that foresight thought of- Tim replies no that is too uncertain. Normand also suggests for future capital expenses- cost saving methods would a lease make sense? Jim replies for the vehicles we have enough capital to cover the cost- we have not gone there yet but it may be coming. Chairperson Anderson asks if we have any idea why students choose to go to Norfolk Aggie- what are they offering. Jim replies some want a change of scenery some of it is the campus style and some have been in 4 H and are interested in farming. Jonathan goes on to say he has an issue with BVT- it is difficult to push back on the increases- it has moved away from what a tech school should be- it is more like a college prep which is in competition with the surrounding towns. Jim replies if the debt exclusion is meant to fix what they have is one thing but if it is meant to expand what they offer then that becomes an issue. Also a concern are the unfunded mandates from DESI and BVT increasing 6% at some point how do you say no- it is unsustainable. It is important to offer education to all kids but the state needs to come up with more strategic ways for us to do this.

#### Town Manager Update:

- Puckihuddle Preschool lease extension- Puckihuddle has decided to exercise their option of the existing lease at the former Manchaug library. The term of this lease will be 8/1/25-7/31/35. Puckihuddle has leased this since 2009. For FY24 we will collect \$15,250. In rent which increases 3% annually. This is a triple net lease and the tenant is responsible for all improvements.
- Town Farm Road additional carrier- the Town was notified that T-Mobile has signed onto the cell tower. They will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> carrier on the tower (Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile). We will be receiving a little over \$61,000. For the 3 of them once they are up & running. The contract goes for 10 years with 2 ten year extensions.
- Hatch Asphalt- will start repaving the parking lot at the ELC & elementary school on Thursday June 22. This should take a week to complete. They won the bid at \$248,000.
- Transfer Station Stickers now available online- \$50.00 a piece.
- Goals meeting scheduled for Tuesday July 25<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.
- July 4<sup>th</sup> takes place Tuesday- the chairman agreed to give employees Monday July 3<sup>rd</sup> off.
- Fireworks have been cancelled- we will wait to see if they are rescheduled. Thank you to Tom Fournier

Announcement's / Round Table:

- Select person Limanek announces that there will be Johnny Cash song & stories on the town common Thursday June 22 at 7pm hosted by the Sutton Cultural Council. Jesse visited the Food Pantry today- they are well stocked but always in need of cleaning supplies. Also today Jesse along with the Womens Auxiliary visited 3 veterans (1 in Millbury/2 I Sutton) to assist with items needed with the proceeds from the recent Poppy drive- every dollar received goes to a veteran. Jesse states Be the One- take a look around your neighborhood- be approachable.
- Select person Champigny says as we close the school year- a shout out to Coach Dennis the Tennis coach at the high school- the boy's tennis team made it to the Elite 8 division. Kudos.
- Chairperson Anderson acknowledges Jesse Limanek and all that he does for the community Jesse is passionate about the town.

Select person Limanek motions to adjourn, Select person Bannon 2nds- Roll Call vote taken- passes 5-0

Meeting adjourned 8:10pm