

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 7, 2023**

In attendance were Chairman Randolph G. LaMattina; Vice Chairman Daniel L. Salvucci; Clerk Justin R. Evans; Members Shawn M. Kain and Dr. Carl F. Kowalski; and Interim Town Administrator Francis J. Lynam.

Chairman LaMattina opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and was followed by a moment of silence dedicated to the family of Thomas Connolly, Jr. Mr. Connolly, who recently passed away unexpectedly, was the father of Lieutenant Dan Connolly of the WPD.

Chairman LaMattina announced the meeting is being recorded and televised by WHCA.

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept bill and payroll warrants. **Second** Dr. Kowalski, **so voted 5-0.**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept correspondence in the Read File. **Second** Dr. Kowalski, **so voted 5-0.**

PUBLIC FORUM

Dawn Varley, Town Clerk was present to discuss several matters:

- There were 712 dog licenses for 2023
- The second round of census were mailed on February 6, 2023
- It is being recommended by the Registrars not to have in-person early voting for the Annual Town Election due to the cost. Early voting by mail will still take place.
- Nomination papers for several positions will be available until March 31, 2023

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept the Open Session minutes of the January 24, 2023, Board of Selectmen meeting. **Second** Dr. Kowalski, **so voted 5-0.**

COVID-19 UPDATE

Chief Clancy provided a Covid-19 update. There were 291 tests performed with 35 positive cases with a positivity rate of 12.02%. The numbers will continue to be monitored and are expected to decrease.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

S. Kain and K. Lytle provided a budget worksheet for FY2024.

Mr. Kain stated that 70% of excise tax bills were paid in January with the total collected being a \$140,000 increase over what was collected last year. Regarding the Article 2 expenditures; steps and lanes are staying consistent with a small increase due to the fire department having several employees with 20-year service anniversaries. We are close to having a balanced budget.

The budget for the School Committee was run at 5% for this report. There is a \$1M budget gap. Mr. Lynam noted that while it is important to support education, a 5% increase will absorb every dollar of revenue. He further recommended that the budget process be started earlier next year. Mr. Salvucci stated that Whitman is the lowest paying town per student for those attending South Shore Technical High School, yet there is still an increase of \$165,000 to the budget. This is the result of an increase of 11 students.

Chairman LaMattina conveyed that at last week's School Committee budget meeting, it was proven that there is no collaboration by the School Committee in having a budget conversation and that the School Committee has still not reached out. Mr. Lynam will reach out to the Hanson Town Administrator to show her the reality of the budget.

Mr. Kain suggested that having a conversation about debt and capital ratios be on the agenda at an upcoming Capital Committee meeting.

Mr. Evans thanked the Budgeting Committee for this very helpful presentation and suggested his takeaway was that the Town budget increase is also at 5% as the School Committee is also requesting.

Mr. Kain expressed that the Madden recommendation was made years ago, before Covid-19 and that the school budget is not sustainable.

Mr. Lytle stated that with salaries, steps and lanes, there is \$80,000 left after the School Committee budget and that the Town cannot count on free cash, a point also made by Mr. Lynam.

NEW BUSINESS

Facilities Manager: Discussion re: Maintenance Department.

A request was made by Facilities Manager Todd DeCouto to hire a full-time maintenance employee, as several part-time positions have been dissolved over the last 15 years.

Chief Hanlon stated that the Police Department would like to retain the 3-day a week outside vendor currently used.

Chief Clancy expressed that the Fire Department has significant issues and that the Facilities Manager has been very busy at the station.

Chairman LaMattina requested that a job description and salary range be provided to the Board at a future meeting.

Mr. Lynam praised the work being done and noted this is not the year to be adding a full-time position; however, the issue will be addressed as best it can.

Resignation: Dawn Byers, Whitman Cultural Council

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept the resignation of Dawn Byers from the position of Member, Whitman Cultural Council, effective February 7, 2023. **Second** Dr. Kowalski, **so voted 5-0.**

Rescind Appointment: Lisa Riley, Assistant Deputy Director-Administration, WEMA

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to rescind the appointment of Lisa Riley from the position of Assistant Deputy Director-Administration, WEMA. **Second** Dr. Kowalski, **so voted 5-0.**

Appointment: Amy Desmond, Assistant Deputy Director-Administration, WEMA

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to appoint Amy Desmond to the position of Assistant Deputy Director-Administration, WEMA, through June 30, 2023. **Second** Dr. Kowalski, **so voted 5-0.**

Rescind Appointment: Brandon Griffin, Community Preservation Committee (Planning Board Representative)

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to rescind the appointment of Brandon Griffin from the Community Preservation Committee (Planning Board representative), effective February 7, 2023. **Second Dr. Kowalski, so voted 5-0.**

Appointment: Adam Somerville, Community Preservation Committee (Planning Board Representative)

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to appoint Adam Somerville to the Community Preservation Committee (Planning Board Representative, indefinite term). **Second Dr. Kowalski, so voted 5-0.**

Correction to Date of Expiration of Appointment: Robert Kimball, ZBA

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to correct the date of expiration of the appointment of Robert Kimball as Associate Member, Board of Appeals, to June 30, 2023. **Second Dr. Kowalski, so voted 5-0.**

Declare as Surplus: Old Firefighter Gear

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of Chief Clancy to declare old firefighter gear as surplus material and to donate said gear to the Fire Cadet program at South Shore Technical High School. **Second Dr. Kowalski, so voted 5-0.**

Declare as Surplus: Ambulance Stretcher

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of Chief Clancy to declare an ambulance stretcher as surplus material and to donate said stretcher to Brockton Hospital. **Second Dr. Kowalski, so voted 5-0.**

Declare as Surplus: 2000 Chevrolet Ambulance (DPW)

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of DPW Superintendent Bruce Martin to declare a 2000 Chevrolet ambulance (VIN # 1GBKC34F4YF434466) as surplus material. **Second Dr. Kowalski, so voted 5-0.**

Request to Hold Whitman Little League Opening Day Parade

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of Paul Cappelletti on behalf of Whitman Little League to conduct its Opening Day Parade on Saturday, April 22, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m. **Second Dr. Kowalski, so voted 5-0.**

OLD BUSINESS

Town Administrator Recruitment

Mr. Lynam announced that an agreement has been reached and a contract has been executed by the Town and new Town Administrator Mary Beth Carter. Mr. Lynam further stated that the Town is looking forward to the transition on February 21, 2023. Ms. Carter was in attendance and thanked the Board of Selectmen for the opportunity.

INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Discuss Request to Place Vending Machine(s) at Memorial Field

Mr. Lynam shared that a request has been made by Mr. Phillip Davis to place a vending machine at memorial Field. Mr. Lynam discussed the issue with Bruce Martin, who has concerns

regarding littering, vandalism and other damage. Chief Hanlon stated that there are cameras facing the street and the park that can be adjusted if necessary. Mr. Lynam recommended the Board not move forward with this. This would be a private vendor and the funds would not be benefiting any of the sports leagues. It was the consensus of the Board not to honor the request of Mr. Davis.

Regional Sharing – Town Accountant

The Hanson Town Administrator has contacted Mr. Lynam and advised him that Hanson is not interested in regionalizing the position of Town Account with Whitman; and that they have decided to hire their own accountant.

Cable License

Mr. Lynam stated that the cable license expires in 2024, and he is seeking permission of the Board to enter into an agreement with Attorney Bill Solomon. Mr. Lynam also plans to ask WHCA to cover the legal fees. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to authorize the interim Town Administrator to enter into an agreement with Attorney Bill Solomon for the purpose of negotiating the Cable Television License renewal, with legal fees to be paid by Whitman-Hanson Cable Access. **Second** Dr. Kowalski, **so voted 5-0**.

Mr. Lynam shared that the Department of Public Works has two employees who are in the military reserves and that the Town is responsible for paying the difference in their salary, as well as insurance, while they are serving. He thanked both employees for their service.

At 7:57 p.m. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. **Second** Dr. Kowalski, **so voted 5-0**.

Justin R. Evans, Clerk