

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2020  
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING, SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
240 SPRINGFIELD STREET, WILBRAHAM, MA**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Nick Breault - Town Administrator, Selectmen Robert J. Boilard and Heather Kmelius - Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Nate DeLong – IT Director, Jennifer Buchanan – WPA Part Time Production Coordinator.

**PRESENT BY PHONE:** Chair Susan C. Bunnell (presiding) and Selectmen Robert W. Russell, Steve Reilly - Town Counsel.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Bunnell asked all to join the Selectmen in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. She then stated the following. "In accordance with Mass. General Law Chapter 30(A), section 20, I announce that this meeting of the Board of Selectmen is being recorded by Wilbraham Public Access and the Board of Selectmen's Office; and ask if there is anyone present who is also recording this meeting". Chair Bunnell asked if there was anyone present in the audience also recording the meeting. No one was recording the meeting.

Town Administrator Nick Breault stated this meeting is being recorded by "Go To Meeting". He stated that this meeting is conducted in compliance with Massachusetts Governor Charles D. Baker's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20 signed on March 12, 2020. All of the 25 "call ins" were identified on the call and confirmed by the Chair.

A quorum of the Finance Committee was in attendance by phone at this meeting with attendees including Mark Manolakis, Marc Ducey, Mike Mazzuca, Tim Murphy, Chair Carolyn Brennan, Kevin Hanks, Anna Levine, and Nancy Johnson – Town Accountant. Finance Committee Members not in attendance include Todd Luzi and Kevin Corridan. Finance Committee Chair Brennan called the Finance Committee Joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen to order at 7:06pm and stated minutes of this meeting will be available through the Board of Selectmen's minutes of this joint meeting.

**APPOINTMENTS WITH THE BOARD**

7:00 p.m. Fire Chief Andrews - COVID-19 Coronavirus Update

Fire Chief Andrews was present by phone. The EMA Team is staying in close contact with one another daily. All essential Town services are operational. Personal protective equipment has been in use on the calls. There are concerns of staff exposure and quarantining venues available. Contingency plans are being worked on for sharing staff. Chief Andrews asked the public to maintain social distancing and to please only leave the house for essential needs. He stated that currently they are getting double digit calls. The combination of flu and corona viruses has generated a lot of activity recently.

Public Health Nurse Jill Consolino called the State about the epidemiology of virus. She stated that in summary, contraction of the virus is possible if you have prolonged contact with an infected individual within a six foot distance for the duration of 15 minutes or more. She stated it can be days before the virus presents itself with symptoms such as fever, cough, chills and shortness of breath. Following the date of the onset of any sickness symptoms, start a fourteen day quarantine. Once you have two negative tests in a 24 hour period, you can be cleared of quarantine. PHN Consolino discussed the increase in reported cases and noted that the increase was in part due to the increase in available testing. Selectman Russell asked about PPE availability and Chief Andrews responded that they have contacted MEMA about obtaining new supplies. Chief Andrews stated that one mask is being issued to each staff member per week. Health Inspector Lorri McCool stated that she and Chief Andrews are working together to try to get some of the PVPC funding for emergency staffing and reaction efforts.

TA Breault thanked all of the Town departments for their fantastic work in today's environment. He assured residents that Town services and staff are available. TA Breault urged residents to practice social distancing maintaining six feet apart from one another and to not congregate in groups of more than ten. He further addressed concerns from residents about people being in groups of ten or more in outdoor areas. The Town has not closed Parks and Recreational areas and other Open Space areas in Town as to allow people opportunities to get outside, exercise and to support positive mental health. TA Breault and Parks and Recreation Director Bryan Litz both advised residents not to engage in contact sports, pick-up games and similar activities as a precaution.

7:10 p.m. Finance Committee - FY 21 Budget; Annual Town Meeting Date and Annual Elections Date

Chair Bunnell stated that the Board has the authority to move the Town Meeting. The Town of Hampden has agreed to move its Town Meeting to the same future proposed date. TA Breault stated that the HWRS School Committee, despite rescheduling the

meeting, will still face a DESE deadline on March 31, 2020 and be faced to present a budget number. The vote will take place this Thursday in order to meet the DESE deadline.

TA Breault stated that the Mass Legislature is working on changing the Election date. The Town Clerk is prepared to hold the Election on June 20, 2020 as permitted. Town By-Laws state that the ATM is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May. Chair Brennan stated that the Finance Committee intends to vote on the budget this Wednesday. TA Breault stated that he was advocating for the school administration's wish to have action taken tonight. Director of Finance, Operations and Human Resources Howie Barber cited MGL identifying the law that the budget must be voted on no later than March 31<sup>st</sup>. Selectman Boilard asked about DESE's relaxation of the rules in light of the current Covid-19 health crisis and HWRSD Director Mr. Barber reported that there are no plans to so do.

Finance Committee member Anna Levine commented that some expenses are saved at this time with the schools being closed for three weeks. HWRSD Director Mr. Barber reported that 60% of the budget is based on salaries. Savings identified during the school district closure include office supplies, not paying substitute staff, and stipends for the spring season. The teachers and administration salaries are continuing even with the closure of the school buildings. HWRSD Director Barber estimated approximately \$100,000-\$200,000 savings from the closure. The savings could be applied to the FY21 budget. Finance Committee member Mark Manolakis commented that lighting has been left on during the day and night since the closure of the now vacant school buildings and many residents are taking notice. HWRSD Director Barber commented that he and the MRHS Director of Facilities are working with the subcontractor responsible for correcting this issue, which seems to stem from the recent change to Daylight Savings Time.

The proposed FY21 budget was put on the main screen for review. TA Breault stated the Selectmen need to talk about the money for the schools (2.5% increase over last year) and whether or not to include money for the two firefighters with grant funding. Chair Bunnell stated that the budget is under the levy limit (\$131,642) and would like to add the grant funded new firefighters. Finance Committee member Levine stated that she would like to fund one firefighter position regardless of grant money received. It was acknowledged by Finance Committee member Marc Ducey that the budget ask of the HWRSD administration is well beyond the reality of the current budget. HWRSD Director Barber stated that a 2.25% increase (total 3%) was presented. Following the originally proposed budget, the school district has further suggested reduced staffing (15 positions) and some reduction of supplies were proposed. Selectman Boilard stated that the unplanned FY20 expenses/saving could cover the difference of \$121,083. Finance Committee member Levine confirmed some expenses have already been saved since March 13 school closure announcement. Finance Committee member Levine is comfortable with the schools 2.5% (\$605,412) increase budget. She also stated that the Fire Department is a priority.

**Motion (Levine, Mazzuka): Move that the Finance Committee recommend a \$24,821,884.00 budget for the school committee plus \$1,487,527.00 for debt service for a total of \$26,309,411.00 for the school committee.** Finance Committee member Levine later withdrew her motion due to lack of support from the Finance Committee discussion.

Chair Brennan stated that there have been so many changes in the last week and a half that she would like to hear from each Finance Committee member about their thoughts. Finance Committee member Manolakis stated that he would like to vote on Wednesday after getting more information. Finance Committee member Ducey stated that one-time expenses in the budget total approximately half a million dollars and he wants to know what those represent and shared that he has deep reservations about the budget. The School District is now proposing serious staffing cuts that propose eliminating the only elementary school librarian in place. He also has reservations about State Aid. HWRSD Director Barber clarified that the one time purchases include purchasing textbooks, a fiber plan, a software system, and a testing system totaling \$224,000. Finance Committee member Kevin Hanks is not prepared to vote to tonight and would like more information regarding one-time expenses. Finance Committee member Tim Murphy stated that he missed the original school presentation and he is also looking for more information before voting. Finance Committee member Levine withdrew her motion at 8:08pm. Finance Committee member Ducey asked for a list of the one-time expenses in the budget prior to the Finance Committee meeting this Wednesday. Finance Committee member Levine left the call at 8:09pm. HWRSD Director Barber committed to providing the information requested from Finance Committee member Ducey. Chair Bunnell asked that it be sent to TA Breault and the Town of Hampden also.

Chair Bunnell asked about the budget regarding firefighters. Selectman Boilard supported the \$48,000 funding to supplement two grant funded firefighters for a few years. The Board agreed.

TA Breault reviewed the other Free Cash proposals in the budget including funding for Tree Trimming, a Broadband study plan (which may not be needed if the state approves using Community Compact funds to the study), the additional Firefighters, Police camera, and an IT fiber line installation. The items in this area of the spreadsheet related to the Town Buildings have costs relevant to Green Communities, but which are not part of the current budget proposal for use of Free Cash. IT Director DeLong responded that the fiber line installation is required for the Town Hall to be in connectivity for the Town. This installation will add a new line connecting the Town Hall to the rest of the buildings.

Selectman Boilard is not looking to increase the burden on the taxpayer and appreciates that the future is uncertain based on the virus and Selectman Russell agreed. Discussion ensued. The schools have to look at other options as Wilbraham is bearing a bigger financial burden as Hampden students attend Wilbraham schools. HWRSD Barber outlined the penalty of not meeting the March 31

DESE deadline, noting that the district would be subject to 1/12<sup>th</sup> appropriation. Chair Bunnell clarified this could be corrected at Town Meeting if necessary. Chair Brennan proposed asking this question at the MMA meeting tomorrow, as well as reaching out to the legislators. Chair Bunnell will reach out to MMA and the legislature asking for deadline relief possibilities. HWRSD Director Barber discussed more financials. Finance Committee Manolakis asked about Technology and Efficiency Fund Request for the exterior library cameras to see if they could push that expense off until next year. Library Director Demers stated that the funds cannot be put towards the MAR and that the cameras were prompted for security reasons and that the project was paid for out of her landscaping budget. She stated the wiring has been done and the cameras have been ordered. The Finance Committee questioned why the project had been initiated and pursued before funding was allocated. Chairman Boilard clarified that there were extenuating circumstances and that the cameras were needed immediately. Library Director Demers stated that there is discussion about another interior camera that will be addressed in the next year. Finance Committee Hanks had questions about the Firefighter grant in today's fiscal environment. Discussion ensued about the FY21 budget.

Finance Committee member Ducey moved to adjourn and Finance Committee member Mazzuka seconded the motion. The Finance Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 8:52pm.

**MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move to reschedule the Annual Town Meeting to Monday, June 15, 2020 at 7pm in the Minnechaug Regional High School Auditorium. Roll call vote: (Chair Bunnell – yes, Selectmen Russell – yes, Selectmen Boilard-yes).**

**MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move to recommend to the Town Clerk to reschedule the Annual Elections in accordance with any discretion granted to the Town Clerk by the Massachusetts General Court, and to recommend a new date of Saturday, June 20, 2020. Roll call vote: (Chair Bunnell – yes, Selectmen Russell – yes, Selectmen Boilard-yes).**

*Materials Referenced: Excel spreadsheet titled March 17 FY'21 BUDGET WORKBOOK and 1 page document titled "Impact on Budgets" provided by TA Breault.*

**OPEN SESSION** (for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting, such as :)

Town Administrator's Report

TA Breault stated that the former license holder from Michael's Pasta in the Pan is asking for a refund to a surrendered liquor license. The ABCC returned the change of manager application without action for NEC OPCO I, Inc. dba Wilbraham FL Roberts. They will need to submit a new application for consideration.

*Materials Referenced: Recommendation of the Investigator notice receive via email to the Selectmen's Office from Mass ABCC Licensing Supervisor S. Walsh on 3.17.2020 (2 pgs).*

Board of Selectmen Updates

Selectman Boilard directed residents to review Gov. Baker's orders issued today regarding the shelter in place and safety. Chair Bunnell will reach out to legislatures as promised in an earlier discussion this evening.

The Board asked for public forum discussion input but had no response or issues brought to attention.

*Materials Referenced: Gov. Baker's Orders released 3.12.2020 and 3.23.2020.*

**OLD BUSINESS**

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

**MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move to approve Friday, April 10, 2020 as the deadline for Warrant Articles for the Annual Town Meeting. Roll call vote: (Chair Bunnell – yes, Selectmen Russell – yes, Selectmen Boilard-yes).**

FY 2021 Budget Proposal

This matter was covered in discussion with the Finance Committee this evening.

Board of Selectmen Meeting Schedule

The Board is not meeting on March 30, 2020 per the regular schedule. TA Breault recommended that the Board leave next Monday night open in case a meeting needs to be called.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – J. Sasen, Director of Veterans Services

No discussion took place about this matter.

**MOTION (Russell, Boilard): Move to recommend the approval of the Reserve Fund Transfer request of Jered Sasen, Director of Veterans Services, for \$25,000 to cover the expense of multiple unforeseen Veterans' funerals, and to forward said recommendation**

**for approval to the Finance Committee for final consideration. Roll call vote: (Chair Bunnell – yes, Selectmen Russell – yes, Selectmen Boilard-yes).**

*Materials Referenced Email and Reserve Fund Transfer application submitted by Director of Veterans' Serviced J. Sasen delivered to the Selectmen's Office on 3.30.202 received via email from Town Accountant N. Johnson.*

Ratification of votes of BOS Meeting on March 16, 2020

This matter was considered in the beginning of this meeting following the Board's appointment with Chief Andrews. This Open Meeting Law requirement was not one of the sections that was suspended in the Governor's orders. All of the Selectmen's votes of the BOS need to be via roll-call moving forward.

**MOTION(Bunnell, Russell): Move to ratify, via roll call vote, the votes taken by the Board of Selectmen on March 16, 2020. Roll call vote: (Chair Bunnell – yes, Selectmen Russell – yes, Selectmen Boilard-yes).**

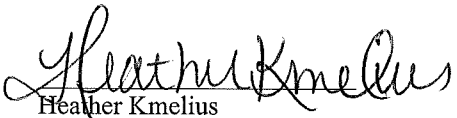
**LICENSING AND OTHER APPROVALS**


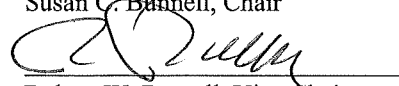
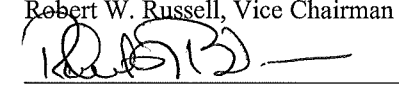
None.

**MEETING MINUTES**

None.

Having no further business, Selectman Russell made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Boilard seconded the motion and the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted in a roll call vote (Chair Bunnell – yes, Selectmen Russell – yes, Selectmen Boilard-yes) to adjourn at approximately 8:58 PM.

  
Heather Kmelius  
Administrative Assistant to the BOS/TA

  
Susan C. Bunnell, Chair  
  
Robert W. Russell, Vice Chairman  
  
Robert J. Boilard, Clerk