

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TOWN HALL-COUNCIL CHAMBERS
February 17, 2015**

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

Absent: Brian McDonald, Councilor
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
Kathy Deree, Town Clerk

Also Present: George Lane, Town Solicitor
William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer
Lee Hultin, Assistant Town Clerk
Rob McLean, Director of Libraries

Recording Secretary: Diane T. Hachey

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call was performed with all Councilors present, with the exception of Councilor McDonald. President O'Connor spoke with Councilor McDonald who is unable to attend this evening.

Announcements

Councilor Smart announced that dog licenses are due prior to March 1st, in order to avoid a \$25 late fee. Due to this date falling on a Sunday, the deadline is Friday 27 February, in order to avoid the late fee.

He further announced that the Fire Department is looking for the public's help in locating and digging out the more than 1,600 fire hydrants in the town.

Councilor Harrington announced that he has recently joined social media and invited people to visit him on facebook or contact him, noting his contact information is on the town's website. Additionally, he will not hold office hours this week. He further stated that South Shore Hospital has suspended its decision to enter into an agreement with Partners Health Care, due to recent court decisions, and he feels that this decision does injustice to the quality of health care, in particular that on the south shore. Further he believes that it may possibly jeopardize the hospital's ability to compete in the industry. Residents of the south shore have felt that one needs to go into Boston for quality health care. This recent court decision further reinforces the lock on Boston's healthcare monopoly under the pretense of being concerned for affordable health care. Councilor Harrington advocates for affiliations and mergers with the highest quality health care providers to maintain healthy industry competition on the South Shore.

Minutes

Budget/Management Committee Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2014 (tabled from January 20, 2015).

Councilor Smart motioned to take these minutes off the table, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously. Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action on the revised draft of the Budget/Management Committee Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2014, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Budget/Management Committee Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2015

Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action on the Budget/Management Committee Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2015, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Communications and Reports from the Mayor, Town Officers, and Town Boards

15 008-Authorization to Overexpend-Snow Removal-action requested under 2-9(b).

William McKinney presented on behalf of the Mayor's office.

He requests that in accord with Mass General Laws, chapter 44 section 31D, that the Town Council authorizes the DPW, with the approval of the Mayor, to over expend any and all line items associated with snow removal.

Councilor Smart motioned to consider this measure under 2-9(b), motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action on measure number 15 008, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews. Councilor Mathews requested an update from Mr. Connell, inclusive of updated figures as related to snow removal, as this measure was drafted prior to the storms. Mr. McKinney agreed to provide this updated information. Motion passes unanimously.

15 010-Statement of Interest, Chapman School-action requested under 2-9(b).

Mr. McKinney read the following into the record:

“Having convened in an open meeting on Tuesday, February 17, 2015, the Town Council of Weymouth, in accordance with the town charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest by the deadline date of April 10, 2015 for the Chapman School located at 1051 Commercial Street which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category for which Weymouth may be invited to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future.

Submitting a SOI is the critical first step in the MSBA's school construction program. It allows a district to inform the Authority about deficiencies that may exist in a school facility. If we receive an invitation into the Eligibility Period by MSBA, the district will be seeking funding for a Feasibility Study to replace the Chapman School which was built in 1961. Replacement would improve efficiency, reduce utility costs, insure non-interrupted service, and extend the useful life of the building. The project is identified as a Priority 1, Replacement or renovation of a building which is structurally unsound or otherwise in a condition seriously jeopardizing the health and safety of school children, where no alternative exists. Priority 4, Prevention of severe overcrowding expected to result from increased enrollments.

Priority 7, Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements of the Chapman building.

It is hereby further specifically acknowledged that by submitting this Statement of Interest, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits to the Town of Weymouth to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.”

Councilor Smart motioned to consider this measure under 2-9(b), motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously. Councilor Smart motioned for favorable action on measure number 15 010, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Reports of Committees

Budget/Management Committee/Chair Michael Molisse

14 114-Free Cash OPEB Liability Trust Fund

Chairman Molisse noted that this measure was referred on December 1, the committee met on December 15, held a public hearing, which was continued till January 1. The committee met tonight and voted unanimously to reject the measure.

Mr. McKinney stressed that his hope is that the Council will not reject the measure, noting that the \$224 million OPEB liability will not go away. He and the Mayor want to ensure the town is financially sound, and addressing the liability now is important, we owe it our employees who have vested money. He noted that contrary to what many people believe, there is no relief forthcoming from the state. He read the following into the record-the sources are Mass DOR, Division of Local Services:

“A community that fails to act on its OPEB liabilities runs the risk that future health insurance expenses will become so large that they eventually overwhelm other budget priorities and have a detrimental impact on municipal services. Although GASB has not mandated a funding requirement for OPEB liabilities, it is important for municipalities to start

saving for these costs as soon as possible. Even if your community is not in the position to contribute the full ARC each year, modest and manageable contributions are better than nothing. Strategies to set aside one-time revenues, appropriation balances or other windfalls and appropriate them to the trust as available or identifying an appropriate recurring revenue stream can make a significant difference.”

Chairman Molisse requests on behalf of the Budget/Management Committee, for unfavorable action on measure number 14 114, motion seconded by Councilor Smart. President O’Connor clarified that a “yes” vote signifies rejection of the measure, which is the recommendation of the Budget/Management Committee.

Councilor Harrington stated that this is a token amount to pay towards a huge debt, the problem is a large liability and he wants a strategy to address this going forward, he will vote in favor this time, but in the future will not, unless a strategy is implemented.

Councilor Conlon feels that this must be addressed, as it is not going away, he is in favor as we have an obligation to teachers and employees. He will vote “no” to the measure rejection.

Councilor Mathews states that the Council has been given a needs lists from schools. Additionally the fire department and police department have needs. He cited a \$2 million estimation for snow removal, and he doesn’t want to support.

Councilor Hackett will support the Budget/Management’s decision, she too, wants a plan for funding versus simply using pockets of money and not having a long term plan. She has serious concerns with the amount of free cash projected versus the actual. She was uncomfortable then and is more now with the snow storms. She would like to see a line item in the budget to address the issue going forward.

Mr. McKinney asked to speak as he feels his character was called into question. President O’Connor did not allow him to speak as discussion is on the motion, which has been seconded.

Motion for rejection of measure number 14 114 passed 8-2 (Conlon and Harrington voted no).

15 004-Reappointment-Town Clerk-Kathleen Deree

Chairman Molisse noted that this measure was referred on January 20 and the committee met this evening and recommended unanimous favorable action. On behalf of the Budget/Management Committee he recommended favorable action, motion seconded by Councilor Smart and voted unanimously.

15 005-Reappointment-Assistant Town Clerk-Lee Hultin

Chairman Molisse noted that this measure was referred on January 20 and the committee met this evening and recommended unanimous favorable action. On behalf of the Budget/Management Committee he recommended favorable action, motion seconded by Councilor Smart and voted unanimously.

15 007-Library Department Line Item Transfer

Chairman Molisse noted that this was referred on January 20, the committee met on February 17.

Rob McLean presented and is requested the transfer of \$2,000 from Library Management Salaries to Library Building Maintenance Overtime line items. He expects an anticipated surplus in fiscal 2015 as a result of a resignation of a secretary and the time which elapsed in hiring her replacement. To date his department has expended \$1700 in overtime in order to fund this position. Mr. McLean stated that he doesn't foresee having to appear before Council to seek additional funding in the future, as it could be derived from another line item in his budget.

On behalf of the Budget/Management Committee, Chairman Molisse motioned for favorable action on measure number 15 007, that the sum of \$2000 is transferred from Management Salaries to Overtime for the purpose of funding the costs associated with an increase in overtime usage. Motion was seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Long Range Planning Committee-Chair Ed Harrington

The committee met on December 3 at the Fogg Library and discussed prioritizing the needs of the town by department and defining the costs of providing for those needs. The committee will approach administration to request assistance in assigning hard costs. He met with the Mayor after the

meeting and she is willing to work in conjunction with the committee to ascertain true needs and cost.

Discussion also occurred regarding the funding mechanism of an override. Legal guidance is needed and officials may discuss these issues but can't give a personal opinion in a public forum. The town's citizens, by popular vote, may make the decision to approve or disapprove an override question. Future meetings of the committee will discuss other methods of increasing revenue streams.

Councilor Harrington additionally announced that the Economic Development Committee and a second Long Range Planning Committee Meetings have had to be postponed due to the weather, but will be rescheduled in the near future.

At 8:12 PM, there being no further business to attend to, Councilor Smart motioned to adjourn, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by: Diane T. Hachey as Recording Secretary

Approved by:

Patrick O'Connor
President of Weymouth Town Council

Voted unanimously on 2 March 2015