

**Westborough Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
February 24, 2015**

**6:30 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.**

Present: Chairman Barrette, Vice Chairman Dodd, Selectmen Drewry and Johnson

Also Present: Assistant Town Manager/HR Director

**Open Forum**

Gary Wells, Advisory Finance Committee Chair, came before the Board. He noted that the proponents of Article 27 are requesting that the heat be turned back on in the Spurr House so that the fire alarm system will operate if needed. Mr. Behn spoke with Chief Perron and Frank Cornine and was told that the building has been winterized but the fire alarm is not connected to the furnace system and the Chief informed them that any fire alarm system that drops below 32 degrees becomes unreliable and may not work. Mr. Wells requested that Chief Perron and Mr. Cornine test the system and the temperature in the building before Town Meeting so that they could have the information in time to make a recommendation.

Mr. Wells distributed preliminary revenue and expenditure estimates for FY 2016 updated as of this afternoon.

**Consent Agenda**

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

- **November 24, 2014 (Joint Meeting)**
- **January 28, 2015**

**Request to Appoint Election Officers**

Selectman Johnson's motion that the Board approve the minutes of November 24, 2014, the minutes of January 28, 2015 and the appointment of Election Officers was seconded by Selectman Dodd. Vote: 4-0

**Public Hearing for a Pole Petition to Install a New Pole to Support Pole 4 to Provide Service to 25 West Main Street / Angela Birch/Eric Widman**

Selectman Johnson's motion to open the public hearing for a Pole Petition was seconded by Selectman Dodd. Vote: 4-0

Crystal Toganzzi came before the Board and explained that the upgrade to is to provide service to the new building at 25 West Main. The petition is to install a new guy pole on Milk Street to support Pole 4.

Selectman Johnson's motion to approve the Pole Petition as shown on Plan 16716328 for Pole P4-84 on Milk Street was seconded by Selectman Drewry. Vote: 4-0

Selectman Johnson's motion to close the public hearing was seconded by Selectman Dodd. Vote: 4-0

**Request to Approve the “Knights at the Races” Fundraiser Sponsored By the Knights of Columbus, 17 Willow Street / Stanley Giegucz**

Mr. Giegucz came before the Board. He noted that the Knights of Columbus is committed to the Special Olympics and they have pledged \$1.4 million for the summer games held in Los Angeles. This fundraiser will help support the local unified track program with Westborough and Algonquin High Schools. Chief Gordon has no issues with the event.

Selectman Drewry’s motion to approve the Raffle Permit for the Knights of Columbus for March 28, 2015 at the Knights of Columbus hall was seconded by Selectman Johnson. Discussion: Mr. Giegucz reviewed the evening’s events. Vote: 4-0

**Discussion of the Postponement of a Town Meeting Due to an Emergency Situation / Town Moderator**

Mr. Arnold came before the Board. He reminded the public that the Town election is next Tuesday and that Town Meeting is Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. He reviewed the new options/possibilities in case there is an emergency and Town Meeting needs to be postponed or cancelled. In the past, if there was a weather issue or other emergency the Moderator and Town Clerk would have to go to the hall, open and then close the meeting in order to avoid reposting the Warrant. Mr. Arnold noted that the Massachusetts Moderator’s Association petitioned the legislature and a new law was enacted, which has been used this year, that now requires that the Moderator consult with the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Selectmen to determine that conditions are not safe. The postponement would be posted on the website. This process makes it easier, safer and the Warrant does not have to be reissued.

Selectman Johnson noted that Article 27 requests to raise and appropriate money for the current year and asked if that can be done as the tax rate has been set. There are funds in the FY 2015 budget. Mr. Arnold noted that the Article does not state what year the money will come from and a motion to raise and appropriate would be the same as any other, however if the funds are not available until July 1 there would be no way to pay the bills now. He explained that the wording can be adjusted at Town Meeting and whether the motion allows the proponents to achieve their goals. Mr. Arnold informed the Board that electronic voting will be available on Saturday and Monday as well.

**Senior Transportation Service Strategic Plan / COA Director**

Ms. DeManche and Mr. Flood came before the Board. Mr. Flood noted that the need for transportation services is increasing every year and he reviewed the history of the senior bus service and the locations of residents who use the service. He informed the Board that the number of hours each day that transportation is needed is increasing, doctors have moved out of town, the buses cannot leave Town, it is becoming more difficult to find volunteers, and they would like to transport seniors to other community activities on the weekends as well. Mr. Flood noted that they are asking to increase the driver time from 57 to 76 hours per week. Rider fees were discussed and they are currently what the seniors can afford. Mr. Stepanian, a Council member, asked the Board to ride the bus in order to experience it firsthand.

Ms. DeManche noted that there are 302 regular riders, and the list of streets where they live and their destinations is also included in the report. She informed the Board that they also transport younger people with disabilities and two people in wheelchairs. Their goal is to meet the needs of the community with what they already have and with little money. Bill LaPrade, Shine Counselor, noted that he has 200 clients, 50% of whom rely on the bus for their appointments.

Ms. DeManche explained that more seniors have had to surrender their licenses and she and Chief Gordon help them to make the transition to the bus.

Selectman Barrette explained that according to the wording of the Fall Town Meeting Article the report was due by February 1, 2015 and because it was not delivered on time the COA will not receive funding for the bus driver in FY 2015. The Board will address the report as it relates to the FY 2016 budget.

Selectman Drewry noted that the senior bus is a great service and supports it, but that it is unfortunate that the report was not submitted on time.

Selectman Johnson asked if the routes were evaluated beyond the list of destinations in the report and if regionalization of the service was explored as the Article specifically asked for “measurable goals, funding plan, evaluation of routes and opportunity to regionalize services”. Ms. DeManche explained that it is not a fixed route system and reviewed how they schedule the trips. She noted that in the past they were part of the WRTA system, it was lacking and does not work for many seniors and that some surrounding communities are purchasing their own buses. Selectman Johnson asked why the buses cannot leave Town and Ms. DeManche noted that they can but have not yet coordinated it. He also asked about exploring any opportunity to supplement the service with the WRTA and she informed the Board that they will do what we want but the Town would have to pay for it. Selectman Barrette pointed out that the report does not reflect that information. Regarding the expansion of services, Ms. DeManche noted that the WRTA does not provide service on the weekends.

Selectman Dodd noted that the requirement to provide measurable outcomes would be a way to show what the successes are. He pointed out that it would help with the process of determining future ridership and it would be beneficial to have a target to aim for.

The Board is in favor of the program and Selectman Barrette noted that the report provided a good beginning to the process, however there were objectives but no measurable goals or a funding plan. Ms. DeManche explained that the fee structure has been the Selectmen’s responsibility while she has been Director and Selectman Barrette will provide Ms. DeManche with a request from the Board that she creates an acceptable recommendation for the rider fees. He will also go before the COA to discuss what the Selectmen expect from them going forward and that they provide benchmarks from other communities of a similar size, budget and programs, so that the service remains viable in the future. The Board offered assistance with the process.

Ms. Abladian noted that the WRTA will only share information about costs with a Town official and Selectman Barrette offered to assist her with this issue.

### **Update on Snow Budget**

Mr. Walden came before the Board and reviewed the spending in wages and expenses for the snow and ice budget as outlined in his handout. The plan is to finish the snow removal by Thursday. The Board commended the DPW for their efforts and noted that there have been many positive comments from residents.

### **FY 2016 Budget**

**Insurance:** Ms. Williams was notified today by the Town's health insurance consultant that there will be an 8.7% increase in the insurance budget for FY 2016. She explained that the delay in getting a more definitive number is due to an earlier Town Meeting and the budget, a 6% increase, was based on conversations with them in the fall. Ms. Williams noted that with the new insurance carrier the consultant needed more months of claims experience to determine the renewal cost. Tufts is being asked look more closely at their numbers and the hope is that it will be less by Town Meeting.

Regarding the transfer to OPEB funding, Ms. Williams informed the Board that bond counsel was consulted and due to the commitment of transferring the health insurance savings of \$1.1 million for three years, which was discussed when negotiating the Memorandum of Agreement, it would not be looked at favorably to decrease the amount. If it were decreased the amount would have to be made up in the fourth year. This change puts the budget \$936,000 over the Selectmen's goal.

Selectman Drewry's motion to place the insurance budget of \$10,560,000 on the Warrant was seconded by Selectman Dodd. Vote: 3-1 (Johnson)

**Council on Aging:** Ms. Williams explained that the salary adjustment for the Director is due to the re-grade and there were three positions that moved to a higher grade. The adjustment is included in the \$292,667. With the removal of the fourth bus driver the budget would be \$276,094. Selectman Barrette noted that because the report was late the FY 2015 funding was not granted and asked the Board if they want to fund it in the FY 2016 budget. He agreed with the need for the bus driver and as the COA liaison he will work with them to develop the report. Selectman Dodd also offered his assistance so that when the funds become available they are being used correctly.

Selectman Drewry's motion to fund the Council on Aging budget of \$292,667 was seconded by Selectman Dodd. Discussion: Selectman Johnson expressed his disappointment in the report that was received and concern regarding the inclusion of the funds without the completed report. Selectman Dodd pointed out that funds can be included but that does not mean that they have to be spent. Vote: 3-1 (Johnson)

**DPW, Water, Sewer, and Buildings & Grounds:** Ms. Williams explained that these budgets were voted but due to the re-grade there are adjustments to the salaries and they have to be re-voted.

Selectmen Johnson's motion to approve the revised Salary and Wages for the following departments: Building & Grounds - \$156,970, DPW - \$1,649,336, Sewer - \$741,253, and Water - \$584,932 was seconded by Selectman Drewry. Vote: 4-0

#### **Annual Town Meeting Warrant – Discussion of Articles and Vote to Close the Warrant**

Article 21 – Ms. Williams noted that the Board had voted to place this Article on the Warrant at the last meeting but did not vote to support it. This Article strengthens the kennel laws.

Selectman Johnson's motion to support Article 21 as printed in the Annual Town Meeting Warrant was seconded by Selectman Dodd. Vote: 4-0

Article 27 – Citizen’s petition from the neighbors of Spurr House: Selectman Barrette noted that he has met with Hazel Nourse, Historical Commission Chair as the petitioners approached her for guidance. Regarding the requests contained in the Article, he explained that the building has been winterized by a licensed plumber, it is not inhabited, and he will speak with the Fire Chief about the fire safety issue; the Town Manager is in charge of all Town buildings and there is an existing committee, the Municipal Building Committee (MBC), that has looked at the building, as well as the Historical Commission. The Board agreed that they did not support the Article and that the MBC is capable of looking at all the alternatives regarding the disposition of the building.

Selectman Dodd’s motion to defeat Article 27 of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant was seconded by Selectman Drewry. Vote: 4-0

Selectman Dodd’s motion to close the Town Meeting Warrant was seconded by Selectman Johnson. Vote: 4-0

### **Issues and Correspondence of the Selectmen**

Selectman Johnson commended the School Department and Committee for their efforts and the public process that is being used regarding their Articles.

Selectman Dodd noted that the School Enrollment Committee has met twice and with the consultant at the second meeting. The deadline for the report is June and it will have specific recommendations for each department. He informed the Board that Boston has been recommended as a site for the Summer Olympics and asked the Board if they wished to provide formal feedback or vote on the proposed site. Selectman Dodd offered to draft comments/questions for the Board to discuss.

Selectman Barrette made the public aware that there is an IRS phone scam being circulated. He reminded residents that the voting polls will be at the High School.

### **Adjournment**

Selectman Dodd’s motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. was seconded by Selectman Drewry. Vote: 4-0

*Submitted by Paula M. Covino*

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Chairman Barrette

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Vice Chairman Dodd

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Selectman Drewry

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Selectman Johnson