

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**  
**Abigail Adams Auditorium**  
**89 Middle Street, Weymouth, MA 02189**  
**Monday, May 12 2014 – 7:30 p.m.**

Present: Patrick O'Connor, President  
Michael Smart, Vice President  
Robert M. Conlon, Councilor  
Kenneth DiFazio, Councilor  
Jane Hackett, Councilor  
Ed Harrington, Councilor  
Rebecca Haugh, Councilor  
Thomas J. Lacey, Councilor  
Arthur Mathews, Councilor  
Michael Molisse, Councilor  
Brian McDonald, Councilor

Also Present: Susan M. Kay, Mayor  
Lee Hultin, Assistant Town Clerk  
William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer  
George Lane, Town Solicitor  
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor  
Various Department Heads and School Committee Members

Recording Secretary: Abby McCabe

President O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Assistant Town Clerk, Lee Hultin, called the roll call with all members present.

President O'Connor announced that the first item on the agenda was the presentation of the scholarship awards.

**Presentation of Scholarship Awards**

Mayor Susan Kay introduced Chairperson of the Scholarship Committee, Lois Desmond. Ms. Desmond introduced this year's scholarship awards presentation which will award 35 Weymouth students (23 high school seniors, 8 students in college, and 4 adult students). The total awarded this year is over \$44,000. Additionally, one student is a returning award recipient for a scholarship renewal. This year the Committee welcomed three new sponsors; South Shore Road Race Group with proceeds from the October road race, the Weymouth High School Class of 2003, and Denis Shea, a former member of the School Committee that recently passed away and his family established a scholarship fund.

For high school seniors from public and private schools, the following scholarships were awarded by Council President O'Connor, Lois Desmond and Mayor Susan Kay:

Brianna N. Boiki - \$1,000 Town of Weymouth Scholarship and \$500 Richard W. Walsh III Memorial Scholarship

Jared A. Brooks - \$2,000 Salvatore and Maria Pizzi Family Foundation Scholarship

Elizabeth M. Burnand - \$1,000 Michael J. Murphy Memorial Scholarship

Alycia M. Carney - \$1,000 Joseph I. Dalton Memorial Scholarship

Joanna M. Cassidy - \$1,000 William L Concannon Memorial Scholarship and \$1,000 Town of Weymouth Scholarship

Timothy J. Cronin - \$1,500 George H. Player Memorial Scholarship and \$500.00 Town of Weymouth Scholarship

Erin M. Crowley - \$2,000 Salvatore and Maria Pizzi Family Foundation Scholarship

Erin N. Cunningham - \$1,000 South Shore Running Scared Road Race Scholarship and \$1,000 Town of Weymouth Scholarship

Kathryn E. DiCesare - \$500 Weymouth Class of 1993 Scholarship and \$500 Town of Weymouth Scholarship

Sara E. Ellis - \$2,700 Weymouth Club Scholarship

Edward A. Fisher - \$3,000 Scholarship

Alisha Fitzpatrick - \$500 Fraternal Order of Eagles Weymouth Aerie 2899 Scholarship and \$500 Town of Weymouth Scholarship {Alisha was not present}

Amanda M. Flaherty - \$1,000 William and Florence McGrath Memorial Scholarship

Mathew S Healey - \$500 DeLuze Collision Center

James P. J. Hebert - \$1,000 David G. Noble Memorial Scholarship

Elizabeth N. Johnson - \$1,000 Connie G Passerio Memorial Scholarship

Mark E. Mueller - \$1,000 McDonald Keohane Funeral Homes Scholarship

Emma E. Murphy - \$500.000 Lions Club Scholarship and \$500 Town of Weymouth

Rachel A. Scholz-Bright - \$1,000 Joseph P. and Rosemary Flynn Memorial

Patrick W. Shuman - \$1,000 Weymouth Town Taxi Scholarship

Joseph N. Tenaglia - \$1,000 Weymouth Bank

Timothy J. Vazquez - \$1,000 Quincy Credit Union

Matthew J. Walsh - \$1,000 Electro Switch Corporation

Four students (presently attending college) scholarships were awarded as follows:

Molly E. Barker - \$1,000 Scholarship

Lena M. Cavallo - \$1,000 Weymouth Garden Club

Mary-Kate Cone - \$1,500 Town of Weymouth and \$500 Dunkin Donuts

Erin N. Craig - \$500 Trapani + Assoc. Inc. and \$500 Town of Weymouth

Kristin P. Graham - \$1,000 Scholarship

Peter S. Salhaney - \$1,000 Scholarship

James E. Simmons - \$1,000 Scholarship

Jessica A. Stuart - \$1,000 Scholarship

For residents returning to college for retraining or to further their college education, the following scholarships were awarded:

Meredith A. Deacon - \$1,000 {Ms. Deacon was not present}

David J. McCoy - \$1,000 Dennis P. Shea, Jr. Memorial Scholarship

Karen Fosa Salhaney - \$500 Rockland Federal Credit Union Scholarship and \$500 Town of Weymouth

Kelly S. Young - \$1,000 {Ms. Young was not present}

The following individual received a renewal of the Salvatore and Maria Pizzi Family Foundation Scholarship:

Randi A. Whitman - \$2,000, Salvatore and Maria Pizza Family Foundation

Ms. Desmond thanked the Mayor, Council President O'Connor and the various scholarship sponsors that have made these scholarships and the awards presentation possible.

Council President O'Connor informed everyone that due to a technicality, tonight's meeting is not being aired live but will be on WETC tomorrow and throughout the week.

### **Overview of Legislative Activities for Fiscal Year 2014**

Council President O'Connor delivered a legislative overview for the past fiscal year. He has been the Council President for the second half of the year and Councilor Mathews for the first half of the fiscal year. The Council has held 54 Council meetings to date including Committee meetings. The Council reviews and can decrease, but not increase, the Town's budget and they are beginning their review of next year's budget.

Some of the highlights of the Council's work over the last year have been; a new roof at the High School that came in under budget allowing the town to purchase additional police and department of public works vehicles, HOME partnership, awarded Community Preservation Committee (CPC) funds, the completion of the Fogg Library renovation, \$25,000 from Community Preservation Committee funds for Whitman's Pond Vegetation, the appointment and re-appointment of volunteers on various town boards, commissions, and committees, a transfer from free-cash to the school department, and departmental audits by the Town Auditor. Additionally, the Council members have performed an extensive review of Starwood's proposed legislation that includes 17 Council meetings to date beginning in November 2013. This endeavor involved approximately 40 hours of Council negotiations. He noted that the town has hired a legal team to review the legislation, and Councilors attended the 3 town wide public meeting in Abington.

### **Public Hearings – Commencing at 7:30 PM – Published on May 2, 2014**

14 057 – General Government Annual Appropriation

14 058 – Revolving Accounts Annual Authorization

14 059 – Gift Accounts Annual Authorization

14 060 – Unpaid Bills

14 061 – Free Cash – FY 14 Snow Removal Appropriation

14 062 – Free Cash – SPED Out-of-District Tuition

14 063 – Free Cash – OPEB Liability Trust Fund

14 064 – Health Insurance Unexpended Balance

14 065 – Sewer Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation

14 066 – Sewer Retained Earnings – Pump Station Improvements

14 067 – Sewer Retained Earnings – Capital Equipment

14 068 – Water Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation

14 069 – Water Retained Earnings – Water Main Improvements

14 070 – Water Retained Earnings – Great Pond Dam Sluice Gate Repair

14 071 – Water Retained Earnings – Great Hill Water Tank Rehabilitation

14 072 – Water Retained Earnings – Capital Equipment

14 073 – Community Preservation Committee Annual Appropriation

On a motion made by Vice President Smart, seconded by Councilor Mathews, the Council unanimously voted to open the public hearings for 14 057 – 14 073.

### **Fiscal Year 2015 Budget**

Mayor Kay read her “State of the Town” message. She summarized some of the accomplishments over the last fiscal year, which included the re-opening of the Fogg Library by investing with CPC (Community Preservation Committee) funds, Host Community Agreement payments, the completion of the 75% design plans for Legion Field. Utilization of the local meals tax revenue for Legion Field and a new turf field at the High School are currently before Council. The 75% design plans for Lovell Playground are complete and the town is still researching funding opportunities, revenue from the local meals tax is being used for park maintenance and improvements at various parks throughout town. The Mayor noted that a centralized park maintenance program has not been set up yet but she is working with the new Public Works Director and he has also been working closely with the School Department’s Director of Maintenance. During the past fiscal year, a new trash and recycling program was implemented, a social service guide published, launching of a new town website, and CPR training across the town offices.

The Mayor stated that her submitted FY 2015 budget reflects almost level service funding and does not reflect the speculations surrounding Southfield. The budget is a 2.9% increase from last year and \$800,000 is needed for the snow removal budget. The increase is caused by the change in State Aid (Chapter 70, Education Aid, and Veterans Aid) are less than last year. The town experienced an increase in excise tax, property taxes, and the adoption of the local meals tax has provided for improvements and maintenance improvements at Weston, Stella Tirrell, and Great Hill.

On the expense side, the town’s health insurance cost is only increasing by 1% with the GIC program; the pension contribution has increased, state assessments, union contracts have been negotiated with a 2% increase and the budget also includes a 2% increase for non-union employees. The budget proposal also includes a transfer for \$900,000 from free cash to supplemental the school department’s budget as there is a deficit. Due to the decrease in state

aid, Community Development Block Grant Funds and Elder Affairs grant money has resulted in more money having to be provided by the town.

The Capital Improvement Plan has been updated and is important in determining the long-term goals and health of the community. The sewer department budget has increased due to an increase by the M.W.R.A which may ultimately result in a fee increase. There is no room in the school department budget to increasing staffing levels, unfortunately.

Mayor Kay reviewed the tax structure as consisting of property taxes, CPC funds, and as the town is 95% – 96% built-out with approximately \$600,000 in new growth, she noted that the former Naval Air Station is the last remaining undeveloped revenue source. Her goal is to ensure that the revenue would meet the required services while also ensuring that the town won't absorb any financial risks or liability. Negotiations with Southfield are still ongoing at this time. The FY15 revenues projected do not include figures from Southfield. The Mayor thanked the Council and her supporting staff for their efforts.

#### **Presentation of the Budget, William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer**

Mr. McKinney gave an overview of the budget. The FY2015 budget is almost level service funded with no fee increases and an investment in education. He reviewed the past budget appropriations from FY2008 through to the present, citing nominal growth each year. Property taxes account for 61% of the budget, local aid 29%, excise tax 4%, transfer-ins 7%, local receipts 2%, and all other account for 1%.

Mr. McKinney reviewed the changes from FY14; the local meals tax has increased by \$500,000, excise taxes are up, and education aid has decreased over the last few years to \$25 per student.

On the expense side, the School Department accounts for 42% of the budget, 22% for pensions and benefits (largely health insurance), 7% debt service, 7% Department of Public Works, 2% state assessments, 12% for public safety, 7% for general government, and 1% for all other. The meals tax revenue has been allocated to the Department of Public Works (DPW), and a major benefit for this year's budget has been that the town experienced only a 1% increase in health insurance costs. The only departments that were not level funded are Fire, Police, Public Works, and Schools. 57% of the Town's budget goes towards education and the remaining 43% is for general government services.

The Education Reform Act requirements are growing by \$2 million, but State Chapter 70 funding is not increasing that much. The Enterprise funds are \$14,939,804, the water department budget remains the same, and collective bargaining is settled through FY2016. The collective bargaining unions include library, firefighters, public works, clerical and custodial employees.

Mr. McKinney explained that free cash is the amount of revenue that exceeds budget and unspent funds from the budget line items and should be used for one-time expenses. The Host Community Agreement goes into the General Fund, then to free cash and then to the special purpose stabilization fund. As the Mayor noted earlier, the budget is not based on any changes

or projections from Southfield. The long-term liabilities – pensions, OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) total \$345 million.

The operation requests include the measures listed this evening. The average FY14 property tax bill was \$3,755, the lowest in Norfolk County. Mr. McKinney summarized property taxes in other communities; Weston is the highest and Hancock is the lowest in the state.

The Mayor concluded with Mr. McKinney that the town will continue to provide strong services to residents even in tough economic times.

Council President O'Connor thanked the Mayor and Mr. McKinney. He also introduced the School Committee members present; Tracey Nardone and Kathleen Curran.

President O'Connor opened the meeting up to public comments:

**Maggie Murphy, Weymouth Educators Association Vice President**

Ms. Murphy stated that she did not feel the funding for schools and education was adequate or sufficient. She does not live in Weymouth and feels that education is a major factor to attract families to town.

**Bob Montgomery Thomas, 848 Washington Street**

Mr. Montgomery Thomas spoke about OPEB and was concerned with the increasing cost and that no solutions or alternatives to address OPEB have been brought forward. He believes there are solutions that will help address the OPEB situation such as local ballot options.

**Gus Perez, 16 Hewett Road**

Mr. Perez expressed his concern for the student's education as he believes the schools are underfunded. He stressed the importance that strong school's play into successful communities. He felt that Weymouth's tax rates were similar to other communities and that the property values were low because of the schools. He believes that good schools lead to higher property values and thus more property tax generation. He asserted that Weymouth pays \$1,460 per student less than the average of all other communities in the state. He believes that other departments are over budgeted as indicated by the remaining balances given to free cash. He urged the town to put more towards schools prior to each fiscal year since the school department needs the money up front prior to the start of the academic year.

Councilor Hackett and Councilor McDonald left at 9:20 PM.

Mr. McKinney added that the free cash balances from departments are generally used for one-time expenditures and using free cash is not a sustainable option. The snow removal budget is the only budget item that can be underfunded- which is why it is generally under-funded.

**Chris Primiano, 82 Rindge Street**

Mr. Primiano expressed his disappointment that the schools are underfunded even though he felt there is money in the budget, police and fire are underfunded, Southfield and a strong 20 year vision for Weymouth is important to help raise property values.

**Kathleen Curran, 26 Babcock Road**

Ms. Curran identified herself as a School Committee member but stated that she was speaking as a resident and not a Committee member. She expressed her concern that the public schools are not properly funded which has deterred young families from moving into town. Arts and music programs are also suffering and she feels that not enough money is focused on education.

**Elizabeth Foster Nolan, 54 Houserock Road**

Ms. Foster felt that the town clearly had a revenue issue and should be focusing on ways to increase the property values to help provide for the schools and education. Increased revenue is needed to provide appropriate resources for public safety and Southfield should be seen as an opportunity.

**Anne Hilbert, 58 Doris Drive**

Ms. Hilbert believed a large portion of the school budget was for salaries. She also stated that she did not believe the town needed Southfield.

**John McDonough, 6 Shore Drive**

Mr. McDonough asked if residents of Southfield were Weymouth residents and if they paid taxes. President O'Connor responded that they were residents and did not pay Weymouth property taxes.

**George Berg, 74 Summer Street**

Mr. Berg agreed that the town had a significant revenue problem and thought that the free cash figures seemed high. He also felt the level services for the schools was not enough and emphasized the need to generate additional revenue and suggested increasing the tax base.

**Bob Montgomery Thomas, 848 Washington Street**

Reiterated that the school funding is 42% of the budget which is \$61 million. The state should stop requiring increases for student costs if given less financial support. The town needs help from the state for schools, public safety and should re-visit OPEB.

**Gus Perez, 16 Hewett Road**

Added that the school department is the largest part of the budget because it has the most employees and provides the services to the most people in town.

On a motion made by Vice President Smart, seconded by Councilor Mathews, the Council unanimously voted to close the public hearing for measures 14 057 – 14 073.

**Adjournment**

On a motion made by Vice President Smart, seconded by Councilor Mathews, the Council adjourned the meeting at 10:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Abby McCabe as Recording Secretary

Approved by Council President Patrick O'Connor

Voted unanimously on 16 June 2014