



MINUTES
of the
TOWN COUNCIL OPEN MEETING
TOWN OF SOUTHBIDGE
January 30, 2023
7:00pm

CALL TO ORDER The Southbridge Town Council met on January 30, 2023, in the Town Council Chambers of the Southbridge Town Hall. Chair Daniel called the meeting to order at 7:23pm.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Pledge of Allegiance: Chairman Daniel led the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call: Councilors present: Adams, Daniel, Daou, Lazo, Marketti, Montigny, Rivas, Ryan, and Steeves.

Also Present: Michael McCall, Town Manager; Police Chief Shane Woodson, Pam LaDuc & Will Canoyer, Southbridge Retirement Board; Steve Brady, Historic District Study Committee; Mark Carron, and Redevelopment Authority Executive Director; Eric Rumsey, Town Planner.

Chair Daniel paused to recognize the passing of Pauline Talisman and recounted her life and service to the town as Town Clerk. There was a moment of silence to remember Ms. Talisman.

3. Consider and accept the Town Council Meeting Minutes, Monday, January 9, 2023.

*Councilor Adams moved to approve the minutes of the **January 9, 2023 Open Session** of the Town Council.*

Additions/Corrections/Deletions: Council Rivas said that under item 9 Councilor Adams was called Chief Adams. Councilor Steeve said that in the Citizen's Forum, Denise Clemence's name was misspelled.

*Councilor Montigny seconded, and **motion passed 8-0-1 by a show of hands vote with Councilor Ryan abstaining.***

4: Subcommittee Reports

General Government: Councilor: Councilor Steeves reported that they are meeting on February 6th and that there will be a full agenda.

Department of Public Works: Councilor Marketti reported that they met on January 26th and listed items from that meeting on tonight's agenda. The next meeting is February 8th at 6pm in the Veteran's Room.

Education and Human Services: Councilor Montigny reported that they met on January 18th and there are a couple of items tonight's agenda and he will speak about later.

Planning and Development: Councilor Adams reported that they are meeting February 6th.

Protection of Persons and Property: Councilor Lazo said he had no report and there is no meeting currently scheduled.

5. Chairman's Announcements. Chair Daniel's announced that:

- Councilor Marketti is now a member of the ARPA committee.
- Chair Daniel read a statement about the Town Manager and Finance Manager resigning at the same time and discussed the situation in relation to the Charter. As there is no mention of this situation in the Charter, he has asked asked Vice Chair Adams, Councilor Lazo, HR Director Adriana Robaina, and Finance Director Karen Harnois for advice on how to proceed. He explained that 15 resumes have been received and reviewed with 2 finalists remaining. These finalists will be re-interviewed, and the finalist will

43 be presented for interview at a Special Town Council meeting yet to be scheduled. He stated that he
44 believes this course of action best serves the needs of the Town.

45 **6. Town Manager's Announcements.** Mr. McCall reported that:

- 46 • He wrote to the WRTA because of an ongoing situation and that Councilor Rivas would be attending
47 meetings going forward. He said WRTA has notified member communities that routes will be changed,
48 although Route 29 in Southbridge will not be affected. He outlined some of the changes that were done
49 to address the shortage of drivers.
- 50 • His office is looking at the budget to add a Facilities Manager and a Stormwater Manager.
- 51 • Ms. Harnois has resigned, and he wished her well. He explained that there are some Treasurer
52 candidates from before who were also interested in the Finance Director role, and they are trying to fill
53 these positions either with two or one individual.
- 54 • He attended a preliminary discussion and space examination to see if School Facilities could be moved
55 to Guelphwood Road and outlined some other facilities issues.
- 56 • The Town Administrator from Sturbridge has forwarded a draft extension agreement for the sewer
57 agreement. He has sent this to counsel for review and will send it to Town Council after that review.
- 58 • Mass Municipal Association (MMA) had their annual meeting, and he outlined who attended and the
59 activities at the event. Mr. McCall had a short conversation with Senator Markey and his office has
60 drafted a letter outlining some of the Town needs in hopes of securing funding.
- 61 • A \$282 million supplemental State budget was release today which is focused on combating food
62 insecurity and homelessness. He will review this to see what it's impact will be on Southbridge.
- 63 • He is monitoring the State budget although Local Aid amounts are not anticipated until March 1.
- 64 • Southbridge received an award from the insurer in recognition of the Town's improvement in employee
65 wellness, and recognized HR Director Robaina for her work in this area.

66 **7. Presentations**

67 Councilor Marketti: Updates from Ad hoc Curbside Trash Committee: Councilor Marketti reminded
68 everyone that trash pickup will end in about a year, and outlined the members of the Curbside Trash
69 Committee. They have been meeting since November, and he explained that a survey has been sent out
70 asking for resident input on options for future service, and asked that everyone complete their survey. They
71 have also discussed billing, starting an Enterprise Fund, etc. He explained some of the benefits and
72 challenges of the different options. He asked the Town Council to use the Landfill Royalty Fund and funds
73 from the gas-to-energy agreement with Casella to offset the cost of curbside pickup.

74 Mr. McCall outlined the status of the RFP with the goal of receiving proposals in mid-March.

75 Councilor Adams asked if there is an area on the website where residents can ask questions. Councilor
76 Marketti said no but that they would add it.

77 Councilor Rivas asked if the survey is translated, and Councilor Marketti said it is English on one side and
78 Spanish on the other. However, the online version needs to be offered in Spanish too and he will ask about
79 this.

80 Councilor Adams asked when the Committee expects to bring something to the Town Council. Councilor
81 Marketti said he hopes to have something by March.

82 Steve Brady: MOTT Grant Update, Downtown Historic Walking Tour: Mr. Brady outlined the members of
83 the Local Historic District Study Committee and explained the task of the group. They are working to design
84 self-guided tours in Town that have QR markers and plaques on buildings. He detailed the two routes
85 being considered, which both start at the Depot. They plan to have these routes interface with the Rail
86 Trail. He then provided details on each route and the resources that are being used for the project. He also
87 highlighted the funding sources for the project.

88 Councilor Adams asked what the total amount needs to be raised. Mr. Brady said they have about \$20,000
89 and that it will probably take a little bit more to do the design and implementation. Councilor Adams asked if
90 they had considered ARPA funds, and suggested they meet with the ARPA Committee.

91 Councilor Marketti asked how the tour would actually work, which Mr. Brady explained.

92 Councilor Rivas asked how the Committee is approaching accessibility. Mr. Brady said this will be part of
93 the actual design and outlined some of the issues they are considering.

94 Councilor Lazo complimented and thanked Mr. Brady on his work.

95 Councilor Montigny asked if there is a zoned Historical District. Mr. Brady said there are 12 Historic
96 Districts in Town which have a paper designation, and explained what means and the work that needs to
97 be done in these districts.

98 Councilor Montigny asked if Historic Districts need to exist to get grants, to which Mr. Brady replied no and
99 then explained the grant process. Councilor Montigny added that he has heard from residents who are not
100 in favor of the districts.

101 Mark Carron: Performance Update: Mr. Carron outlined the status of some of the new businesses and
102 services in Town and added that:

- 103 • There is a Main Streets America National Conference in Boston in March and Southbridge was
104 chosen to have an event at the Optical Museum. He will send information about the event and
105 conference to Town Council.
- 106 • Central Street Parking Lot Concerts will start up in March & April and an intern is helping to
107 administer and coordinate these.
- 108 • The mural project is moving forward, and a group will be created to consider designs.
- 109 • He is hoping to make March an active month for newsworthy activities.
- 110 • The Rail Trail Groundbreaking is targeted for Mid-March. He attended a regional trail meeting and
111 Southbridge was recognized for the success of the trail development.
- 112 • There are plans for a Stakeholders & Realtors event in March at the Southbridge Conference
113 Center.
- 114 • There was a meeting with the Worcester Food Hub, and there are some likings with what they are
115 looking for and what Southbridge may be able to provide. They are willing to come to give
116 Southbridge some suggestions on this. Later in his presentation, Mr. Carron detailed the activities
117 of the Worcester Food Hub.
- 118 • Perception Shift: the long program is bearing fruits, and he reviewed the status of the applications.
- 119 • Investor Groups: he has given 3 group tours recently and explained that there is some potential
120 interest in the Sacred Heart property.

121 Councilor Ryan said she was very happy about the events at the Central Street Parking Lot, and that it is
122 nice to see something happening in that area of Town.

123 Councilor Marketti asked what kind of new businesses are in town, which Mr. Carron described.

124 Councilor Marketti asked about the status of the marijuana store and Council Ryan said they are going
125 through final approval.

126 Councilor Marketti asked why the back of a Main Street building is boarded up, which looks bad. Mr.
127 Carron said there are 2 buildings and that one has a new owner, and the other is on the market. There was
128 a discussion of the look of that area of Town.

129 Councilor Adams asked if the commercial kitchen at the Community Center could be used by food trucks
130 who are going to the Worcester Food Hub. Mr. Carron said there have been “soft” discussions, but it can
131 be looked at more closely.

132 Councilor Daou asked how difficult it is for people to open businesses in Town and if there are issues that
133 need to be resolved. Mr. Carron said there are always issues, but his job is to make it better. He outlined
134 some of the questions that he is asked by those interested in coming to Southbridge and some of the
135 actions the Town is taking to make it easier.

136 **8. Citizen's Forum**

137 Maureen Doyle, 771 Lebanon Hill Road: Ms. Doyle said Conrad Vandal passed away recently and she
138 suggested fixing the handicap ramp at Town Hall and dedicating it to Mr. Doyle.

139 **9. Vote to ratify employment agreement between the Town of Southbridge and Shane Woodson as**
140 **Chief of Police, effective January 23, 2023 through September 16, 2028, and allow the Town**
141 **Manager to sign all related documents.** *A motion was made by Councilor Ryan and seconded by*
142 *Councilor Steeves to vote this item.*

143 Councilor Marketti noted that this had been discussed at Executive Session before being brought to Open
144 Session.

145 Mr. McCall explained that Chief Woodson wishes to stay in the role until his retirement so the contract will
146 be for 5 years and 9 months instead of 5 years, and outlined some of the components of the contract.

147 Councilors Ryan, Montigny, Rivas, Daou, Lazo, Adams, and Daniels expressed their support for extending
148 the contract and Chief Woodson's performance and leadership.

149 Chief Woodson said the stability of the department is most important and that the performance of the
150 Police Department is not about him.

151 ***The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.***

152 **10. Vote to approve the Town Manager's appointment of Richard Benoit as DPW Director for a 3-year**
153 **term effective immediately through January 30, 2026, pending the successful completion of pre-**
154 **employment physical and background screening and State Ethics.** *A motion was made by Councilor*
155 *Ryan and seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote this item.*

156 Mr. McCall outlined Mr. Benoit's qualifications and resumé and listed the members of the Committee that
157 interviewed candidates for the position.

158 Councilor Lazo spoke about Phil Harding stepping up while there was no DPW Director.

159 ***Councilor Marketti called a point of order that the comments should be kept to the candidate, and***
160 ***Chair Daniel advised that all comments should be kept to the current candidate.***

161 Councilor Marketti asked Mr. Benoit if he would consider moving to Southbridge. Mr. Benoit said it was
162 difficult to live in the Town where he previously served as DPW Director, so moving to Southbridge is not
163 out of the question but it is not something he currently cares to do. He spoke about his ability to be neutral
164 because of not living in Town. Councilor Marketti asked Mr. Benoit about his education and experience,
165 which Mr. Benoit answered. Councilor Marketti then outlined some of the tasks that he hopes the DPW
166 Department will address in the near future.

167 Councilor Ryan enthusiastically supported Mr. Benoit's appointment.

168 Councilor Steeves asked Mr. Benoit to compare his experience in Thompson to what he might face in
169 Southbridge. Mr. Benoit shared some of the experiences he had which he believes will inform his work in
170 Southbridge.

171 Councilor Steeves asked Mr. Benoit's experience with Massachusetts grants, and Mr. Benoit said he has
172 not done any but had done Connecticut grants and is looking forward to learning about the Massachusetts
173 grant process.

174 Councilor Steeves asked what Mr. Benoit's priorities are to have the Southbridge DPW be in a position to
175 address climate change. Mr. Benoit said it's difficult to say at this time as he needs to learn about existing
176 infrastructure, upcoming projects, street program, etc. and explained some work he had done in
177 Thompson.

178 Councilor Steeves asked for Mr. Benoit's thoughts on best first pavement. Mr. Benoit shared his
179 philosophy of road programs.

180 Councilor Daou asked why Mr. Benoit left his previous position. Mr. Benoit explained what happened when
181 he was in public places and the stress of this on his family, especially during and immediately after the
182 pandemic. Councilor Daou and Mr. Benoit discussed his experience in Thompson.

183 Councilor Lazo said he is not supporting the recommendation, but it is not personal. He explained that he's
184 concerned that Mr. Benoit was overwhelmed with people approaching him outside of work and feels that
185 this is part of the job. He also doesn't feel Mr. Benoit has the resumé and experience and explained his
186 concerns.

187 Councilor Montigny said his priority for DPW is to get as many roads fixed as possible and not have the
188 organization change significantly. He said he has asked for more local candidates and that is why he is
189 voting no to the recommendation, and also expressed concern about Mr. Benoit's issue with people
190 approaching him.

191 ***The motion passed 6-3 by a roll call vote with Councilors Lazo, Montigny and Daou opposing.***

192 **11. Vote to authorize the Interim Building Commissioner to "enter upon the premises with the**
193 **necessary workmen and assistants and cause such unsafe structure to be made safe or taken**
194 **down without delay, and a proper fence put up for the protection of passers-by, or to be made**
195 **secure," pursuant to MGL c. 143, s. 7, to authorize the use of the Town Attorney to take all actions**
196 **necessary, including not limited to initiating litigation to secure the Town's access to the property**
197 **and ability to recover its costs, and to authorize that Town Manager to enter into contracts and to**
198 **sign all documents related thereto. A motion was made by Councilor Ryan and seconded by Councilor**
199 **Steeves to vote this item.**

200 Councilor Lazo said the towers have been netted and the fence has been installed.

201 Councilor Marketti pointed out that the address is not on the agenda.

202 ***Councilor Lazo moved to amend the motion to show the address as 30 Charlton Street. Councilor***
203 ***Ryan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.***

204 Mr. McCall shared the memorandum that Mr. Julian prepared for this meeting. He added that he and Mr.
205 Julian have visited the site regularly and that there is progress being done, which Mr. McCall detailed.
206 Given that they have seen progress, Mr. McCall recommends continuing this discussion.

207 Councilor Marketti said he drove by and saw that work was being done. However, every time Council votes
208 to continue the work stops but when it's back on the agenda work resumes. He suggested the item be on
209 every agenda.

210 Councilor Lazo reminded the Council that weather can impact progress. He also asked for the status of the
211 overall structure and the condition of the interior.

212 Councilor Adams asked if this could go back to Subcommittee who would update the Town Council.
213 Councilor Lazo said it is already kept on the Subcommittee agenda.

214 ***Councilor Adams moved to refer the issue back to the PPP Subcommittee. Councilor Ryan***
215 ***seconded.***

216 Councilor Steeves said there may be more progress if the issue is kept at this level. This was discussed.

217 ***The motion to refer the issue back to the PPP Subcommittee passed 8-1 by a show of hands***
218 ***vote with Councilor Daou opposing.***

219 **12 Vote to approve the Southbridge Retirement Board recommendation to increase the FY 2023 COLA**
220 **from 3% to 5% effective 7/1/2022. A motion was made by Councilor Lazo and seconded by Councilor**
221 **Adams to vote this item.**

222 Councilor Ryan said she is happy this has come forward so Southbridge is matching what other
223 communities are doing.

224 Councilor Marketti pointed out that this is retroactive to July 2022 and asked where the money will come
225 from since the budget has already been approved. Pam LaDuc and Will Canoyer from the Southbridge
226 Retirement Board explained how the increase will be funded and what will happen next year.

227 Councilor Steeves asked if there is data about the long-term impacts of this change. Ms. LaDuc said this is
228 worked into the actuarial tables and explained the process. Mr. Canoyer said the change is about 1% of the
229 overall budget, so it is minimal. He also outlined the status of the Town funding portion.

230 Councilor Steeves repeated his question about what the impact will be on the budget 10-20 years in the
231 future. Mr. Canoyer explained what the Board is focusing on, but he doesn't think these are big numbers
232 compared to the total budget. Ms. LeDuc expanded on this issue.

233 Councilor Lazo asked if someone who retires will get COLA, which Mr. Canoyer explained.

234 ***The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.***

- 235 **13. Vote to approve the Town Manager's request to negotiate pricing with Competitive Energy Services**
236 **and enter into a contract for the Town's electricity supply for up to 48 months at a low fixed rate. A**
237 ***motion was made by Councilor Ryan and seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote this item.***

238 Mr. McCall explained that this is for Town buildings only, such as Town Hall, the library, etc. and not the
239 overall community. He explained the process that was used to create the recommendation and why the
240 Town would want to do enter into these agreements.

241 Councilor Marketti said Southbridge should start looking at renewable energy and spoke about the hydro,
242 wind, solar and wood opportunities in Town.

243 Councilor Steeves said the Town has done several solar projects and agrees that something could be done
244 with hydro.

245 John Pawlowski, 87 Old North Woodstock Road: suggested that the Town take a look at the Co-
246 Generating Wood Powered System at Quabbin and consider using acreage in Town for this type of
247 opportunity. Mr. Pawlowski expanded on this idea.

248 ***The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.***

- 249 **14. Vote to approve to use Good Energy as electricity aggregation consultant and authorize the Town**
250 **Manager to enter a contract to aggregate the electricity load of the residents and businesses in the**
251 **Town of Southbridge. A motion was made by Councilor Steeves and seconded by Councilor Lazo to**
252 ***vote this item.***

253 Councilor Steeves explained how an aggregation works and pointed out that this motion is for the Town
254 Manager to negotiate the details of the program which would then be voted on by the Town Council. He
255 then outlined the benefits of the program.

256 Councilor Montigny said this should have been done sooner and supports this proposal.

257 Councilor Marketti pointed out that it will take a year or more for this program to begin and suggested that
258 Council members and residents write letters to their representatives to try to speed up the process.

259 Councilor Rivas said she went to the aggregation workshop at the MMA conference and there was an
260 explanation given for the slow speed of the approval process. The State hopes it will go back to about 3
261 months for approval.

262 Councilor Steeves pointed out that this does not cost the Town anything.

263 ***The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.***

264 ***The Council took at break at this point in the agenda and returned at 9:38pm.***

- 265 **15. Vote to accept the USDA American Rescue Plan Act Emergency Rural Health Care (ERHC) Grant in**
266 **the amount of \$913,399.00, and authorize the Town Manager to sign all related documents. A**
267 ***motion was made by Councilor Lazo and seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote this item.***

268 Councilor Marketti said he read in the paper that the cost of the Fire Station has increased to \$27.5M, and
269 the Chair of the Subcommittee said this grant is not included in the amount. Councilor Marketti expressed
270 concern about the increased costs.

271 *Councilor Steeves called a point of order, saying the discussion should be about the grant not*
272 *the project. Chair Daniel decided that the item under discussion is acceptance of the grant not*
273 *the cost of the project.*

274 *Councilor Marketti moved to appeal the decision of the Chair, and Councilor Lazo seconded. The*
275 *decision of the Chair stood 6-3 by a show of hands vote with Councilors Marketti, Montigny, and*
276 *Lazo opposing.*

277 Councilor Lazo explained why he voted against the decision of the Chair and why he will support accepting
278 the grant. He also spoke about the variations of the cost of the project.

279 Councilor Ryan thanked Mr. Jovan for finding funding to help pay for the cost of the project.

280 Councilor Montigny said he will support accepting the grant because he has faith in Mr. Jovan and others
281 on the Building Committee and the work they are doing.

282 Mr. Jovan said the Building Committee gave opinions of probable costs, and that they want to build a
283 station that will last 100 years and have it built right. He outlined how the finances have changed and said
284 that nowhere was it said that the station would cost would increase \$27.5M and he doesn't know where
285 Southbridge News got that number. He then discussed the process of getting the grant to help keep the
286 cost to \$25.7M. He discussed the fiscal management that has gone into the project.

287 Councilor Adams thanked Mr. Jovan and Ms. Dean for getting the grant.

288 Councilor Lazo asked how the \$25.7M cost for the project was determined, which Mr. Jovan outlined in
289 detail. Councilor Lazo said he's hoping the bid process will get bids that are close to the budget, but the
290 Town can't wait any longer to build the station.

291 Mr. Jovan outlined other funding sources that are being pursued.

292 Councilor Lazo said he was upset that the Southbridge congressman who sits on the Ways & Means
293 Committee couldn't provide any funding for the project, but Councilor Marketti did praise Peg Dean for
294 finding grants.

295 Councilor Marketti and Mr. Jovan discussed the funding of the project.

296 **Councilor Ryan called a point of order.**

297 Mr. Jovan said they are not spending over \$25.7M right now and have not spent anything over that.

298 Councilor Daou said they promised the residents \$25.7M but not that they would get credit if other funding
299 was found and he feels that everyone understands Councilor Marketti's point.

300 Councilor Steeves asked how much has actually been spent so far. Mr. Jovan said it's less than \$250,000
301 mostly for project management, environmental study, architectural design and one or two other things.

302 Councilor Lazo asked if any Urban Renewal money has been researched for the demolition at the property.
303 Mr. Jovan said there was a conversation with Senator Fattman for State APRA funding, but he will let the
304 Council know what happens.

305 ***The motion passed 8-1 by a show of hands vote with Councilor Marketti opposing.***

306 **16. Vote to accept the award of \$4,381.00 for FY 2023 Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E)**
307 **and \$2,277.00 for Senior SAFE grants and to authorize the Town Manager to sign all related**
308 **documents. A motion was made by Councilor Lazo and seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote this item.**
309 ***The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.***

310 **17. Vote to accept the Green Communities Competitive Grant award in the amount of \$130,217.00 from**
311 **Department of Energy Resources (DOER) and to authorize the Town Manager to sign related**
312 **documents. A motion was made by Councilor Ryan and seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote this item.**

313 Councilor Montigny said this was not recommended at Subcommittee and explained why.

314 Mr. Rumsey explained there had been some miscommunication about this grant, and that the school has a
315 list of weatherization items that need to be repaired. He was under the impression that they were going for

316 grants to fix these problems, but they are not doing it at this time. Therefore, weatherization was not
317 included in the grant application, and the state said they couldn't approve the heat pumps without the
318 weatherization, although the lighting project could still proceed. He explained that the State wants the Town
319 to do the lighting project now and then apply for the weatherization and heat pump project in the spring.

320 Mr. Rumsey explained that the grant would now be \$83,349 for the lighting project and administrative
321 costs. He then outlined the change in incentives. There was a discussion of how to proceed.

322 Councilor Adams asked for something in writing from the State outlining the situation with correct numbers.
323 Mr. Rumsey said they don't have anything concrete right now, but they have not received anything stating
324 that the State is refusing to fund the grant. Mr. Rumsey discussed how the process would proceed.

325 *Councilor Adams moved to send the issue back to the EHS Subcommittee. Councilor Lazo*
326 *seconded.*

327 Councilor Daou asked what Mr. Rumsey meant when he said they were running out of time, and timing of
328 the spring grant application process was discussed.

329 *The motion to refer back to EHS failed 4-5, with Councilors Montigny, Rivas, Ryan, Steeves, and*
330 *Daou opposing.*

331 *Councilor Ryan moved to amend to approve the motion contingent upon receiving a letter from*
332 *the State stating that Southbridge has received an award of \$83,349. Councilor Rivas seconded.*

333 Councilor Marketti asked how the funding works and Mr. Rumsey answered.

334 *The motion to amend passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.*

335 *The amended motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.*

336 **18. Vote to accept proposed update to Weights and Measures fees.** *A motion was made by Councilor*
337 *Ryan and seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote this item.*

338 Councilor Lazo explained the reason for the motion.

339 *The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.*

340 **19. Vote to approve the transfer request for \$6,600.00 from #01900000.527400 Property Repair,**
341 **Maintenance and Demo to #001240.585200 General Equipment to cover the cost of equipment**
342 **needed for the Sealer of Weights and Measures.** *A motion was made by Councilor Lazo and seconded*
343 *by Councilor Ryan to vote this item. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.*

344 **20. Vote to approve the transfer request for \$111.50 from #01240.558000 Misc. Materials to**
345 **#001240.571000 Mileage to cover the cost of mileage for the Sealer of Weights and Measures to get**
346 **equipment calibrated.** *A motion was made by Councilor Lazo and seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote*
347 *this item. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.*

348 Chair Daniel congratulated Mr. Cuomo for making arrangements with the State regarding certified testing of
349 large quantities of fluids which will save the Town approximately \$35,000.

350 **21. Vote to approve the Health Department transfer request for \$1,000.00 from #001512-534100 Adv &**
351 **Promo and for \$1,385.00 from #001512-571100 Conf & Meetings, totaling \$2,385.00, to be**
352 **transferred into #001512-542000 Data Processing & Supplies to cover the cost for 3 laptops for**
353 **department staff.** *A motion was made by Councilor Steeves and seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote this*
354 *item.*

355 Councilor Montigny explained that he had met with the Health Inspector and learned that this was a big
356 need in the department.

357 *The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.*

358 **22. Vote to approve the transfer request for \$13,185.46 from #001132-578100 Town Council Reserve to**
359 **#001910-515100 Sick/Vacation Buyback to cover the cost of the Town Manager's Vacation Payout.**

360 *A motion was made by Councilor Ryan and seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote this item.*

361 Councilor Steeves explained that this is part of the Town Manager's contract.

362 ***The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.***

363 **23. Councilors Forum**

364 Councilor Marketti: He felt some changes should be made to the First Station Building Committee and that
365 Councilor Lazo should be on the committee because of his construction experience. He also said that the
366 committee membership might be out of compliance with the Town Bylaws and explained why he believes
367 this.

368 Councilor Montigny: asked that everyone stay warm later this weekend.

369 Councilor Lazo: Welcomed Councilor Ryan back to the Council and wished Councilor Adams happy
370 birthday.

371 Councilor Rivas: Shared that the MMA conference was an amazing experience and she was proud of all of
372 the great work that the Town is doing. She explained how privileged she felt to have the Town be
373 recognized for its progress.

374 She also thanked the 5 students who have volunteered for Youth Voices with Councilor Rivas and said she
375 is looking for more students. She also welcomed Councilor Ryan back to the dais.

376 Councilor Steeves: Asked that anyone considering taking out papers for elected offices to please do so. He
377 also asked people to get involved in the Boards and Communities.

378 Councilor Ryan: Explained that her medical leave of absence from the Council was to address her
379 depression which had become unmanageable. She thanked Chair Daniel and Vice-Chair Adams for their
380 support, and also Councilor Rivas for her friendship and for checking in on her.

381 She addressed the LBTQ members of the community and said that the life, love, and laughter of LGBT kids
382 matter and that she will be a resource to anyone needing support.

383 Councilor Adams: Thanked Councilor Ryan for being so open about her challenges.

384 Responded to Councilor Marketti's concern about the makeup of the Fire Station Building Committee by
385 pointing out that the bylaws state that the Building Committee "shall seek" various types of members but
386 does not require it.

387 Said he is happy that there is a DPW Director and thanked Mr. McCall, Mr. Harding, and Ms. Robaina for
388 their work and support. He outlined open positions in DPW.

389 Announced the ARPA Meeting on February 9th and welcomed Councilor Marketti to the Committee.

390 Suggested that anyone running for public office speak with the Town Manager to better understand the
391 status of the Town before being elected.

392 Finally, the Town Manager Search Committee met and the meeting can be viewed on YouTube.

393 **DISCUSSION OF NEXT MEETINGS**

- 394 • February 13, 2023 at 7:00pm.

395 **ADJOURNMENT**

396 ***Motion***: Councilor Ryan moved to adjourn the meeting of the Southbridge Town Council.
397 Councilor Steeves seconded, and ***the motion passed unanimously by a show of hands***
398 ***vote***. The meeting was adjourned at 10:43pm.

399 Respectfully submitted by,

400 Susan Peghiny
401 Recording Clerk
402