

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
FEBRUARY 19, 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.**

Chairman Kowalski opened public forum and no one in attendance came forward to address the Board.

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the Open Session minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, January 8, 2019. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the Open Session minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, January 22, 2019. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 4-0-1 (Mr. Salvucci abstained).**

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**See Budget Review**

**BUDGET REVIEW**

**Proposed Bond Refinancing**

Clark Rowell of Unibank provided the Board with information regarding refunding of the Police Station, Town Hall and Fire Department debt; and the potential savings to the Town if the Board decides to go this route. Mr. Lynam advised the Board that when Mr. LaMattina was a member of the Finance Committee he suggested we look into this; however, at that time there would have been penalties. If the Board decides to move forward with this, Mr. Lynam noted there will be an approximate savings of \$275,000 over the life of the refunding bond. Following a brief discussion, Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to authorize Treasurer/Collector Mary Beth Carter to proceed with refunding the Police Station, Town Hall and Fire Department debt. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

**Joint Meeting with Finance Committee: Budget Update**

Mr. Lynam distributed documents consisting of the Town Meeting Warrant with Article 2; a budget analysis for the period 2015-2019; a list of impacts to the Town if a wage freeze is

imposed; a worksheet reflecting the tax impact for a levy increase and a debt exclusion; and a proforma recap worksheet reflecting actual and projected impacts. He also read a prepared statement where he advised that the services most in demand are public safety, security and education – the departments that demand the lion’s share of our financial resources. He also noted that last year Town Meeting voted to support the increase in the cost of education by using funds from Capital Stabilization to service debt. Because that option is not available this year, it will be necessary to reset the financial process in order to keep providing the services residents have come to expect. Mr. Lynam went on to say that the town cannot fund multi-million dollar increases when growth is limited to \$970,000 per year and, moving forward, a budget plan will need to be established limiting increases. This will require the cooperation of all departments. At the suggestion of Mr. Lynam, Town Accountant Ken Lytle explained the budget analysis he prepared for this evening, advising that his analysis was based on information he obtained from annual town reports from fiscal year 2015-2019. Mr. Lynam then outlined departmental increases over the last 5 years; and outlined the proforma worksheet, noting without adjustments there will be a shortfall of more than \$3 million. He also discussed enacting a 2-year wage freeze, seeking an override and a debt exclusion for the remaining 10 years of a bond. If this goes into effect, a levy of \$1,292,000 will be available. Of this, \$600,000 would be set aside for capital expenses and the remainder would go into the stabilization account. Mr. Lynam advised that the town raised \$25,343,000 in revenue, with 89.2% coming from residential taxes, 5.3% from commercial taxes, 1.25% from industrial and 4.13% from personal property. In order to raise \$2.5 million to make ourselves financially stable, the tax rate will need to be raised from the current rate of \$15.38 to \$16.90, resulting in an increase of \$467.40 for median family households. Mr. Lynam noted that if these ideas do not work, municipal services will be downsized.

Mr. Lynam discussed a meeting he attended recently at the request of the superintendent of schools. Present at the meeting were himself, Chairman Kowalski, the superintendent and assistant superintendent of schools, the chairman of the finance committee and a member of the school committee. At this meeting, Mr. Lynam advised that he would be looking for wage concessions this year and that he would be seeking permission from the Board of Selectmen to reach out to all of the unions to discuss a wage freeze. At the time, he also said he would be reaching out to the School Committee as well. In the days following the meeting, Mr. Lynam met with union representatives, including a representative of the school union, and told them he would be seeking permission from the Board of Selectmen to officially talk with the unions. Chairman Kowalski agreed with Mr. Lynam, noting that the meeting was called by the superintendent of schools to discuss a petition that was being circulated by a member of the Finance Committee about full-day kindergarten. Chairman Kowalski noted that he was the person that raised the question of whether the district would be interested in discussing wage freezes. Mr. Lynam stated that it was not his intent to go around the School Committee and that his initial conversation with the union representative was nothing more than a conversation about the town budget.

Mr. Bezanson suggested holding a pre-town meeting where town departments could provide information on how budget cuts would affect them. Finance Committee member Rosemary Connolly and Chairman Kowalski agreed. Chairman Kowalski stated that Article 2 sometimes is not considered a budget document because it is not usually seen until the night of Town meeting. Mr. Lynam asked for a vote authorizing him to reach out to the unions to bargain a wage freeze. He advised the Board that he would like to hold a group meeting with the union representatives

and two members of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. LaMattina and Mr. Lambiase agreed to take part in the meeting(s). Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to authorize the Town Administrator to reach out to town unions to bargain a 2-year wage freeze. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

Mr. Bezanson asked Mr. Lynam to put the documents that were presented tonight on the town website.

Finance Committee Chairman Rick Anderson said that the committee will take the information provided tonight and put together a recommendation for the Board of Selectmen. The committee is set to begin a second round of meetings with department heads; and is prepared to make difficult decisions regarding the future of our community.

## **COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Update re: Community Assessment Survey**

Mr. Lynam advised that he has received a final report containing the statistical data from the survey. Dr. Tarsi is preparing a report of all the data collected and upon completion of that report, a public meeting will be held. Chairman Kowalski provided some of the statistical results and stated that in general, he is enthusiastic about the survey.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

### **Route 18 Construction**

Mr. Salvucci announced the construction project at routes 18 & 27 and routes 18 & 14 has been awarded to P.A. Landers. Work is expected to begin in the spring.

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Recreation: Field Usage and Permit Policies**

Recreation Director Ollie Amado advised the Board that he and the assistant town administrator have established the policies and are asking the Board of Selectmen to adopt them. Mrs. Green said that she researched policies of other towns and feels this should alleviate problems that the Recreation Department has had in the past with local sports organizations. Mr. Amado also advised the Board that the Recreation Commission voted unanimously to accept the policies. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to adopt the Field Usage and Permit Policies handbook for the Town of Whitman Recreation Department. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Application for Class II Auto Dealer's License: RT Auto Sales & Repair, Inc.**

Action on this application was tabled until the next meeting at the request of Mr. Lynam in order to allow the administrative assistant to the Board of Selectmen to contact the RMV for information regarding the applicant's previous revocation of a Class II License at this same location (288 Essex Street).

### **Auxiliary/Special Police Officer Appointments**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of Chief Benton to appoint Kyle Bersani, Paige Lambert and Vanessa Miranda to the position of Auxiliary/Special Police Officer, through June 30, 2019. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

**Auxiliary/Special Police Officer Resignation**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept the resignation of Camden Bruno from the position of Auxiliary/Special Police Officer, effective January 23, 2019. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

**Whitman Baseball & Softball Association Opening Day Parade**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of Brian Schwede on behalf of the Whitman Baseball & Softball Association to conduct its Opening Day Parade on Saturday, April 20, 2019, beginning at 9:00 a.m., with a rain date of April 27, 2019. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

**Disclosure by Non-elected Municipal Employee: Justin Evans**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to acknowledge the Disclosure by Non-elected Municipal Employee of Financial Interest and Determination by Appointing Authority, as required by G.L. c.268A, §19 for Finance Committee Member Justin Evans. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

At 8:10 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. **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.** The meeting will reconvene in Open Session for the purpose of adjourning the meeting.

At 9:10 p.m. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. **Second** Mr. Bezanson, **so voted 5-0.**

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Brian J. Bezanson, Clerk