

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
JULY 14, 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. 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 meeting held on Tuesday, May 26, 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.**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to approve the Open Session minutes of the meeting held on Monday, June 1, 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.**

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**Update: COVID-19**

Mr. Lynam announced that operations have resumed at Town Hall with all staff present daily and visitors being accepted by appointment only. Town Hall is also open until 7:30 p.m. every Tuesday evening.

**Whitman Youth Soccer: Opening Day Parade**

Mr. Lynam reminded the Board that at a previous meeting, the Board voted to authorize a request to hold the Whitman Youth Soccer Opening Day Parade. The Fire Chief and Board of Health do not feel it is prudent to have people gathering and are asking that the Board of Selectmen rescind their vote. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to rescind, with regret, the vote taken on June 23, 2020, to approve the request of Helen Iannone on behalf of Whitman Youth Soccer, to

hold the Opening Day Parade on Saturday, August 29, 2020, beginning at 8:30 a.m. in accordance with the route outlined in a letter received June 8, 2020, as parades are not allowed to take place until Phase 4 of Governor Baker's Reopening Plan. **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.**

### **Plymouth County Commissioners COVID Program**

Mr. Lynam reminded everyone that the Town is participating in a COVID-19 program with Plymouth County, a state program that allows for \$235 per student. The funds will come from the \$90 million granted to Plymouth County. The per-student allocation will not affect us as we would not have spent all of the money apportioned to us. Mr. Salvucci asked what the average amount is that each town is receiving. Mr. Lynam stated that this is a phased allocation. Phase 1 is based on the population of each town. Phase 2 is based on the number of people who tested positive and Phase 3 is based on the number or people in need, such as the elderly and veterans. Mr. Lynam agreed to place this information on the town website; and noted Whitman's allowance is in excess of \$1 million. This includes students of the WHRSD and SSVT.

Chairman Kowalski read the following public comment into the record:

*To the members of the Select Board. I respectfully ask that you consider reaching out to your counterparts in Hanson to work out a resolution to the conflict surrounding the regional school agreement. The action taken at their last meeting to include Article 23 on their warrant and to formally pursue a de-regionalization committee is evidence of the discord among us. Personally, I believe that it would be in the best interest of the community, both Whitman and Hanson, to keep the 50/50 compromise this year and to use the coming months to update the regional agreement; and to present a long term agreement to Town Meeting next spring. Doing so would allow the school budget to move forward without severe cuts (i.e. no physical education offered at the high school and no freshman sports, to name a few) and it would assure that the regional agreement is negotiated properly. In addition, by adhering to the recommended Madden budget limitations, specifically a 5% yearly assessment increase to the schools, the board would prevent any unpredicted financial burden to the town. I understand that this is a complex situation and that you are in a tough spot, but children should not be punished because of a contractual issue among adults. For these reasons, and more, I respectfully ask you to compromise during this difficult time.*

*Shawn Kain  
31 Forest Street*

### **BUDGET REVIEW**

#### **Effective Date for Community Preservation Act**

Assistant Town Administrator Lisa Green advised the Board that Article 6 of the Annual Town Meeting warrant relates to the acceptance of the Community Preservation Act. If Town Meeting accepts Article 6, the question will move to the November ballot. If it then passes on the ballot, the surcharge will commence in FY2021. This would give town resources a short time to prepare. Mrs. Green advised the Board that she is proposing the language be amended on the floor of Town Meeting to allow the surcharge to commence in FY2022. The consensus of the

Board was to allow the change in the language of Article 6 to be amended on the floor of Town Meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Request for WMS Building Committee Board Members**

Mr. LaMattina nominated John Galvin; Robert Curran and Lisa Green; and Chairman Kowalski nominated Mr. Lamattina to serve as members of the Whitman Middle School Building Projects committee. Mr. LaMattina **MOVED** to approve the nominations. **Second** Mr. Salvucci. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. Salvucci – yes; and Chairman Kowalski – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

#### **Rescind Appointment: Board of Appeals**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to rescind the appointment of Sheila Salvucci from the position of Associate member of the Board of Appeals. **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.**

#### **Rescind Appointment: AAA Advisory Board and WEMA**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to rescind the appointment of Barbara Garvey from the AAA Advisory Committee and as Assistant Deputy Director – Senior Citizens, WEMA. **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.**

#### **Rescind Appointment: Whitman Cultural Council**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to rescind the appointment of Steven Santos from the position of Member of the Whitman Cultural Council, due to lack of response. **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.**

#### **Announce Board/Committee Vacancies**

Chairman Kowalski read the list of Board/Committee vacancies and asked those interested to contact the Selectmen's office.

#### **Authorize Town Account to Sign Requests for Reimbursement of COVID-19 Expenditures**

Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to authorize the Town Accountant to sign requests for reimbursement from Plymouth County for COVID expenditures. **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 Meeting Warrant Amendments**

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that due to several amendments to the Town Meeting warrant, he asked town counsel if it is permissible to withdraw the current document and post a new one; however, counsel feels it is better to make amendments on the floor. There will be a change in the language regarding the regional agreement and a copy of the amendment will be attached to the warrant and will also be on file with the Town Clerk. Mr. Lynam then stated that a vote to change the time of the Annual Town Meeting is needed. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to change the

start time of the July 27, 2020, Annual Town Meeting to 6:00 p.m. **Second** Mr. Bezanson. Mr. Salvucci expressed concern that it may be difficult for people to attend at an earlier hour. Mr. Lynam stated that he is concerned with the health and safety of the attendees, therefore the field will be sprayed for mosquitoes and insect repellent will be provided. Mr. LaMattina advised the Board that sunset will take place at 8:05 p.m. which means an early start is necessary. Mr. Evans asked if electronic voting will be available. Mr. Lynam said it will not be available due to limited power. Colored cards will be provided in the event standing votes are necessary. 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.**

### **Hanson Town Meeting Warrant**

Chairman Kowalski announced that Article 23 of the Hanson Town Meeting warrant asks Town Meeting to vote in a Home Rule Petition to determine the assessment by the number of pupils. He has spoken to Attorney McNulty and she feels the likelihood of this passing in the legislature is slim. Mr. Lynam advised that he has reached out to State Representative Allyson Sullivan to represent our interests. Chairman Kowalski suggested it may not pass at Town Meeting. If it does, we would have to reach out to all of our representatives and senators; and noted that Mr. Lynam described it as a shot across the bow. Mr. LaMattina stated that he does not understand how it has come to this. The root of our problem is the narrative has not been how we got to this, but the inaction of the School Committee has caused fighting between the two towns. He has been organizing notes from public video and published documents and has yet to see any admission of their wrongdoing or that of the previous administration. He went on to say that he finds it troubling that the narrative has been that Whitman is evil and the School Committee does nothing. Facebook posts are using the children as pawns. Hanson benefited in a flawed process which hurt us. The School Committee has done nothing and this is clear malfeasance. Mr. Evans stated that we reached a tentative agreement for a one year fix. The School Committee voted 9-1 to approve the amendment to the agreement. We have not heard from Hanson and the consequences are real and immediate. Disagreements should be held until next year because a budget must be passed this year. The dialogue is not over, but we must fund the schools by August. Mr. LaMattina stated that if another alternative method is added to the agreement, the statutory method is still included in it. Mr. Salvucci reminded the Board that the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee agreed to fund the school budget of \$55 million. The formula is wrong. We have also agreed to support the full statutory method which was not being used for years. Mr. Bezanson stated that we have been accused of not supporting education but the fact is we have paid \$5 million more than we should have over the past few years which could have funded a new DPW facility. Someone has to be held liable for this and we must find out where this started and end it once and for all. Chairman Kowalski stated that we can stomp our foot in righteous indignation and say Hanson has been living off of us for a number of years but it will not do the schools any good. Mr. Lamattina stated that the 50/50 compromise gives the students the best chance at success. If it does not pass, no one can blame this board. He went on to say that the reason he has been pushing this issue is because the Town voted us to be accountable. Mr. Lynam noted that the School Committee did not allow the two towns to understand what they were voting on by not presenting it properly. Chairman Kowalski noted the Board of Selectmen supports the 50/50 compromise but the Finance Committee does not; therefore, it is up to Town Meeting to vote. Mr. Salvucci asked if Article 7 will be passed over if

Town Meeting votes the full statutory method. Mr. Lynam said no, but we will have to speak with Town Counsel regarding process and order.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Carleton Street Extension**

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that he received a speed and traffic study for one direction of traffic on Carleton Street Extension. The Whitman Police Department has requested a study be done for the other direction. The results of the study conducted indicate only one vehicle reached or exceeded 40 mph. The police department is waiting on the counts from the other direction in order to determine if there is a definite problem.

#### **Annual Town Meeting**

See earlier discussion on this subject.

#### **Simple Recycling**

Assistant Town Administrator Lisa Green advised the Board that Simple Recycling has been on board with the town since December, 2018. To date, 37.7 tons have been recycled; however, due to the pandemic, Simple Recycling has asked to be released from its contract with the Town. They will continue to pick up items but are unable to pay the town \$0.01 per pound. Since the program began, the town has saved over \$2,000 in disposal costs. Mrs. Green feels it would be beneficial to the town to continue with the program even without a contract as it helps to keep textiles out of our landfills. Mr. Salvucci **MOVED** to release Simple Recycling from its contractual obligation with the Town of Whitman. **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 8:07 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, (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.

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Brian J. Bezanson, Clerk