

**TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, MAY 23, 2022**

A meeting of the Southbridge Town Council was held on Monday, May 23, in the Council Chambers. Council Chair Daniel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

**AGENDA ITEM #1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Council Chair Daniel led the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA ITEM #2. ROLL CALL.** Present: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Steeves, Ryan. Absent: Cotrona. Excused: Adams (7 present)

**AGENDA ITEM #3. CONSIDER AND ACCEPT THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2022.** A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #4. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS** (relevant minutes to be read at each agenda item).

**a. GENERAL GOVERNMENT.** Subcommittee Chair Ryan had a meeting that resulted in several items on tonight's agenda including items 27-32.

**b. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.** Subcommittee Chair Marketti summarized a recent meeting in which they discussed several items on tonight's agenda including 35-37.

**c. EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES.** Subcommittee Chair Jovan summarized a recent meeting that resulted in items 25 and 26.

**d. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.** Subcommittee Chair Adams was excused.

**e. PROTECTION OF PERSONS AND PROPERTY.** Subcommittee Chair Lazo had no report.

**AGENDA ITEM #5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.** None.

**AGENDA ITEM #6. TOWN MANAGER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

- Reminders from the BOH
  - Yard waste drop off is open for the season through late fall
  - Curbside collection in paper bags is available as well
  - Rain barrels & compost buckets available through town
  - Recycling is mandatory
  - Fall- ban on textiles for disposal

**AGENDA ITEM #7. VETERANS COUNCIL OF SOUTHBRIDGE INITIATIVE BRIEF (DAVE ADAMS)**

Since Councilor Adams was excused, there was a motion to postpone this item until the June 6 meeting was made by Councilor Jovan, second by Councilor Ryan, to vote on this item. Vote by roll call, by 6-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #8. CITIZENS FORUM.** Donald Solinsky of Henry Street doesn't like the rhetoric surrounding him, he cited several examples of Councilors saying things about him, the vote for the ACO's recommendation to euthanize and encouraged residents to view the meetings on youtube to see for themselves that the Council is lying. He noted that he has been called a psycho several times and it's very disheartening, he'd like people to own up to their opinions, lies, and treatment of him since he believes they look down on him and other citizens in town.

Maureen Doyle of 771 Lebanon Hill Road summarized her findings on beautify Southbridge day and encouraged people to stop littering! She'd love for people to wait to dispose of their trash until they find a waste barrel to do so in. Ms. Doyle noted that balloons are especially detrimental for the environment and suggested creative alternatives such as paper flowers. Balloon releases amount to waste, therefore those celebrating graduations and other events may want to reconsider. She thanked all those who turned out for the town clean up and hopes to continue to have this event.

Maddie Bonadiaz of Denison Drive reminded people that May 25th is the last day to register to vote and the Town Hall will be open from 8AM-8PM. The election will be Tuesday 6/14 at the Community Center.

**AGENDA ITEM #9. VOTE TO ADOPT THE FY 2023 TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE GENERAL FUND OPERATING BUDGET PER THE ATTACHED VOTING DOCUMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$59,873,045.00 TO BE FUNDED AS FOLLOWS:**

**RAISE AND APPROPRIATE** **\$58,296,503.00**

**TRANSFERS FROM OTHER AVAILABLE FUNDS:**

<b>SALE OF STREET LIST BOOKS</b>	<b>500.00</b>
<b>CABLE OPERATING ACCOUNT</b>	<b>196,934.00</b>
<b>DEBT SERVICE RESERVE</b>	<b>950,000.00</b>
<b>PERPETUAL CARE INTEREST</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>
<b>ACCESS ROAD DEBT SERVICE</b>	<b>338,065.00</b>
<b>LANDFILL REIMBURSEMENT FUND</b>	<b>80,213.00</b>
<b>SALE OF LOTS AND GRAVES</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL TRANSFERS FROM OTHER AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>	<b>1,572,712.00</b>

**OTHER TRANSFERS:**

<b>BAY PATH BOND PREMIUM</b>	<b>3,830.00</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL OTHER TRANSFERS</b>	<b>3,830.00</b>

**TOTAL GENERAL FUND BUDGET** **\$59,873,045.00**

A motion was made by Councilor Jovan, seconded by Councilor Daou to vote on this item. Council Chair Jovan read through the budgets line by line. The following items were discussed further.

- Town Clerk
  - Councilor Ryan said they are recommending an increase in the budget to reflect the step increase for the Town Clerk's position. Motion to increase this line item budget to \$205,426.00. A motion was made by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote on this item. Councilor Jovan asked what research was done to bring about the proposed change for schedule 1. Councilor Ryan said this item has come up for 7-8 years due to Maddie's request. The comment made by the Town Manager is that this would need to come from the Town Council due to the Charter. The only issue he has is separating the person from the position, meaning what would happen with other people in positions that may need to change to that schedule and they would need to look to adjust pay for several other positions. Councilor Ryan said other departments have not advocated for themselves as Maddie has, therefore the subcommittee has not considered that. She also noted that the jobs and goals of the town clerk have consistently evolved due to the pandemic. Councilor Ryan provided several examples in which this position had to adapt and change its own policies and department policies. The difference they are talking about is around \$2,000, therefore the subcommittee believes they should support this to reward her efforts and to work on employee retention. Several Councilors are concerned with this since other positions will come forward and want the same increase and they would need to prepare to accommodate this. They noted that they're not questioning this employee's performance, but they are concerned with the other employees within MS18. Councilor Jovan believes this should be discussed at length during the year, rather than at the end of the budget season every year to ensure they are able to do a comprehensive study on this since changing a position to a different level is a big deal. He and Councilor Lazo stressed that they won't support this decision because of the way it is being done, not because they don't support the work done by Ms. Bonadias. They stressed that they are voting on a position, not a person for this item. Councilor Marketti supports this item because Ms. Bonadias is an elected administrator that oversees the department and elections division and the increase is minimal. Vote by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daou, Marketti, Ryan, Steeves. Councilors opposed: Daniel, Jovan, and Lazo. Since a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority was needed, the motion failed by 4-3.
  
- Council Reserve
  - Councilor Marketti doesn't recall them ever spending \$100,000.00, therefore he thinks they could decrease this by \$25,000.00. Councilor Steeves said they could afford to cut some of this since in his 8 years on Council the most he's seen them spend is around \$80,000.00. Ms. Harnois believes they've come close to that in some years, but the amount fluctuates each year. She noted that sometimes they go to that account for Veteran's benefits, and other costs and believes \$100,000.00 is a good amount in case they need it. Since there was no support from the Council, Councilor Marketti did not make the motion, but he noted that he was just keeping an eye out for modest cuts. **Motion to reduce the amount of the Council reserve from \$100,000.00 to \$80,000.00.** A motion was made by Councilor Steeves, seconded by Councilor Marketti to vote on this item. Vote by roll call. Councilors in favor: Marketti, Steeves. Councilors opposed: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Ryan. By 2-5 the motion fails.
  
- Police

- In an effort to save money, Councilor Marketti requested cutting the employee requests for this and several of the following departments from two to one. **Motion to only fund one position for the Police Department.** A motion was made by Councilor Marketti, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. Councilor Jovan noted that they did not vote to add multiple positions for this year; he was looking for authorization for 40, but not to fund it this year. The goal was that they may be able to begin the hiring process for the upcoming year. The recommendation was to fund one new position and to explore the authorization situation. Councilor Lazo said a level service budget means no extra bodies. Councilor Steeves asked Chief Woodson why he is asking for more in the overtime budget since historically they haven't needed that much. Chief Woodson said they will be well over the budget for this item this fiscal year. Chief Woodson noted they are asking to be budgeted for 39 positions; they currently are funded for 38. He noted that they want to be authorized for 40, but don't believe they will ever get to that due to vacant positions and the need to continue to fill them. The goal is to shuffle people around to be able to fill any of those vacancies on an ongoing basis. Councilor Lazo believes they can create a position without funding it, therefore it doesn't necessarily need to be included in the budget. The subcommittee brought this to the Council for discussion on how to proceed, several Councilors believed they would put it to PPP to create it, but they wouldn't fund it yet. Councilor Ryan would have preferred this discussion be its own agenda item, but supports referring this back to the subcommittee for further discussion. Councilor Marketti withdrew his motion.
- Fire
  - Councilor Marketti is willing to give the fire department two positions, but not four. He noted that if they do not get the SAFER grant they would look to fund the positions anyway, which would be a higher cost to the town. Town Manager McCall said they have tried for this grant for several years, therefore the Chief is asking for half a year's funding for the four firefighters because he'd like to begin the process of hiring and staffing adequately while they await a response on the grant award. The grant will cover the costs of these positions for the first three years if they are awarded this. Councilor Jovan believes the SAFER grant language should be taken out of the wording since these are actual positions to be funded out of the operating budget whether or not they get the grant funding. Chief Normandin said the position titles would change as needed if they did not get the grant, but a positive vote tonight would allow them to be staffed more adequately. He would love to go for 8, but the cost to the town, once they are responsible, would be very high. Chief Normandin said 80 Marcy Street has increased its call volume and they know the Case Street lodging will do the same as well, which is discouraging because they need more staff. Two additional positions would only fix half the problem since they are attempting to go with four groups of six firefighters. He's passionate about ensuring that they are able to provide safe care for the residents and noted that the station is left unmanned often due to calls, vacation, and sick time. He will provide detailed statistics on that to the Council. Councilor Ryan asked how often they lose calls to mutual aid due to a lack of staffing. He said this past year it was 60 calls, but it's been much higher in previous years. Due to a lack of staffing in other towns they've had to respond to local towns at a much higher volume than they have in the past. Councilor Ryan fully supports this item and understands that it is a huge need for this community. Councilor Daou says there have been many times where they've

agreed on these things on the subcommittee level and then they come to the Council and are challenged more than they were at those meetings, but he said there is a need to better the community and to make sure the services are adequate. Councilor Marketti clarified that he's not trying to cut anyone's budget, he is just attempting to slow the growth as a taxpayer on a fixed income. Councilor Steeves reminded Councilor Marketti that all of them are residents, and many of them are on a limited income, but they need to do as much as they can to make sure the taxes are being utilized for the public services that benefit the community and they need to make sure they meet those basic needs. Councilor Lazo said the art of government is mankind is sure they get the most bang for their buck and to make the tax dollars go a long way. There was ample discussion on the best way to address the town's public safety concerns and how to make the tax dollars go the longest way. Councilor Ryan is tired of people making statements that people who don't own property don't pay taxes, when they do. She said renters are impacted by high taxes as well and they are allowed to have a voice and an opinion. Councilor Jovan said he is concerned for property owners, renters, and all residents and he wants to make sure they are safe and protected. The general recurring theme of the discussion was the need for every Councilor to vote their conscience. Vote to amend the fire position from four to two: A motion was made by Councilor Marketti, but there was no second.

- DPW operations and administration
  - Councilor Marketti is willing to allow for one position, but not two. He knows the Council has asked for a clerk of the works, but not an engineer. **Motion: Vote to remove the assistant engineer position.** A motion was made by Councilor Marketti, seconded by Councilor Lazo. Ms. Blakeley said this position is a need because they would perform two functions including the clerk of the works duties and meeting their obligations for MS4 permitting, which they are extremely behind on. Several Councilors see a need for this and support this position especially since this position would be handling the oversight on projects which has been a constant ask of the Council. There was discussion on the need to stop hiring outside oversight if they were to move forward with a position like this. Ms. Blakeley reminded them that if they have one person for oversight, they wouldn't be able to physically provide oversight on every project they have going on at the same time. This position would have oversight and be able to follow up on items and to partly oversee several projects but they would need to find the right balance with that. **Motion to move the question** was made by Councilor Jovan, seconded by Councilor Lazo. Vote by a show of hands to move the question, by 6-1 the motion carried with Daou abstaining. Vote on the motion by roll call. Councilors in favor: Marketti. Councilors opposed: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Ryan, Steeves.

Vote on the item by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Ryan, Steeves. Opposed: Lazo, Marketti. by 5-7 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #10. VOTE TO APPROPRIATE THE AMOUNT OF \$4,239,111.00 FOR THE FY 2023 SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND BUDGET TO BE RAISED FROM SEWER USER CHARGES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTAL REVENUES.** A motion was made by

Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. Vote by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Ryan, Steeves. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #11. VOTE TO APPROPRIATE THE AMOUNT OF \$3,609,956.00 FOR THE FY 2023 WATER ENTERPRISE FUND BUDGET TO BE RAISED FROM WATER USER CHARGES AND OTHER DEPARTMENT REVENUES.** A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. Vote by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Ryan, Steeves. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #12. VOTE TO APPROVE REVISIONS TO SCHEDULE 1 FOR 2% INCREASES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022 AND THE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2023.** A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote on this item. Vote by a show of hands. By 6-1 the motion carried with Marketti opposing.

**AGENDA ITEM #13. VOTE TO APPROVE REVISIONS TO SCHEDULE 5 TO APPROVE 2% INCREASES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022 AND THE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2023.** A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. Vote by a show of hands. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #14. VOTE TO RE-AUTHORIZE THE "LEASED PROPERTIES REVOLVING FUND" UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 44, SECTION 53E½ TO PAY REPAIRS, IMPROVEMENTS, EXPENSES AND UTILITIES FOR ALL TOWN-OWNED LEASED PROPERTY, FROM LEASE PAYMENTS TO BE DEPOSITED IN THE ACCOUNT, WITH ALL EXPENDITURES TO BE APPROVED BY THE TOWN MANAGER AND TOTAL EXPENDITURES FROM THE ACCOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$100,000.00 PER YEAR.** A motion was made by Councilor Jovan, seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote on this item. Vote by a show of hands. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #15. VOTE TO REAUTHORIZE THE "SOUTHBRIDGE AIRPORT LEASED PROPERTIES REVOLVING FUND" UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 44, SECTION 53E½ TO PAY REPAIRS, IMPROVEMENTS, EXPENSES AND UTILITIES FOR THE LEASED PROPERTY AT THE SOUTHBRIDGE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT, FROM LEASE PAYMENTS TO BE DEPOSITED IN THE ACCOUNT, WITH ALL EXPENDITURES TO BE APPROVED BY THE TOWN MANAGER AND TOTAL EXPENDITURES FROM THE ACCOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$300,000.00 PER YEAR.** A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. Vote by a show of hands. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #16. VOTE TO REAUTHORIZE THE “TOTER MAINTENANCE REVOLVING FUND” UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 44, SECTION 53E1/2 TO PAY FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF LOST AND/OR DAMAGED TOTERS, FROM FEES BY HOMEOWNERS AND DEPOSITED IN THE ACCOUNT, WITH ALL EXPENDITURES TO BE APPROVED BY THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND TOTAL EXPENDITURES FROM THE ACCOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$15,000.00 PER YEAR.** A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote on this item. Vote by a show of hands. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #17. VOTE TO REAUTHORIZE THE “DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS REVOLVING FUND” UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 44, SECTION 53E1/2 TO PAY EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS WITHIN THE TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE AND ANY REVENUE RECAPTURED TO BE DEPOSITED IN THE ACCOUNT, WITH ALL EXPENDITURES FROM THE ACCOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$185,000.00.** A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote on this item. Vote by a show of hands. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #18. VOTE TO REAUTHORIZE THE “MUNICIPAL HEARING OFFICER REVOLVING FUND” UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 44, SECTION 53E½ TO PAY EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION AND COLLECTION OF FINES IN VIOLATION OF M.G.L. CHAPTER 148A AND CHAPTER 115 OF THE ACTS OF 2009, SUCH FINES TO BE DEPOSITED IN THE ACCOUNT WITH ALL EXPENDITURES TO BE APPROVED BY THE TOWN MANAGER AND TOTAL EXPENDITURES FROM THE ACCOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,500.00.** A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #19. VOTE TO REAUTHORIZE THE “SOUTHBRIDGE MIDDLE / HIGH SCHOOL STORE REVOLVING FUND” UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 44, SECTION 53E1/2 TO PAY EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SCHOOL STORE FROM RECEIPTS TO BE DEPOSITED INTO THE ACCOUNT, WITH ALL EXPENDITURES TO BE APPROVED BY THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT AND TOTAL EXPENDITURES FROM THE ACCOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$30,000.00 PER YEAR.** A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #20. VOTE TO ADOPT THE TOWN MANAGER’S FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN, FY 2023-2027.** A motion was made by Councilor Jovan, seconded by Councilor Daou to vote on this item. Councilor Marketti said the Capital Planning committee, the Manager, and the Charter Review Committee are in favor of the five-year plan but the

Charter still says six years. Town Manager McCall said although it is called a five-year plan, there is a column for future years and it does go through the six-year plan. Amendment: Vote to approve the Town of Southbridge capital improvement program for FY 2023-2028 as presented tonight. This amendment was seconded by Councilor Steeves. Vote by show of hands on the amendment, by 7-0 the motion carried.

Vote by roll call on the item as amended. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Ryan, Steeves. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #21. VOTE TO APPROPRIATE \$1,984,637.00 FROM FREE CASH FOR**

**THE FY 2023 CAPITAL BUDGET:**

<b>TOWN HALL-PAINTING OF INTERIOR</b>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS CENTER TOWER</b>	<b>100,000.00</b>
<b>UPGRADE TELEPHONE SYSTEM AT TOWN HALL</b>	<b>30,000.00</b>
<b>POLICE PATROL VEHICLES</b>	<b>130,000.00</b>
<b>POLICE STATION PAVEMENT REPLACEMENT</b>	<b>80,000.00</b>
<b>POLICE IT-COMPUTER SERVER</b>	<b>21,044.00</b>
<b>FIRE ADMINISTRATIVE VEHICLE</b>	<b>67,721.00</b>
<b>FOREST FIRE TRUCK</b>	<b>150,872.00</b>
<b>FIRE PORTABLE, MOBILE AND BASE RADIO REPLACEMENT</b>	<b>20,000.00</b>
<b>DPW NEW 10 WHEEL DUMP TRUCK</b>	<b>320,000.00</b>
<b>DPW PURCHASE OF SWEEPER</b>	<b>300,000.00</b>
<b>DPW PURCHASE OF SPREADER</b>	<b>240,000.00</b>
<b>DPW CLAMSHELL CB CLEANER FOR SWAPLOADER</b>	<b>120,000.00</b>
<b>TIP-CONSTRUCTION PHASE AND ROW ACQUISITION COSTS HOOK &amp; HAMILTON 2</b>	<b>45,000.00</b>
<b>COMMUNITY CENTER WINDOWS, EXIT DOORS, FLASHING, CAULKING-</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>

A motion was made by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Lazo. **Motion to amend the motion to strike the forest fire truck at \$150,872.00.** A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, second by Councilor Marketti. Chief Normandin summarized his proposal and said they currently have a 2007 F450 and it is an appropriate vehicle, however, it doesn't have a good turning radius, it's not easy to maneuver and it is capped at 4-5 people. They'd plan to use it still, but they are hoping to get this new truck to replace a 1971 truck they have that has no airbags or anti-lock brakes. If they sell that they would get money back to put toward the purchase. If they happen to have an incident with the older truck, the liability to the town could be severe. They want a brush truck that can actually do what it needs to do in the woods. Councilor Ryan said this item has been brought up for several years and shot down, but she supports this since there is a clear need for them to be able to deal with brush fires. Councilor Steeves asked how often this vehicle is used, Chief Normandin said they've had a dozen brush fires so far, but this vehicle is used for other incidents regularly and it is probably used 70 times a year. Councilor Lazo thought that 1971 was supposed to go when they purchased the 2007 F450, which he believes is suitable for this. Chief Normandin said this purchase will eliminate two vehicles from this department and will be a safe, maneuverable vehicle for the department. Vote on the motion to amend by roll

call. Vote by roll call. Councilors in favor: Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Steeves. Councilors opposed: Daniel, Daou, Ryan. By 4-3 the motion to amend carried.

Several Councilors would like to see the older accounts looked at and to hold a meeting to discuss how to utilize the funds in those accounts and in free cash. Councilor Ryan noted that the Cable access had requested some items that aren't on here, and Town Manager McCall said the cable funds wouldn't be coming out of free cash, which is why they aren't included in this item. Ms. Harnois said they've gone through the capital projects and they've cleared out many of them in the past year, so she advised that they vote this through tonight, and then she will look through these accounts to clean them up again in the near future.

Motion to cut FIRE ADMINISTRATIVE VEHICLE for 67,721.00. A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Marketti. Chief Normandin said they would be refurbishing the Deputy's service vehicle and it will get used regularly when they need to keep a paramedic in town on certain service calls. Councilor Lazo asked if the existing tow vehicle could be used for the DPW but Chief Normandin was unsure without checking with Homeland Security and MIU. They are also exploring some grant funding options that may allow them to reduce some costs and allow for a fuel-efficient vehicle. Vote on the amendment by roll call. Councilors in favor: Marketti. Councilors opposed: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Ryan, Steeves. By 1-6, the motion failed.

There was a discussion on when the DPW Sweeper was replaced, Ms. Blakeley confirmed it was last replaced in 2011. Councilor Lazo asked what an annual contract for sweeping would cost, Ms. Blakeley said prior to her employment they did that and the determination was it was more efficient for the town to have their own sweepers. She noted that the requirements have changed significantly because they now have to sweep twice, which means it would be double the work if they contracted it out. Councilor Ryan suggested they do a cost-benefit analysis on this in the future to see what makes the most sense for the department and town finances. Councilor Daou would like to see a mechanic company-specific to sweepers look at this, rather than just the in-house mechanics. Ms. Blakeley said it isn't a matter of fixing it, it's a matter of when will it break down next. Councilor Lazo echoed those sentiments and understands that there are mechanics that specialize in varying equipment, however, he understands that the sweeper is essential to the Town and that it likely needs to be replaced for several reasons.

**Motion to remove the DPW PURCHASE OF SWEEPER for 300,000.00.** A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Marketti to vote on this item. Councilor Jovan noted that they likely won't even have this until next spring once they put the order in, but he supports it due to the federal requirements they have to meet. In the meantime, until they get the new sweeper in service, they would attempt to get the sweeper back on the road temporarily and if they can't they'll operate with the one they have and do the best job they can. They may be able to explore renting one, but they'd have to come back to the Council for that. Vote on by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Ryan, Steeves. Councilors opposed: Daou, Marketti, By 2-5 the motion carried.

Councilor Marketti asked why the animal kennel was removed from the capital list, Chief Woodson said they didn't ask for any additional money for it right now, which is why it's not on there. They are seeing several delays with this due to COVID, staffing issues, and so on.

**New motion: VOTE TO APPROPRIATE \$1,833,765.00 FROM FREE CASH FOR THE FY 2023 CAPITAL BUDGET:**

TOWN HALL-PAINTING OF INTERIOR	\$10,000.00
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER TOWER	100,000.00
UPGRADE TELEPHONE SYSTEM AT TOWN HALL	30,000.00
POLICE PATROL VEHICLES	130,000.00
POLICE STATION PAVEMENT REPLACEMENT	80,000.00
POLICE IT-COMPUTER SERVER	21,044.00
FIRE ADMINISTRATIVE VEHICLE	67,721.00
<del>FOREST FIRE TRUCK</del>	<del>150,872.00</del>
FIRE PORTABLE, MOBILE AND BASE RADIO REPLACEMENT	20,000.00
DPW NEW 10 WHEEL DUMP TRUCK	320,000.00
DPW PURCHASE OF SWEEPER	300,000.00
DPW PURCHASE OF SPREADER	240,000.00
DPW CLAMSHELL CB CLEANER FOR SWAPLOADER	120,000.00
TIP-CONSTRUCTION PHASE AND ROW ACQUISITION COSTS HOOK & HAMILTON 2	45,000.00

COMMUNITY CENTER WINDOWS, EXIT DOORS, FLASHING, CAULKING- 150,000.00

Vote by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Ryan, Steeves. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #22. VOTE TO APPROPRIATE \$300,000.00 FROM SEWER RETAINED EARNINGS FOR THE FY 2023 CAPITAL BUDGET.**

**PRIMARY PUMP STATIONS REPLACEMENT \$300,000.00**

A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. Vote by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Ryan, Steeves. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #23. VOTE TO APPROPRIATE \$250,000.00 FROM WATER RETAINED EARNINGS FOR THE FY 2023 CAPITAL BUDGET.**

**POLYMER/FILTER AID STATION UPGRADES \$200,000.00**  
**ENGINEERING, PERMITTING AND DESIGN FOR POLYMER STATION UPGRADE 50,000.00**

A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. Vote by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Ryan, Steeves. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #24. VOTE TO APPROVE THE SOUTHBRIDGE RETIREMENT BOARD'S RECOMMENDATION TO INCREASE THE RETIREES' COLA BASE PAY FROM \$12,000.00 TO \$16,000.00 EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022. A motion was made by**

Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Steeves to vote on this item. **A motion to amend to decrease the amount to \$14,000** was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Marketti. Councilor Marketti was in favor of the request for \$14,000, but not for \$16,000. The members of the Southbridge Retirement Committee said they gracefully accepted the \$16,000 when it was offered because they are in need of it. Councilor Steeves proposed the increase because the COLA base is significantly under the current rate of inflation and the increase made sense for this particular situation. He noted that the memo they got in their packet notes that it doesn't take their actuarial evaluation until 2031, therefore this gives retirees a little boost in their pockets to help them pay bills that have risen above the cost of living. Town Manager McCall and Ms. Harnois explained the impact on the annual appropriation for the town and noted they end up putting in almost \$5M in a pension over that time if they go with the \$16,000 increase because it almost doubles in the latter years when you increase it from \$14,000 to \$16,000. Pam said they are actually delaying the huge drop-off in their appropriation for one year, and noted the increase is actually the same average as their increase is for each year. The committee said that this increase is an extra \$10 a month and the retirees have also had a spike in healthcare costs. Mr. Counoyer explained that this is a matter of \$60 or \$120 a year for the retirees. Ms. Harnois explained that at \$14,000 the town pays 2.6M, but at \$16,000 the town pays 5.269M. Several Councilors felt conflicted on what decision to make, but many think \$14,000 is a fair compromise for both the retirees and the town. Mr. Cournoyer said he originally tried for a much larger amount since this issue impacts retirees and current employees since they will retire one day, however they encouraged them to go for a more conservative number vs. a realistic number. He noted that the Town of Webster just voted to increase theirs from \$16,000 to \$18,000. Vote by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti. Opposed: Ryan, Steeves. By 5-2 the amendment carried. Vote on the item as amended by roll call. Councilors in favor: Daniel, Daou, Jovan, Lazo, Marketti, Ryan, Steeves. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #25. VOTE TO ACCEPT FY22 COUNCIL ON AGING FORMULA GRANT FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ELDER AFFAIRS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$39,180.00 FOR DATES OF SERVICE JULY 1, 2021 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2022, AND ALLOW THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN ALL RELATED DOCUMENTS.** A motion was made by Councilor Jovan, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #26. VOTE TO RATIFY THE INTER-MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNS OF AUBURN, CHARLTON, OXFORD AND SOUTHBRIDGE TO CONSOLIDATE FORMALLY THEIR CHAPTER 115 OPERATIONS TO PROMOTE EFFICIENCIES TO ESTABLISH AND OPERATE THE "SOUTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS VETERANS SERVICES" AND ALLOW THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN ALL RELATED DOCUMENTS.** A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #27. VOTE TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE TOWN ENGINEER ASSISTANT POSITION.** A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. By 6-1, the motion carried with Marketti opposing.

**AGENDA ITEM #28. VOTE TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED JOB DESCRIPTION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT I/INSPECTOR (S-10).** A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. By 6-1, the motion carried with Marketti opposing.

**AGENDA ITEM #29. VOTE TO APPROVE THE ADDITION OF THE TOWN ENGINEER ASSISTANT POSITION TO SALARY SCHEDULE 1, GRADE P/T7.** A motion was made by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. By 6-1 the motion carried with Marketti opposing.

**AGENDA ITEM #30. VOTE TO APPROVE THE ADDITION OF CDBG/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR TO SALARY SCHEDULE 1, MS-19.** A motion was made by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. Councilor Marketti asked if this change would have any impact on the fact that the position is 83% funded by CDBG; Town Manager McCall doesn't believe that it would. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #31. VOTE TO APPROVE THE ADDITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT I/INSPECTOR TO SALARY SCHEDULE 1, (S-10).** A motion was made by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. By 6-1 the motion carried, with Marketti opposing.

**AGENDA ITEM #32. VOTE TO APPROVE AN ACCESS EASEMENT ON PARCEL 27-1-1 AND PARCEL 40-1-1 OWNED BY TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE IN ORDER TO GET A WATER SOURCE TO 225 DRESSER HILL ROAD.** A motion was made by Councilor Steeves, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. Councilor Lazo strongly believes this item should have gone to the DPW subcommittee, not the general government. He asked if they were looping the waterline, Ms. Blakeley said they no longer do that for several reasons and said this particular line will not be active at all, it is only there for firefighter purposes. Town Manager McCall noted that the agenda item is more of a concept, not an approval, therefore he suggested they amend it. **VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONCEPTUAL AGREEMENT TO ENTER INTO AN ACCESS EASEMENT WITH FULL TEXT TO COME IN THE FUTURE ON PARCEL 27-1-1 AND PARCEL 40-1-1 OWNED BY TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE IN ORDER TO GET A WATER SOURCE TO 225 DRESSER HILL ROAD.** A motion was made by Councilor Steeves, seconded by Councilor Daou to amend the motion. Councilor Ryan noted that this agenda was posted properly and if anyone had an issue with this it should have been brought up appropriately since everyone had the opportunity to see it and respond outside of putting her on the spot at her meeting. Councilor

Marketti did not intend to make a fuss about this, he did not get the packet until right before the meeting and was just attempting to ask for clarification to ensure that this item was being handled in the correct way. Councilor Lazo has issues with lines not being lopped and will not support the item, but Councilor Jovan said this easement is no different than any other dry hydrants since it is not for any use other than potential fire needs. Mr. Rumsey clarified that the project is for a stand-alone power generator and noted that the system is fully operated, therefore there is no staff oversight unless there is an emergency. Councilor Daou asked who was paying for the easement and connection fee, Ms. Blakeley confirmed that the business is paying for all costs and the town is not responsible for anything. Councilor Steeves was concerned with the fact that there would be no operators on-site or nearby, but Mr. Rumsey said this is a fully automated system that shuts down when needed and alerts the appropriate authority. Vote on the amendment by show of hands: By 6-1 the motion carried with Lazo opposing. Vote on the item as amended: 6-1 the motion carried with Lazo opposing.

**AGENDA ITEM #33. VOTE TO APPROVE USING EXCESS FUNDS IN THE DPW SALARY AND WAGE ACCOUNT 01499-511000 TO HIRE FOR THE NEW POSITION OF MAINTENANCE MAN/EQUIPMENT OPERATOR INCLUDED IN THE FY23 BUDGET CONTINGENT OF FUNDING OF THE POSITION. THE COST TO FUND THE NEW EMPLOYEE FROM MAY 24 TO THE END OF JUNE, WOULD BE \$5731.20 (6 WEEKS) BASED ON THE CURRENT UNION CONTRACT. POSTPONED FROM MAY 9, 2022 MEETING.** A motion was made by Councilor Daou, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. Councilor Marketti said the only issue he has with this is that all hired employees need to come to Town Council for a vote. Town Manager McCall explained that they are attempting to fill the position for the balance of the remaining fiscal year. It does say in the Charter that the Manager appoints the DPW Director and on the recommendation, the DPW Director appoints the DPW, but at either rate, they wanted to be able to tell this candidate that they are able to hire them and then they would come back to Council with the recommendation. By 6-1 the motion carried with Marketti opposing.

**AGENDA ITEM #34. VOTE TO APPROVE APPLYING FOR THE ONE STOP FOR GROWTH FOR THE FOLLOWING GRANTS: MASS WORKS, MASS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE, URBAN AGENDA, BROWNFIELDS, AND UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES, ALL 100% FUNDED, WHOSE PROJECTS ARE OUTLINED IN THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION, AND ALLOW THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN ANY RELATED DOCUMENTS.** A motion was made by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Lazo to vote on this item. Ms. Dean provided some updates on the MassWorks grant and the anticipated amount of \$500,000-\$600,000. Councilor Marketti fully supports this and thanked Ms. Dean for bringing this forward. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #35. VOTE TO APPROVE THE DPW TRANSFER REQUEST FOR \$125,000.00 FROM FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS ACCOUNT # 610450- 583000-22585 TO WATER FACILITY PAVING IMPROVEMENT ACCOUNT TO REPAVE AREAS AT THE WATER FACILITIES. (NEW PROJECT # TO BE ISSUED BY**

**ACCOUNTING)** A motion was made by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Daou to vote on this item. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #36. VOTE TO APPROVE THE SNOW & ICE TRANSFER REQUEST FROM OVERTIME SNOW & ICE ACCOUNT #001495-513100 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$16,563.76 AND SPECIAL SERVICES ACCOUNT #001495-529000 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$83,436.24 FOR TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$100,000.00 TO ROAD PAVING CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION FUND PROJECT #64843 TO INCREASE AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS.** A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #37. VOTE TO APPROVE THE WATER TRANSFER REQUEST FOR \$23,965.61 FROM EQUIPMENT CAPITAL ACCOUNT #610450- 583000-22581 TO SYSTEM CAPITAL ACCOUNT #610450-583000-22580 TO COVER ADDITIONAL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH WATER SYSTEM EXPENSES.** A motion was made by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Daou to vote on this item. By 7-0 the motion carried.

**AGENDA ITEM #38. AMENDMENTS TO SOUTHBRIDGE ZONING MAP TO CHANGE THE FOLLOWING**

- A. CHANGING 333 EAST MAIN STREET THROUGH 505 EAST MAIN STREET FROM MANUFACTURING TO GENERAL BUSINESS.**
- B. CHANGING 1, 6, AND 28 SANDERDALE ROAD AND MAP 44, LOT 17 FROM MANUFACTURING TO GENERAL BUSINESS.**
- C. CHANGING 23, 27, 31, AND 35 GOLF STREET FROM MANUFACTURING TO R2.**
- D. CHANGING 39 OLD WOOD STOCK ROAD FROM MANUFACTURING TO R2.**
- E. CHANGING 70, 78 JENNISON STREET FROM OFFICE RESEARCH TO R2.**
- F. CHANGING MAP 44, LOT 29, AND 37 (KINGSLEY STREET) FROM OFFICE RESEARCH TO R2.**
- G. CHANGING 72 DOUTY STREET, AND MAP 44, LOTS 47, 55, AND 56 (DOUTY STREET) FROM OFFICE RESEARCH TO MANUFACTURING.**
- H. CHANGING 66, 73, 94, 105, 121, 126, 134, AND 234 ASHLAND AVENUE FROM OFFICE RESEARCH TO MANUFACTURING.**

**FIRST READING 05/09/2022**

**SECOND READING 05/23/2022**

**AGENDA ITEM #39. COUNCILORS FORUM**

- Councilor Marketti reminded everyone that the Memorial Day Parade is next Monday, May 31 at 10:00AM
- Councilor Steeves reminded everyone that the Town Council Candidate forum will be 5/31 at 7:00 PM

- Councilor Ryan enjoyed beautifying Southbridge and said 75 people come out to help clean up
- Councilor Lazo thanked the Health Department and all those who helped out with Beautify Southbridge Day
- Councilor Daou commented on a comment that Councilor Lazo made about him giving money away. He clarified to his dear friend that he understands what it's like to struggle and he is not trying to throw money out the window, but he believes in investing to move forward. He said if other Councils had slowly improved this town, they wouldn't be in the position they are in now, but believes they need to spend on improvements.
- Councilor Jovan wished Ms. Blakeley the best of luck on her new position in Sturbridge and thanked her for all she's done.
- Town Manager McCall also wished Ms. Blakeley well and said she would be sorely missed. He's enjoyed working closely with her and getting to know her, but he knows she'll be an asset to Sturbridge

**AGENDA ITEM #40. DISCUSSION OF NEXT MEETING DATE – MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2022 - 7:00 PM.**

**AGENDA ITEM #41. ADJOURN**

A motion was made by Councilor Lazo, seconded by Councilor Ryan to vote on this item. Vote by a show of hands. By 7-0 the motion carries.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Darling  
Recording Clerk

Documents used:

- Draft of Town Council Minutes, 05/09/22
- Voting Document, #9
- Retirement COLA documentation, #24
- FY22 COA formula grant, #25
- Final Veterans District IMA, #26
- Town Engineer packet, #27
- Job description S-10, #28
- Schedule 1 FY23, #28&30
- ZPB-400 Letter, #32
- One Stop For Growth FY23 memo, #34
- DPW transfers, #36 & 37
- Map amendment package, #38