

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – AUGUST 2, 2022

**APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN–MEETING MINUTES
August 2, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER – Chairwoman Corbett called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30pm

PRESENT: Jaie Bergeron, Heather Corbett, Kevin Cote, Jason Croteau, Charlene Takesian, Interim Town Administrator Joseph Roark

ABSENT: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MEETING MINUTES REVIEW

July 12, 2022, and July 19, 2022

MOTION: (Cote/Bergeron) To approve the July 12, 2022, and July 19, 2022 meeting minutes as amended.

VOTE: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

OPEN FORUM

No one came forward to address the Board in open forum.

APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments on August 2, 2022.

2023 BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUDGET REVIEW

Fire Department and Emergency Management – Chief Midgley and Deputy Ignatowicz

Chief Midgley started with the budget for Emergency Management. He started by mentioning that the \$260.00 increase was due to the contractual rate changes for himself and the office manager. He also stated that the \$3,500.00 equipment repairs budget is not just for repairs, but also once per year, during the winter, they bring in a contractor to clear out the 80 cisterns throughout the Town.

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47

48 Chief Midgley then moved on to the Fire Department's budget. He started by mentioning the
49 contractual salary increases. He also noted that the former Deputy Chief's salary had been
50 removed and refunded under the new full time Deputy Chief salary, which they are asking the
51 Board to consider. Mr. Midgley explained that there was a \$16,000.00 increase in the budget for
52 vacation pay, overtime pay, emergency coverage, internal training, and other contractual items.

53

54 Deputy Chief Ignatowicz then stated that there was a \$739.00 increase in the budget for fire
55 education backfill coverage. There was also a \$73.00 increase for the company office
56 development. He also explained that E.M.T and paramedic refresher courses run on opposite
57 years, which is noted in the budget. The budget for education incentives will remain the same.
58 The budget for position incentives increased by \$2,500.00 due to the Chief wanting to reinstate
59 the IT position in the Fire Department. The Acting Officer budget will remain the same.

60

61 Mr. Cote asked them to explain more about the IT position they would like to add. Deputy Chief
62 Ignatowicz explained that the IT Officer will oversee things like the tablets in the trucks,
63 dispatching and medical report tablets, software for testing and radio issues. Chief Midgley
64 explained that part of his role is communications and communications infrastructure, and
65 eventually this role will need to be taken over for him when he retires. He also explained that an
66 individual already working in the department has been selected by FEMA to be on the Mass
67 Task Force for Communications. Mr. Cote asked if that was what the \$2,500.00 stipend was for,
68 and Chief Midgley confirmed that it was.

69

70 Chief Midgley then explained how the FLSA is a number that is developed by the Town
71 Administration by taking the amount that they are at in January, and then doubling it. He
72 explained that this was a high year for overtime, but the budget will be decreasing by \$7,000.00
73 for 2023.

74

75 Deputy Chief Ignatowicz went on to state that the budget for earned time buy back is calculated
76 based on every employee who is eligible to use this benefit. Ms. Takesian stated that she thought
77 the Town had a budget for employees buying back earned time. Chairwoman Corbett explained
78 that it is separate, and the department has its own budget for this.

79

80 The budget for call department salaries was decreased by \$10,000.00 since there are only two
81 call department employees. Chairwoman Corbett asked if 2 employees were adequate. Chief
82 Midgley explained that in the past, the Board wanted to abolish the call department, but they
83 ended up deciding to keep on the employees who had been working there for over 18 years.

84

85 Deputy Chief Ignatowicz stated that the budget for ambulance supplies has no increase. The fire
86 supplies budget had small increases due the cost of the items increasing. He also explained that
87 they are required to replace any gear that is over 10 years old, and that the materials are hard to
88 find now. He explained that one set of turn out gear is now over \$3,000.00.

89

90 Chief Midgley stated that the budget for office supplies is calculated by their office manager and
91 that there is no increase in the budget. Deputy Chief Ignatowicz explained that there was a
92 \$120.00 increase for the Hazmat budget due to the gas meters cost rising. Chief Midgley

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93 explained that there was a decrease in costs with their phone company due to renegotiated items,
94 but that they needed to switch carriers from Sprint to Verizon, and that Verizon did recently
95 increase their costs. Deputy Chief Ignatowicz stated that the ambulance fuel budget does have an
96 increase. The vehicle maintenance and repair budget had an increase of just over \$3,200.00 due
97 to the price increase of tires. The equipment maintenance and repairs budget did not have an
98 increase.

99

100 Chief Midgley stated that the Fire Department has been having issues finding batteries for their
101 radios, and that they are not projected to be available until 2023. He explained that the radio
102 maintenance budget is mostly covered by their insurance, and that there is no increase. Deputy
103 Chief Ignatowicz stated that there is no increase in the equipment repair budget. He also
104 explained that there is a \$600.00 reduction in the budget for equipment that will not need to be
105 tested for 3 more years.

106

107 Chief Midgley explained that there is a contractual increase in the photocopier budget. He also
108 stated that the communications infrastructure budget is split between the Fire Department and the
109 Police Department and covers any issues or repairs. He noted that the budget is high because
110 they ran into many issues with it last year since it is so old.

111

112 Ms. Takesian asked if the \$10,000.00 for the radio contract budget was the total budget that is
113 split between the Fire Department and the Police Department, or if it is \$10,000.00 each. Chief
114 Midgley explained that it is \$20,000.00 total, so \$10,000.00 each. Ms. Takesian asked if the
115 defibrillator budget covered all the A.E.D machines hanging in town buildings. Chief Midgley
116 explained that it only covers the three advanced cardiac monitors in their ambulances.

117

118 Mr. Bergeron asked about the dumpster budget. Chief Midgley explained that they do have to
119 cover the cost of the dumpster at the station, and that the price has been slowly increasing over
120 the years.

121

122 Chief Midgley stated that the State of New Hampshire no longer has a contract with a company
123 to supply oxygen. Since this contract ended, they have seen a 500% increase in the cost of
124 oxygen. He also stated they are in the process of renegotiating the dispatch contract since it
125 raised from 3% to 3.5%. Mr. Cote asked if the dispatch contract was under rentals due to it being
126 at a different facility. Chief Midgley confirmed that it is a rental fee.

127

128 Chief Midgley explained that the ambulance equipment budget is remaining the same. Deputy
129 Chief Ignatowicz stated that there is no increase in the new fire equipment. Chief Midgley
130 explained that the uniform expenses budget is contractual, and that there is a decrease in the
131 budget. The general expenses budget has a \$625.00 increase due to costs rising in the Hazmat
132 District. The Chief explained that the department receives a lot of grant money through the
133 Hazmat District. There is also a \$3,000.00 increase in fire training supplies due to needing
134 supplies for live burns to help the department's ISO rating. There was also an increase in the
135 brush permit rates. Mr. Cote asked what the brush permits do. Chief Midgley explained that
136 instead of the Town funding the warden's salary, they bill the State of New Hampshire for burn
137 permits, and they do not have to cover the fees themselves. Mr. Cote asked why we pay
138 \$4,000.00. Chief Midgley explained that this money gets reimbursed to the Town.

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139

140 Chief Midgley explained there is a slight increase in the budget for tuition reimbursement since
141 one of their contractual members is going to school. There are other minor increases due to the
142 company the department uses for their physicals and vaccinations. He also explained that they
143 have to stop running their Flu Shot clinic due to not enough people signing up for it.

144

145 Chief Midgley stated that there is a \$30,203.00 increase in the Fire Department 2023 budget.

146

147 Mr. Cote asked if the budget for administrative overtime was for a salary position. Chief
148 Midgley explained that this is for when they must call someone in to swap out narcotics, a fire
149 prevention program or anything that is not usual fire fighter duties, it is not a specific person.

150

151 Chairwoman Corbett stated that the 2022 operating budget for the Fire Department was
152 \$2,883,761.00. The 2023 default budget is \$2,903,414.00. This is an increase of \$21,771.00. The
153 2023 requested budget is \$2,918,172.00.

154

155

156 **Police Department** - Captain Perriello, Captain Toom, Admin Assistant Lingley

157

158 Captain Perriello started by explaining that there was an overall decrease in the salary budget due
159 to staff changes. However, there is an increase in the pay for crossing guards from \$15.00 an
160 hour to \$18.00 an hour. Also, part-time officers will now receive \$22.79 an hour instead of
161 \$21.92 an hour.

162

163 Captain Perriello then stated that there is a significant decrease in the budget for the Fair Labor
164 Standards Act. She also stated that there was a decrease in the earn time and minimum
165 mandatory staffing budget. She explained that when they agreed to hiring two more full-time
166 officers, that \$11,000.00 would be taken out of the minimum mandatory staffing budget. By
167 hiring two more officers, they can always keep three or four patrol cars out, depending on what
168 is necessary at that time. Captain Perriello informed that there is a decrease in the elections
169 budget as well.

170

171 Captain Perriello then stated that there is a significant increase in the roll call overtime budget.
172 She explained that this is contractual, and a federal mandate. The Union members are entitled to
173 15 minutes of overtime per shift to exchange information with the next shift coming in. The total
174 increase for the roll call overtime budget is \$27,531.00. She also explained that there was an
175 increase in the budget for in-service training for full-time officers, which is a mandate through
176 the Police Standards and Training Council. This Council has increased every officer across the
177 State by four additional training hours.

178

179 The SOU training call out budget is decreasing. There are also bi-annual trainings that get
180 switched every year, so one training budget will increase but the other will decrease to \$0.00.
181 Captain Perriello also explained that the supplies budget is increasing by \$6,000.00 due to the
182 cost of ammunition rising.

183

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184 Captain Perriello stated that the budget for gas and oil is set by the Town, however, the new
185 cruisers the Police Department is about to receive are hybrids and have better gas mileage than
186 the current cars. Mr. Cote asked about the budget for new tires since they are going to be
187 receiving new cars very soon. Captain Toom explained that the tires on the new vehicles are not
188 great for winter, so they replace them with winter tires in the fall.

189
190 Regarding the repairs and projects budget, Captain Perriello explained that there are some
191 contractual increases, including the contract they split with the Fire Department. There was also
192 a \$500.00 increase for the cloud-based server due to a new company taking over the software for
193 the cruiser's cameras. There is also a \$1,200.00 increase in the promotional hiring expenses due
194 to the Department being in a large transition. There is also a \$3,500 increase in computer
195 expenses due to a mandate that requires protection of the Police Department's technology. This
196 increase also includes the department receiving the business version of Adobe.

197
198 Captain Perriello then went on to list the Police Department's wish list items. She explained that
199 the first item is the Department getting a therapy dog. There is a place called Boonefield
200 Labradors that donate Labs to departments in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. She explained
201 that the dog would be a sworn officer and assigned a comfort handler who the dog will go home
202 with. Hudson K-9 is a training facility that can certify the dog as a therapy dog, there are thirty
203 week of training that will cost \$1,575.00. The handler will also receive 4.5 hours of overtime per
204 week for training and care of the dog. There is also a yearly cost of \$2,047.00 for food, initial
205 shots, and other necessary equipment for the dog. The total cost for the wish list item is
206 \$10,839.00.

207
208 The second wish list item Captain Perriello requested for the Police Department was rifle
209 replacement. The department's current rifles are around twenty years old. The cost to replace
210 them would be \$5,500.00, including the trade-in of their current rifles. There would be eight new
211 rifles.

212
213 Captain Perriello also explained that their third wish list item is to replace the department's 2009
214 Harley Davidson motorcycle. She noted that they also asked for this last year as well. She
215 explained that the intended life span of the bike was 10 years, and that the bike is starting to
216 break down. She also mentioned the possibility of leasing a new motorcycle. The quote for a new
217 motorcycle is \$25,483.00. Mr. Cote asked if they had any numbers for leasing a new motorcycle.
218 Captain Perriello explained that the interest rates were extremely high, but that she could get a
219 quote. Interim Town Administrator Roark explained that they would not lease from the
220 dealership due to the high rates but would lease the motorcycle through a municipal lease.

221
222 Captain Perriello stated that the Police Department's last wish list item is to hire an architect to
223 draft plans for the new animal shelter. The cost for this is estimated to be about \$10,000.00 for
224 commercial architect plans, but they are still waiting to receive an actual quote. Ms. Takesian
225 asked what they would be looking for when building the shelter. Captain Perriello explained that
226 they are looking to move the animal shelter to behind the Police Department, which would
227 require some clearing of the land. They also would like to add an overhang to cover the police
228 cruisers during inclement weather. Ms. Takesian asked what the building would contain. Captain

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229 Perriello explained that there would be a small kitchen area with running water, a bathroom, a
230 laundry area, and electricity, heat, and air conditioning.

231
232 Chairwoman Corbett stated that the 2022 operating budget for the Police Department was
233 \$3,642,399.00. The 2023 default budget is \$3,689,866.00. The 2023 requested budget is
234 \$3,698,386.00. The requests for this year total \$55,987.00.

235
236 Mr. Croteau asked if there was any trade-in value on the current motorcycle that the department
237 has. Captain Perriello stated that the trade-in value was extremely low due to wear and tear on
238 the bike when training. She explained that it would be useful to keep the old bike for training
239 purposes, and for events like parades.

240

241

242 **Highway Department - Mr. Hoffman and Ms. Martin**

243

244 Interim Town Administrator Roark explained that he had spoken to the Highway Department,
245 and that the superintendent of the Highway Department is currently interim, so the salary for that
246 position will be changing in October.

247

248 Ms. Martin stated that any changes in the salary and overtime budgets were contractual. The
249 supplies budget is an estimate since the price of salt and other supplies for this year has not been
250 established. They increased many of them due to costs rising. The telephone budget is raising by
251 \$79.00 due to adding two new phones, and the price of one rising. The budget for gas increased
252 as well due to costs rising.

253

254 Mr. Hoffman explained that the repairs budget only increased slightly, and that since they started
255 housing the vehicles in a garage, less maintenance is needed on them.

256

257 Ms. Martin explained that the rentals budget is also an estimate and that they went off the bids
258 they opened in May. The catch basin cleaner and sweeping hour bids are not completed until
259 November or December.

260

261 Mr. Hoffman stated that the plow contracts increased due to the increase of fuel prices, and
262 upgrade equipment on trucks. Mr. Cote asked if the Town subcontracts eleven vehicles total. Mr.
263 Hoffman confirmed that this number fluctuates based on the needs and availability of the
264 contractors.

265

266 Ms. Takesian informed that the default budget is a contractual obligation for the department. She
267 asked how they know what the default budget would be regarding bucket truck and crane tree
268 removal when they have not yet established a contract. She also asked why the bucket truck and
269 crane tree removal budget is the only line not increased. She stated that their default budget for
270 bucket truck and crane tree removal is \$13,120.00, which is the same as the operating budget
271 from this year. However, in the requested budget it is \$44,800.00. Mr. Cote asked if the contract
272 with the tree removal company was \$13,120.00 for this year, and if they were requesting
273 \$44,800.00 for next year. They explained that there was such a large increase due to an increase
274 in the numbers of hours needed for tree cutting. Ms. Martin explained they allotted for 64 hours

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275 this year, at \$700.00 an hour. Interim Town Administrator Roark added that he would inquire
276 about what exactly is in each budget.

277
278 Mr. Cote asked if the streetlight utility expense was the cost for the electricity needed for the
279 streetlights or if anything else was involved. Mr. Hoffman explained that this budget covered the
280 flashing lights on various streets in the Town. Ms. Martin added that Liberty Utilities sends them
281 a bill for these lights.

282
283 Mr. Hoffman explained that they had a wish list item of a catch basin cleaner. He said they have
284 about 700 catch basins now, but more are added when new streets are constructed. When you
285 hire a company to clean them, they complete anywhere from 80-100 basins a day per truck, and
286 there is not time to inspect them all. He explained that they don't do a thorough job and would
287 like the department to have their own truck to clean them and other pipes. Interim Town
288 Administrator also added that there is only one company locally that cleans catch basins, so there
289 are no other options for cheaper prices or better work. He also stated that within 10 years, the
290 truck would pay for itself. The cost of the truck is around \$318,000.00, but they pay around
291 \$36,000.00 a year for the current company to clean them. Mr. Hoffman also explained that they
292 have applied for a loan to help cover some of the cost of the truck as well. Mr. Bergeron asked if
293 the Town had the manpower and time to clean the catch basins in Town without having to hire
294 more people. Mr. Hoffman explained that they do, and that they have room to store the truck as
295 well. Mr. Cote asked how many times a year the current company comes. Mr. Hoffman explains
296 that they come once a year, for two to three weeks.

297
298 Chairwoman Corbett stated that the Highway Department's 2022 operating budget was
299 \$1,863,582.00. The 2023 default budget \$1,969,163.00. The 2023 requested budget is
300 \$2,156,142.00.

301
302

303 **Selectmen** – Interim Town Administrator Joe Roark

304
305 Interim Town Administrator Roark started by stating that the budget for salaries would have
306 some contractual increases of 2.5%. He also noted that some contracts will be expiring this year,
307 so there may be some changes in the budget. The supplies and telephone budget will remain the
308 same. He stated that the copying budget will slightly increase. The postage budget will remain
309 the same. There is an increase on the budget for the town report voting guide. Chairwoman
310 Corbett noted that it may be worth looking into using a new company to print the voting guides.
311 Interim Town Administrator Roark stated that they do try and push people to use the electronic
312 version, but many still request the printed books.

313
314 Interim Town Administrator Roark stated there was an overall \$40,000.00 increase in the
315 Selectmen budget.

316
317 Chairwoman Corbett stated that the 2022 operating budget for the Selectmen was \$630,532.00.
318 The 2023 default budget is \$659,533.00. The 2023 requested budget is \$670,604.00.

319

320 **Town Buildings**

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321
322 Interim Town Administrator Roark started by explaining that the budget for electricity was
323 increased by about 10%, but may not be enough, due to costs rising. The propane budget is
324 contractual and has a small increase. The landscaping, snow removal and round-a-bout budget is
325 an estimate based on the 2022 contract price since the new contract is still being negotiated.
326 There was a total decrease of \$300,000.00 in the 2023 budget, due to the Planning Department
327 renovation in the 2022 budget.

328
329 Interim Town Administrator Roark stated that the first wish list item is install two new wells at
330 Muldoon and Lyons Park/Meetinghouse Park, due to the increased level of green space. The
331 current wells we have are working almost 24 hours per day with rest time in-between and are
332 struggling to produce enough water. The estimate provided for Muldoon Park is \$15,865.00 and
333 Lyons Park/Meetinghouse Park irrigation well would be \$14,365.00. Interim Town
334 Administrator Roark noted that there is \$10,000.00 in this year's budget not being used, that
335 could possibly go towards one of the wells to be put in this year.

336
337 Interim Town Administrator Roark asked Mr. Scanzani to come up and speak on behalf of the
338 Historical Society building projects needing to be done in the future. Mr. Scanzani stated that he
339 would like to put together a map and hang up plaques on the significant historical place in Town.
340 He also stated he would like to fix the windows in the Historical Society building. He would also
341 like to remove the rest of the fluorescent lights in the building and replace them with LED lights.
342 He also stated that the building needs to be pressure washed for the masonry repairs to be
343 completed. Mr. Scanzani noted he will have a quote for this for reconsideration. He stated that
344 the roof needs repairs, and that since it is slate there are few companies who can complete this
345 job. The flashing needs to be replaced due to leaks in the attic. Also, the front steps need to be
346 replaced since they are a safety hazard. Ms. Takesian asked if he could get more quotes for the
347 masonry and inside work that needs to be done. Mr. Scanzani explained that the contractor he
348 has used in the past, and the one he has the current quote from, is his best option price and work
349 wise.

350
351 Mr. Bergeron noted that it may be helpful to get more quotes just to make sure they are going
352 with the best option. Interim Town Administrator Roark stated they could put out an RFP for 30
353 days. Mr. Croteau noted that going forward, it may be best to have two or three quotes for any
354 project requests, and that putting out an RFP for all the projects may be helpful. Ms. Takesian
355 asked if it was a policy to request bids for projects over a certain amount of money. Mr. Cote
356 asked if Mr. Scanzani thought the issues that are safety concerns should be addressed first. Mr.
357 Scanzani explained that people may enter the building through the side, handicap accessible door
358 until the front stairs are replaced.

359
360 Mr. Croteau asked if they could also get more bids on the well installs. Interim Town
361 Administrator Roark stated he would inquire about more bids. Mr. Cote noted it may be useful to
362 open the project to bids.

363
364
365 **Debt Services**

366

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367 Interim Town Administrator Roark stated that there is a \$280,000.00 decrease due to the
368 Municipal Building Bond being paid off in 2022. The Conservation Bond continues and will be
369 paid off in 2023. The Ford Focus and fire rescue pumper debt has a slight increase due to interest
370 but will be paid off in 2023. The golf course is the same and will be paid off in 2026. The Police
371 fleet lease budget is a place keeper, since they are unsure what the price will be this year. The
372 boiler project pays off in 2028. The new bond for conservation land purchases will be paid off in
373 fiscal year 2032 and is \$65,000.00 more than the past bond. Ms. Takesian noted it is significantly
374 more since they only made one payment on the bond last year, and this year they are making two
375 payments.

376
377 Mr. Cote noted that the cost of borrowing money to purchase land is extremely high due to
378 interest, so putting money away to purchase land in cash would be better in the long run. He
379 explained it may be helpful to put money away every year to save up to buy land with cash.

380

381

382 **Treasurer**

383

384 Interim Town Administrator Roark noted that the budget for treasurer is level funded this year.
385 Ms. Takesian noted that they should remove the signature stamp from the budget since the
386 checks now come printed with the signature on them. Chairwoman Corbett suggested that they
387 send the physical stamp over to the Historical Society.

388

389 Ms. Takesian also noted that the treasurer's office does not need special ink anymore, and that
390 they could just use regular toner to print.

391

392

393 **DISCUSSION**

394

395 **Dam on Gumpas Pond**

396

397 Mr. Cote stated that they are still trying to find a mechanism to take \$18,000.00 from the
398 building maintenance account to finish the assessment of the dam. However, the dam is in
399 private ownership, which makes things more difficult. He noted that it is important to do
400 something pro-active before the issue gets worse and costs more money. Because it may be a
401 hazardous situation to citizens in Town, there may be a way to spend public funds on a privately
402 owned dam. Interim Town Administrator Roark noted that they be able to find the money from
403 the building maintenance fund, but that it may make the budget go over. He also noted that if
404 they would be able to adopt the dam, and get a better idea of what is wrong, they may be able to
405 find more funding. Mr. Cote and Chairwoman Corbett noted it may not even be possible to use
406 public funds for this. Mr. Bergeron asked if the HOA was opposed to gifting the dam to the
407 town. Mr. Cote explained that they are not opposed to this idea. Mr. Bergeron informed that if
408 they owned the dam, they would be able to apply for grants to repair the dam. Chairwoman
409 Corbett noted that there is a warrant about residents gifting land to the Town, and any
410 stipulations surrounding that.

411

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412 Mr. Cote also noted that there is a chance, based on the cost to fix the dam, that the HOA may
413 want to keep the dam and the houses will cover the costs themselves. The Board decided they
414 will enquire about being able to use public funds to cover the costs of the dam. Mr. Croteau
415 asked if the HOA is trying to raise funds to cover the costs. Mr. Cote confirmed that they are.
416 Ms. Takesian asked why the Town should cover the costs, since it is private ownership. Mr. Cote
417 and Chairwoman Corbett noted that because it is a safety issue, and that the State estimated one
418 loss of life and many structural losses. Ms. Takesian asked if the dam was red listed. Mr. Cote
419 confirmed that it was.

420

421

SELECTMEN AND TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

423

424 **Interim Town Administrator Roark** stated that the Clerk's Office is now open until 6:00 pm
425 on Tuesdays, and also open during their lunch hour as well.

426

427 **Mr. Cote** had nothing to report.

428

429 **Mr. Bergeron** had nothing to report.

430

431 **Ms. Takesian** had nothing to report.

432

433 **Mr. Croteau** had nothing to report.

434

435 **Chairwoman Corbett** stated that there will be a Board of Selectmen meeting on August 9,
436 2022.

437

438

439 **MOTION:** (Cote/Croteau) To adjourn the meeting.

440

441 **VOTE:** (5-0-0) The motion carried.

442

443

444 The meeting ended at approximately 9:12 pm.

445

446

ADJOURNMENT

448

449

450 Respectfully submitted,

451 Makayla Clougherty

452 Recording Secretary