

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall Council Chambers

January 7, 2007

Present: Michael Smart, President
Arthur Mathews, Vice-President
Robert Conlon
Kenneth J. DiFazio
Ed Harrington
Thomas J. Lacey
Brian McDonald
Michael Molisse
Patrick O'Connor
Victor Pap III
Kevin Whitaker

Also Present: Susan Kay, Mayor
Maureen Duffy, Town Auditor
Franklin Fryer, Town Clerk
George Lane, Town Solicitor
James Wilson, Chief Financial Officer

Recording Secretary: Janet Murray

President Smart called the Town Council Meeting to order at 7:30pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Molisse thanked the Frozen Wildcats for their efforts in raising money through their swim at the beach on New Year's Day.

Councilor Harrington stated that the hearing for the Dunkin Donuts which was scheduled for 1/9/08 has been changed to 2/6/08 at the McCullough Building, Whipple Center Conference Room. He also noted that the petitioner will meet with the Forest Street Civic Association on 1/29/08 at 12 noon at the New England Wildlife Center on Columbian Street.

NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Councilor Mathews made a MOTION to NOMINATE Councilor Smart to the position of President of the Weymouth Town Council and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Councilor Mathews made a MOTION to CLOSE the nomination for President of the Weymouth Town Council and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Councilor Mathews made a MOTION to ELECT Councilor Smart to the position of President of the Weymouth Town Council and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

NOMINATION FOR VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Councilor O'Connor made a MOTION to NOMINATE Councilor Mathews to the position of Vice-President of the Weymouth Town Council and was seconded by Councilor DiFazio and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Councilor O'Connor made a MOTION to ELECT Councilor Mathews to the position of Vice-President and was seconded by Councilor DiFazio and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

CITIZENS' CONCERNS/COUNCIL RESPONSE

A MOTION was made by Councilor Mathews to take Mayor Kay's introductory address out of order and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Mayor Susan Kay – Introductory Address

Mayor Kay addressed the Council. She discussed her plan for her first 100 days. She noted that the town's Charter requires that she submit a Capital Plan by 3/1/08, a balanced budget by 4/1/08 and a new administrative organizational plan. She stated that she is beginning those plans now.

Mayor Kay noted that the town has known since this past summer that the next few years will be difficult financially. She noted that Free Cash has been certified in the amount of \$181,000. She noted that this is the lowest that Free Cash has been since 1992.

Mayor Kay pointed out that there is a measure before Council this evening to allow the overspending of the snow removal budget in light of the significant snowfall during the month of December. She stated that she expects that all free cash will be spent on this expenditure and more funding will be necessary. She also stated that there is underfunding in departmental expenses in the amount of \$100,000. She commented that all of the outstanding labor agreements weigh heavily on the budget forecasting.

Mayor Kay stated that it is her conclusion that she must be cautious in crafting the budget for the following reasons:

1. Commonwealth has noted a projected \$1.3 billion revenue shortfall which will affect net aid to the town.
2. DOR has noted that the town's Free Cash had dropped from \$4.3 million in 7/05 to \$181,000 currently. They have indicated that they will deny unsubstantiated revenue and will carefully review the town's financial situation.
3. The town's share of health insurance coverage will increase by \$1.4 million.

She noted that the Capital Budget must be lean; there can be no additional capital expenditures despite the need. She commented that the Chapman School requires asbestos abatement mandated by the EPA at a cost \$5 million. She noted that she has already eliminated some positions and combined others.

She requested that the Council allow her to use the Council meetings as a forum for further discussions/updates of these issues.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

07 135 National Grid/Verizon Pole Relocation- Samoset Street

Aileen Darois from National Grid stated that she is requesting that pole number 6 be moved.

Councilor Harrington disclosed that he lives on Samoset Street. Solicitor Lane recommended that Councilor Harrington recuse himself from this hearing. Councilor Harrington left the Council Chambers.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Mathews to OPEN the Public Hearing on item number 07 135 and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

The abutters were notified of the public hearing on 12/31/07. There was the following public comment:

Steven Ford, Samoset Street, stated that National Grid has agreed to adjust the relocation of the pole so as not to block his driveway.

Council President Smart asked if the Council was comfortable to the adjustment or would they like to have a plan brought to the Council.

Councilor Mathews stated that he is comfortable as long as Mr. Ford's concerns are addressed.

Councilor DiFazio asked if this adjustment adversely affects any other abutters.

A new plan showing the change will be submitted with the new location.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Mathews to CLOSE the Public Hearing on item number 07 135 and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Mathews to CONSIDER item number 07 135 under 2-9(b), same night action and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Mathews to APPROVE item number 07 135 and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

CITIZEN'S CONCERNS

Art Doine-Increase in Assessment of Properties in Whitman's Pond area

Mr. Doine, 16 Revere Road, made a presentation regarding the significant increase in property taxes for the waterfront property owners on Whitman's Pond. He noted that his small 1923 home is located on .24 acres of land and his land value increased by \$50,000.

Mr. Doine noted that he is aware of property coming up for sale which was purchased five (5) years ago for \$460,000 and will be marketed for \$429,000 at a \$31,000 loss. He asked if land is taxed at full value or at 150% of value.

Councilor Mathews stated that he has heard from a number of residents who live along Whitman's Pond. He noted that he too lives on Whitman's Pond. He commented that the Council cannot talk about any specific property due to potential conflict of interest concerns.

Mr. Wilson gave an overview of the process of revaluation. He stated that this process is regulated by the state. He stated that the town used PKS Evaluation Services.

Mr. Wilson stated that the town was put on notice to complete a full fair market valuation as of 1/1/07. As a result that complied with the Department of Revenue (DOR) nine (9) year revaluation process. He noted that DOR spent time reviewing the values, had no comments, and certified the valuations.

Mr. Wilson pointed out that requests for abatement, exemption, and/or deferral of taxes are available.

Mr. Wilson stated that there will be an Assessor's Committee meeting on 1/29/08 at 6:30pm at the McCullough Building Conference Room.

Councilor DiFazio asked about the potential liability to the town for broadly overvaluing the property to meet the town's financial needs.

Mr. Wilson stated that the property values are based on 1/1/07. At that time home values were higher. Councilor DiFazio asked when residents will see a reduction in taxes considering the flat home values of the past year. Mr. Wilson stated that the Assessor's Board reviews sale comprehensions and values in August and September of each year. He reiterated that this process is dictated by state statute.

Councilor Mathews noted that any resident has the right to file for an abatement at the Assessor's Office. He noted that abatement requests must be submitted by 2/1/08.

Councilor Lacey asked if there was any correlation between the change from a three year evaluation to a one year evaluation. Mr. Wilson stated that there was not a direct correlation.

Councilor Whitaker asked why the changes come up in the third quarter. Mr. Wilson stated that the Council sets the tax rate in November-therefore the change occurs during the third and fourth quarter tax bills.

Councilor Lacey asked that Mr. Wilson recommend to Administration that the meeting on 1/29/08 be widely publicized. Mr. Wilson agreed.

Councilor McDonald suggested that a flyer be sent out with the tax bills to explain the increase.

OLD BUSINESS

Memorandum dated January 2, 2008 entitled “Town of Weymouth Provision of Services and Resources to Redevelopment of Weymouth Naval Air Station” - Councilor Kenneth

DiFazio

Councilor DiFazio read for the record the above mentioned memorandum.

A MOTION was made by Councilor DiFazio to REFER this issue to the Public Works Committee and was seconded by Councilor O’Connor.

Councilor Mathews asked that Diane Hachey send this issue to the Mayor’s office.

The MOTION passed unanimously

COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR, TOWN OFFICERS, AND TOWN BOARDS

08 001-Snow Removal Authorization-Same Night Action Requested

Mr. Wilson stated that this is a request pursuant to Chapter 44-31(d) to over expend the snow removal budget.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Mathews to CONSIDER item number 08 001 under 2-9(b), same night action and was seconded by Councilor O’Connor and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A MOTION was made by Councilor O’Connor to APPROVE item number 08 001 and was seconded by Councilor Mathews and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

NEW BUSINESS

08-002-Call of the Presidential Primary Election-Same Night Action Requested

A MOTION was made by Councilor Mathews to CONSIDER item number 08 002 under 2-9(b), same night action and was seconded by Councilor O’Connor and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Councilor Mathews read the call of the presidential election.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Mathews to APPROVE item number 08 002 and was seconded by Councilor O’Connor and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:30pm there being no further business, Councilor Mathews MOTIONED to adjourn and Councilor O’Connor seconded and was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Approved by: _____
Michael Smart, Council President