

**Town Council Minutes  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
March 18, 2024**

Present:

Michael Molisse, President  
Pascale Burga, Vice President  
John Abbott, Councilor  
Rick Coughlin, Councilor  
Kenneth DiFazio, Councilor  
Fred Happel, Councilor  
Chris Heffernan, Councilor  
Gary MacDougall, Councilor  
Arthur Mathews, Councilor  
Greg Shanahan, Councilor

Absent:

Maureen Kiely

Also Present:

Kathleen Deree, Town Clerk  
Ted Langill, Chief of Staff  
Richard McLeod, Town Solicitor  
Brian Connolly, Town Auditor  
Scott McIntire, CPA/Marcum L.L.P.

Recording Secretary:

Kim McCutcheon

President Molisse called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Town Clerk Kathleen Deree called the roll, with Councilor Kiely absent. President Molisse reported that Councilor Kiely had a family commitment and would not be in attendance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilor Coughlin announced that the Council received an email from a citizen regarding the MWRA Informational meeting held at Tufts Library on March 12<sup>th</sup>. There were between 100 and 120 people in attendance but there was some question regarding timeframe of notice given for the meeting. Councilor Coughlin stated notice was given via the Town's website at [www.weymouth.ma.us](http://www.weymouth.ma.us), and from there residents can go to the Events section on the homepage to view upcoming events, as well as notice was given on social media sites such as Facebook. For those persons who wish to be notified when events are added they can subscribe to e-alerts to receive e-mail notification of upcoming events. Subscription to e-alerts can be found at [www.weymouth.ma.us/subscribe](http://www.weymouth.ma.us/subscribe).

Vice President Burga announced the town of Weymouth is inviting neighborhood residents and the general public to participate in an interactive workshop on the future of the Bridge Street corridor and Bicknell Square. The planning department is hosting the first community workshop as part of the corridor and Bicknell Square planning study on Thursday, March 21, at the Weymouth Senior Center at 182 Green Street at 6:30pm. In addition, more information can be found on the town of Weymouth website under planning community development. And there is a survey on the town's website, if you could please fill that out to provide input.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **24 009 Emery Estate Revolving Account**

Vice President Burga motioned to open public hearing for measure **#24 009 Emery Estate Revolving Account**, published on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Seconded by Councilor Mathews.  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Mr. Langill stated in recent years the Town has been collecting revenue for the use of the Emery Estate, mostly for the paranormal tours that have been hosted. With the increased revenue, over \$6700.00 in FY23 and nearly \$8400.00 so far in FY24, the creation of the revolving account will earmark those funds for expenses for the house, mostly utilities. The fund will be approved each year similar to other revolving funds. Mr. Langill provided examples of costs that are currently incurred. Electricity with a \$3500.00 budget the Town has expended slightly over \$1200.00, and the previous year expended between \$1700.00 and \$2000.00. The heat budget is \$2000.00 and the Town has expended about \$2300.00. Last year telephone and internet expenses were around \$1300.00 and alarm expenses between \$1000.00 and \$1200.00. The account will allow the Town to use the revenue to directly pay expenses, or portions of those expenses and then reduce the budget accordingly that is in asset management right now for those utilities. Once the measure is passed an account number will be created and the Council will see it on the budget measure in April.

President Molisse asked if there were any questions or comments from the Council.

Vice President Burga restated her comments from the Budget/ Management Committee meeting that this a very creative way to fund the expenses at the Emery Estate until long term plans are made and commented it was a great job.

Councilor Abbott asked Mr. Langill if and when there is a longer-term solution for the fund of any major projects at the Emery Estate, does this back the Town into a corner with any spending restrictions.

Mr. Langill replied that it does not, and if there were other things that generated revenue or created bigger expenses, the amounts on the measure could be amended on the annual budget.

President Molisse asked if there were any questions or comments from the public, to which there was none.

With no members of the public wishing to speak, Vice President Burga motioned to close the public hearing for measure #24 009 **Emery Estate Revolving Account** and was seconded by Councilor Mathews. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**24 010 – Free Cash Transfer for Improvements to 111 Middle Street**

Vice President Burga motioned to open public hearing for measure 24 010 Free Cash Transfer for Improvements to 111 Middle Street, published on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Seconded by Councilor Mathews. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Mr. Langill stated that 111 Middle Street is the former school administration building. School administration has moved into the renovated Abigail Adams school which closed when the new Chapman Middle School was built. Later this year the Early Education Center will also move into the Adams building. After a feasibility study done by the schools, they determined 111 Middle Street was surplus and was no longer needed for school purposes. The building was turned over to the Town. Administration would like to supplement the offices at Town Hall into that building. The current plan is to move the town offices that are currently now at the Whipple Senior Center, with the exception of the Veterans Office, will move to 111 Middle Street. In addition, the IT department currently at Town Hall will also move there.

Mr. Langill provided a list of the upgrades needed at 111 Middle Street. Most expenses are HVAC related. Other minor modifications will be needed, so a phased approach for moving departments will be needed with a goal of having all departments moved in by July 1<sup>st</sup>. The move also creates more room for events and storage for the seniors at the Senior Center. It will also bring town employees more centrally located and people will not have to travel to different spots in town.

President Molisse asked if there were any questions or comments from the Council, to which there were none.

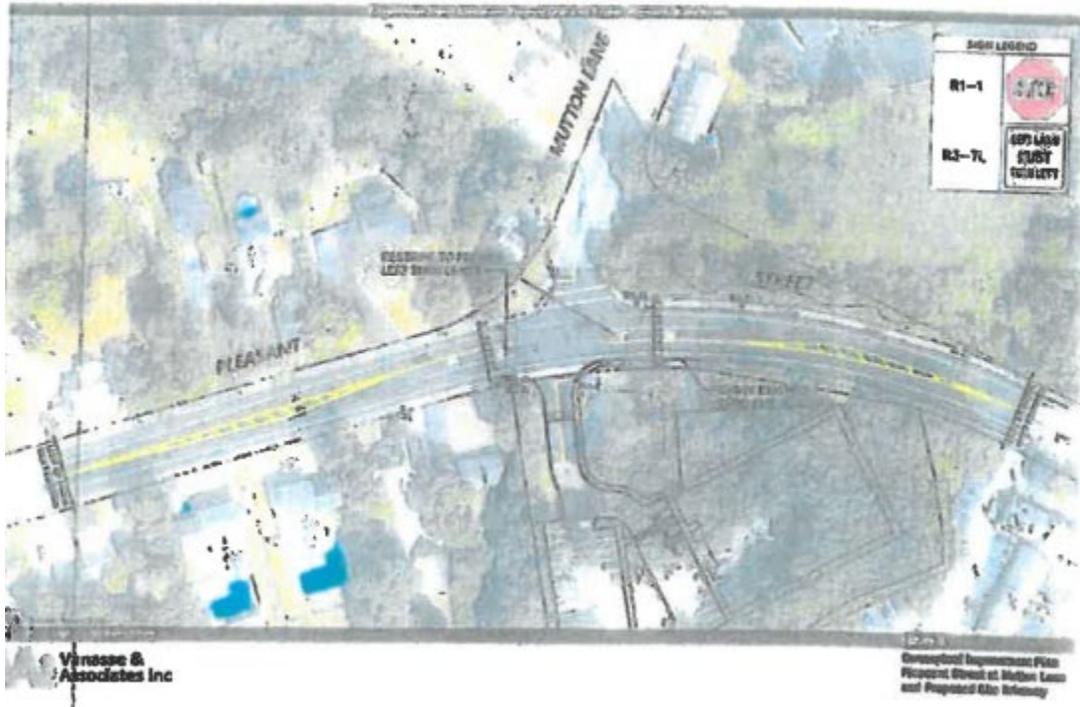
President Molisse asked if there were any questions or comments from the public, to which there were none.

With no other members of the public wishing to speak, Vice President Burga motioned to close the public hearing for measure 24 010 Free Cash Transfer for Improvements to 111 Middle Street. Seconded by Councilor Mathews. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**24 011 – Traffic Regulations for Pleasant Street/Mutton Lane**

Vice President Burga motioned to open public hearing for measure 24 011 Traffic Regulations for Pleasant Street/Mutton Lane, published on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Seconded by Councilor Mathews. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Town Traffic Engineer Owen MacDonald presented a map of the proposed measure.



Mr. MacDonald stated this measure involves proposed traffic regulations associated with the construction of a new daycare and preschool facility at the south intersection of Pleasant Street and Mutton Lane.

Mr. MacDonald stated the first regulation is to make the left turn lane in each direction of Pleasant Street exclusively a left turn lane. The traffic going northbound on Pleasant that wants to turn on to Washington Street would have to go through two traffic signals. If staying on Pleasant Street traffic would go through two signals, one at Pleasant and Washington and one at Washington and Mutton. It is very common for traffic northbound on Pleasant to take the left onto Mutton so they are only going through one traffic signal, and, as a result, it is a fairly significant left turn at that intersection.

Mr. MacDonald demonstrated that the driveway to the proposed preschool and daycare is slightly to the south of the intersection due to topography and the need for stormwater retention. The concern was that because of that location there would be confusion with left turning traffic which is significant movement. Being a daycare and preschool with small children there will be numerous cars entering and exiting the site while cars also heading northbound turn onto Mutton Lane. To resolve that issue the engineer for the preschool came up with a plan showing two well marked left turn lanes. Those lanes push vehicles closer to the center which provides a smaller distance to have to turn and clearly delineates where the terrain should start so that they can turn simultaneously without conflicting each other.

Mr. MacDonald stated the second part of the measure is a parking restriction along both sides of Pleasant Street from Washington Street down to a point about 425ft south of Mutton Lane, which fortunately coincides with where the left turn lane is starting. The no parking regulation would serve two purposes, first, at the hearings of the Zoning Board of Appeals a number of residents

stated concern over people parking on Pleasant Street and walking their children to the building while there seems to be ample parking available. Often the parents find it quicker to walk their children in and leave their cars parked on the street so they can leave more quickly. Second, the travel lane, because of the way the left turns are configured, are pushed to the right. There isn't room for a vehicle to park in the right lane without obstructing traffic in the presence of the left turn lanes.

President Molisse asked if there were any questions or comments from the Council.

Councilor Mathews stated he had the opportunity to attend the meeting that was held by Robert Luongo with the neighbors and developer. Councilor Mathews recalled a conversation after the meeting with residents regarding the exiting traffic from the new facility. Will there be any restriction going to be put in place for vehicles so they cannot go straight across Pleasant Street on to Mutton Lane? Neighbors were concerned about cars who may do that and the danger associated with that, especially during periods of heavier traffic from 3:00pm-5:00pm.

Mr. MacDonald responded that there was not a specific restriction, but agreed that that movement would present a challenge and is no different that slightly further down Pleasant across from Mathewson Drive.

Mr. Mathews stated as a follow up that if that is not going to be something put on the table now, he would like it monitored after the new facility is up and running, and if necessary, come back and restrict traffic from traveling across because of accidents. Councilor Mathews compared it to the traffic situation on Washington Street between Shaw's and Stop & Shop, where traffic does not go left or right, but instead shoots straight across and there are a lot of accidents in that area. Councilor Mathews wished that someone had put in turning restrictions so people could not shoot straight across and hopes this is not a missed opportunity.

Councilor Abbott asked if there was any discussion in putting a traffic signal in at this intersection. Mr. MacDonald confirmed there is not.

Vice President Burga stated when thinking about Councilor Mathews' comments, could this be easily solved by adding a right turn only sign to prevent people from cutting across and turning left? Mr. MacDonald stated signage would address the issue but also inconvenience a certain percentage of the population using the facility.

Vice President Burga followed up her question by asking if this is something that will be monitored or having the police department monitor. Mr. MacDonald stated it will be monitored.

Councilor Mathews clarified his statement to Vice President Burga stating he is not concerned about traffic turning left or right out of the new facility, it is cutting straight across to Mutton Lane.

President Molisse agreed with his fellow Councilors and stated he is concerned about the traffic shooting straight across and believes a right turn only sign would be great because they are not coming out across all lanes to take a left. Traffic coming from Columbian Square is difficult and then coming down Pleasant Street traffic can come flying around the curve, it's a tough spot to

get out of. President Molisse would not like to see a traffic light as that would further complicate traffic, but a right turn only sign could eliminate many problems, although people may not obey the sign, but it will be there to protect everyone. At peak times in the morning and evening there will be a lot of traffic so a restriction may help because it will be a problem with traffic shooting across and he does not want to see anything happen there. President Molisse thanked Mr. MacDonald for his update.

Councilor Coughlin stated his concern is if someone is heading to South Weymouth after picking up their child now, if they are only turning right to go down Pleasant Street to Washington Street and then taking a left from Washington Street to Mutton Lane, it may cause bottlenecks in that triangle. Stating there is no easy solution, Councilor Coughlin stated it needs to be monitored but believes a right turn only is just going to exacerbate the issue.

President Molisse asked if there were any questions or comments from the public, to which there was the following:

**Brett Bobysud, 25 Randall Avenue** – Mr. Bobysud stated his son goes to KinderCare which is just South of where this proposed intersection will be. KinderCare is on the same side of the road as this new facility and he does believe there is a right turn only sign out of that parking lot, which is much smaller than the parking lot at this new facility. He has frequently witnessed people disregard the sign and turn left out of the parking lot. While it is a good intention, Mr. Bobysud does not believe a right turn only sign will deter people who may need to get to South Weymouth from taking a left.

Councilor MacDougall asked Mr. MacDonald if they are putting a new road right into the parking lot. Mr. MacDonald stated yes it was. Councilor MacDougall asked why wouldn't they be required to put a light there. Councilor MacDonald responded by stating that there are traffic volume criteria and that that facility would not meet it. Councilor MacDougall stated that they were basically creating a four-corner intersection and it will be tough for entering and exiting during rush hour periods without a light and finds it problematic.

President Molisse asked if there were any questions or comments from the public, to which there were none.

With no other members of the public wishing to speak, Vice President Burga motioned to close the public hearing for measure 24 011 Traffic Regulations for Pleasant Street/Mutton Lane. Seconded by Councilor Mathews. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR, TOWN OFFICERS AND TOWN BOARDS**

**The following reappointments were grouped together and voted. There was no Councilor opposition to the reappointments:**

**24 039**-Reappointment to Zoning Board of Appeals – Nicole Chin

24 040-Reappointment to Conservation Commission – Alexander Donovan

24 041-Reappointment to Cemetery Commission – Deborah Sullivan

24 042-Reappointment to Board of Library Trustees – Christa Savery Dunn

24 043-Reappointment to Historical Commission – Jennifer Weiss

24 032-Reappointment to Board of Assessors-Paul Haley

24 033-Reappointment to Zoning Board of Appeals (Alternate)-Jonathan Lynch

Vice President Burga made a motion to accept the reappointment list, measures 24 039 through and including 24 043. Seconded by Councilor Mathews. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

Chair Shanahan reported that the Budget Management Committee met on March 18, 2024 to deliberate the following:

**24 009- Emery Estate Revolving Account**

The measure was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on February 20, 2024. The committee met and voted to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action.

On behalf of the Budget Management Committee, Chair Shanahan motioned to approve measure 24 009; On behalf of Mayor Hedlund, it is requested that the Town of Weymouth authorize the creation of the following revolving account for fiscal year 2024 in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53E ½. Furthermore, that the revolving account is permitted to accept funds in the aggregate to the limit set forth below and expend those funds in the aggregated to the limit herein expressed, with the consent of the Mayor.

<i>Account</i>	<i>Fund Name</i>	<i>Limit to Accept</i>	<i>Limit to Expend</i>
####	Emery Estate	\$50,000	\$50,000

And that the balance of line-item 11210430-437004 at the time of this measure taking effect be transferred to this newly established revolving account.

This measure requires a legal notice and public hearing.

The account number will be supplied when the fund is created.

Vice President Mathews seconded the motion. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**24 010 – Free Cash Transfer for Improvements to 111 Middle Street**

This measure was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on February 20, 2024. A public hearing was held March 18, 2024. The committee met and voted to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action.

On behalf of the Budget/ Management Committee, Chair Shanahan motioned to approve measure 24 010; On behalf of Mayor Hedlund, it was requested that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$164,625.00 from Free Cash to a new ‘02’ capital account for the purpose of funding costs associated with making improvements to 111 Middle Street.

This measure requires a legal notice and public hearing.

Attached was a summary of needed improvements and estimated costs.

At the time of submitting this measure, the balance of Free Cash is \$12,949,240.00

Vice President Burga seconded the motion. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**24 022 – Appointment to Community Events Committee – Katherine Keefe**

The measure was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on March 11, 2024. A public hearing was held March 18, 2024. Miss Keefe was not able to attend this evening. But the resume and the application were very impressive. The committee met and voted to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action.

On behalf of the Budget Management Committee, Chair Shanahan motioned to approve measure 24 010; On behalf of Mayor Hedlund, it was requested in accordance with Section 2-10 of the Town Charter, to respectfully submit the name of Katherine Keefe of 63 Roosevelt Rd, Weymouth, MA 02190 for appointment to the Community Events Committee. This is a 3-year term due to expire on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2027.

Vice President Burga seconded the motion. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**24 019 – FY22 Financial Statements**

The measure was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on March 11, 2024. The committee met and voted to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action.

Mr. Scott McIntire presented an overview of the audit of financial statements for FY22. Mr. McIntire stated for the most part the audit was completed over a year ago, but it took an extended period of time to have the retirement system audit under contract and completed.

Mr. McIntire provided the high points and stated that the audit of financial statements went very well, the books and records were in good working order when the audit was completed. There were no significant adjustments required and were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. There were no disagreements on how to apply generally accepted accounting principles between management and Marcum L.L.P.

Mr. McIntire also stated there are several estimates in the financial statements, particularly the net pension liability and OPEB liability and the related accounts, generally the deferred outflows and deferred inflows, as well as allowances for uncollectible receivables and estimated useful lives. In reviewing the estimates, particularly the ones dealing with net pension and new OPEB, those estimates and actuarial assumptions are consistent with over 50% of other communities in the Commonwealth.

Mr. McIntire referenced page 17 of the report, the modified accrual basis of account, which is very similar to cash. He focused on the general fund and unassigned fund balances of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The balance was \$10.9M, down from about \$14M a year prior. That \$10.9M represents 6% of annual operating expenditures. It is a sound balance sheet, particularly when looking at the committed fund balance. Most of the committed fund balance is Enbridge mitigation money committed for public safety purposes.

Mr. McIntire spoke again about the unassigned fund balance of \$10.9M as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Mr. McIntire wanted the Council to understand that key account balances decreased by about \$3 million and what drives that decrease is the generation of surplus, and that comes from looking at the budget versus actual comparative statements. In fiscal year 2022, the Town generated revenue in excess of what was anticipated in unspent appropriations of about \$5 million. Normally, that would be added to the key account unassigned fund balance. However, Weymouth like most governments in the Commonwealth, use some of its free cash during the fiscal year used about \$9 million, mostly for capital purposes during fiscal year 2022. The budgetary surplus of \$5 million was offset by the use of free cash of \$9 million, resulting in a net decrease of \$4 million in the unassigned fund balance.

Mr. McIntire mentioned that in April of 2024 the standard setters, the Gatsby or the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, are scheduled to vote on a new reporting model. The Town's June 2023 statements are going to look very similar to June 2024. Weymouth, like every government in the whole country will be have to evaluate things regarding the new reporting model, so statements could look very different a few years now from now. Mr. McIntire then asked the Council if there were any questions, to which there were none.

On behalf of the Budget/ Management Committee, Chair Shanahan motioned to approve measure 24 019 and Vice President Burga seconded the motion. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Town Council will be Monday April 1st.

At 8:08 p.m., there being no further business, Vice President Burga made a motion to adjourn the meeting, motion was seconded by Councilor MacDougall. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted by Kim McCutcheon as Recording Secretary

Approved by Council President Michael Molisse  
Voted unanimously on 22 April 2024