

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Weymouth Town Hall
Council Chambers
March 7, 2016

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

Not Present: Robert Conlon, Councilor
Brian McDonald, Councilor

Also Present: Mayor Robert Hedlund
Ted Langill, Chief of Staff
Nicholas Bulens, Administrative Services Coordinator
Kathleen Deree, Town Clerk
Joseph Callanan, Town Solicitor
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor

Recording Secretary: Diane T. Hachey

President O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Town Clerk Kathleen Deree called the roll, with 2 members absent. It was noted that Councilors Conlon and McDonald would not be in attendance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President O'Connor welcomes Troop 2, who were in attendance, in order to receive their Citizenship Badges.

MINUTES

Budget/Management Committee Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2016

Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews, and voted unanimously.

Town Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2016

Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews, and voted unanimously.

Budget/Management Committee Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2016

Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews, and voted unanimously.

Ordinance Committee Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2016

Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews, and voted unanimously.

Town Council Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2016

Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews, and voted unanimously.

RESIDENT AND COMMUNITY COMMENT

Effects on Weymouth Families as a Result of an Underfunded School Budget

- Andrea Honore of 61 House Rock Road**
- Matt Symonds of 39 Governor Winthrop Lane**
- Carrie Skinner Palazzo of 16 Keating Circle**
- Laurie Delano of 56 Thomas Road**

Andrea Honore is present as a parent and on behalf of “Citizens for a Better Weymouth”. Her goal is to shed light on underrepresented and ongoing issues as related to an underfunded school budget. She cited a listing provided to Councilors which depicts fundraising totals from Parent Council to purchase items such as desks, chairs, classroom supplies, curriculum materials, books etc. The expenditures for science were \$57k, Technology \$83K, staff stipends \$34k—for a grand total of more than \$247k. She realizes that money is tight but wants to bring these issues to light.

Matt Symonds is here as both the parent of a special needs student and an IT professional. He cites the need for funding the licensing renewal for homework IT applications and teacher tracking applications. He believes the funding should come from the school budget and not parent council fundraising efforts. He questions why the WIFI connections in the schools are so poor, which is a barrier to student learning; in addition to only having a single network server for the high school. He points to teachers abandoning higher tech lessons due to computer issues. He hopes we can all work collectively to address these issues.

Carrie Skinner Palazzo expressed that she is more familiar with the budget process after being involved in the Proposition 2 ½ override campaign. She cited the charter school lottery applications, noting that 324 applications were from Weymouth. She hopes for a plan moving forward which is clearly communicated to all involved.

Laurie Delano would like new administration to see highlights of the specific effects repeated underfunding of schools have on a community. She highlighted the cuts in the science curriculum and noted that primary schools have no formal science program. Many teachers pay out- of- pocket for supplies to introduce science to young, naturally curious students. At the high school level, teachers are expected to teach STEM, with no funding and questions the negative impact this has on the students. Simply stated, she is looking for a fair budget so that important programs are able to be sufficiently funded.

Councilor Haugh commended the speakers for coming forward and as the chair of the Education Committee is encouraged by the dialogue, realistic expectations and encouraged them to continue to raise their concerns.

Council President O'Connor thanked all speakers and stated that the Council hears them and that we are trying to address and will continue to address these issues in an effort to make our schools great.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

7:35PM 16 001-National Grid/Verizon Joint Pole Installation-Middle Street

Councilor Smart motioned to open the public hearing, noting that abutters were notified on February 29, 2016, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Dennis Regan, National Grid representative, noted that they are requesting to install pole 122-50/ Middle Street, located 85 feet south of the existing pole number 122. Further they wish to install a new anchor located 20 feet south.

President O'Connor asked if there were any comments from the public to which there was no response.

Councilor Smart motioned to close the public hearing, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Councilor Smart motioned for action under 2-9 (b), motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action on measure number 16 001, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

7:36 PM 15 006-Ordinance Amendment-Chapter 7

Councilor Smart motioned to open the public hearing, noting that the publication occurred on February 26, 2016, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Councilor Haugh noted that 14 months ago, she and Councilor Lacey, drafted this ordinance, resultant from issues in their districts surrounding numerous blighted properties. They looked at surrounding communities and states handling and drafted this with much feedback from three town solicitors in the past 8 months.

The following were the comments from the public:

MaryAnne Cuddahy of 83 Wilson Avenue is very much in favor of the ordinance, and is here representing her neighbors. She cites homes in her neighborhood (81 and 93 Wilson) which are eyesores, pose serious safety and health issues, and need to be cleaned up.

81 Wilson Avenue has been abandoned for 6 years, the owner walked away from, leaving pipes bursts, mold, gutters hanging, and an overgrown yard which attracts bugs and vermin.

93 Wilson Avenue was abandoned due to a fire and is a house of squalor, with trash outside, an in-ground pool which isn't covered, home to vermin etc. She and her neighbors are unable to use their backyards due to these homes.

She cites the lack of response from the Mayor's Office (past and current) and Building Department. She feels that if they lived in her neighborhood that swift action would have occurred. She commended Councilor Lacey, the Council Office staff and Matt Brennan from the Health Department with helping make progress.

Christine Joyce of 92 Wilson Avenue is requesting the Council's support of this measure and echoes Mrs. Cuddahy's concerns. She reinforced the aesthetic, safety and health concerns.

Robert Terrevechia/President of Weymouth Bank commends the Ordinance Committee for their work and notes his concern with initiating foreclosure of properties and the duty of the lender prior to taking ownership. He has no concerns with post foreclosure.

Councilor Haugh reiterated the importance of making the town aware of vacant properties and if a complaint is lodged the building department would investigate and if need be-- the property remedied. This would require being completed within 30 days, noting the goal is not to charge fines but to clean up the applicable property.

Mr. Terrevecchia noted that the foreclosure process can take years, which further adds to the blight issue on foreclosed properties.

Jeff Potter of 51 Broad Reach/President North Weymouth Civic Association

supports this ordinance and notes a home located on Neck Street which has weeds so tall you cannot see the house.

Linda MacDonald of 58 Laurel Street is pleased that we are putting this forward and noted that 3 houses in her immediate neighborhood were in poor blighted condition and have recently been cleaned up, some of which are for sale. She hasn't read the ordinance but questions who will be the enforcing agent. Councilor Haugh noted that the building department would conduct the initial inspection and refer out to applicable departments accordingly.

Robert Thomas of 848 Washington Street notes concern with allowing a building inspector to walk on the grounds of private property, and suggests that the Attorney General's office is consulted as well. He further suggests that a longer public comment period is allowed with a more in depth legal review.

Councilor Smart motioned to close the public hearing.

Councilor Lacey responded and noted that this has been in the works for 14 months now and urges moving forward and closing the public hearing this evening. Many residents are wholeheartedly in favor and he recommends swift approval.

Councilor Harrington noted the detrimental effect on property values for those abutting blighted properties. He is ready to vote as this is long overdue.

President O'Connor recapped that this measure is still in the Ordinance Committee and the Council was anticipating hearing thoughts from the public.

Chairman of the Ordinance Committee, Kenneth DiFazio, appreciates the public comment and has learned much from the discussion, and looks forward to voting in committee and making a recommendation to the Council.

Motion to close the public hearing was seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

COMMUNICATION AND REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR, TOWN OFFICERS AND TOWN BOARDS

16 017-Appointment of the Director of Planning and Community Development
-Robert Luongo

Nick Bulens presented on behalf of the Mayor's Office requesting that Robert Luongo be appointed as the Director of Planning and Community Development.

Councilor Smart motioned for referral to the Budget/Management Committee, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

16 018-Appointment of the Information Technology Director-Shawn Rothman

Nick Bulens requested that the title “Information Technology Director” is replaced with “Chief Information Officer”.

Councilor Smart motioned for referral (as amended) to the Budget/Management Committee, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

16 019- Human Resources Department Line Item Transfer

Nick Bulens presented that \$350,000 is transferred from the health insurance employee benefits account to the worker’s compensation employee benefits transfer account in order to cover the projected workman’s compensation claims for fiscal 2016.

Councilor Hackett noted that a \$650k appropriation goes into the workman’s compensation trust fund and we draw down as needed. She is uncomfortable voting under same night action this evening and questions if it is considered an emergency or could a vote wait until 21 May, to which administration responded that a vote could wait.

Councilor Smart motioned for referral to the Budget/Management Committee, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

16 020-Meals Tax Line Item Transfer

Nick Bulens presented a request to transfer \$400k from debt service to the DPW Park Construction Maintenance Account for the purpose of funding improvements to the parks, with projected meals tax revenues.

Councilor Smart motioned for referral to the Budget/Management Committee, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

16 021- General Fund Reserve Appropriation for the Replacement of a Total Loss Police Cruiser

Nick Bulens on behalf of the Mayor’s Office, is requesting that \$18,469.29 is raised and appropriated from the general fund reserve account to the Police Department’s Insurance Reimbursement Account-- in order to replace a K-9 cruiser which was in a motor vehicle accident and declared totaled.

Councilor DiFazio interjected and asked to revert back to the prior measure. He would like a status of fees from use of Legion Field from administration.

Councilor Smart motioned for referral of measure 16021 to the Budget/Management Committee, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

16 013-FISCAL YEAR 2015 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND MANAGEMENT LETTER -PRESIDENT PATRICK O'CONNOR

Councilor Smart motioned for referral to the Budget/Management Committee, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

16 015-PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SOUTHFIELD ZONING AND LAND USE FOR WHITE STREET -VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL SMART

Vice President Smart explained that LStar is proposing this rezoning change due to ongoing issues with the neighbors and is being done in an effort to create a buffer zone.

Councilor Smart motioned for referral of measure 16 015 to the Ordinance Committee and Planning Board, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION-PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING STRATEGY REGARDING POTENTIAL LITIGATION AGAINST NATURAL GAS COMPANIES, RESULTANT FROM POTENTIAL EXPANSION PLANS

Vice President Smart motioned to go into executive session for purposes of discussing strategy regarding potential litigation against natural gas companies, resultant from potential expansion plans; noting that discussing this in open session would have a detrimental effect. He further noted that the Council will reconvene in open session for the purpose of adjournment.

At 9:08 PM a roll call vote to enter executive session was taken by Kathy Deree, as follows:

Robert Conlon (not present)
Kenneth DiFazio-yes
Jane Hackett-yes
Ed Harrington-yes
Rebecca Haugh-yes
Thomas Lacey-yes
Arthur Mathews-yes
Brian McDonald (not present)
Michael Molisse-yes
Vice President Michael Smart-yes
Council President Patrick O'Connor-yes

*** (Executive session minutes will be released at which time the purpose for calling the session has been resolved).

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:36 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Vice President Smart in open session, to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Mathews.
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Hachey as Recording Secretary.

Approved by Patrick O'Connor as President
Voted unanimously on 16 May 2016