

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
APRIL 13, 2021**

In attendance were Chairman Carl F. Kowalski; Vice Chairman Daniel L. Salvucci; Clerk Brian J. Bezanson; Member Randolph G. LaMattina; Member Justin R. Evans; and Town Administrator Lincoln D. Heineman. Chairman Kowalski opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Kowalski read the following into the record:

*In accordance with Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, §20, this meeting is being held remotely in an on-line conference mode hosted on Zoom.com and members of the public are not able to physically attend. The meeting is being broadcast live on Comcast channel 12 and can be viewed via live stream at WHCA.tv. It will subsequently be broadcast on YouTube.com.*

Present for the meeting were Fire Chief Timothy Grenno and all members of the Finance Committee.

Chairman Kowalski asked everyone in attendance to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. This was followed by a moment of silence.

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve bill and payroll warrants. **Second** Mr. Bezanson. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. Salvucci – yes; and Chairman Kowalski – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept correspondence in the Read File. **Second** Mr. Bezanson. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. Salvucci – yes; and Chairman Kowalski – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**Recent Correspondence**

**Chief Grenno-Letter of Intent to Retire**

Chairman Kowalski read into the record a letter received from Fire Chief Timothy Grenno notifying the Board of his intent to retire. He then thanked Chief Grenno for his 37 years of service to the Town of Whitman, noting he enjoyed having him as Fire Chief and as one of his students many years ago. The other members of the Board also thanked Chief Grenno for his service, especially over the last year during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chief Grenno thanked the Board for always being extremely supportive of him.

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept with regret the retirement of Fire Chief Timothy Grenno, effective July 9, 2021. **Second** Mr. Bezanson. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. Salvucci – yes; and Chairman Kowalski – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to call for a Fire Chief list from Civil Service. **Second** Mr. Bezanson. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. Salvucci – yes; and Chairman Kowalski – yes. **So voted 5-0.** Chief Grenno departed from the meeting.

### **Kathleen Ottina-Letter to Chairman Kowalski**

Chairman Kowalski read into the record a letter he received from Finance Committee member Kathleen Ottina expressing her displeasure with Dr. Kowalski for allowing Mr. LaMattina to make comments about a School Committee member during the March 23, 2021, meeting. Chairman Kowalski thanked Mrs. Ottina for her comments and expressed regret for her having to write the letter. He then asked Mr. LaMattina to respond. Mr. LaMattina apologized to Chairman Kowalski for being put in this position; and stated that if the time should come again when he needs to call on a department head or elected official for making false or untruthful statements, he will try to do it in a less abrasive manner.

### **Department of Public Works-Vote re: Sewer Force Main**

Chairman Kowalski read into the record a letter from Kevin Cleary, Chairman of the Board of Public Works Commissioners, notifying the Board of the Commissioners' vote to move forward with the sewer force main project; and their request that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the article for the Annual Town Meeting. Chairman Kowalski noted the Board will act on this issue at the appropriate time.

### **RoseMary Connolly-Email to Chairman Kowalski**

Chairman Kowalski advised of an email he received from Finance Committee member RoseMary Connolly regarding federal funds the school district is receiving and how it is being spent. Chairman Kowalski has advised Ms. Connolly that she if she wishes to, she may speak on this at the appropriate time later in the meeting. He also suggested a School Committee meeting may be the appropriate place to deal with School Committee actions. Chairman Kowalski also noted he appreciates Superintendent Szymaniak's efforts to try and soften the blow to the FY22 budget.

### **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Heineman stated it has been a pleasure working with Chief Grenno for the short time he has been employed as Town Administrator. He also advised the town has returned to the red with respect to COVID-19, which may have an effect on the opening of Town Hall and the date of the Annual Town Meeting.

### **Budget Presentation**

Mr. Heineman outlined the proposed FY22 budget which includes \$1,564,075 in expenditure increases due to increases in the WHRSD and Plymouth County Retirement assessments and an increase in enrollment at Norfolk Agricultural High School. To close the gap, there are \$603,000 in reductions to departmental requests. Mr. Heineman also provided a revenue summary; outlined the increase in school assessments since 2013 from the Whitman Hanson Regional School District, South Shore Voc Tech and Norfolk Agricultural High School and the increase in pensions since 2013; and the proposed use of free cash for FY22. Mr. Heineman advised that the members of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee have been provided with a consolidated budget document along with an additional document that contains a line item by

line item budget. He is recommending the consolidated budget be used at Town Meeting. This document also allows management of the town to make adjustments throughout the year. Following the presentation, Mr. Salvucci asked if it is appropriate to present a budget that outlines percentage increases or a consolidated budget document. Also, with respect to the use of free cash, we need to know what the Buildings, Facilities and Capital Expenditures Committee has approved for capital expenses. David Codero, Chairman of the Buildings, Facilities and Capital Expenditures Committee and Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee advised Mr. Salvucci that the BFCEC voted in favor of all capital items with the exception of the DPW building as a feasibility study is not yet available. The committee also did not vote on a fire panel for the high school. Mr. Heineman noted that the DPW Commissioners will be seeking funding for a new building at a future Town meeting. Mr. Evans stated that he likes the idea of a consolidated budget but more information will need to be made available to the voters at Town Meeting, possibly by also including the 74 page budget document as well. He also has concerns with the reduction in the Reserve Fund Transfer line.

### **SCHEDULED MEETINGS/HEARINGS**

#### **Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee**

At 7:45 p.m. Chairman Kowalski called for the joint meeting to begin.

Finance Committee Chairman Rick Anderson thanked the Board of Selectmen for this meeting. Mr. Anderson stated the biggest hurdle seems to be the school district. He appreciates the work done on the budget by Mr. Heineman and Town Accountant Ken Lytle, but he is concerned with a consolidated budget being presented to Town Meeting as he feels it is insulting the intelligence of the voters. He feels more information, not less, should be presented to the voters. He also feels it makes sense that the Reserve Fund has decreased due to the consolidated budget but at the same time he does not think it should necessarily be less. Chairman Kowalski advised that the Board of Selectmen will be meeting next week and will probably begin voting the warrant articles at that time. The consolidated budget is a big departure from what has been presented in the past, but the 74 page document provides more information than the voters have had in the past. It will be up to Mr. Heineman to sell the format at Town Meeting. He finished by saying he is pleased with the way we are going but knows it will be difficult for some people to adjust. Mr. Codero stated that more than a month ago, the Finance Committee delegated creating a balanced Article 2 to Mr. Heineman. It should not be a surprise that it looks different than it has in the past. With respect to the Reserve Fund, Mr. Heineman advised that he looked at what has been historically needed and spent. With respect to the 74 page document, the voters will always receive at least that much information; and he can tweak it to make it as useful as possible. Ms. Connolly stated you take control of the citizens with as much information as you give; and she would like Mr. Heineman to consider the citizens might want more control over where the money goes and how it is spent. Mr. Galvin stated that he feels everyone can achieve what they are looking to achieve with the consolidated budget. He also feels the managerial control the department heads will have with a condensed budget is a plus, but he would also like to see the information made available to the public before Town Meeting takes place. Mr. Heineman agreed. Mr. Anderson asked if the Finance Committee should make recommendations on the 74 page document. Mr. Heineman said yes, as well as in the rolled up fashion on the warrant if that's what the selectmen want. Chairman Kowalski stated that the Board will discuss it next week. Mr. LaMattina stated that the idea of a consolidated budget is a new appearance for town departments. This is exactly what the school department does. This now puts the burden on the

managers to manage properly and we have the proper administrators to handle these issues. This is sticker shock, but the 74 page document gives more information than the voters have ever seen. He went on to say that this will not take rights away from the voters. He also agrees with Mr. Salvucci on adding percentages to the document. He finished by commending Mr. Heineman and Mr. Lytle for all of their hard work. Mr. Bezanson suggested placing the budget information on the website. He also asked if surrounding towns use a consolidated budget. Mr. Heineman advised Mr. Bezanson that at least ten towns use a consolidated budget, with some of those budgets being more consolidated than what he has presented. Mr. Anderson expressed concern with the amount of free cash being used. Mr. Heineman stated that if the school district can reduce its budget to what was discussed last week, \$123,721 in free cash would be used which would allow for all capital items with the exception of the DPW building. \$23,000 will still need to be funded, possibly with funds from the Community Preservation Act. Chairman Kowalski thanked the members of the Finance Committee for their input. Mr. Anderson thanked the Board of Selectmen for meeting with the Finance Committee.

At 8:18 p.m. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** pursuant to M.G.L., c.30A, §21a (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares. **Second** Mr. Bezanson. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – 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 bargaining position of the public body. The meeting will reconvene in Open Session for the purpose of adjourning the meeting.

Chairman Kowalski read the following into the record:

*In accordance with Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, §20, the Executive session portion of the meeting will be held in an on-line conference mode hosted on Zoom.com and members of the public will not be able to physically attend. No broadcast of Executive Session will be made.*

At 8:30 p.m. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. **Second** Mr. Bezanson. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Chairman Kowalski – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

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Brian J. Bezanson, Clerk