

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Town Hall, 139 Main Street, Rowley

March 18, 2024

6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Christine Kneeland; Sheri David; Robert Snow;
(Town Administrator Debbie Eagan; Assistant Town Administrator Rosemary Restuccia)

ABSENT: Chairman Cliff Pierce; Clerk Deana Ziev

MEETING ATTENDEES: Charles Hazen, Rowley Police Department; James Pike, Building Inspector; Reini Perez, Rowley Police Department; Lucas Tubbs, Rowley Police Department; Ed Wilson, Rowley Police Department; Lynne Neary, Rowley Police Department; Chris Ottani, Rowley Police Department; Bernie Cullen, 283 Wethersfield St; Adam Maher, Rowley Police Department; Nick Ford, Rowley Police Department; Patrick Silva, Rowley Police Department; Karen Summit, Treasurer/Collector; Brent Baeslack, Conservation Department; Elizabeth Urbanczyk, Rowley Police and Fire Department

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Vice Chair Christine Kneeland called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Kneeland asked Bernie Cullen to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

6:00 p.m. TO 6:05 p.m. PUBLIC COMMENT*

Vice Chair Kneeland announced that we have a period of Public Comment for the next five minutes.

Chuck Hazen said that he is an employee of the Rowley Police Department and that the current staffing level is a concern. He noted that as a 24/7 Public Safety Department, the ability of the Police Department is limited. Hazen mentioned as the workforce shrinks, the workload remains the same, if not, grows. He said the only solution is to force people to work overtime shifts or deny requests for time off when they go unfilled. He said that he strongly believes that working these undesirable and mandatory shifts is detrimental to the Town employees and their families. He stated that he supports any measure by the Chief and the Board of Selectmen to work together and expedite a quick and long-lasting solution to the staffing problem.

6:05 p.m. APPOINTMENT* Police Chief Scott Dumas to present Reed Williamson and Matthew Nikas as Full-time Police Officers

Vice Chair Christine Kneeland read the following:

The appointment of Reed Williamson will not be taking place tonight.

Chief Dumas is presenting Matthew Nikas.

Chief Dumas requests the Board to vote to appoint Matthew Nikas as a Full-time Police Officer for the Town of Rowley effective April 1, 2024.

Chief Dumas said Matthew Nikas is a resident of Ipswich and graduated from Ipswich High School. Dumas said that Nikas is currently a Sergeant with the Essex County Sheriff's Department and is a Reserve Officer with the Town of Ipswich. Dumas noted Nikas is a full-time certified Police Officer due to the Municipal Police Training Academy having successfully completed the Bridge Academy Program. Nikas is a Captain in the United States Army Reserve and holds a Jurisprudence Doctorate degree.

Sheri David made a motion to appoint Matthew Nikas as a Full-time Police Officer, Bob Snow second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

Vice Chair Kneeland said congratulations and asked Nikas if he wishes to say anything. Nikas said that he can't thank them enough for the opportunity and that he has been working for fifteen years toward this goal.

Nikas is sworn in with Town Clerk, Catie McGlenaghan presiding.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Accept donation for the Police Department

Vice Chair Kneeland read the following:

Police Chief Scott Dumas has informed us that the Police Department received a \$50 donation.

In accordance with State law, G.L. c.44 §53A, the Board needs to vote to approve this donation.

Bob Snow made a motion to accept donation, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

GENERAL BUSINESS

**2. Letter of resignation from Assessors Administrative Assistant
Rosemary Restuccia**

Vice Chair Kneeland read the following:

Rosemary has submitted her resignation from the Assessor's Office position. Her last day will be March 26, 2024. She has accepted the position of Assistant Town Administrator.

The Board needs to vote to accept her resignation.

Bob Snow made a motion to accept the resignation, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

GENERAL BUSINESS

3. Request from Principal Assessor Sean McFadden to lift the hiring freeze for the position of Assessors Administrative Assistant

Vice Chair Kneeland read the following:

Sean is asking the Board to lift the hiring freeze for this position. If the Board is in agreement, the Board needs to vote to lift the hiring freeze so that this position can be posted.

Bob Snow made a motion to lift the hiring freeze for this position, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

GENERAL BUSINESS

4. Letter of resignation from Debra L. Holland from the position of Health Department Secretary

Vice Chair Kneeland read the following:

Debra Holland has submitted her resignation effective March 29, 2024. The Board needs to vote to accept her resignation.

Bob Snow made a motion to accept the resignation, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

GENERAL BUSINESS

5. Request from Health Director Frank Marchegiani to lift the hiring freeze for the position of Health Secretary

Vice Chair Kneeland read the following:

Frank is asking the Board to lift the hiring freeze for this position. If the Board is in agreement, the Board needs to vote to lift the hiring freeze so that this position can be posted.

Sheri David made a motion to lift the hiring freeze for this position, Bob Snow second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

NEW BUSINESS

1. Request from the Conservation Commission to authorize utilization of funds from the Wetlands Protection Act Notice of Intent Filing Fees Account

Vice Chair Kneeland read the following:

This is an annual budgetary request from the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission is requesting to use \$6,327 in FY 25 from the WPA Account to fund the office secretary for approximately 6 hours per week. The Wetland Protection Act Notice of Intent Filing Fees Account are used to defray departmental costs directly related to work related to the Wetlands Protection Act.

The Board needs to vote to approve this authorization.

Bob Snow made a motion to authorize utilization of funds from the Wetlands Protection Act Notice of Intent Filing Fees Account, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

NEW BUSINESS

2. Three One-Day Liquor License applications submitted by Ipswich Ale Brewery/Todd Riverview Farm for May 24, July 19, and August 30

Vice Chair Kneeland read the following:

Ipswich Ale Brewery and Todd Riverview Farm have submitted a One-Day Liquor License application for 3 events which will take place on May 24, July 19, and August 30 from 3pm – 7pm.

Police Chief Scott Dumas has reviewed this application and recommends that the applications be approved with the following conditions:

- *An area will be cordoned off where the alcohol will be served*
- *Alcohol will not be consumed in any other location other than this cordoned off area*
- *The area will be monitored at the ingress/egress point by 3 TIPS certified personnel*
- *A wristband-type system will be used to more easily identify those that have been ID'd*

The applicant has provided copies of the bartenders' TIPS certification.

How does the Board wish to proceed with this application? Does the Board wish to vote to approve the application?

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the application, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

OLD BUSINESS

1. Whittier Regional Vocation High School Agreement Update

Vice Chair Kneeland said that we are going to table this for next week's meeting because Chairman Pierce is not in attendance to report to the Board this evening. He is the one who attended this meeting.

FY 25 BUDGETS

- Town Accountant
- Conservation Commission
- Town Clerk
- Elections
- Registrar of Voters

Town Accountant

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the FY25 Town Accountant budget, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

Conservation Commission

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the FY25 Conservation Commission budget, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

Town Clerk

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the FY25 Town Clerk budget, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

Elections Budget

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the FY25 Elections budget, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

Registrar of Voters

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the FY25 Registrar of Voters budget, Sheri David second, all in favor – AYE (3-0).

Kneeland said due to timing, we will address the other FY25 budgets later in the meeting.

6:20 p.m. APPOINTMENT* Police Chief Scott Dumas to discuss goals for the Police Department

Vice Chair Kneeland read the following:

Section 5 of Chief Dumas' employment contract says that the Board in conjunction with the employee shall define goals and performance objectives related to the employee's position, which they determine necessary for the proper operation of the Town and attainment of the Board's policy objectives. The Board shall establish and reduce to writing those various goals and objectives.

The Board should discuss the goals with Chief Dumas. After the discussion, the Board should vote on the list of goals.

Chief Dumas said that he has set goals annually for the Police Department and himself. He said that these goals are generally centered around four areas: technology, equipment, outreach and staffing. Dumas noted that the mission of the Rowley Police Department is citizens first, professionalism and continuous community engagement.

Dumas said that to talk about 2024 goals, he wants to go back to 2022 because these goals built upon themselves. He mentions the Radio Infrastructure Project that he said started in 2021 and that for a long time, they have been trying to address the dead spots in Town. He notes that Chief Emery, Chief Broderick and he were part of a task force but did not bring the project forward initially because it was too expensive. He said that they were able to work with the State to bring the costs down and figure out a way to go digital. Dumas said that through the Capital Building Project the Town was able to put together the Radio Infrastructure Project, which they are in the process of implementing.

Dumas said that they introduced the Motorcycle Program which would help with traffic.

He considers this a retention tool and something that officers can strive towards. Dumas said that it was introduced but did not make the cut due to the Town commitment to the Radio Infrastructure Project.

He mentioned that they looked at expanding the outreach program through Facebook and collaborated with the Clark School for some public service announcements. He said that they have looked at staffing needs and reached out to bring on a Clinician to address the needs of the community. He said in 2023, the goal was to continue the Radio Infrastructure Project and that the majority of it is done.

Dumas said that they asked for three Police Officers and were able to hire one last year in a very tight year, but they still have a way to go. He noted the successful Car Seat Distribution Program with Fire and Police Department personnel trained and how Fire and Police collaborated to make the lobby more handicapped accessible with push-button access.

Dumas said that accreditation is a huge issue and that the Accreditation Manager left to go to Georgetown, which has put a lot of stress on Sergeant Hazen, Joy Stanton and him. He said that there are a lot more standards that you have to meet and commends Sergeant Hazen for being able to get a four-month extension.

Dumas noted that he is looking to get one full-time Police Officer. He said that policing has changed and the transition from reserve to full-time is much more difficult now. He noted that they are hoping to add a lead dispatch position, which he said would have minimal impact on the budget and a second Clinician. Dumas said they are seeking a second Clinician through a grant program with the Department of Mental Health. He noted that the program has been successful. Dumas said that Rowley has collaborated with Georgetown, Groveland, Newbury and Boxford and has been asked to speak on a panel discussion in June along with Lynn, Revere, Leominster, and Randolph. He credits Joy Stanton for getting the grant.

Dumas said that the Town will need to increase the fleet and that they have five-front line cars with a lot of wear and tear and have radios that are aging. Dumas said that they need to stay ahead of the curve regarding staffing. He said that they have committed and dedicated employees and that it is a staffing problem and not a morale problem in the Police Department.

Bob Snow asks if Dumas can provide more background on the Clinician. Dumas comments that it is a Jail Diversion Program, and the mental health Clinician has a background and understanding in what an officer might be seeing. He said that the point is to not arrest someone but to get them the help that they need.

Kneeland said that Dumas' goals are thorough and that the Board also has goals.

Kneeland read the following:

These are the Board's expectations:

1) **New Police Officer Training.** *Going forward, the Board feels that the majority of the full-time police officers in the Police Department should be Full-time Police Academy trained. It is important to have police officers go through the experience of a Full-time in-person Academy. A lot of knowledge and experience can be gained from the Full-time Academy, that can't be replicated from the Bridge Academy.*

2) **Communication on major operational and staff changes.** *Work on improving level of communication with the Board pertaining to major operational and staffing changes. In advance of making major operational and staffing changes, the Chief needs to inform the Board of the situation first. The Board must be informed of these kinds of changes before informing the union or outside entities. It should not be the practice to share correspondence from the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator with the unions.*

3) **Information pertaining to new hires.** *As the appointing authority for employees in the Police Department, the Board feels that they need to know more about the people they are appointing to the Police Department. The Board has the right to receive and review applicant's information. The Chief needs to send the Town Administrator the files on prospective candidates for hire to Police Department positions, so that the file can be reviewed a few weeks prior to scheduling the candidate for a vote to appoint.*

4) **School outreach.** *A priority for the Board is to have a police officer in the Pine Grove School for a couple of hours one to two times a week. The goal is to have the students know the police officers.*

5) **Recruit and Retention.** *We are a Town that wants to see growth from within. The Chief needs to find a way to retain employees and have a plan for growth from within the Department so that employees have incentives to look for promotions. Keeping employees' needs to be a priority because the cost to replace a trained police officer or dispatcher is exorbitant to the Town.*

Dumas said he has a lot of questions but doesn't know if this is the place to have them discussed and said that the contract says that we will mutually talk about it, but we have not mutually talked about it. He said that he has concerns with some of the goals and how they are laid out and the conclusions that you have seem to come to.

Debbie Eagan confirms that it can be done at another date.

Bob Snow made a motion to table voting on goals this evening, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

FY 2025 Budgets - continued

- **Constable**
- **Police Department**
- **Fire Department/Emergency Management**
- **Inspection Department**
- **Council on Aging**
- **Shellfish Commission**
- **Shellfish Constable**
- **Whittier Vocational -Tech School Assessment**
- **Triton Regional School Assessment**
- **Essex Agricultural Tech School Assessment**
- **Debt**
- **Health, Life Insurance, Medicare & Benefit Plan**
- **Blanket Insurance**

Constable

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the FY25 Constable budget, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Police Department

Vice Chair Kneeland asks Chief Dumas if he would like to comment.

Chief Dumas presented budget A and budget B. He said that he thinks that he stayed within the guidelines for budget A.

Kneeland asks if there is a motion to approve the budget that is within the guidelines with the understanding that the other requested increases will be taken under advisement.

Eagan said we got school budgets last week and that right now everything is tentative. She said that we are definitely putting in the budget that meets the guidelines, which is budget A, and budget B will be run in a separate column. Eagan said that we will know more next week.

Sheri David made a motion to approve the budget within the guidelines, Bob Snow second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Fire Department/Emergency Management

Vice Chair Kneeland asks Fire Chief Emery if he would like to comment.

Fire Chief Emery said budget is level funded. Emery said that he cancelled magazine subscriptions for \$700. Emery said that they have a lot of equipment that was given to them that was unserviceable. He said that they went to local repair shops and the equipment is now in good working order except for one generator.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the FY25 Emergency Management budget, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Chief Emery said that as requested he gave different options: A, B, C and D for the budgets and that every one of them has increases. He said that it is grossly underfunded and that is why he has to keep going for overrides

He said prior to last fiscal year, they were being charged a service fee of \$175 an hour but found someone who can come to the station and will work on the trucks and charges \$110 an hour.

Snow asks Emery about the issues that he is having. Emery said biggest issue was the major overhaul on pump one and if they blow a tire they are \$1,000 and every truck has six of them. He noted that fire prevention is getting more complicated and is becoming a job in itself.

Vice Chair Kneeland said we are still working on budgets and your additional requests will be taken under advisement.

David asked Emery if it is \$86,000 for the Call Firefighters. Emery said that he can't do away with the call force and wants to do a recruitment drive. David asked if they are required to do a minimum of shifts. Emery said it is whatever they have to be.

Kneeland asks for a motion to approve budget that is within the guidelines

Eagan confirms that it is the D budget with an increase of \$262,000.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the FY25 Fire Department D budget, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Inspection Department

Vice Chair Kneeland asks James Pike if he would like to comment.

James Pike, Building Inspector, said that we desperately need a Fire Prevention

Detection Officer and agrees with Chief Emery.

Pike said that the online permitting is being underutilized and that it is important that Fire and Planning review sign offs and should be using the software. Pike noted that the cost is \$1,500 per user.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve the FY25 Inspection Department budget, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Council on Aging

Kneeland noted a slight increase of 2.75 percent.

Eagan said that there had been a mistake made on step 6 outreach worker, and budget will go up slightly and will be noted on corrected sheet.

Vice Chair Kneeland asks for a motion to approve FY25 Council on Aging budget with that change.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve FY25 Council on Aging budget with step 6 slight change for outreach worker, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Shellfish Commission

Vice Chair Kneeland noted no change in budget.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve FY25 Shellfish Commission budget, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Shellfish Constable

Vice Chair Kneeland noted there is budget A and B.

Eagan said there is the proposed oyster farm and last year we talked about how much work is needed to monitor the proliferation of out-of-town clammers and the green crab invasive issue. She said that we are looking at a salary of \$38,000 for a twenty-five hours a week. Eagan noted that she ran this by the Shellfish Constable and he thought that was good to start.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve FY25 Shellfish Constable budget B, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Whittier Vocational-Tech School Assessment

Vice Chair Kneeland said Whittier Vocational-Tech assessment has gone down by about \$31,090.

Eagan said there is a decrease in enrollment.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve FY25 Whittier Vocational -Tech School Assessment, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Triton Regional School Assessment

Vice Chair Kneeland said that Triton has approved the budget and that it is a 10.31 percent increase to the Town of Rowley at \$1,253,698. Kneeland noted that while she preferred scenario three, she does want to comment on the fact that they worked with us and it is slightly lower than scenario two.

Sheri David made a motion to approve FY25 Triton Regional School Assessment, Bob Snow second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Essex Agricultural Tech School Assessment

Vice Chair Kneeland commented that this is a decrease.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve FY25 Essex Agricultural Tech School Assessment, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Debt

Vice Chair Kneeland asked Karen Summit to comment.

Karen Summit, Rowley Treasurer, said seven percent is the increase. She said that we are not looking at big ticket items other than the School and Public Safety. Summit noted that we are a few years into our big projects and that we are fortunate that we funded the majority of projects when interest rates were low.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve FY25 Debt, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Health, Life Insurance., Medicare & Benefit Plan

Vice Chair Kneeland asked for a motion to approve Group Insurance.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve FY25 Group Insurance, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Blanket Insurance

Eagan noted that we are estimating a 4 percent increase.

Bob Snow made a motion to approve FY25 Blanket Insurance, Sheri David second, all In favor, AYE 3-0.

MINUTES

- February 5, 2024

Kneeland commented that she was not at the meeting, so we have to table the minutes from February 5, 2024, and they will be approved next week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Town has the following board vacancies:

- **Conservation Commission**
- **Housing Partnership Committee – Five members**
- **Open Space Committee**
- **Rowley Cultural Council**
- **Zoning Board of Appeals – Alternate member**

Interested residents should send a letter of interest to the Board of Selectmen.
Positions are open until filled.

ADJOURN

Bob Snow made a motion to adjourn, Sheri David second, all in favor, AYE 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Restuccia
Assistant Town Administrator

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Meeting memo regarding 6:05 p.m. appointment of Matthew Nikas as a Full-time Police Officer
2. Letter from Chief Dumas regarding Matthew Nikas
3. Resume of Matthew Nikas
4. Certificate of Training for Matthew Nikas: Municipal Police Training Committee Bridge Academy Training Program
5. Municipal Police Training Committee Basic Training Exemption for Matthew Nikas
6. Full-time Patrolman Job Description

7. Meeting memo for General Business #1
8. Donation letter for Police Department
8. Meeting memo for General Business #2
9. Letter of resignation from Rosemary Restuccia
10. Meeting memo for General Business #3
11. Email from Principal Assessor Sean McFadden re: lifting of hiring freeze
12. Meeting memo for General Business #4
13. Letter of resignation from Debra Holland
14. Meeting memo for General Business #5
15. Letter from Health Director Frank Marchegiani re: lifting of hiring freeze
16. Meeting memo for New Business #1
17. Letter from Daniel R. Shinnick, Chairman Conservation Commission to Board of Selectmen Chairman Clifford Pierce re: Conservation Commission Notice of Intent Funds Authorization Request for FY25
18. Meeting memo for New Business #2
19. One-Day Liquor License Application from Ipswich Ale Brewery/Todd Riverview Farm for May 24, 2024, July 19, 2024, August 30, 2024
20. Certificate of Completion for eTIPS On Premise 3.1 re: Kristen Porter, Gourmet Delights Catering
21. Certificate of Completion of eTIPS On Premise 3.1 re: Deborah Ellis, Gourmet Delights Catering
22. TIPS Certificate of Completion re: Erin David
23. TIPS Certificate of Completion re: James Dorau
24. TIPS Certificate of Completion re: Stephen M. DiNapoli
25. TIPS Certificate of Completion re: Sarah Blackstone
26. Meeting memo for Old Business #1
27. Memo re: Next Steps on Whittier Regional Vocational High School Agreement, City of Newburyport
28. Meeting memo for FY25 Budgets
29. FY25 Budget for Town Accountant
30. FY25 Budget for Conservation Commission
31. FY25 Budget for Town Clerk
32. FY25 Budget for Elections
33. FY25 Budget for Registrar of Voters
34. Meeting memo for 6:20 p.m. Appointment for Police Chief Scott Dumas to discuss goals for the Police Department
35. Proposed Goals for Police Chief Scott Dumas
36. FY25 Budget for Constable
37. FY25 Rowley Police Department Budget Proposal from Chief Scott Dumas
38. FY25 Budget for Police Department
39. FY25 Fire Department Proposed Budget from Chief Mark Emery
40. FY25 Budget for Fire Department/Emergency Management

41. Meeting Material submitted by Fire Chief Mark Emery re: Rapid Intervention/Two-In Two-Out
42. Meeting Material submitted by Fire Chief Mark Emery re: Fact Sheet Key Requirements for Emergency Services in NFPA 1710
43. FY25 Budget for Inspection Department
44. Budget Development Budgetary Issues and Options Form re: Inspection Department
45. FY25 Budget for Council on Aging
46. FY25 Budget for Shellfish Commissioners
47. FY25 Budget for Shellfish Constable
48. FY25 Budgetary Development Budgetary Issues and Options Form re: Shellfish Constable
49. Town of Rowley Job Description for Shellfish Constable
50. FY25 Whittier Vocational -Tech School Assessment
51. FY25 Triton Regional School Assessment
52. Essex Agricultural Tech School Assessment
53. FY25 Budget for Debt
54. FY25 Budget for Health, Life Insurance, Medicare & Benefit Plan
55. FY25 Budget for Blanket Insurance.