

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MAY 4, 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 7:00 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.*

Chairman Kowalski asked everyone in attendance to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. This was followed by a moment of silence dedicated to Bob Hammond, longtime Animal Control Officer for the Town of Whitman.

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.**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the Open Session minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021; Tuesday, April 13, 2021; and Tuesday, April 20, 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.**

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**Update: COVID-19**

Mr. Heineman advised the Board that the Board of Health met last week and made some recommendations which the Board will discuss under Old Business.

**Other**

**Eagle Scout Projects:** Mr. Heineman advised the Board of three upcoming Eagle Scout projects that include an informational board at Harding's Pond, an informational board at Colebrook Boulevard and the installation of a flagpole at the Whitman Public Library.

**Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness/Hazard Mitigation Plan:** Mr. Heineman advised the Board that meetings on this subject are ongoing and posted on the Town website.

**Memorial Day Parade:** Mr. Heineman advised the Board that due to a change in COVID-19 regulations, parades are allowed; however, the commander of the American Legion and the commander of the VFW have decided not to pursue holding a parade due to short notice. Instead, ceremonies will take place at cemeteries throughout town.

**Outdoor Dining:** Mr. Heineman advised the Board he has contacted all Common Victualler License holders regarding outdoor dining and some have indicated they will consider it. To date, he has issued permits for outdoor dining to the American Legion and VFW.

**WMS Subcommittee Meeting:** Mr. Heineman advised the Board that he and Mr. LaMattina attended the WMS Subcommittee meeting last evening and the process is moving along.

**New Employees:** Mr. Heineman welcomed Firefighter Paramedic Joshua Gray and DPW Truck Driver/Laborer Timothy Burke.

**Sewer Main Project:** Mr. Heineman announced the Town has been approved for a loan from the state revolving fund and may be eligible for principal forgiveness. He feels the right decision is to accept the loan rather than to pursue a loan on the open market.

**Outdoor Movies:** Mr. Heineman announced the Board of Health has approved a request for movies in the Town Park during the month of June. Further details are being handled by the DPW.

**Proclamations:** Mr. Heineman read into the record proclamations prepared for Board of Health members Barbara White and Mary Kelly, who have decided not to seek re-election. Mrs. White was employed as an administrative assistant in the Board of Health office for more than 48 years. After her retirement, she was elected to a seat on the Board. After serving three terms, she has decided not to seek re-election. Mrs. Kelly had previously served on the Board and agreed to fill a vacant seat several months ago. Both have been instrumental during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board agreed to acknowledge the proclamations and to vote at the next meeting.

**Letter from Ashley Sullivan:** Chairman Kowalski read the following into the record:

*Good Evening Members of the Whitman Board of Selectmen,  
My name is Ashley Sullivan. I am a junior at Whitman-Hanson Regional High School. We are doing a civics project in my history class.*

*My goal is to make our town a cleaner place to live for the citizens of Whitman. For my project, I decided to tackle the issue of littering in our community. Littering is harmful to our environment, as well as the animals that live in the environment. As a result, I think that there needs to be a change in the punishments for those individuals who choose to litter. I think that those individuals need to learn their lesson about not littering by having stricter consequences. I am trying to help make my town a better and cleaner place to live.  
I appreciate your time and attention to this very important matter.*

*Thank you!*

*Sincerely,  
Ashley Sullivan*

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, Chairman Kowalski wished Miss Sullivan luck in her endeavors.

## **TOWN MEETING**

### **Town Meeting Warrant**

The Board discussed recent amendments made to the Annual Town Meeting warrant including changes to reflect feedback from Bond Counsel regarding the sewer main project; feedback from Town Counsel regarding the addition of funds for capital items; corrections to account for contractual step increases that were not entirely funded; and the largest change regarding an existing cell tower located on private land. Attorneys are considering other locations and are requesting the Town consider leasing land off Commercial Street where a pumping station is located. This article will seek approval to allow the Town to issue a request for proposals. The Board also discussed a decrease in the amount in the article related to South Shore Voc Tech; a slight increase in the Treasurer-Collector's annual salary; and amending Articles 34 and 35 to reflect the Board of Selectmen as sponsors of these articles.

Mr. Evans **MOVED** to amend Article 34 (Residency Requirement for Committee Members) and Article 35 (Speakers at Town Meeting) of the June 2, 2021, Annual Town Meeting Warrant to reflect that said articles are being proposed by the Board of Selectmen. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. 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 approve the June 2, 2021, Annual Town Meeting warrant. **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.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **List for Police Lieutenant and Police Sergeant**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to call for a departmental promotional exam from Civil Service for police lieutenant and police sergeant. **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.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Update re: Board of Health Recommendations for the Following:**

#### **Early In-Person Voting**

Mr. Heineman advised the Board that the Board of Health voted to allow for early in-person voting from May 10 through May 13, 2021, during regular business hours. He also noted the Board of Health is also recommending Town Hall open when the state reaches 50 percent of residents vaccinated instead of when Whitman reaches 3 weeks in the green. Chairman Kowalski and Mr. LaMattina expressed concern with this, noting that Whitman has been out of the red for 2 weeks but is not yet in the green. Chairman Kowalski suggested keeping things as they are until after Town Meeting takes place. Mr. Evans stated the Board of Selectmen has been following the guidance of the Board of Health without any issues. Mr. LaMattina agreed

with Chairman Kowalski, stating he would prefer to wait an additional 30 days. Mr. Salvucci agreed. Mr. Bezanson agreed it is best to be cautious, but recognized that some citizens are upset. Chairman Kowalski expressed his concern with changing to a statewide percentage when Whitman is 10 percent lower than the state. Mr. Evans provided the Board with updated statistics. Chairman Kowalski stated that the numbers cited by Mr. Evans are much better than he thought; however, he would like the Board of Health to reconsider using the statewide percentage rate; and asked Mr. Heineman to attend the next meeting of the Board of Health in order to relay that message. Mr. Evans **MOVED** to accept the recommendation of the Board of Health to fully open Town Hall subject to the Board of Health reconsidering its amendment to its original policy of waiting for the Town to be 3 weeks in the Green before fully opening Town Hall, to instead waiting until such time as the vaccination rate for the state reaches 50%; and for the Board of Health to consider the percentage rate based on locality as well as statewide. **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.**

### **Removal of Temperature Screening Station Inside Town Hall**

Mr. Heineman advised the Board that the Board of Health voted to recommend the Board of Selectmen authorize the removal of the temperature screening station inside the lower Town Hall due to its inaccuracy. Mr. Salvucci asked what the harm is in leaving the scanner in place until Town Hall opens if it makes the employees comfortable. Mr. Heineman stated the Board of Health recommended opening Town Hall for in-person appointments. If the Board agrees, it makes the non-functioning scanner more confusing for those coming in to Town Hall for meetings, who are wearing masks and social distancing. Chairman Kowalski expressed confusion at Mr. Heineman's statement as it sounds like he is describing opening Town Hall and the Board is not ready to do that. Mr. Heineman clarified his statement, stating that he misspoke when he said "meetings". What he meant to say was in-person appointments. Discussion ensued with respect to possibly repairing the scanner. Mr. Evan suggested making hand held thermometers available to all department heads where they can be used for in-person appointments, Mr. LaMattina **MOVED** to accept the recommendation of the Board of Health to remove the temperature screening station from the downstairs basement entrance and to leave the sanitizer station in place for general use, with the provision that handheld thermometers are made available to all departments. **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.**

### **Revisions to COVID-19 Travel Policy for Town Employees**

Mr. Heineman advised the Board that the Board of Health voted to agree with the Board of Selectmen to amend the current travel town travel policy to adopt and follow Governor Baker's travel advisory with the idea that if circumstances regarding COVID change, the policy would then revert back automatically to the original policy. The vote also stated the current form that must be submitted to the Town Administrator for signature on return would no longer be required.

Mr. Heineman advised the Board that a vote is still required related to opening Town Hall for in-person appointments. Mr. LaMattina stated that he is conflicted on this subject. Chairman Kowalski stated that he understands, but opening for in-person appointments is not the same as

opening fully. Mr. Evans stated he is comfortable with opening for appointments if contact tracing is put in place. Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to accept the recommendation of the Board of Health to open the Town Hall for in-person appointments only. **Second** Mr. Evans. 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. Bezanson asked about the possibility of holding Town Meeting inside as opposed to holding it on the field at the high school. Discussion ensued where it was determined that Mr. Heineman would review the possibility of holding Town Meeting inside the high school gymnasium.

At 8:29 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.

At 8:39 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. Salvucci – yes; and Chairman Kowalski – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

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Brian J. Bezanson, Clerk

