

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 30, 2020**

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 Francis J. Lynam. 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. This meeting will be subsequently broadcast onYouTube.com.

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

Mr. Lynam called for reorganization of the Board of Selectmen. He then opened the floor to nominations for the position of Chairman. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to nominate Dr. Kowalski to the position of Chairman. **Second** Mr. Bezanson. Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Lynam called for a vote in connection with the motion on the floor. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. Salvucci – yes; and Dr. Kowalski – yes. **So voted 5-0.** Mr. Lynam then turned the meeting over to Chairman Kowalski.

Chairman Kowalski called for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to nominate Mr. Salvucci for the position of Vice Chairman. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Hearing no other nominations, Chairman Kowalski asked for a vote in connection with the motion on the floor. 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 called for nominations for the position of Clerk of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to nominate Mr. Bezanson for the position of Clerk. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Hearing no other nominations, Chairman Kowalski asked for a vote in connection with the motion on the floor. 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 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.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Update: COVID-19

Mr. Lynam stated that due to the progress that has been made, he would like to resume a normal schedule for employees on July 6, 2020. He would also like to open Town Hall by appointment only on July 13, 2020. The plan is to install a temperature checking station in the vestibule at the handicap entrance to Town Hall. This entrance will be the only accessible access for all employees and visitors. In addition, two stations will be set up in the auditorium in order to allow for meeting with visitors who have a scheduled appointment. Mr. Salvucci asked if the department head who has a scheduled appointment will take the temperature of the visitor. Mr. Lynam advised Mr. Salvucci that the temperature station will scan the person. Everyone coming in to Town Hall must wear a mask. The goal is to be able to provide whatever services we can with reasonable safety standards. The library and senior center will remain closed until the end of the summer at the earliest. Mr. LaMattina asked if hand sanitizer stations are in place and Mr. Lynam confirmed that they are. Mr. Evans asked if department heads will be wearing masks when meeting with the public. Mr. Lynam said they will be. Currently, employees are not required to wear masks while working in their offices unless they prefer to; and we have been operating in this manner since March. One of our offices is concerned with other employees entering their office; therefore, the office will be converted to provide window access with plexiglass. Chairman Kowalski asked why employees are not wearing masks in their offices. Mr. Lynam stated that people seem to trust others in their office to be taking precautions outside of the job. In addition, social distancing is being adhered to.

Carleton Street Extension

The Board discussed a complaint received from Collin James, a resident of Carleton Street Extension. In a letter to the Board, Chief Hanlon and DPW Superintendent Bruce Martin, Mr. James advised of cars speeding on the street during weekday mornings in order to reach Essex Street before the train comes through. Mr. James is requesting to have two speed limit signs installed – one at each entrance to the street – as well as signs that state there are children at play. He is also requesting a speed bump on Carleton Street Extension and on Raynor Avenue as well as a speed limit sign with a solar powered radar display also on Raynor Avenue. Mr. Lynam advised the Board that the Police Dept. and DPW have reviewed the options suggested by Mr. James. Next week, Mr. Lynam will be meeting with Chief Hanlon and Bruce Martin in order to come up with a final solution. Mr. Martin has indicated that there are a number of signs already in place, and standards do not recommend using “Children at Play” signs as children are then encouraged to play in the street. Both Mr. Martin and Chief Hanlon feel we should rely on the Modernization Act for the speed limit. They are also not recommending the placement of speed bumps as they would create a hazard. Mr. Lynam went on to say that if the solutions they come up with do not work, the street could be made one-way from Raynor Avenue or one end could be closed to keep the street from being a throughway. Chairman Kowalski noted that he drove down the street and saw three signs – “Children”, “Slow Children” and “Deaf Child” – that look as if they have been in place for quite some time. If the complainant is not overreacting, the signs have not had an effect. Mr. Evans stated that he spoke with a friend who lives on this street and he agrees with Mr. James’ concerns. Chairman Kowalski also noted that it is difficult to get up to speed with the sharp curve at the mid-point of the road. He finished by saying that he is looking forward to hearing Chief Hanlon’s thoughts. Mr. Lynam stated that he will review the local authority granted to us in the Governor’s Relief Act. He also noted that posting a speed

limit of 20-25 mph at the curve might have some impact on the situation. The Board will follow up on this issue at its next meeting.

BUDGET REVIEW

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that approval has been received from the Department of Revenue to adopt our 1/12th budget for the month of July. The budget has been circulated to all managers and they have been encouraged to limit spending until the annual budget is voted on at the July 27, 2020, Annual Town Meeting. In the event we are prevented from conducting the Town Meeting on July 27, 2020, Mr. Lynam has asked the Town Accountant to prepare a 1/12th budget for the month of August. He went on to say that we have also received approval to use free cash. If we follow the budget plan, we will have \$833,000 in free cash. He also noted the school district is on a 1/12th budget as of tomorrow. He then stressed the importance of standing firm on our budget, including what we have set for the school district. Hopefully, we will receive support at Town Meeting for use of the statutory method. He then noted he is still waiting to hear from the Town Moderator on whether Town Meeting will be held inside or outside. Chairman Kowalski also spoke of the importance of receiving support for the Selectmen's budget, noting he intends to spend time convincing Mr. Salvucci and Mr. Bezanson to agree with the Selectmen's budget for the school district and not the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Chairman Kowalski advised the Board that he received an email from the chairman of the Hanson Board of Selectmen regarding the budget and the ad placed in the Whitman Hanson Express by the chairman and a member of the Finance Committee, who is urging the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator to look into possible illegal actions. Chairman Kowalski had asked Mr. Lynam to contact town counsel to have the charges reviewed in connection with the paid ad and a possible ethics violation and counsel did not find any violation. In addition, the Board of Selectmen has no authority over the Finance Committee. Chairman Kowalski has asked Mr. Lynam to provide a copy of counsel's opinion to the Finance Committee.

Mr. LaMattina stated that the school budget we have recommended supports the school district and the growth. Both the amendment to the agreement and the school budget need to be approved by Town Meeting in order to keep the students from further risk.

Mr. Lynam stated that if both are approved, it is subject to companion association by the Hanson Town meeting because our appropriation becomes available, but it cannot be used unless it's voted by both towns.

Discussion took place regarding the process that will take place if the two towns do not vote in favor of the budget. Discussion also took place in connection with an amendment to Chapter 70 where language was removed in connection with calculations that DESE provides for minimum contributions and local aid. Mr. Lynam does not believe this will change how the funds are distributed but he will forward it to counsel for review.

Mr. Salvucci reminded everyone of the Finance Committee's recommendation for the school budget where Whitman is still paying more than Hanson because Whitman has more students. He also reminded the Board that an override just failed in Hanson. Also, Hanson did not help us last year when they agreed to pay a higher percentage to the schools and we had to match it by taking over \$800,000 out of stabilization to do so.

Mr. LaMattina agreed, but said unfortunately, this year it is sink or swim together. If this budget is not passed by both towns, it will go back to the School Committee. The offer of a 50/50 split is the best deal Hanson is going to get.

Mr. Bezanson stated that he is in agreement with Mr. Salvucci in principle that we have done enough, but he also agrees with Mr. LaMattina that we should take the bitter pill for the greater good. Ultimately, it lies with the citizens.

Mr. Lynam stated that if this does not pass, the school district has two months to come up with a budget before they have to start laying off employees. If we take the higher road and support this, and it comes together, then we have succeeded. If it does not pass, it effects the quality of the education we are giving our children.

Mr. Evans asked Mr. Lynam if he received a copy of the 1/12th budget from DESE. Mr. Lynam said he did not.

Mr. Lynam announced that he participated in a conference call today with the Plymouth County Commissioners. Due to the COVID-19 Cares Act, the town will be receiving a significant amount of aid in funding for COVID supplies. This means any supplies we purchase for COVID will not impact our budget. The costs from the region will also be included.

NEW BUSINESS

Resignation from COA

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to accept with regret the resignation of Jill Getchell from the position of Member of the Council on Aging, effective March 11, 2020. **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.**

Appointment to COA

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of Barbara Garvey to be appointed to the position of Member of the Council on Aging for a three-year term, effective July 18, 2020, through June 30, 2022, in order to fill an existing vacancy. **Second** Mr. Bezanson. Mr. Bezanson asked if a person has to be a resident of the town in order to be appointed to a board or committee. Mr. Lynam stated that currently a person does not have to be a resident of the town to be appointed to a board or committee but that could change if the article on the Town Meeting warrant related to this issue is approved. He went on to say that Barbara Garvey has been with the Council on Aging for 15 years and she will be retiring in a couple of weeks. A new director has been hired and Barbara will be helpful during the transition. Mr. Evans asked if a plan is in place to fill the position in the Town Clerks office. Mr. Lynam advised Mr. Evans that the vacancy has to be posted in house initially because it is a union position. The Town Clerk will have to decide who to hire as the Assistant Town Clerk. If the current administrative assistant is promoted, someone will be hired to fill that position. If that is the case, the Town Clerk has asked for permission to hire a temporary appointment, which will require the consent of the union. He went on to say a retired employee has expressed interest in helping out through the presidential election which would save the Town Clerk from having to train someone during such a busy time. Chairman Kowalski called for a vote in connection with the motion on the floor. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. Salvucci – yes; and Chairman Kowalski – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

Line Item Transfer: Board of Health

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of Elaine Williams, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Health, for a line item transfer in the amount of \$80.00 from line item #206

(Assistant Health Inspector) to line item #205 (Animal Inspector). **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.**

Line Item Transfer: Town Administrator

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the request of Town Administrator Francis Lynam for a line item transfer in the amount of \$435.60 from line item #11 (Longevity) to line item #7 (Administrative Assistant). **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.**

At 8:01 p.m. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting and to enter 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 collective bargaining of litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating 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 or litigating position of the public body. The meeting will not reconvene in Open Session.

Brian J. Bezanson, Clerk