

**TOWN OF DEDHAM
450 WASHINGTON STREET
DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF THE BYLAW REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 18, 2025, 7:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS:

Cecilia Emery Butler	Chair
Fred Wofford	Vice Chair
Micah Flynn	Member
Norman Vigil	Member
Jennifer Doherty	Member
Michelle Labadini	Member

STAFF:

Nancy A. Baker	Assistant Town Manager
Doreen LeBrecque	Assistant to Administration

ATTENDEES:

John F. Tocci	Chair, Dedham School Building Rehabilitation Committee
Dimitria Sullivan	Vice Chair, Select Board

Minutes prepared by Azra Ahmad of Minutes Solutions Inc. from a recording.

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and the Members and the public having been given adequate and proper notice of the meeting, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments.

3. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION – BYLAWS REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

On a motion duly made, it was resolved to take Article 24 out of order for discussion prior to Articles 23 and 25. Motion carried.

3.1 ARTICLE 24 REVIEW

Mr. Tocci provided an overview of Article 24, a proposed bylaw change under consideration by the School Building Rehabilitation Committee (SBRC) for several years. The proposal seeks to increase SBRC membership from seven to 11 voting members by adding the school superintendent, a planning board member, the Town Manager or designee, and one at-large member appointed by the School Committee who is a parent/guardian of a student in Dedham Public School. The addition of a planning board member is intended to ensure representation and input throughout the SBRC process.

The Committee observed that certain provisions in Article 24 did not appear to align with CMR funding requirements. Mr. Tocci explained that the original bylaw included language regarding designees, and the proposed changes are intended to remain consistent with this language. A discussion ensued and it was noted that the Massachusetts School Building Authority has not indicated non-compliance with the SBRC's configuration to date. Changing the appointing authority could raise a scope issue with the moderator, though this would be at the moderator's discretion.

Upon an inquiry from the Committee, Mr. Tocci advised that the SBRC is seeking an odd number of voting members and that the superintendent should be included as a voting

rationale for the proposed additional members, noting that a larger committee would enhance diversity of viewpoints, experiences, and knowledge among voting members.

Upon an inquiry from the Committee, Mr. Tocci explained the importance of increasing SBRC voting members to address quorum issues at community meetings. He also stated that the SBRC reviewed school building committees in other towns with similar projects.

3.2 ARTICLE 23 REVIEW

Ms. Sullivan advised the Committee that the Town of Dedham has seen a rise in abandoned and unregistered vehicles along with increasing complaints from residents. This issue has led to a review of the current bylaws and options to strengthen enforcement to ensure public safety, neighborhood aesthetics, and community wellbeing. Ms. Sullivan stated that the proposed bylaw is a proactive measure and while the State of Massachusetts requires vehicle registration and valid inspection stickers, the Town of Dedham lacks clear enforcement regarding inspection stickers. Complaints about abandoned vehicles have tripled in recent years, and the Select Board has reviewed regulations from other municipalities as case studies.

Upon an inquiry from the Committee, Ms. Sullivan advised that zoning regulations do not address vehicle inspection stickers. The Committee further noted existing bylaws on abandoned vehicles and nuisance, and Ms. Sullivan explained that creating a separate bylaw for abandoned vehicles could strengthen enforcement. A discussion ensued and the Committee voiced its concerns regarding issues with selective enforcement and potential legal consequences related to the language in the proposed bylaw. Ms. Sullivan clarified that all vehicles have a registration sticker and the proposed bylaw would also include the vehicle's inspection sticker.

3.3 ARTICLE 25 REVIEW

Ms. Baker advised the Committee that the Financial Policies Committee intends to increase the threshold for the capital plan and operating budget from \$10,000 to \$25,000. She noted that the Financial Policies Committee recommended that items of \$25,000 or less be included in the operating budget. Larger items should go through the capital review process to avoid paying interest on smaller expenses that can be funded through the operating budget.

4. DISCUSSION AND VOTE – FINAL REPORT TO BE PRESENTED TO SELECT BOARD

On a motion duly made, it was resolved that the Bylaw Review Committee postpone Article 23 indefinitely. Motion carried.

On a motion duly made, it was resolved that the Bylaw Review Committee agreed to Article 24. Motion carried.

On a motion duly made, it was resolved that the Bylaw Review Committee agreed to Article 25 to amend Section 39-8 of the General Bylaws to increase from \$10,000 to \$25,000 the cost of "capital improvements" and "operating capital expenditures" subject to the capital budget process outlined in Section 39-9. Motion carried.

The Committee agreed that further work was required regarding Article 23. Reviewing and amending the existing bylaw on abandoned vehicles would be more appropriate.

The Committee discussed Article 24 and some Committee members agreed with Mr. Tocci's reasoning for increasing the voting membership of the SBRC. The Committee also issues in Article 24 that needed to be addressed regarding Committee members' experience. The Committee discussed the option to postpone Article 24 indefinitely, put it forth at a town meeting, and review it during the decennial bylaw review meeting.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was discussed.

6. **NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Bylaw Review Committee meeting was not scheduled.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made and carried, it was voted to adjourn the Committee meeting at 8:24 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Cecilia Emery Butler
Cecilia Emery Butler, Chair

10-6-2025
Date