



Special Town Meeting

April 17, 2023

A Special Town Meeting was held on Monday, April 17, 2023 in the Richard H. Smith Town Hall Auditorium. The meeting was attended by the Board of Selectmen including First Selectman Angus McDonald, Selectman Duane Gates, and Selectman James Olson. Also in attendance were approximately 50 residents including representatives of the Board of Finance and various agencies requesting American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

First Selectman Angus McDonald called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. James Olson made a motion to appoint Rick Daniels as moderator which was seconded by John Ely. The motion was approved unanimously. Daniels appointed Amy Winchell to act as clerk of the meeting; Daniels then read the call.

The motion to approve item **1a** was made by George Eckenroth and seconded by Janet Edgerton:

1. To approve actions of the Board of Selectmen's regular meeting of March 28, 2023:

- a. To approve a Road Discontinuance Resolution allowing the Town of Deep River to discontinue an unused portion of Mayer Road as shown on Maps No. 75 and 76 which are on file in the Town Clerk's Office;**

DISCUSSION: McDonald opened discussion with a video presentation of both referenced maps. He explained that, when the State Department of Transportation straightened that section of Route 145, this small portion was left unused. It serves no purpose other than to provide unnecessary access to private property. The Town receives no State funding for this road and now wants to abandon it to the property owner, which is what the property owner wants as well. Jane Samuels asked if this had been reviewed by legal counsel; McDonald responded that it had. Dan Batt asked if there were any utilities involved; McDonald responded no. Tax Collector Kate Cryder pointed out the property would be reassessed and taxed appropriately.

There being no further discussion, a voice vote was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

The motion to approve item **1b** was made by Ely and seconded by Eckenroth:

- b. To authorize the sale of 100 Mislick Drive, identified by Assessor as Map 38, Lot 6B-1, Parcel id# 00050915 on terms to be negotiated and approved by the Board of Selectmen.**

DISCUSSION: McDonald explained that incubator lots had been set up many years ago to help small businesses get started. This lot had been leased but has been empty for some time. The Board of Selectmen decided to sell the lot using proper legal channels, and the proceeds will be put into a fund for another incubator type of space in the future. Tim Lee spoke of how his business has grown because of this incubator program and wants the intended use of the lot to remain unchanged. Robert Raymond expressed concern about appropriate businesses using the location. McDonald assured any business would have to get approval from the Planning & Zoning Commission.

There being no further discussion, a vote by show of hands was held. **YES- 15 / NO- 17; The motion was NOT approved.**

The motion to approve item **1c** was made by Jacquelyn Calamari and seconded by Carmela Balducci:

- c. To approve an amendment to the Bulky Waste Contract between the Town of Deep River and the Town of Chester allowing Chester residents to bring chippable brush to the Deep River Transfer Station for an additional payment from Chester of \$35,000.00 per annum for fiscal year 2023-2024 and thereafter at a rate to be set annually by the Board of Selectmen.**

DISCUSSION: McDonald explained the original contract with the Town of Chester allowed Chester residents to bring their brush to the Deep River Transfer Station for burning. That contract expired over 40 years ago, and we are no longer allowed to burn brush. The Town of Deep River has been hiring contractors twice a year to chip and haul away brush and now wants Chester to pay for half of that expense. The requested \$35,000 will pay for two additional “chippings” plus shared administrative costs. Samuels expressed concern over water on the property and the environmental impact of chipping. McDonald explained that the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is monitoring

the area due to leaching from the old landfill that was there. The chips are removed and are not flowing into the stream. Batt and Sara Conner asked about enforcement of illicit use of our Transfer Station by Chester residents and McDonald responded that enforcement is happening as evidenced by our reduction in waste transferred. Alan Paradis asked if this was designed to help offset our costs for equipment. McDonald responded that the job would go out to bid every 2-3 years and Chester's cost would keep up with any increase, but we will not profit. There was some discussion on whether neighboring towns ever reciprocated and the value of being neighborly.

There being no further discussion, a vote by show of hands was held. **The motion was approved with 2 NO votes.**

The motion to approve item **2a** was made by Janet Edgerton and seconded by Chris Marra:

- 2. To approve actions of the Board of Selectmen's regular meeting of February 22, 2022 and the Board of Finance's regular meeting of March 28, 2023:**
 - a. To appropriate \$75,000 from the ARPA funds for an arts and music festival.**

DISCUSSION: Chris Marra introduced himself as Chair of the Parks & Recreation Commission. He described the difficulties involved in putting on an annual carnival in June, an event that ended with the pandemic. The vision now would be a once a year, 3-day weekend Arts & Music Festival similar to the Montauk Music Festival on Long Island. It would include events all around the downtown area in both public and private venues. The money would be spread out over 3 years and pay for talent, promotion, professional production, security, and trash removal as needed. The hope is for Deep River to become a popular destination that weekend, which should benefit businesses, and for the event to become self-sustaining. There was discussion on improving Town infrastructure for a sizeable event like this which could happen if the event is successful. Diana Roberts suggested it be scheduled so as not to compete with a similar event in New Haven.

There being no further discussion, a vote by show of hands was held. **The motion was approved with 2 NO votes.**

The motion to approve item **3a** was made by Calamari and seconded by Janet Edgerton:

3. To approve actions of the Board of Selectmen's special meeting of March 22, 2023 and Board of Finance's regular meeting of March 28, 2023:

- a. To appropriate \$65,000 from the ARPA funds for Deep River Social Services.**

DISCUSSION: McDonald noted that COVID-19 caused a large increase in needs for social services. These services would directly serve those struggling because of the pandemic. These increased services are not planned to go beyond the next 2 years unless they are deemed necessary enough to be added to the Town budget.

There being no further discussion, a voice vote was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

The motion to approve item **3b** was made by Richard Balducci and seconded by Carmela Balducci:

- a. To appropriate \$45,000 from the ARPA funds for the Deep River Public Library.**

DISCUSSION: Linda Hall, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees, explained that the circulation desk was almost 30 years old and not supportive of current technology. Librarian Susan Rooney added that they would also be increasing programming.

There being no further discussion, a voice vote was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

The motion to approve item **3c** was made by Bruce Edgerton and seconded by Chris Marra:

- b. To appropriate \$150,000 from the ARPA funds for the Deep River Fire Department.**

DISCUSSION: Tim Lee, Fire Department Chief, explained how Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) equipment and turn-out gear ages out and needs to be regularly replaced. Fire Marshal Adam Kerop added how important it was for personal safety systems to be in place and that training can be withheld without equipment being up to date. This expense would have to be in the budget if ARPA funds could not be used for it.

There being no further discussion, a voice vote was held. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

The motion was made by Bruce Edgerton and seconded by Carmela Balducci to adjourn. The motion was approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:18pm.

ATTEST: Amy M. Winchell, MCTC
Town Clerk