

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020**

In attendance were 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 was absent. Vice Chairman Salvucci opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

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; and (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or 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. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; Mr. Connors – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.** The meeting will reconvene in Open Session.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:12 p.m.

Vice Chairman Salvucci 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 on YouTube.com.*

Mr. Salvucci asked everyone to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. This was followed by a moment of silence dedicated to retired Whitman Fire Lieutenant David Bouldry who passed away on August 29, 2020.

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to approve bill and payroll warrants. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to accept correspondence in the Read File. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to approve the Open Session minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, August 11, 2020. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**

**SCHEDULED MEETING:**

**Joint Meeting with the Board of Library Trustees for the Purpose of Filling a Vacancy**

Present for the Board of Library Trustees were Susan Durand; Lauren Kelley; Ann Trotta; and Katherine Youngman. Library Director Marcie Walsh-O'Connor was also present, along with candidates Katherine Getchell and Margaret McEwan.

At 7:15 p.m. a motion was made by Ann Trotta and seconded by Lauren Kelly to open the joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen. Roll call vote revealed: Susan Durand – yes; Lauren Kelley – yes; Ann Trotta – yes; and Katherine Youngman – yes. So voted 4-0.

Each candidate was asked to provide a brief statement as to why she is interested in being a member of the Board of Library Trustees.

Margaret McEwan stated that she has been a Whitman resident for more than 40 years. She has used the library extensively; and would like to give back to something that means a lot to her.

Katherine Getchell stated that she is a lifelong resident of Whitman and recently retired from her position with the WHRSD. She is in a position to give back and to help with things she has a true love for.

Mr. Salvucci asked if there were any questions for the candidates. Hearing none, he asked for a roll call vote where each member of the Board of Library Trustees and the Board of Selectmen was asked to state the name of the candidate they would like to see fill the vacancy. Roll call vote revealed: Ms. Kelley – Margaret McEwan; Mrs. Trotta – Margaret McEwan; Mrs.

Youngman – Katherine Getchell; Ms. Durand – Margaret McEwan; Mr. Bezanson – Katherine Getchell; Mr. Evans– Katherine Getchell; Mr. Lamattina – Katherine Getchell; Mr. Salvucci – Margaret McEwan. So vote 4-4.

Mr. Lynam advised that a tie is a failure to elect; and the most likely option is to take a second vote.

A second roll call vote revealed: Ms. Kelley – Margaret McEwan; Mrs. Trotta – Margaret McEwan; Mrs. Youngman – Margaret McEwan; Ms. Durand – Margaret McEwan; Mr. Bezanson – Katherine Getchell; Mr. Evans – Katherine Getchell; Mr. LaMattina – Katherine Getchell; Mr. Salvucci – Margaret McEwan. So voted 5-3 in favor of Margaret McEwan.

Mr. LaMattina asked who the actual appointing authority is. Mr. Lynam advised Mr. LaMattina that neither Board is the appointing authority. The vote was taken to elect someone to fill the vacancy until the next Annual Town Election. If Mrs. McEwan wants to retain the seat, she must seek election to retain it.

At 7:25 p.m. motion was made by Ann Trotta and seconded by Lauren Kelley to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Library Trustees. Roll call vote revealed: Susan Durand – yes; Lauren Kelley – yes; Ann Trotta – yes; and Katherine Youngman – yes. So voted 4-0.

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

### **Update: COVID-19 – Ambulance Purchase**

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that the Plymouth County Commissioners have taken the position to finalize COVID purchases in October and to transfer any funds that each town has not spent to towns that are overburdened. Chief Grenno would like to utilize COVID funds to purchase an ambulance. The sole purpose of the ambulance would be to transport COVID suspected patients. Mr. Lynam went on to say that the cost is approximately \$334,000 and again, the use would be limited to COVID until such time the COVID emergency ends. At that time, the ambulance would become a fleet vehicle. Mr. Lynam reminded the Board that the department is slated to purchase an ambulance and Chief Grenno feels it would be advantageous to do so now. Mr. Lynam requested advisement from the Plymouth County Commissioners but they refused. They will only evaluate the purchase and then make a determination. If an ambulance is purchased

and the purchase is not approved by the commissioners, the town will be responsible for the bill. Mr. Lynam stated that he feels this is a question of practicality and strategy. He also noted that two other communities are each purchasing an ambulance.

Mr. LaMattina asked if Chief Grenno was invited to attend this meeting, and noted that no information was provided to the Board regarding this issue.

Chief Grenno messaged Mr. Lynam to advise him that he was attempting to join the meeting but was experiencing technical difficulties.

At 7:36 p.m. Chief Grenno joined the meeting.

Chief Grenno advised the Board that federal guidelines under the COVID-19 Cares Act refer to purchases for medical or emergency transport. The Town of Kingston purchased an ambulance and was approved. Hanover and Brockton also purchased vehicles and were reimbursed. Chief Grenno noted that an ambulance was due to be purchased in FY22, and if this purchase is denied for reimbursement, it will be presented at Town Meeting. He went on to say that in the spring, one of the department's ambulances was used strictly for COVID. This forced the department to use an older ambulance that was normally used as a reserve ambulance due to its outdated equipment.

Mr. LaMattina asked if an ambulance could be available for purchase before the Plymouth County Commissioners' deadline for purchases. Chief Grenno advised Mr. LaMattina that the vendor has a demo ambulance that he can take possession of in the second or third week of September.

Mr. Evans stated that he feels this is a good idea but he would like to be sure there are not any large expenses that we may have.

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that he is anticipating significant requests from the WHRSD, however, he has not been successful in getting the district to reply to his requests for that information. He also has received a letter from NCAHS asking if Whitman would consider submitting some of the schools costs for reimbursement. Mr. Lynam denied the request based on the cost per student for out of district students (\$23,634) and the cost per student for in district students (\$2,000). He did, however, allow \$11,000 in expenses from South Shore Vocational Technical High School to be submitted for reimbursement.

Chief Grenno noted he has stocked up on PPE, cleaning supplies, etc. for all of the town buildings. He is now looking into ultraviolet lighting and has received a quote of \$600. Mr. Bezanson asked what will happen if there is a resurgence and costs are accelerated for the Town. Mr. Lynam stated that as of now, the funds we have not used will be taken away in October. However, he plans to actively oppose any attempt to take the funds away and to be given to other towns.

Mr. LaMattina asked what will happen if the purchase of an ambulance is denied. Mr. Lynam stated that it will be put before Town Meeting for appropriation, noting that \$150,000 has already been set aside for this purchase.

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to proceed with the purchase of an ambulance, to be submitted as a COVID-19 related expense to the Plymouth County Commissioners. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**

Chief Grenno thanked the Board and exited from the meeting.

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that two employees traveled to restricted areas for vacation. Upon return, both were tested with negative results and have returned to duty.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Old Colony Elder Services: Nomination to Board of Directors**

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to accept the recommendation of the Whitman Council on Aging and nominate Mary Holland to serve as the Town's representative on the Board of Directors for Old Colony Elder Services, through June 30, 2021. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**

#### **Appointment to ConCom: Spencer Shute**

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to appoint Spencer Shute to the Conservation Commission for a three-year term, through June 30, 2022, in order to fill an existing vacancy. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**

#### **Auxiliary/Special Police Officer Appointment: Adam Kosterman**

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to approve the recommendation of Chief Hanlon to appoint Adam Kosterman to the position of Auxiliary/Special Police Officer, through June 30, 2021. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**

#### **Additional Parking Space at South/Temple/ Washington Street**

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to eliminate one (1) of the emergency vehicle spaces at the east side of Washington Street below South Avenue; and to designate said space as a public parking space. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**

#### **NCAHS Request for COVID Support**

See Town Administrator's Report.

#### **602 Bedford Street**

Assistant Town Administrator Lisa Green advised the Board that she has been trying to obtain help from the state and the Mass. Office of Business Development with respect to this property which has been designated as a brownfield by the DEP. The property is valued at \$1.2 million and there is a 42,000 square foot building on the property that is structurally sound. The focus has been on contamination to residences on Robin and Terri Roads. She went on to say that there are grants available for site assessment, and she is seeking authorization from the Board to apply for those grants.

Mr. Salvucci asked if the town needs to obtain ownership of the property. Mrs. Green stated that she has been working with town counsel who has reached out to the agent of the property. The agent has stated that the owners have no interest in the property. This request is for a site assessment only. The town will have to motion the court to allow access to the property later. Mr. Bezanson asked who gave the contractor performing road work on route 18 permission to store his equipment on this property. Mr. Lynam advised Mr. Bezanson that no one gave the

contractor permission. The town does not have any interest in the property; therefore, we cannot take a stand on it.

Mr. Lamattina stated that the land is seriously contaminated. We do not own the property and he does not think we should be doing the work for any future developer.

Mrs. Green advised that the owners are behind on the taxes. The Treasurer/Collector could move forward at any time with tax title. Mr. Lynam stated the property cannot be taken until it is 6 quarters in arrears.

Mr. LaMattina stated that until we know we can take it, it is not our property.

Mr. Salvucci expressed concern with losing the opportunity to apply for the grants.

Mrs. Green advised the Board that the town is insulated from liability because the property has been labeled as a brownfield. The state wants to help towns with abandoned properties; and she feels this is worth looking at while the grants are available.

Mr. LaMattina asked how long it has been since taxes were paid on the Regal property. Mr. Lynam answered 1988.

Mr. Evans stated that he does not see a lot of risk in a site assessment of the property through a grant.

Mr. Bezanson agreed.

Mr. LaMattina asked what will happen if contaminants are found to be leaching on to the neighboring properties and who is responsible for the cleanup. Mr. Lynam stated that the DEP and EPA would have to take emergency action to protect the surrounding properties. Also, the DEP has already installed monitoring wells.

Following discussion, Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to authorize Assistant Town Administrator Lisa Green to seek a grant from the Mass. Office of Business Development to assess the contamination of the property located at 602 Bedford Street. **Second** Mr. Evans. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – no; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 3-1.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **IMA Between the Town of Whitman and the City of Brockton**

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to approve the Intermunicipal Agreement between the Town of Whitman and the City of Brockton for Treatment of Wastewater for the period July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2035. **Second** Mr. Evans. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**

### **Retirement of Current Town Administrator**

Mr. Lynam announced he is planning to retire on October 13, 2020, subject to the needs and approval of the Board of Selectmen, noting he can be available if needed. His retirement will also provide the opportunity for Assistant Town Administrator Lisa Green to be appointed as interim Town Administrator if the Board so chooses.

### **Update on Bid Process for Consultant Search for Town Administrator**

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that an invitation was sent to five companies to bid on a search for a town administrator and two of the companies responded. Mr. Lynam outlined the proposals from both Community Paradigm Associates and Municipal Resources, Inc. and recommended the Board choose Community Paradigm Associates.

Mr. LaMattina stated that he would like to hear from both companies at an upcoming meeting. He noted the Town of Hanson used Municipal Resources, Inc. and was very happy with them. Mr. Evans agreed with Mr. LaMattina's suggestion to hear from both companies in order to have transparency.

Mr. Lynam agreed to contact both companies to verify availability for September 16, 17 or 22, and to notify the Board members upon confirmation of a date.

#### **Review Town Administrator Job Description**

Mr. Lynam asked for any changes to the Town Administrator job description and there were none.

#### **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'E REPORT (cont'd)**

Mr. Lynam advised the Board that Lisa Green has procured \$29,000 in a municipal vulnerability grant to assess vulnerability to climate change. The town will be designated a MVP Community by the state and this will open up eligibility for future grants.

Mr. Lynam announced the property on Lazel Street that was taken by the Town will be auctioned on September 22, 2020, and the minimum bid has been set. He expects the property to sell for between \$140,000 & \$150,000.

At 8:49 p.m. Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Mr. Salvucci – yes. **So voted 4-0.**