

Special Town Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2023


Call to Order: May 1, 2023 at 7:30pm in the Town Hall Auditorium, 298 Central Street, Saugus, MA 01906

Girls Saugus Softball Little League presenting the flag at 7:31pm (Fire Chief Mike Newbury’s Daughter Mia, Town Meeting Member Precinct 5 Jackie Hickman’s Daughter Olivia and Town Moderator Steve Doherty’s granddaughter Ava.).

Pledge of Allegiance at 7:31pm

Tellers: Maureen Whitcomb Precinct 4 and Peter Rossetti Precinct 2 at 7:33pm

Roll Call at 7:36pm



| Town Meeting Member name | Pct | Present /Absent | Town Meeting Member name | Pct | Present /Absent | Town Meeting Member name | Pct | Present /Absent |
|--------------------------|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----|-----------------|--------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Arone, A. | 1 | P | Hickman, J. | 5 | P | Paolini, M. | 7 | P |
| Bartolo, J. | 6 | P | Jones, C. | 1 | P | Riley, C. | 2 | P |
| Bell, M. | 1 | P | Kahn, J. | 8 | P | Ring, D. | 10 | P |
| Berube, K. | 9 | P | Kelly, D. | 9 | P | Rossetti, Jr., P. | 2 | P |
| Brown, W. | 6 | P | Kramich Jr., W. | 8 | P | Schena, D. | 3 | P |
| Camuso Sr., R. | 2 | P | LeBrasseur, E. | 6 | P | Scuzzarella, C. | 10 | P |
| Chipouras, J. | 7 | P | Leuci, W. | 4 | P | Smith, R. | 3 | A |
| Connors, Jr., A. | 3 | A | Long, R. | 9 | P | Spencer, B. | 5 | P |
| Costello, M. | 10 | P | Lopresti, A. | 8 | A | Strasnick, R. | 9 | P |
| Cross III, W. | 8 | A | Manoogian Sr, P. | 10 | P | Tesora, A. | 3 | P |
| Currie, K. | 6 | P | McCarthy, S. | 7 | P | Thompson, R. | 3 | A |
| D'Anna, S. | 7 | P | Migliore, M. | 5 | A | Traverse, T. | 8 | P |
| Davis, G. | 4 | P | Moreschi, C. | 2 | P | Vecchione IV, J. | 2 | P |
| Delios, P. | 10 | P | Northrup, R. | 4 | P | Wallace, R. | 5 | P |
| Doherty, S. | 4 | P | Palleschi, R. | 7 | P | Whitcomb, M. | 4 | P |
| Dunn, S. | 1 | P | Palomba, A. | 1 | P | Worthley, J. | 9 | P |
| Goodwin, P. | 5 | P | Panico, A. | 6 | P | Total Present= | | 44 |
| Town Meeting: | | | | | | Absent count= | | 6 |
| | | Date: STM May 1, 2023 | | | | | | |

Attendance Count: Total: 43+ Moderator = 44

Making the Motion this Evening: Chris Riley Precinct 2

Town Moderator Comments: Informs Town Meeting on those members unable to attend. Acceptance of the minutes of last session at 7:36pm: Unanimous vote Yes. He gives instructions on the process of tonight’s Town Meeting.

No other committees

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 2 as recommended:

Seconded at 7:40pm

Article as Written:
Article 2.: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to be transferred to the Stabilization Fund.

Town Manager speaks at 7:40pm about the Stabilization Fund, putting \$1 Million in free cash. We are still under 10% of our operating budget. No layoffs or interruptions of services like other communities.

Bob Palleschi, Precinct 7 at 7:44pm asks; what are the various areas generating free cash?

Town Manager at 7:45pm answers that it is about \$3.8 million this year from free cash. He reminds Town Meeting those year there was no free cash. Most is from fund balance roll over, expenses, taxes that were collected and spending within our means. Having a good bond rating and financial health.

Martin Costello, Precinct 10 speaks at 7:48pm specifically asking about our bond rating now? What the other 351 cites/towns where are and we top or low 50%
Town Manager states Saugus is AA+ bond rating. There are only a few communities that are a AAA. Tough time to maintain what we have and not being downgraded. Very well respected where we are for our financial health.

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,000,000.00 to be transferred to the Stabilization Fund. The source of funding is July 1, 2022 certified free cash.

Call for the question at 7:52pm

Article 2 – Unanimous vote Yes at 7:53pm

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 3 as recommended:

Seconded at 7:53pm

Article as Written

Article 3.: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to be transferred to the OPEB Trust (Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust).

Town Manager speaks at 7:53pm about the Towns unfunded liability. Town Meeting has discussed and recognized this issue on the retirement/pension. Continue to fund and talk about creating the trust. \$500,000 from free cash into the fund.

No discussion.

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$500,000.00 to be transferred to the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust). The source of funding is July 1, 2022 certified free cash.

Call the question at 7:57

Article 3 – Unanimous vote Yes at 7:57pm

Bob Long, Precinct 9 asks to take Article 7 out of order.

Seconded at 7:57pm

Unanimous vote Yes at 7:57pm to take Article 7 out of order.

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 7 as recommended:

Seconded at 7:58pm

Article as Written

Article 7.: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for the purpose of conducting a feasibility study for a fire station to be located on the west side of the Town of Saugus, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any action relative thereto.

Town Manager speaks at 7:58pm, clarification this is a feasibility study and the next stage. Already did feasibility study mainly how long it would take to get there and the need for a fire station on the west side. Addressing the needs of the community, figure out where, look at a site, put a foot print together and look at the operational costs. This will not happen without a debt exclusion or over ride. Public safety is important. This is a next stage to give to the public. Please support the article.

Bob Long, Precinct 9 speaks at 8:02pm this has gone on forever. First duty to the community is public safety. Another feasibility study, talk a lot about it but nothing is done about it. Reads an

article regarding another fire station. In 1995 Town Meeting voted the capital improvement plan which set aside \$500,000.00 for this and it passed.

Martin Costello, Precinct 10 speaks at 8:08pm agree with Mr. Long. How much will this evidently cost? He thinks the Fire Chief should be part of the process with the study committee in what this town needs.

Debra Panetta, Board of Selectmen speaks at 8:09pm, the Board of the Selectmen has made the West Side Fire Station a priority.

Maureen Whitcomb, Precinct 4 at 8:10pm asks when do they plan on doing the feasibility study and how long will this take?

Town Manager speaks at 8:11pm stating as soon as possible. Like the school discussion, need to get real support from the public/community on this issue. Must have a thorough comprehension plan put together like the schools for the community to see exactly what is happening. No politics. Location is the most important. This must be done correctly and experts giving us the best advice.

Chris Riley, Precinct 2 speaks at 8:17pm is in support of the article. Asks will this study include land, location, foot print and operational costs? Will this study include a detailed design? Will this be put in front of voters with models?

Town Manager speaks at 8:19pm doesn't have exact cost, could be more or less. This will give us a footprint to put in front of people and maybe spend more to give more detail.

Chris Riley, Precinct 2 speaks at 8:21pm he is asking to make sure we do the study and you are some thing you want to put in front of the voters.

Town Manager will have a Special Town Meeting right away to get more money but he is confident this is enough money with no interruption in the process.

Peter Delios, Precinct 10 at 8:22pm asks if ever considered peering up with other communities like Wakefield or Melrose to deter some of the funds?

Town Manager speaks at 8:23pm something we can consider and the Fire Chief can speak more on this. Initial thoughts to have our own station and issues. Not sure that is the easiest thing to do and can be more complicated.

Bob Long, Precinct 9 speaks at 8:24pm in 2020 Town Meeting had an article on this subject had a lot of this work already done, with the recommendations in 2021. Take that report issued at the time and used that report.

Town Manager speaks at 8:27pm for clarification the feasibility study that was done by a committee is different, is more action based moving into the area of and the costs associated. This is a different study to alleviate the issue of the response times.

Call for the question at 8:28pm

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$400,000.00 for the purpose conducting a feasibility study for a third fire station, including the payment of cost incidental or related thereto. The source of funding is a borrowing authorization

Roll call vote at 8:30pm

| Article 7 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----|------|------------------|-----|------|-------------------|-----|------|--|-----|------|
| | Pct | Vote | | Pct | Vote | | Pct | Vote | | Pct | Vote |
| Arone, A. | 1 | Y | Hickman, J. | 5 | Y | Paolini, M. | 7 | Y | | | |
| Bartolo, J. | 6 | N | Jones, C. | N | Y | Riley, C. | 2 | Y | | | |
| Bell, M. | 1 | Y | Kahn, J. | 8 | Y | Ring, D. | 10 | Y | | | |
| Berube, K. | 9 | Y | Kelly, D. | 9 | Y | Rossetti, Jr., P. | 2 | Y | | | |
| Brown, W. | 6 | Y | Kramich Jr., W. | 8 | Y | Schena, D. | 3 | Y | | | |
| Camuso Sr., R. | 2 | Y | LeBrasseur, E. | 6 | Y | Scuzzarella, C. | 10 | Y | | | |
| Chipouras, J. | 7 | Y | Leuci, W. | 4 | Y | Smith, R. | 3 | A | | | |
| Connors, Jr., A. | 3 | A | Long, R. | 9 | Y | Spencer, B. | 5 | Y | | | |
| Costello, M. | 10 | Y | Lopresti, A. | 8 | A | Strasnick, R. | 9 | Y | | | |
| Cross III, W. | 8 | A | Manoogian Sr, P. | 10 | Y | Tesora, A. | 3 | Y | | | |
| Currie, K. | 6 | Y | McCarthy, S. | 7 | Y | Thompson, R. | 3 | A | | | |
| D'Anna, S. | 7 | Y | Migliore, M. | 5 | A | Traverse, T. | 8 | Y | | | |
| Davis, G. | 4 | Y | Moreschi, C. | 2 | Y | Vecchione IV, J. | 2 | Y | | | |
| Delios, P. | 10 | Y | Northrup, R. | 4 | Y | Wallace, R. | 5 | Y | | | |
| Doherty, S. | 4 | | Palleschi, R. | 7 | Y | Whitcomb, M. | 4 | Y | | | |
| Dunn, S. | 1 | Y | Palomba, A. | 1 | Y | Worthley, J. | 9 | Y | | | |
| Goodwin, P. | 5 | Y | Panico, A. | 6 | Y | | | | | | |

Date: 5/1/2023

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Yea= 42

Nay= 1

Abst= 6

Article 7 has passed with majority vote: 42 Yea, 1 Nay and 6 Absent at 9:53pm.

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 4 as recommended:
Seconded at 8:31pm

Article as Written
Article 4.: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to be transferred to the Stabilization Fund for the Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School Construction Project.

Town Manager speaks at 8:31pm we are being assessed this. The new Vocational School was supported by the community and is needed. This is going to have an impact on our costs. Town meeting took recommendations from him and the Finance Committee to create a Stabilization fund, so the town may have some money that can offset. Balance of 507,000.00 right now looking to put in \$500,000.00 of free cash bring us up over a million dollars. Significant cost coming our way in the operating budget. This money can be used to offset. Budgeting for \$200,000.00 this year and continue to go up. Have spoken about this at past Town Meetings. The town has to make adjustments to support this, just like our schools need public support.

No discussion

Call for the question at 8:36pm

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$500,000.00 to be transferred to the Stabilization Fund for the Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School Construction Project. The source of funding is July 1, 2022 certified free cash.

Article 4 passes with majority voice vote Yes and 1 No vote by Dan Kelly, Precinct 9 at 8:37pm

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 5 as recommended:
Seconded at 8:37pm

Article as Written
Article 5.: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for purchasing various equipment for town departments, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto; and to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager at 8:37pm states generally each year we look at capital equipment needs; 4 police cruisers, some municipal vehicles, highway department 5-ton dump trucks are very old and doesn't have plows that rotate, an excavator and mini excavator, mower and a couple pickup

trucks for highway and parks. The fire trucks that were approved are still 2 years out. Please support to get it in the pipeline.

Bob Palleschi, Precinct 7 speaks with 8:40pm asking to provide with a list?

Town Manager speaks that it is in your packet.

Martin Costello, Precinct 10 speaks at 8:40pm since some of this money used by the DPW, any money used by the snow and ice.

Town Managers states that \$185,000.00 per year is earmarked for snow and ice. The DOR allows for a fiscal deficit for snow and ice. The cost for everything including for snow and ice have considerable increased, like food.

Jean Bartolo, Precinct 6 speaks at 8:43pm asks about the 3 municipal department vehicles, who & where they are going?

Town Manager states not for who they are going to the municipal vehicles. Just hired an Engineer that is using his own vehicle, Assessor that uses own vehicle and Inspector using own vehicle. Liability if they get into an accident in their own car doing town work. Look to see exactly where to put them. Maybe have some “pool” cars.

Jean Bartolo, Precinct 6 are we going to be doing this every year? Money should go to the schools.

Town Manager states Yes. This is a borrowing an article. Schools are an operational budget.

Call for the Question at 8:47pm

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,440,000.00 for the purpose of purchasing various equipment for town departments, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto. The source of funding is a borrowing authorization.

Article 5 passes by Unanimous voice vote Yes at 8:48pm

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 6 as recommended:

Seconded at 8:49pm

Article as Written

Article 6.: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for designing, constructing, repairing and replacing parks and playgrounds in the Town, including the payments of costs incidental or related thereto; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager speaks at 8:49pm asking for \$2 million for Parks & Playgrounds, some feel this is not a priority. Many Town Meeting Members and residents are asking to improving parks and playgrounds. Looking to get some money to get drawings; Stackpole, Golden Hills, Anna Parker and Baker Hill dated back 40 years. Please support.

Ron Wallace, Precinct 5 speaks at 8:52pm he is all about supporting parks. Hard pill to swallow to pay for this instead of going to the Riverside Cemetery.

Katrina Berube, Precinct 9 speaks at 8:53pm how bad the Golden Hills playground currently is and please support this article.

Jason Kahn, Precinct 8 speaks at 8:54 is in support of the article. What is the breakdown of the \$2 million; where it is going?

Town Manager speaks at 8:54pm there is a process and gives examples. A way to move this forward, we don't have town meeting every week, now we have to wait each time. This gives us a start and come back to Town Meeting with more concrete plans. Need the money to start to do the work.

Call for the question at 8:57pm

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,000,000.00 for the purpose of designing, constructing, repairing and replacing parks and playgrounds in the Town, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto. The source of funding is a borrowing authorization.

Article 6 passes by Unanimous voice vote Yes at 8:57pm.

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 8 as recommended:

Seconded at 8:59pm

Article as Written

Article 8.: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for the design and construction of capital improvements to the Town's sewer system, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust or otherwise; and to take any other action relative thereto

Town Manager speaks at 8:59pm in the past we have had on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant but decided to put on the Special. Last 10-12 years undergoing an II project taking the storm water in and out sewer system. Completed some and moved on to other sub systems that were not on the initial 9 list and elevate problems in the future. This is sub system 3A (main street, RT 1 through Forest Street, Longwood and south of Main Street) continue to be proactive. No discharge into the Saugus River.

Call for the question at 9:01pm

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$3,800,000.00 for the purpose of design and construction of capital improvements to the Town's sewer system, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto. The source of funding is a borrowing authorization.

Article 8 passes by Unanimous voice vote Yes at 9:01pm.

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 9 as recommended:

Seconded at 9:02pm

Article as Written

Article 9.: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for the design and construction of capital improvements to the Town's sewer lift stations, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any action relative thereto.

Town Manager speaks at 9:02pm a few years back approved money on lift stations. The Lynnhurst area and there is an urgency at Hammersmith Village area, trying to improve the lift stations. The DEP is involved replacing the 25-year-old equipment.

No Discussion

Call for the question at 9:04pm

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$700,000.00 for the purpose of design and construction of capital improvements to the Town's sewer lift stations, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto. The source of funding is a borrowing authorization.

Article 9 passes by Unanimous voice vote Yes at 9:04pm

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 10 as recommended:

Seconded at 9:10pm

Article as Written

Article 10.: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for the design and construction of capital improvements to Town-owned bridges, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto.

No Discussion

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend Indefinite Postponement.

Article 10 passes by Unanimous voice vote Yes at 9:06pm

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 11 as recommended:

Seconded at 9:07pm

Article as Written

Article 11.: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for the planning and construction of drainage capital improvements, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager speaks at 9:07pm has a draft study put together regarding Storm Water drainage issues around the town. Money for DPW to put together design and permitting and then come back to get more funding to repair these areas. This is part of the Town's Master Plan.

Bob Palleschi, Precinct 7 speaks at 9:08pm will Federal Funds be available?

Town Manager said he is looking at all grants that will be available, so yes.

Call for the question at 9:08pm

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$500,000.00 for the planning and construction of drainage capital improvements including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto. The source of funding is a borrowing authorization.

Article 11 passes by Unanimous voice vote Yes at 9:09pm.

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 12 as recommended:

Seconded at 9:10pm

Article as Written

Article 12.: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for the planning and construction costs associated with the enforcement of the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto; and to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Managers speaks at 9:10pm LCR (Lead and Copper Rule) the EPA has put out requirements and standards. The Town has completed phase 1 and need this money for phase 2, public and private materials needed. The next phase will be replacing.

No Discussion

Call for the question at 9:11pm

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$250,000.00 for the planning and construction costs associated with the enforcement of the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto. The source of funding is a borrowing authorization.

Article 12 passes by Unanimous voice vote Yes at 9:11pm.

As a courtesy to the Finance Committee, Chris Riley Precinct 2 moves Article 13 as recommended:

Seconded at 9:12pm

Article as Written

Article 13.: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money for the purpose of repairing or replacing Town water hydrants and valves, including payment of costs incidental or related thereto; to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Town Manager speaks at 9:12pm this is an ongoing task at DPW, the replacement of hydrants and valves. Additional money needed for replacement with a lot of problems with older valves in the town and to prevent less issues.

No Discussion

Call for the question at 9:15pm

Article as Voted: Voted to recommend the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$200,000.00 for the purpose of repairing or replacing Town water hydrants and valves, including payment of costs incidental or related thereto. The source of funding is a borrowing authorization.

Article 13 passes by Unanimous voice vote Yes at 9:15pm.

Motion to adjourn the May 1, 2023 Special Town Meeting at 9:16pm.

Seconded at 9:16pm

Unanimous voice vote Yes to adjourn at 9:16pm.

Adjourned at 9:16pm, sine die.

Sincerely

Ellen Joyce Schena, CMMC
Saugus Town Clerk