

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING
JANUARY 8, 2019**

The meeting took place in the Selectmen's Meeting Room located in the upper level of Town Hall. In attendance were Chairman Carl F. Kowalski; Vice Chairman Daniel L. Salvucci; Clerk Brian J. Bezanson; Member Randolph G. LaMattina; Member Scott J. Lambiase; and Town Administrator Francis J. Lynam. Chairman Kowalski opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Kowalski asked everyone in attendance to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve bill and payroll warrants. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

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

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Health Insurance

Mr. Lynam announced that MMHG has introduced a vision plan for Blue Cross Blue Shield members at no cost to the town. An optional high-deduction plan is also in the works, which Mr. Lynam will revisit when more information is available. Also, due to an increase in coverage by the town's long term disability carrier, the town went to bid and was able to secure a cheaper plan which is locked in for the next three years. Mr. LaMattina asked if the MMHG will be retaining the Legacy plan. Mr. Lynam stated that 2 previous votes to discontinue the plan have failed. Currently, Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO is the best performing plan in the group; however, it is more expensive to the town and the employee. Mr. Lynam reviewed the costs of other plans; and noted that any changes will require collective bargaining with all of the unions.

Budget

Mr. Lynam distributed a pro forma Article 2 that reflects necessary funding.

BUDGET REVIEW

Finance Committee: Status of meetings with Department Heads

Chairman of the Finance Committee, Rick Anderson, advised the Board that the budget review cycle has begun, 3 months ahead of schedule. The Finance Committee has met with all department heads, who were asked to provide impact statements based on 3 percent and 6 percent budget cuts. Mr. Anderson then provided the Board with the results of the impact statements, as follows:

Council on Aging: No impact statement was received, however Barbara Garvey advised that a 3 percent cut would result in the senior center being closed on Fridays. A 6 percent cut would cause staff to be cut, such as clerical, bus drivers and outreach assistance. In addition, the passport process would also be impacted.

Assessor: A 3 percent cut would reduce the expense line, doing away with staff development. A 6 percent cut would cause a reduction in staff.

Fire Department: While the collective bargaining agreement does not allow him to provide a budget reflecting a 3 percent and 6 percent reduction, Chief Grenno advised the Finance Committee that a reduction of \$115,605 would result in the elimination of the administrative deputy position which would affect fire prevention and commercial property inspections. A reduction of \$231,210 would eliminate coverage for community events and storms, the light maintenance technician, the call department and IT duties. Training hours, overtime and EMS training will be reduced; and response times will be delayed.

Police Department: A reduction in budget would result in the layoff of 2 to 4 officers, participation in SEMLAC and the WEB Task Force would be eliminated; and follow-up investigations would be delayed.

Board of Health: An impact statement was not submitted; however, a budget reduction would result in staff cuts.

DPW: A 3 percent cut would affect response times to weekend and after-hours emergencies. The yard would not be open on Saturdays in the spring and fall for disposal of leaves and grass. A 6 percent cut would result in one full-time employee being laid off.

Town Clerk: A reduction in budget would result in a reduction in staff, delays in postings and filings and the office being closed for one or two days per week.

Recreation: A budget reduction would cause an increase in user fees.

Building Department: Inspections would be delayed due to a reduction in staff hours.

WHRSD: There has been no follow-up from the district as of yet.

Library: A 3 percent cut would result in 2 part-time technicians being laid off and the library being closed one day a week. A 6 percent cut would result in the library being closed one additional night per week. In addition, book clubs, outside performers, adult craft nights and story times would be eliminated.

Mr. Anderson noted that although they still have two weeks of work ahead, they are getting a comprehensive look at what these budget cuts will mean to the town. He also noted that it would be beneficial to have a draft Article 2 to work with. Mr. Lynam stated that a working document should be ready within a week.

Fred Small, member of the School Committee, advised the Board that reimbursement for transportation is up slightly, and the closing of the Maquan School is being calculated. Mr. Lynam advised Mr. Small that he would like to see the impact that the closing of the Maquan has had on the total budget. Mr. Lambiase suggested scheduling a meeting of the Budget Working Group one hour before the next scheduled School Committee meeting.

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that street light conversion should begin next week. This should result in a \$35,000 reduction in the budget. Also, there was an increase in meal tax revenues.

Mr. LaMattina asked how quickly National Grid's property tax is amortizing. Mr. Lynam stated that he expects it to be gone in 3 years. Mr. LaMattina suggested the Board consider freeing up levy space by taking a look at the effect the cost of renovations to the Town Hall and fire station, and the construction of the police station is having on the levy. Finance Committee Vice Chairman David Codero also reminded the Board that in 2018, Town Meeting voted to transfer \$800,000 from capital stabilization to fund salary increases for department heads and capital spending. Adding money to a budget from outside sources is not a solution because that one-time money is no longer there; and Mr. Codero asked the Board not to take the same approach this year. Mr. Anderson stated that if we want the residents of the town to pay more, a long-term plan needs to be provided to them. Mr. Lambiase suggested another meeting will have to take place between these two boards in order to decide how to get the word out. Mr. Salvucci stated

that he agrees with Mr. Codero, although he is not sure he agrees with Mr. LaMattina's idea of moving the debt for the Town Hall and fire station renovations and the new police station to a debt exclusion. Mr. Lynam advised Mr. Salvucci that moving this debt to a debt exclusion would increase free cash that could be used for capital projects.

Mr. Bezanson stated that based on comments on social media regarding the recent increase in taxes, he does not believe residents will be in favor of an override. Mr. Lambiase agreed, but noted that a plan still needs to be put together. He then set a meeting date of January 16th, at 6:00 p.m. for the Budget Working Group.

Chairman Kowalski suggested the Board meet with the Finance Committee again at the first regularly scheduled meeting in February.

Mr. Anderson thanked the Board for the opportunity to meet with the Board of Selectmen this evening. At 7:50 p.m. the Finance Committee departed from the meeting.

Mr. Lambiase

This topic was covered during the meeting with the Finance Committee.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Update re: Community Assessment Survey

Mr. Lynam announced that he and Chairman Kowalski will be meeting with Dr. Tarsi next week to review the responses from the Community Assessment Survey. An update will be provided to the Board at its next meeting.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Salvucci: Friends of the Park

Mr. Salvucci announced that approximately \$3,600 was raised at the annual wine tasting. The money raised may be used to repair the period lights in the park.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Personnel Policies

Mr. Lynam asked to postpone this discussion until the next meeting. The Board was in agreement.

NEW BUSINESS

Mokshrudra, Inc., dba Whitman Liquors: Application for Change of Hours

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of Mokshrudra, Inc., dba Whitman Liquors, for a change of hours in order to sell alcoholic beverages beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays on the premises located at 682 Bedford Street. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to open the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting scheduled on Monday, May 6, 2019, and to close same on Friday, January 25, 2019. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

Requests to Hold Tollbooth Fundraisers

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the applications submitted by the following organizations to hold a tollbooth fundraiser at the intersection of Washington Street and Route 27:

- Whitman-Hanson High School Wrestling Boosters: April 27, 2019, 9am-3pm
- Knights of Columbus #347: October 12, 2019, 9am-4pm

- Whitman Area Toy Drive: August 31, 2019, with a rain date of September 7, 2019, 9am-1pm
- American Legion Post #22: April 13, 2019, with a rain date to be determined, 9am-1pm

Second Mr. Bezanson, so voted 5-0.

Resignation: Keith Holland

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept the resignation of Keith Holland from the position of Reserve Officer. **Second Mr. Bezanson, so voted 5-0.**

Edward J. Collins Center: Professional Service Agreement

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to authorize the town administrator to sign the Professional Service Agreement between the Town of Whitman and the Edward J. Collins Center for Public Management for the development of a comprehensive 5-year capital improvement plan and assistance in the implementation of budget document enhancements. **Second Mr. Bezanson.** Mr. Lynam reminded the Board that a Community Compact Grant was awarded to the town to develop a capital plan and budget presentation. After meeting with all who bid on this project, it is his recommendation to utilize the Collins Center. Chairman Kowalski asked for a vote in connection with the motion on the floor. **So voted 5-0.**

Status of Class II Auto Dealer's Licenses

Auto Crafting Unlimited

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that all renewal paperwork was submitted to the Selectmen's office earlier today, therefore no action is necessary.

RT Auto Sales & Repair, Inc.

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that this licensee did not submit his renewal paperwork by the November 30, 2018, deadline. On December 31, 2018, the license fee and renewal documents were received, but not all of the documents required to renew the license for calendar year 2019. It is his recommendation that the license be revoked. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to revoke the Class II Auto Dealer's License issued to RT Auto Sales & Repair, Inc. on the premises located at 288 Essex Street. **Second Mr. Bezanson, so voted 5-0.**

OLD BUSINESS

Chief of Police and Deputy Chief or Police Assessment Center

Assistant Town Administrator Lisa Green advised the Board that after reviewing the proposals received, it is the recommendation of both her and Chief Benton that the Board accept the proposal submitted by Public Safety Consultants. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept the proposal of Public Safety Consultants, LLC for a Civil Service Sole Assessment Center for the rank of Police Chief and Deputy Police Chief. **Second Mr. Bezanson, so voted 5-0.**

At 8:08 p.m. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** in accordance with the M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21a, (2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; and (3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. **Second Mr. Bezanson.** Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. Lambiase – yes; Mr. Salvucci – yes; and Chairman Kowalski – yes. **So**

voted 5-0. Chairman Kowalski declared that having this meeting in open session will have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body. The meeting will reconvene in Open Session for the purpose of adjourning the meeting.

At 8:16 p.m. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. **Second Mr. Bezanson, so voted 5-0.**

Brian J. Bezanson, Clerk