

## **Town of Dudley**

Board of Selectmen, Highway and Cemetery Commissioners

Monday, February 26, 2024

Dudley Municipal Complex

71 West Main Street, Dudley, MA 01571

Room 321A

**Approved 3/11/2024**

**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 Honorable John Marsi opened the meeting at 6:35pm. He disclosed that the meeting will be recorded. In attendance were the Honorable Mark Landry, Honorable Steven Sullivan and Honorable Jason Johnson. Also present were Jonathan Ruda, Town Administrator and Michelle Jervis, Assistant Town Administrator. The Honorable John Marsi entered at 7:20pm.

### **2. Acceptance of Minutes – Mark Landry motioned to approve the minutes of February 5, 2024. Jason Johnson seconded. Unanimous 4-0.**

**Mark Landry motioned to approve the minutes of February 8, 2024 (joint meeting with FAA). Jason Johnson seconded. Unanimous 4-0.**

### **3. Citizens Comments – n/a**

### **4. Town Administrator's Report:**

Mr. Ruda reviewed the FY2025 Budget with his recommendations. He had instructed all department heads, on behalf of the Board, his recommendations to stay within 2.5% increases. Regarding the Treasurer's Budget there are 10-line items that cannot be adjusted such as Unemployment Self Ins. Trust, County Retirement, group insurance, Medicare tax, insurance general, maturing debt, interest-debt, W/D Intermunicipal principal, W/D Intermunicipal interest, and Webster Dispatch Assessment. There should be appropriate adjustments in October. Also OPEC Trust in the amount of \$10,000 will be a warrant article for the Special Town meeting in October. The FAA reserve will remain at \$20,000. Regarding the Water/Sewer budget it should be straightened out by Thursday's meeting but they are still waiting for the third party consultant to send over their report on the indirects. Free Cash balance is \$150,292.57; and we have an Excess Capacity of \$58,256.

Regarding Revenue Projections he received advice from the Treasurer as DOR. The Excise commitment was level funded to last year's amount. Mr. Carmignani stated that Excise Tax revenue was high last year, and things are similar this year. Jason Johnson stated that the values of vehicles have not changed much, and many residents purchased new vehicles. An email from our contact at the DOR agreed. Regarding the non-local receipts, the Cannabis Host Agreement was changed by the State and we do not receive any funds. Regarding the Cannabis Excise Tax, it is not affected by litigation. On the DCRSD budget the Board approved a 2.5% increase, if they ask for additional funds we would have to dip into Stabilization or Capital Stabilization but at this time we do not have the number from the schools. Regarding the Annual Town Meeting Warrant there will be an article for drinking water near the landfill, we will be having a meeting with Jeff

Blake, KP law, Jeff Faulkner, engineer from Tighe & Bond and Weston & Sampson soon. Article 9 requests funds for increases in the merit pool, Article 10 is for dam inspections, that are mandated, and Article 11 is for funds for grants and project designs. There is also a placeholder for the Planning Board to accept a portion of Pierpont Estates. Mr. Sullivan is not in favor of a partial acceptance. The subdivision has not been completed, trucks would potentially rip up the roads and they would have to increase their bonds. Mr. Ruda will check and get back to him regarding this article.

## **5. Public Business:**

- a. Dudley Little League – Danielle Collella, Secretary for the Dudley Little League, came before the Board. The 2024 season is coming up and they would like to hold a toll booth for donations and the annual parade. Steven Sullivan asked if they had reached out to the Police Chief. Chief Karlowicz stated that they have not at this time. **Jason Johnson motioned to allow the Dudley Little League to hold a toll booth on Saturday, April 20, 2024 from 9am to noon at the town line. Mark Landry seconded. Vote 3-0-1 with Steven Sullivan abstaining.**
- b. **Jason Johnson motioned to approve the request to hold the Annual Little League Parade on Saturday, May 4, 2024 with a rain date of Saturday, May 11, 2024. Steven Sullivan seconded. Unanimous 4-0.**
- c. Amendment to Regulatory and Compliance Revolving Account – **Jason Johnson motioned to amend the revenue source of the Regulatory Compliance Account 0915-000-5897-9164 to also include any fees, reimbursement, donation, cost-sharing, or mitigation funds received for environmental testing, mitigation or compliance expenses and to amend the qualified expenditure to include any fees, reimbursement, cost sharing or mitigation funds received for environmental testing, mitigation or compliance. Steven Sullivan seconded. Unanimous 4-0.**
- d. Chief Karlowicz – Central Mass Law Enforcement Counsel (CMLEC) – Police Chief stated that this is an update on an agreement for mutual aid. There was no vote on his agreement, just a unanimous consensus of the Board members.
- e. Board of Selectmen/Town Treasurer/Collector – Cash Reconciliation Updated – Mr. Ruda stated that at this time the accountant has not received several months of cash reconciliation reports from the Treasurer/Collector. The last one was in October 2023 and he would like feedback by March 4, 2024. Mr. Carmignani stated that the accountant had not completed her side in Vadar but November is complete and December is being worked on. He stated that everything is in Vadar now and the tie out is painfully slow.

John Marsi entered at 7:20pm.

Mr. Carmignani stated that his office has been extremely busy. Steven Sullivan asked why he is three months behind and concerned about revenues in the future. Since they are not being reconciled will this cause a problem with our revenue projections? Mr. Carmignani stated that all deposits are listed and put in Vadar; it is very time-consuming. Mr. Ruda stated that he needs the ability to analysis what we are receiving, and DOR wants to look at more than one quarter. Other revenue sources need to be accurate, and he has tried to get assistance from DOR but we need more than 2-3 months of the fiscal year. Mr. Carmignani stated that to catch up will be done in his own time. Kerry Cyganiewicz suggested account temps to come

in and help so he can catch up. Someone who can use a calculator. Jason Johnson suggested additional help with one employee working with the Treasurer/Collector office and the accountant's office. We need the bullet points to post the position. Steven Sullivan stated that at a minimum we need to get help in the accounting office. She is the only one in that office. John Marsi stated that we need to get this right and the people are now paying attention. You need to get caught up. Mark Landry stated that we have been waiting for a plan as well as the bullet points on what the duties would be for that position so there is no conflict since one office collects, the other one audits. Mr. Carmignani stated he needs to devote time to reconcile and needs to focus. With a clerk they would be able to provide basic admin service, but training takes time. Mr. Ruda suggested an option and put an end to the foot/public traffic for a period to catch up. Mr. Carmignani did not agree and will provide Mr. Ruda with the bullet points this week.

## **6. Department Head Communication:**

With the recent resignation of the Highway Superintendent the town established a Highway Superintendent Screening Committee of which Chief Karlowicz was chosen Chairman. He stated that we have not received any viable candidates for the position and the Selectmen should appoint an Acting Highway Superintendent. He will be asking the Board to appoint MJ Gatske for this position. The screen committee will review the current job description along with the market in the area and suggest edits. All agreed the appointment should take place at our meeting on Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup>.

Chief Karlowicz also reported on and commended Officer John Glowacki for interrupting a B&E recently. Two suspects were there, and one ran into the woods. Webster's K9 found him in a tree and the second suspect is still on the loose. Along with the B&E police found two guns recovered from Southbridge, of which the Chief reported in a common thing right now in that town, and illegal drugs. It was excellent police work.

MJ Gatske, Foreman at the Highway Department, reported that currently trees are being cut along the rail trail in West Dudley, to the CT line and off Schofield Ave. We have a rail trail grant to pave this trail and it must be completed by June. Additionally, his department has several new employees which he is training. At the recycling center we are no longer taking ashes, too much for Pratt to handle.

Fire Chief Kochanowski reported he received two grants; one for \$3,500 that will pay for a new thermal imaging and the other for \$2,700 for additional rescue equipment. Also, his new hire started today.

## **7. Adjournment:**

**Mark Landry motioned to convene into executive session under MGL Chapter 30A section 21(a)(2) – to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel and not to reconvene into Public Session – Fire Chief. John Marsi seconded.**

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Kerry Cyganiewicz, Aye**

**John Marsi, Aye**

**Mark Landry, Aye**

**Steven Sullivan, Aye**  
**Jason Johnson, Aye**

Respectfully submitted.  
Michelle Jervis, Assistant Town Administrator

Documents physically identified, discussed, or considered by the Board:  
FY25 Draft of Budget  
Letter from Little League  
Central Mass Law Enforcement Agreement

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Michelle Jervis, Assistant Town Administrator

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