

**Town Council Minutes
Town Hall Council Chambers
March 11, 2024**

Present:

Michael Molisse, President
Pascale Burga, Vice President
Rick Coughlin, Councilor
Kenneth DiFazio, Councilor
Maureen Kiely, Councilor
Gary MacDougall, Councilor
Arthur Mathews, Councilor
Greg Shanahan, Councilor

Absent:

Gary MacDougall, Councilor
Arthur Mathews, Councilor

Also Present:

Kathleen Deree, Town Clerk
Ted Langill, Chief of Staff
Richard McLeod, Town Solicitor

Recording Secretary:

Kim McCutcheon

President Molisse called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Town Clerk Kathleen Deree called the roll, with Councilors MacDougall and Mathews absent. President Molisse reported that both Councilors MacDougall and Mathews had family commitments and would not be in attendance.

MINUTES

Budget Management Minutes of February 20, 2024

Vice President Burga made a motion to approve the Budget/ Management Committee meeting minutes of February 20, 2024. Motion was seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Town Council Meeting Minutes of February 20, 2024

Vice President Burga made a motion to approve the Town Council meeting minutes of February 20, 2024. Motion was seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

23 135 Ritual Slaughter Ordinance

Vice President Burga motioned to open public hearing for measure 23 135 Ritual Slaughter Ordinance, seconded by Councilor Coughlin. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Town Solicitor Rick McLeod stated the presented ordinance is a result of a complaint received by the Mayor's office in the summer of 2023 where a family had brought a live goat onto their property and pursuant to religious ritual, the animal was slaughtered. The complainant was not understanding it was a religious ceremony and was concerned about the future. The Mayor's office asked to prepare an ordinance that would address the situation. Solicitor McLeod explained there was an existing state statute, Chapter 94, Section 139G that protects the rights of individuals to practice ritual slaughter. The ordinance before Town Council is identical to the state statute, but adds a bit of a twist. Due to the closeness of some homes and neighbors, language was added that if an animal is to be slaughtered for religious purposes it would be done out of public view. Solicitor McLeod also stated the Ordinance Committee suggested language be added to require the homeowner clean up any remains within a reasonable amount of time. Solicitor McLeod would also accept any other suggestions. Solicitor McLeod made it clear the Town is not trying to take away the rights of certain religions to practice their faith, but need to balance the interest of neighbors who are not familiar with those rituals by keeping it out of view.

President Molisse asked if there were any questions or comments from the public, to which there was the following:

Laura Sabadini, 386 Front Street – stated she was trying to understand if our town has an ordinance with a twist does that go a little further in limiting what people can do with regards to religious expression and religious slaughter? Is that something that would have the town at odds with the state in terms of having a more restrictive ordinance than what is at the state level?

Solicitor McLeod stated he does not think it is restricting them from conducting ritual slaughters, it is the last two sentences added, the first being from the health department standpoint that suggests the livestock must be healthy and slaughtered under sanitary standards to not create a public health or safety hazard. The second reads any practice of ritual slaughter must be sheltered on private property outside the public view. The ordinance does not hinder their ability to practice their faith but balances the interests by allowing the event but also protecting the interest of the neighbors that may not fully understand what that faith entails.

Ms. Sabadini responded by thanking Mr. McLeod for his response and she just wanted to express her concerns as a resident that the Town try to do this in a way that does not curtail the expression and worship of some people and not others.

With no other members of the public wishing to speak, Vice President Burga motioned to close the public hearing for measure 23 135 Ritual Slaughter Ordinance and was seconded by Councilor Shanahan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

24 006 Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Account

Vice President Burga motioned to open public hearing for measure 24 006 Opioid Settlement Special Review Account, seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Chief of Staff Langill stated that in 2023, a special purpose stabilization fund was created for opioid settlement that came into the Town as Massachusetts was part of a larger lawsuit with

opioid manufacturers and distributors. The fund was created knowing that monies would start coming into the town under previous Solicitor Joe Callanan. Mr. Langill provided a list of what monies have already come into the town, totaling just under million dollars. There was backlash from municipalities when the money started coming in because the municipalities were told the monies had to be deposited to a special purpose stabilization fund which was not an ideal situation for using the money. The monies were treated as general revenue during the year which they were not budgeted for and therefore could not be spent. The monies went into free cash and were moved into the current fund. This measure will create a new fund, similar to other revolving funds, that are part of the budget each year for the same purposes outlined in the settlement, prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery. The fund will be the same money, have the same uses but will be a more flexible way to use the money.

Mr. Langill also reported that Mayor Hedlund, with guidance from the settlement, has created an Opioid Abatement Working Group, not yet complete, will be a team of five appointed people; first responders, represented by Police Chief Fuller, a medical professional from the addiction medicine field, which they will look toward South Shore Health, a resident with live opioid experience, Mr. Langill as representative from the Mayor's office and a representative from the Health Department who is the Substance Use Prevention Coordinator. There is also a forum online where people or groups may fill out forms with suggestions on how to spend the money. The working group will be responsible for reviewing submissions and making recommendations on how to spend the money.

Councilor Abbott asked Mr. Langill if there are any additional pending lawsuits that the town is a party to that could generate additional revenue, and if so, would those monies also go into this new fund. Mr. Langill confirm that yes, it would and it will be seen on the revolving list during budget to approve.

Vice President Burga pointed out that suggestions can be submitted on the Town's website <https://www.weymouth.ma.us/substance-use-prevention>, where there are many links for information and resources.

President Molisse asked if there were any questions or comments from the public, to which there were none.

With no other members of the public wishing to speak, Vice President Burga motioned to close the public hearing for measure 24 006 Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Account and was seconded by Councilor Coughlin. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR, TOWN OFFICERS AND TOWN BOARDS

24 020 Borrowing for Road/Sidewalk Improvements

On behalf of Mayor Hedlund, Ted Langill requested that the Town of Weymouth appropriate the sum of \$5,000,000.00 to pay costs associated with repairing and reconstructing Town roads and sidewalks, and for the payment for all other costs incidental and related thereto, and that to meet

this appropriation, the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. c.44, §7(1), or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and that the Mayor is authorized to contract for and expend any grants, aid, or gifts available for this project; and that the Mayor is authorized to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out this project. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. c.44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

Vice President Burga made a motion to refer measure 24 020 Borrowing for Road/Sidewalk Improvements to the Budget Management Committee, seconded by Councilor Kiely. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

24 021 Transfer Funds for Adams School Repurposing

On behalf of Mayor Hedlund, Ted Langill requested that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$928,005.15 from the ‘Residual Transfer to Capital Projects’ Account (3416200 596800) to the ‘Adams School Renovation Transfer from Residual’ account (31340005 490070) for the purpose of paying costs associated with the repurposing of the Abigail Adams School at 89 Middle Street.

Vice President Burga made a motion to refer measure 24 021 Transfer Funds for Adams School Repurposing to the Budget Management Committee, seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

24 022 Appointment to Community Events Committee – Katherine Keefe

On behalf of Mayor Hedlund, Ted Langill stated that measure 24 010 is hereby submitted on behalf of Mayor Hedlund for consideration and action by Town Council.

In accordance with Section 2-10 of the Town Charter, I respectfully submit the name of Katherine Keefe of 63 Roosevelt Road, Weymouth, MA, 02190 for appointment to the Community Events Committee. This is a 3-year term due to expire on June 30th, 2027 replacing Frannie Xerokostas.

Vice President Burga made a motion to refer measure 24 022 Appointment to Community Events Committee – Katherine Keefe to the Budget Management Committee, seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

The following reappointments were grouped together and voted. There was no Councilor opposition to the reappointments:

24 023-Reappointment to Community Events Committee-Joseph Bronske

24 024-Reappointment to Planning Board-Gregory Agnew

- 24 025-Reappointment to Waterfront Committee-Paul Brooks
- 24 026-Reappointment to Cultural Council-Daniel Callahan
- 24 027-Reappointment to Historical Commission-James Clarke
- 24 028-Reappointment to Community Events Committee-Michele Connaire
- 24 029-Reappointment to Cultural Council-Debbie Courteau
- 24 030-Reappointment to Board of Elder Services-Sally Furlong
- 24 031-Reappointment to Construction Steering Committee-John Gillion
- 24 032-Reappointment to Board of Assessors-Paul Haley
- 24 033-Reappointment to Zoning Board of Appeals (Alternate)-Jonathan Lynch
- 24 034-Reappointment to Zoning Board of Appeals-Jonathan Moriarty
- 24 035-Reappointment to Veteran's Council-Francine Nesson
- 24 036-Reappointment to Zoning Board of Appeals (Alternate)-Michael Pizziferri
- 24 037-Reappointment to Recreation Commission-Keith Ricci
- 24 038-Reappointment to Local Emergency Planning Committee-Jonathan Tose

President Molisse entertained motion to accept the reappointment list, measures 24 023 through and including 24 038. Vice President Burga made a motion to accept the reappointment list, seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Chair Shanahan reported that the Budget/ Management Committee met on March 11, 2024 to deliberate the following:

24 005- Revoke Opioid Settlement SPSF

The measure was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on February 5, 2024. The committee met and voted to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action.

On behalf of the Budget/Management Committee, Chair Shanahan motioned to approve measure 24 005; that the Town of Weymouth revoke the establishment of the Opioid Settlement Special Purpose Stabilization Fund (Established by Measure 23 035, Fund 8323).

On December 4th, 2023, Governor Healy signed Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2023. Section 9 of the law provides, in part, for an exception to the legal requirement that all receipts are to be recorded as general fund revenue for Opioid Settlement Receipts. Municipalities may now account for these receipts in Special Revenue Fund. A separate companion measure is being filed to establish

a Special Revenue Fund for Opioid Settlement Receipts. Vice President Kiely seconded the motion. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

24 006-Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Account

The measure was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on February 5, 2024. The committee met and voted to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action.

On behalf of the Budget/ Management Committee, Chair Shanahan motioned to approve measure 24 006; that the Town of Weymouth authorize the creation of an Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Account for Fiscal Year 2024 pursuant to the new Clause 4 of M.G.L. c.44 §53.

Furthermore, that the Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Account is permitted to accept and expend funds in the aggregate to the amount received from the opioid-distributor and opioid-maker defendants of the opioid lawsuit settlements with the consent of the Mayor and only for the purpose identified in opioid settlement agreements.

Furthermore, that the Town of Weymouth transfer the following sums:

\$43,417.50 from account 83230005-460030 (Revoked Opioid Settlement SPSF – Settlement Revenue) to account 46440005-460030 (Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Account -Interest Revenue), and

\$400.59 from 83230005-482010 (Revoked Opioid Settlement SPSF – Interest Revenue) to 46440005-482010 (Opioid settlement Special Revenue Account – Interest Revenue), and

\$250,122.63 from Free Cash to account 46440005-460030 (Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Account – Settlement Revenue).

Vice President Kiely seconded the motion. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

NEW BUSINESS

24 019 – Fiscal Year 2022 Financial Statements

Vice President Burga read measure 24 019 FY22 Financial Statements into the record on behalf of Auditor Brian Connolly.

The Fiscal Year 2022 Audited Financial Statements and Management letter are finalized and ready for distribution to the Town Council and the Mayor’s Office. This measure 24-019 FY 2022 Audited Financial Statements is being introduced to the Town Council at the March 11, 2024 Council meeting to be referred to the Budget/Management Committee, which in turn will meet on March 18, 2024, a regularly scheduled meeting time of the Town Council. At the 3/18 meeting, the Budget/Management Committee needs to vote to “Accept the audited Financial Statements” and “Management Letter” and refer this measure to the full Town Council for a vote.

Scott McIntire CPA, Principal with Marcum, LLP will be scheduled for 30 minutes on the Budget/Management Committee agenda to present the statements and 20 minutes on the Town Council agenda to answer any questions the Councilors may have.

Vice President Burga made a motion to refer measure 24 019 Fiscal Year 2022 Financial Statements to the Budget Management Committee, seconded by Councilor Kiely.
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

ADJOURNMENT

President Molisse announced that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Town Council will be Monday March 18.

Councilor DiFazio asked President Molisse to make an announcement that there was an important public meeting scheduled for Tuesday March 12th. The meeting is an informational meeting regarding the Town of Weymouth's application to the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) on Tuesday March 12th, 2024 at the Tufts Library, Room 138 at 46 Broad St. from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. The meeting will include town officials, representatives from the Town's engineering consultant, Environmental Partners, the SRA (Southfield Redevelopment Authority) and Southfield master developers.

At 7:56 p.m., there being no further business, Vice President Burga made a motion to adjourn the meeting, motion was seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted by Kim McCutcheon as Recording Secretary

Approved by Council President Michael Molisse
Voted unanimously on 1 April 2024