

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 18, 2023**

The Board of Selectmen held a joint meeting with the Hanson Board of Selectmen and the Whitman-Hanson Regional School Committee. In attendance for the Whitman Board of Selectmen were Chairman Randolph G. LaMattina; Vice Chairman Daniel L. Salvucci; Clerk Justin R. Evans; Member Shawn M. Kain and Town Administrator Mary Beth Carter. Dr. Carl F. Kowalski was absent. Present for the Hanson Board of Selectmen were Chair Laura Fitzgerald-Kemmett, Vice Chair Joseph Weeks, Clerk Ann Rein, Members Edwin Heal and James Hickey; and Town Administrator Lisa M. Green. Present for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School Committee were (Whitman members) Steven Bois, Dawn Byers, Christopher Scriven, Fred Small and Beth Stafford.; and (Hanson members) Chairman Christopher Howard and Hillary Kniffen. Present via telephone were Hanson School Committee Members Michelle Bourgelas and Glen DiGravio.

Chairman LaMattina opened the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

Discussion re: The Town of Whitman, Town of Hanson and WHRSD FY24 budgets.

Mr. Small **MOVED** to appropriate the sum of \$500,000 from the WHRSD Excess & Deficiency Fund balance for the purposes of reducing the FY2024 operating assessment for the towns of Whitman and Hanson. **Second** Mr. Bois. Mr. Small feels this is something that needs to be done however, he cautioned that using these one-time funds will cause a problem in FY25. Mr. Howard suggested the two Select Boards meet more frequently next year. Ms. Stafford reminded everyone that WHRSD School Committee budget meetings are open to all. Dawn Byers voiced her opposition to the use of one-time funds. Hillary Kniffen clarified that a vote was not taken at the las School Committee meeting because they wanted to hear from the two Select Boards. Chairman Howard called for a vote in connection with the motion on the floor, **so voted 8-1 (Ms. Byers opposed).**

Mr. Small **MOVED** to certify the WHRSD FY2024 budget in accordance with PK-12 Whitman-Hanson Regional Agreement, section 4, paragraph E(2) and MGL chapter 71, section 16B at \$59,985,158.00. This includes the removal of robotics and foreign language from the FY2024 school budget. **Second** Mr. Bois, **so voted 8-1 (Ms. Byers opposed).**

Mr. Small **MOVED** to set the FY2024 WHRSD operating assessment for the Town of Whitman in accordance with the PK-12 Whitman-Hanson Regional Agreement, section 4, paragraph E(2) and MGL chapter 71, section 16B at \$17,739,500.00. **Second** Mr. Bois, **so voted 8-1 (Ms. Byers opposed).**

Mr. Small **MOVED** to set the FY2024 operating assessment for the Town of Hanson in accordance with the PK-12 Whitman-Hanson Regional Agreement, section 4, paragraph E(2)

and MGL chapter 71, section 16B at \$13,907,233.00. **Second Mr. Bois, so voted 8-1 (Ms. Byers opposed).**

Hanson Select Board member James Hickey agreed the two towns should be meeting with the School Committee earlier in the year, as opposed to 2 weeks before Town Meeting is scheduled to take place. He then **MOVED** to use \$166,000 in free cash in order to close the gap in the FY2024 assessment to the WHRSD. **Second Mr. Weeks.** Mr. Heal, Mr. Weeks, and Ms. Rein expressed their opposition to using one-time funds. Ms. Kemmett asked for a vote in connection with the motion on the floor, **so voted 3-2 (Ms. Rein and Mr. Healy opposed).**

Chairman LaMattina thanked the WHRSD School Committee for their leap of faith.

Mr. Evans **MOVED** to increase the Town's assessment to the WHRSD for FY24 to 5.96 percent. **Second Mr. Salvucci.** Mr. Salvucci said that he would not like to see any cuts to the fire or police departments due to this motion. Mr. Kain provided a report showing school statistics over the last 10 years which included the following:

2012: 202 teachers for a ratio of 21/1 with an enrollment of 4,320 students

2022: 249 teachers for a ratio of 14/1 with an enrollment of 3,539 students

Mr. Kain further commented that he would like to stick to a sustainable budget and no more than a 5% increase in the assessment each year. Chairman LaMattina agreed with Mr. Kain's comments. Chairman LaMattina would like everyone to look at who this vote affects – people in this room, friends, neighbors, children. He reminded everyone that the process has to change, and a better solution needs to be found. Mr. Kain asked Chairman LaMattina to explain what would happen if the vote does not pass this evening. Chairman LaMattina expressed that we would be back to where we started and that does not work for anyone. Mr. Salvucci asked the WHRSD School Committee to do a better job next year. Chairman LaMattina asked for a vote in connection with the motion on the floor. **So voted 3-1 (Mr. Kain opposed).**

At 6:00 p.m. the Whitman-Hanson Regional School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting (moved by Mrs. Stafford and seconded by Mr. Bois).

At 6:00 p.m. the Hanson Select Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting (moved by Mr. Hickey and seconded by Mr. Heal).

At 6:00 p.m. the Whitman Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting (moved by Mr. Salvucci, seconded by Mr. Evans).

Justin Evans, Clerk