

## **Town of Dudley**

Board of Selectmen, Highway and Cemetery Commissioners

Monday, January 22, 2024

Dudley Municipal Complex

71 West Main Street, Dudley, MA 01571

Room 321A

**Approved 2/5/2024**

**Some matters have been taken out of agenda order but were typed up in agenda order for ease of locating information when necessary.**

### **1. Open Meeting, Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm. The Chairman stated that this meeting is being recorded.

In attendance were the Honorable Kerry Cyganiewicz, Honorable John Marsi, Honorable Jason Johnson, Honorable Steven Sullivan and the Honorable Mark Landry. Also, present were Jonathan Ruda, Town Administrator and Michelle Jervis, Assistant Town Administrator.

2. **Acceptance of Minutes** - John Marsi motioned to accept the minutes of 1/8/2024. Jason Johnson seconded. Unanimous 5-0.

3. **Appointments: Economic Development Committee (EDC)** – Ricky Bowden – Mr. Bowden came before the Board. He is a senior at Nichols College majoring in Economics and Communication and he would like to get involved with the community and put his education to good use. He is also an Eagle Scout. John Marsi motioned to appoint Ricky Bowden to the EDC with a term to expire 6/30/2024. Mark Landry seconded. Unanimous 5-0.

4. Town Administrator's Report – Mr. Ruda stated that there will be some upcoming meetings on the FY25 budget. There are many challenges this year and he would like to see the public involved with these meetings. The meeting of 2/5/24 will be a joint meeting with the FAA and several department heads will be reviewing their budgets. Another meeting is scheduled for 2/9/24 at 6:30PM, a joint meeting, to go over the remaining department's budgets. On 2/14/24 the Board of Selectmen will be meeting with the Board in Charlton and the DCRSD at Shepherd Hill to hear the school's budget. We need to publicize these meetings and the public should be involved. He wants the public to ask the questions and get their answers now so that we will have public support going into the budget season. Steven Sullivan motioned to accept the Town Administrator's Report. Mark Landry seconded. Unanimous 5-0.

5. Resignation – Jeff Murray, Highway Superintendent – Mr. Murray stated that effective 2/2/24 he will be resigning as Highway Superintendent. It was a difficult decision but with all the struggles with the budget last year along with failed grants, he is moving forward. A screening committee will be implemented for his successor. Steven Sullivan motioned, with regret, to accept the resignation of Jeff Murray. John Marsi seconded. Unanimous 5-0.

6. Declaring a Vacancy and appoint a Screening/Interview Committee-John Marsi motioned to declare a vacancy for Highway Superintendent and to appoint Jonathan Ruda, Marek Karlowicz and Dean Kochanowski to the screening/interview committee with final interviews and vote to appoint the replacement to be conducted by the Highway Commissioners. Jason Johnson seconded. Unanimous 5-0.
7. **Public Hearing – National Grid** = Continuation of Pole Hearing opened on Monday, December 18, 2023. Petition for a Joint or Identical Pole Location – The Hearing reopened at 6:48pm. Robert Williams from National Grid came before the Board. National Grid plans on moving 1 Joint pole on West Main Street and move it 40' on West Main Street to line up for an infrastructure project. The hearing closed at 6:57pm. John Marsi motioned to approve the petition from Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid and Verizon New England, Inc. to relocated poles, wires, and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures, along and across the following public way. West Main Street – National Grid to install 1 JO poles on west Main Street and remove 1 JO pole on West Main Street beginning at a point approximately 78' west of the centerline of the intersection of West Main Street and Dudley Hill Road. Removal of Existing Pole 17 West Main Street and installation of a new Pole 17 approximately 40' east. Mark Landry seconded. Unanimous 5-0.

#### **8. Public Business:**

- a. Massworks Grant – Stevens Mill Project Overview and Presentation – Matt Wzorek and Aaron Sabbs, Engineers at Tighe & Bond along with Town Planner Bill Scanlan, came before the Board. Mr. Wzorek stated that this project started in 2019 with the CDBG grant through the Jericho area of Dudley as well as the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. project. Now they will be working on the area near Stevens Linen Mill on Mill Street. They are ready to put it out to bid this spring with a new sewer system, sidewalks and repaving. Plans were reviewed on where the new pipes will be laid and new sidewalk improvements in the area around the mill. After the pipes are in place the road will be milled and resurfaced. The project has been approved by the Conservation Commission since it is close to the river. On Village Street some residents will be able to connect to the new sewer pipes and on the east side of the street residents will have stubs in place to connect if they wish to do so. This project is a grant funded project for the town. Richard Clark of Airport Road questioned Camden Properties and their timeframe to work on the mill. It was said that John Gumpert, owner of the mill, has stated that interest rates are taking a more favorable trend, and it depends on the market. He remains all in the project. Last year was not a good time to finance these projects but the project will be going forward and the timeline on the mill project will not hold up the infrastructure project. Douglas Macedo of Noble Street stated that the mill is an eyesore and dangerous. Chief Kochanowski stated that his department has worked with the mill owner who boarded up the windows that squatters were able to get into and put in security cameras. This company has someone who checks on the property on a regular basis along with police patrols. Don Wilson of 31 Mill St. stated concerns about the construction project and detours will be implemented. The engineers stated that there will be detours and there is not much they can do about them, it will be a temporary inconvenience. Mr. Ruda added that the building is on the National List of Historic Places and the developers have been responsive and easy to work with on the project. We are working on a contract with Massworks and moving forward with a contractor for the infrastructure project.

- b. Shared Streets Grant: Airport Road Project Overview and Presentation – Tanyard Road residents were informed of this public engagement session. Many attended the meeting. Greg Lucas and Ryan Cass of Tighe & Bond presented their plan for the intersection at Dudley Hill Road, Airport Road and Tanyard Rd. The award for this grant is \$177,000 that ended in 2023 but was extended to the end of 2024. Narrowing up available pavement with a more traditional intersection and dead ending Tanyard Road. The preliminary design included drainage improvements too. Stage 1 is to Dead End Tanyard Road, Stage 2, install sidewalks but there will need to be more money so that there will be no delay with this stage. It is needed to comply with the Shared Streets Grant. Chief Karlowicz stated that there have been several accidents in the area, mostly alcohol related. He has seen more pedestrian traffic as well. Gerry Millette of Tanyard Road stated that this plan is a bad idea. Residents on Tanyard Road will have no other way of getting out of their street than going up a huge hill up to Center Road. Many times, people get stuck on that hill. Charles Landry of Tanyard Road stated a crosswalk is expensive and there must be a cheaper solution. Along with that hill, he witnessed vehicles sliding backwards trying to get up the hill. Another resident has concerns about the traffic, firetrucks, ambulances, Amazon trucks etc. along with adding the traffic of Nichols College, it is very busy road. A traffic light at the intersection was suggested. Mr. Lucas from Tighe & Bond stated that the lights would not work. Ed Bazinet, Chairman of the Historical Commission, stated that Tanyard Road is an historic street and one of the oldest streets in Dudley along with being in the Historic District and was an old stagecoach road. Steven Sullivan suggested leaving Tanyard Road the way it is and request Nichols College to alter the entrance and egress of the golf course. John Marski would like to see this plan scaled back and make improvements there, but he can't get past the dead ending of Tanyard Road with a roundabout. Mr. Carmignani stated that this is a small piece in a bigger puzzle with the plan to have sidewalks from Shepherd Hill on Dudley Oxford Road down to Park 'n Shop via Airport Road. Also, we have a Safe Streets to Schools grant with a master plan. Robin Watson of Dresser Hill Road asked who is responsible for this project and thinks it is Nichols College. All stated that Nichols was not included in this plan and had no input on it. Social Media suggested this, and it is wrong. All agreed the plan needs modification and suggested the engineers come back with another plan.
- c. Eagle Scout Project -Riley Lepage – Riley came before the Board. He is working on his Eagle Scout project to benefit the community. His project is to improve the Quinebaug Honor Roll Memorial off of Quinebaug Road or Route 131. He will be looking to add a bench and secure it with concrete. The bench will have a saying across the back. He will also install a flagpole and flag. The flagpole will be 20 feet high and secured in concrete. Also, the concrete walkway leading up to the memorial is in terrible shape. He plans on pulling up any patches of grass sticking out and filling in the cracks, edge the grass and clean the memorial with a power washer and ask someone with experience in cleaning stones for recommendations. He will be fundraising for his project which he has estimated to cost \$1,550-\$2,500. Steven Sullivan suggested he reach out to the Veteran's Agent for guidance and support. All agreed it is a wonderful project and look forward to its completion.
- d. Election Warrant – February 6, 2024 – The Board signed the Warrant excluding John Marsi, who is a candidate for the State Representative position. The election will take place from 7am to 8pm on 2/6/24.

- e. Brandon Road Bridge Update – Jeff Murray stated that the project review committee from the State approved a single bridge with a temporary solution, but funding has been unsuccessful. Trying very hard to find a funding source with grants. The estimated value of a temporary bridge is 1 million dollars, and this bridge would be good for years. The larger bridge is owned by both Dudley and Webster, built in 1926, with a 6-million-dollar price tag. Mr. Ruda stated we are on the TIP sheet and waiting for the State. The state will give us the bridge, which was part of the Central Artery, when the Big Dig in Boston took place, but all engineering costs associated with the project must be paid by the Town.
- f. Richard Carmignani, Treasurer/Collector – Request to fund and hire a part time position – Mr. Carmignani thanked the Board. On 11/13/23 an Assistant Treasurer was appointed. He has great things to report but needs to restore that fourth person in his office. In 2012 the office was combined, and a part time position was never filled. He has funding in his budget for this position. He would like to fund the position for the peak hours of the day and busy days, which are cyclical and with this position that person would give relief to the administrative portion and his employees can get trained. It's a busy office with payroll taking a big portion of money every Monday. Retirements are coming up, early enrollments, two worker's comp audits, daily tasks, monthly and annual tasks need to be done. A priority is needed, and he has no time to take off. I am always in the office and independently elected. If you need something and it is a priority, I can get it to you, but something needs to be done. Kerry Cyganiewicz stated that he received an email from the Assistant Collector advocating for the position and he thanked her. He understands it is understaffed but other offices are understaffed too. He questioned the fact that in June 2023 Harper's Payroll has the ability for all employees to set up their own payroll via an app and as of this date it has not been implemented. Would like to know the reason. Steven Sullivan stated that in 2012 the positions were combined, the collector resigned and a citizen's petition on the warrant was passed having the position of Collector and Treasurer combined. If the scope of the job has changed, should we look at splitting the two offices again? Mark Landry questioned reconciling now that the town has Vadar software. Vadar software does so many things which the Treasurer/Collector does not use. Vadar cash books are not used, auto reconciliation is not used and there is an option of scanning codes on the bills that help with time management. He stated that Mr. Carmignani was an advocate for this software since he makes his office more efficient, and it has been implemented since July 2023. It took a year, and we are not in the third quarter and July and August have not been reconciled. The accountant has so much work to do, she has to take classes and she takes lots of work home and works on it during off hours. She keeps asking for your reconciliations, but she does not receive them from you. Regarding Vadar Cash books, it is part of the software program, and He is aware it takes time and resources, but it is not activated. Vadar can help so much with the office's workload, and it is not activated but we pay for it. Steven Sullivan asked why the Vadar Cash Books are not activated and used? Mr. Carmignani has an issue with this and all he is here for is to get approval for a part-time position. Jason Johnson motioned to request to fund and hire a part time position in the Treasurer/Collector office for a period of six (6) months for no more than 40 hours month or 10 hours/week. John Marsi seconded for discussion. He has money in this budget but would like to amend for no more than 40 hours month to the end of the fiscal year. Steven Sullivan wants to discuss this with the accountant and wants to see Vadar up and running as requested by Mr. Landry. Deb Thibaudeau, Town Accountant, has no one else in

her office to help. She is extremely busy herself and needs a part-time position too. We need to do this right. Since the funding for the town hall and highway had a failed override, it is challenging. Kerry Cyganiewicz wants to see on the next agent Fiscal and Operational Review. He is troubled that the Treasurer/Collector and the Accounting offices are not on the same page. Jason Johnson withdrew his motion, and this issue will be on the next agenda. Lori Smith came before the Board and can vouch that Mr. Carmignani's office needs to have someone to help them. She can sympathize with him.

**Department Head Comments:**

Chief Karlowicz stated that the gas company is back in Dudley working up on Dresser Hill Road #2. He also thanked the Town Clerk's office for the outstanding dog violations and all residents with dogs need to register them with the town. It is so much easier for the Animal Control Officer to find the owners of a lost dog when they are registered.

George Patrinos, Water/Sewer Superintendent updated the Board with the work on West Main Street, fixing a trench near Marty's.

Richard Carmignani stated that the excise bills are out along with Water/Sewer bills.

Adjournment:

John Marsi motioned to adjourn at 9:35pm. Mark Landry seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michelle Jervis  
Assistant Town Administrator

Cc: documents:

Preliminary plans – Massworks-Steven Mill/Mill Street/Village Street project  
Tighe & Bond – Preliminary project at Airport Rd intersection  
Eagle Scout project