

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING
SEPTEMBER 7, 2021**

In attendance were 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 was absent. Vice Chairman Salvucci opened the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Vice Chairman Salvucci called for a motion to move into Executive Session. Mr. Evans **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. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0**. The meeting will reconvene in Open Session.

At 7:00 p.m. the meeting reconvened in Open Session.

Vice Chairman Salvucci asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. This was followed by a moment of silence dedicated to those lost on 9/11.

Vice Chairman Salvucci announced that the Whitman Cultural Council has rescheduled the concert in the Town Park to Wednesday, September 15th. In addition, the Cultural Council will host an Open House at the Whitman Public Library on Thursday, September 16th.

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY: WHITMAN POLICE

Officer Richard Belcher

Police Chief Timothy Hanlon introduced the 2 newest officers to join the Whitman Police Department. He advised the Board that Officer Belcher is a longtime resident of Whitman and a 2006 graduate of Whitman-Hanson Regional High School. Officer Belcher was appointed as a Reserve Intermittent Police Officer in 2017, a full-time officer in 2020, and he recently graduated from the Cape Cod Police Academy. Officer Belcher was then sworn in by Town Clerk Dawn Varley.

Officer Christopher Ezepik

Chief Hanlon advised the Board that Officer Ezepik is a Whitman resident and a 2007 graduate of Cardinal Spellman High School. He was appointed as a Reserve Intermittent Police Officer in 2017, a full-time police officer in 2021, and is a recent graduate of the Plymouth Police Academy where he received the top academic award. Officer Ezepik is currently undergoing field training before being assigned to a permanent shift. Officer Ezepik was then sworn in by Town Clerk Dawn Varley.

Both officers were congratulated by the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Constable Reappointment: Charles E. Castro

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to approve the request of Charles E. Castro to be reappointed to the position of Constable for a three-year term, through September 16, 2024. **Second** Mr. LaMattina, **so voted 4-0.**

Appointment to Historical Commission: Elaine Bergeron

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to approve the request of Elaine Bergeron to be appointed to the position of Member of the Historical Commission for a three-year term, through June 30, 2022, in order to fill an existing vacancy. **Second** Mr. LaMattina, **so voted 4-0.**

Rescind Appointment: Elaine Bergeron

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to rescind the appointment of Elaine Bergeron to the position of Associate Member of the Historical Commission, effective immediately. **Second** Mr. LaMattina, **so voted 4-0.**

Southeastern Philharmonic Orchestra: Request for Use of Town Hall Auditorium

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to approve the request of Elena Mauro on behalf of the Southeastern Philharmonic Orchestra for permission to use the Town Hall auditorium for the purpose of conducting a free concert on Sunday December 5, 2021 and Sunday, April 24, 2022. **Second** Mr. LaMattina, **so voted 4-0.**

OLD BUSINESS

Ann Donner: Update on Strategic Plan

In an update on the status of the Strategic Plan, Ms. Donner provided the definition of strategic planning and outlined the planning phases. She advised the Board that she has completed 14 interviews to date, including the Town Administrator, Superintendent Szymaniak, 14 department heads, 4 members of the Board of Selectmen and 4 members of the WHRSDC. The second phase includes a day-long retreat with the Board of Selectmen, department heads and the Whitman members of the School Committee. Discussion took place regarding a date for the retreat and Mr. Heineman was instructed to reach out to those being invited in order to determine availability for either October 9th or October 23rd. It was determined that the meeting will take place in the Town Hall auditorium and will be open to the public. Mr. Evans also suggested Ms. Donner interview Town resident Shawn Kain due to his interest in the strategic plan. The Board thanked Ms. Donner for attending the meeting.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Heineman advised the Board of an increase in Whitman's positivity rate. In addition, an increasing number of employers are requiring employees be vaccinated with the exception of those who have not been vaccinated due to religious beliefs or health reasons. He then asked the Board to consider taking this same route, noting the Board of Health has not recommended it. Mr. Salvucci stated that he feels the Board should continue to follow the advice of the Board of Health. If the Board of Health should recommend that all employees be vaccinated, then the Board of Selectmen can discuss it.

Chief Clancy advised the Board that he is working hard to put together a plan for a booster shot clinic; however, he is still waiting for the Moderna booster shot to be approved. Also, the Board of Health will be reaching out to the school nurse to discuss a vaccination clinic for students age 12 and older.

Comcast Franchise Agreement

Mr. Heineman advised the Board that the agreement with Comcast expires in June, 2024, and he would like to reach out to Attorney Bill Solomon for representation. There was no objection from the Board. Shawn Kain asked if the Board has given any consideration to municipal internet. Mr. LaMattina said no, as it would be a considerable investment. Mr. Heineman agreed it would be a large capital expense. Mr. Bezanson asked about procuring competition for Comcast because so many residents are unhappy with the service. Mr. Heineman suggested outage problems be addressed during negotiations.

911 Ceremony

Chief Hanlon announced a 911 Ceremony will take place in the park on Saturday, September 11th. An additional ceremony will take place at the American Legion at 8:00 a.m. He also noted it will be the 10th anniversary of the new police station.

New Website Update

Mr. Heineman announced that things are moving along with the design of the new website; and a draft version should be available within the next 3 to 5 weeks.

At 7:58 p.m. Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. **Second** Mr. LaMattina, **so voted 4-0.**

Brian J. Bezanson, Clerk