

**TOWN OF FALMOUTH**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2020**  
**SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM**  
**TOWN HALL**  
**59 TOWN HALL SQUARE, FALMOUTH, MA 02540**

Present: Megan English Braga, Chairperson; Doug Brown, Vice Chair; Susan Moran; Doug Jones; Sam Patterson.

Others present: Julian Suso, Town Manager; Frank Duffy, Town Counsel; Irie Mullin, Associate Town Counsel; various Town Department Heads.

**OPEN SESSION**

1. Call to Order at 7 p.m. by Chair English Braga.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Recognition

Mr. Brown thanked those who initiated the YMCA in Falmouth.

Mr. Brown thanked Jeff Smith for 29 years of service at the FPD and congrats on his retirement.

Mr. Jones recognized Laurie McNee, Library Trustee, and her contributions to the community.

4. Announcements: Set Date for Fire Station Community Forum

There will be a community forum hosted by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) on 1/21/20 at 7 p.m. at FHS around the issue of looking at where a new fire station may be placed, new staffing in place in July 2020, and other issues around this topic. The goal is to hear from folks, share information, and engage a community wide conversation.

Community advisory group had 5 applicants, initially they wanted a 9 member committee, and it will be advertised again this Friday so those who are interested are encouraged to apply.

**Ms. Moran motion to deadline of 1/17/2020 for applications. Second Mr. Jones. Vote: Yes-5. No-0.**

Ms. Moran noted this is a Falmouth wide issue, all should be involved in placement of fire stations; the BOS wants as much input as possible.

5. Public Comment

Alden Cook, West Falmouth, retired FFD Firefighter/Paramedic. If the fire station in West Falmouth closes, it will never reopen, without which that area is over the accepted time to safety respond. There are no relocation plans for stations 3 and 4. The Town is supposed to plan for proper fire and EMS protection for the community; no plans were brought forth at October meeting, only the statement that the West Falmouth station will close this year. They were told the Fire Fighter's union was at fault, this is not so. Immediate investigation through FEMA should commence, the Town has never applied FEMA grants that may be available and that many other municipalities use this to increase manpower.

Marc Finneran finds the explanation of the comment period unacceptable; stating not to use anyone's name or speak of another unless present. The West Falmouth station is important issue, to think they will deal with an issue where there is not enough coverage by reducing the spots to respond from is not reasonable.

## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

1. Administrative Orders
  - a. Vote to authorize letter of support for Buzzards Bay Coalition application to the MA Department of Environmental Protection for a grant to replace 30 conventional moorings in West Falmouth Harbor with conservation moorings designed to reduce impacts on eelgrass

**Mr. Patterson motion approval. Second Ms. Moran. Vote: Yes-5. No-0.**

## BUSINESS

1. Presentation of Proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

Mr. Suso noted the first formal business meeting of the BOS is historically the presentation of proposed annual appropriations budget brought forward by Mr. Suso working with department heads throughout the Town. Thanked and acknowledged all department heads for being present tonight and willingness to answer questions the BOS may have.

The BOS has received a copy of the proposed budget, per normal operations, the BOS will listen to the presentation and vote on the budget at the BOS meeting next week, so it can be transmitted to the Finance Committee.

Jennifer Mullen made a PowerPoint presentation.

Revenues and Expenses were reviewed, including recurring expenses, revenues property taxes, state aid, local receipts, and other available funds. One time revenues fund one-time expenses.

Revenue detail, revenue policy, four recurring revenue are the sources that support the operating budget. Property taxes are 74% of the total revenue used to balance the budget. Limits increased due to proposition 2 ½. Estimated local receipts and Departmental revenue reviewed. Estimated receipts increased \$1 million in estimates to include the hotel/motel tax and increase in water revenues to support the debt service for the Water Main Project. It is premature at this time to provide a short term rental tax estimate. We have had other increases to offset additional positions.

Fiscal Year 2021 balanced budget based on projection of \$23.1 million in estimated local receipts. Steady consistent growth trend in the last 5 years. The local receipts for the last 5 years were reviewed, there has been growth the last couple years. Other available funds include parking meter, SSA embarkation fees, golf revenues, and community preservation. Bond premiums have decreased due to the refinancing and debt stabilization.

The debt policy was reviewed, reviewed debt drop off chart, in 2024 there will be a significant drop off; gives an appetite for new projects. The athletic field, senior center, and CWMP projects are included. About \$8.9 million in debt was on the books that could be refinanced, the BOS said yes, wanted to roll all the projected debt into a refinance, issued \$19.5 million in debt on the senior center FHS field, Water Main Project, Wastewater Projects, and saved taxpayers \$200,000 with Falmouth's AAA Bond Rating. Savings of \$1.3 million due to the refinancing. The savings was incorporated into the 2021 budget.

Ms. Mullen explained that the revenue for fiscal year 2020 is the actual tax levy. She likes to see more of a trend before recommending an increase to the tax levy. State revenue funds are down from the past due to MA State Building Authority (MSBA), the school can apply for grants. Before 2005 if applied for a grant, you would borrow money and pay back principal and interest and MSBA would give money after you had already borrowed to pay some interest. Now, they give you the money as your are building the building, so less is borrowed. The refinancing; there were 2 more years on Mullen Hall School, the MSBA agreed to give 2 years in advance, that was part of the refinance resulting in MH being paid in full.

Mr. Jones noted that the BOS increased the fees for some License and permits, so we know there is going to be an increase. Ms. Mullen explained when fees are increased, it is hard to project what income will result, so she likes to see a year so she can see a trend. Embarkation fees are increasing, these fees are put

in another fund and filtered through the state; if use part of the revenue to support the budget, use it for public safety and increase modestly so they can see if they can sustain that revenue.

The debt went down and reimbursement went down, it will be supplemented with debt stabilization.

Ms. Moran asked about the short term rental tax; looking at special projects like broadband and housing, what would be required regarding a policy change so that could happen and are there more funds available in Community Preservation.

Ms. Mullen would like to see what the income is over a year for the short term rental tax and it will be shared with the school dept. Community Preservation and affordable housing, they are discussing an article and would be proposing that \$1.3 million. Community Preservation funds go into the Affordable Housing Fund. There can be a community impact fee, legislation changed last July, and only certain types of units can be taxed at the 3%.

Mr. Patterson asked if they are not spending allocated money, it is converted to free cash the following year. If there are additional revenues, do they get swept into the free cash? Ms. Mullen said that if they are general fund revenue, yes; if another fund revenue, it stays in the fund. Receipt reserved for appropriation; cannot spend unless it is appropriated at Town meeting.

Appropriation Policy reviewed.

Budget increases:

Health insurance increase of 0%. (At most a 2% increase)

Retirement assessment 6.16% increase \$521,006.

School Dept. budget 2.5% increase \$1,226,816.

Upper Cape Vocational Technical School 10% increase \$320,136.

New senior services increase: receptions, laborer, food service worker, and cleaning services.

Two additional police officers effective 1/1/21, beyond the numbers now.

Two additional firefighters effective 1/1/21, beyond the numbers now.

One additional clerical position for the Health Department.

Doug Jones asked how many open positions are funded in public safety. Chief Dunne said the FPD is hiring 7, after which another 4 will be hired. This does not include retirement and transfers.

Chief Small has 1 open position should be filled shortly. 14 recruits hired this year; 5 brand new, making up for losses.

Finance Department: Treasurer and Assessor's office.

Adjusted wage schedule for seasonal employees.

Adjusted wage schedule for AFSCME A.

Additional library hours of operation for the Sundays.

Requesting part time Solid Waste Coordinator.

Funding reserves, funding \$1M allocated to capital stabilization fund, reallocating stabilization fund transfers to OPEB and Works compensation, keeping a healthy reserve.

Mr. Brown asked about wage schedule adjustment for seasonal works, could this be for the regular FPD officers? Ms. Mullen said it cannot because they are in a different union. Increasing base pay for regular police officers is part of the bargaining process according to Mr. Suso and bargaining will probably be under way in the not too distant future.

Other non-voted appropriations include State assessments and allowance for abatements. These can be surprises, so need to be conservative to have flexibility.

Continued increases in public safety issues, debt management, continue implementation, and further exploration of department reorganization and cost saving measures.

Mr. Jones asked where to go from here, if the BOS has issues, if smaller things such as \$20,000 into there, if suggestions are made tonight is it better to have Ms. Mullen reallocate? Ms. Mullen noted they like the chance to recommend the amount. Talk about that in the next week, she will have recommendations in future BOS meeting.

Chair English Braga noted the West Falmouth piece and probably talking about the possibility of an article addressing additional staffing, but does not resolve the July challenges. She would like to hear next week where potentially, if they have an article that votes for 8 more firefighters, where that will come from and how it goes forward. Noted West Falmouth piece, probably talking about possibility of article addressing additional staffing, but does not resolve the July challenges.

Ms. Mullen has been involved in some conversations, this is an operating budget, the West Falmouth discussion is different, if you wanted to hire 8 firefighters, it would be an override because you do not want to cut the budget hundreds of thousands of dollars in another department. Chair English Braga requested to have Ms. Mullen expound on that at next week's meeting. Including the process and how it would impact the Town going forward. Ms. Mullen feels they can talk about it without impacting this budget. Chair English Braga would like to have that information for a future discussion outside of this budget.

Mr. Patterson asked why we are not investing in a position that addresses the environmental degradation impacts. Ms. Mullen and Chair English Braga commented that this a good topic for the BOS strategic planning meeting. If the BOS wants a position dedicated to this challenge, it can be incorporated. They look at the strategic plan when putting the budget together. Mr. Patterson noted we have been counting on volunteers, he feels need a staff to look at paths forward we can take and advise on steps the Town can begin to take.

Ms. Moran said they need to be prepared to respond to questions about safer grants, surplus funds, and various ways it can or cannot be done.

The budget will be placed on the Town website tomorrow.

Mr. Jones asked about the following line items that he wanted an explanation for why it is being done:

Town Meeting increasing advertising by 20% compared to the past. Ms. Mullen said that some recommendations were made because the Charter Review Committee, have requirement of printing Town Meeting Articles and recommendations, there were some times that they were given at no cost, but Charter Review made it a mandatory recommendation so they wanted to pay and make sure it is correctly in the Enterprise.

Election-increase because there is an election this year.

Ms. Mullen said much are step increases, AFSCME adjustment, and settled contract in Conservation and Building Inspector Departments.

Recreation and Beach Departments, increase due to seasonal wages, which has led to retaining seasonal employees.

2. Approve 2020 Annual License Renewals:
  - Common Victualler
  - a. Falmouth Hospital Cafeteria, 100 Ter Heun Drive
  - b. Devour, 352 Main Street

**Mr. Jones motion approval. Second Ms. Moran. Vote: Yes-5. No-0.**

3. Minutes of Meetings:
  - a. Executive Session – December 16, 2019

**Mr. Jones motion approval of package 1 and not release. Second Mr. Patterson. Vote: Yes-5. No-0.**

**Mr. Jones motion approval of package 2 and not release. Second Mr. Patterson. Vote: Yes-5. No-0.**

4. Individual Selectmen's Reports-none.

5. Town Manager's Report-none.

**Mr. Jones motion to adjourn at 8:06 p.m. Second Mr. Patterson. Vote: Yes-5. No-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Chaves  
Recording Secretary