

Town Council Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2010

Under the Rules and Procedures of the Winthrop Town Council, President Turco called the meeting to order at 7:00PM in the Harvey Room of Town Hall. Vice President Calla, Councilor Varone, Councilor DeLvento, Councilor Sanford, Councilor Boncore, Councilor Maggio, Councilor Powers and Councilor Letterie were present.

The pledge of allegiance was recited. Council President Turco asked the Council Clerk to call the roll for the record.

Public Comment

Guy Brandenstein of Trident Avenue spoke on the water/sewer issues including: the application of the \$160,000 plus refund monies, size of water/sewer department compared to City of Revere, request for an outside audit of water/sewer enterprise fund.

TM McKenna notes that water/sewer rates have not risen and in fact remained stable because of the application of the \$160,000 refund. MWRA assessments are based on a three year rolling average not a one year look.

DPW Director Hickey discussed differences in Winthrop versus Revere water/sewer program. In particular, Revere has a much larger use of outside contractors than Winthrop. Water bills were high in large part due to increased use as a result of extremely dry summer.

General discussion took place regarding the calculation of water/sewer bills. President Turco requested the following information: 1) total dollar amount in November bills and 2) how many total bills were sent out.

Correspondence

Communication from Airport Hazards Committee sent to Town Council and Town Manager in an email dated 12/10/10. Comments must be forwarded to Airport Hazards Committee in early January.

Councilor Boncore requested a copy of Massport mitigation agreement with the Town of Winthrop. A copy of the agreement to be provided.

Email from Lee Dzeulonis regarding Short Beach and concerns regarding traffic flow, public safety and traffic flow.

Email from Guy Brandenstein on 12/13/10 regarding a request for audit of water/sewer funds.

Email from Viking Pride Foundation inviting Town Council to ribbon cutting for Viking Pride buses.

Letter from David Osborne requesting that the Town of Winthrop look into MBTA assessment and the possibility that the MBTA is using an incorrect census figure. It appears that this is indeed correct. However the Town of Winthrop is not allowed to challenge our census as a result of the dicentennial census. Town Manager's office will look into this issue.

Committee Reports

Councilor Calla reported on the recent meeting of the Public Works Committee. Topics included: trash/recycling, rodent control, Point Shirley drain/water project is high on list for grant money (\$500,000 total cost with 25% Town match); sewer contract in Ingleside Park area, Bell Isle bridge Spring 2011 MassDOT project; water meter (radio read); Winthrop transportation improvement program; Fort Banks secondary access road; supplemental budget request for: cupola on Town Hall, Revere Street pumping building and base of water tower; discussion on combining school/town maintenance and grounds department; finally, need or desire to create a cemetery advisory board.

Councilor Calla thanked Director Hickey and his team for constantly doing more with less.

Councilor Sanford reported on the recent meeting of the Economic Development Committee. Discussion focused on Hong Kong Dragon and its expansion and renovation. Specifically, Hong Kong Dragon requested that the Town Council consider pro-rating their all alcohol license fee for 2010. The Committee recommended that the Town Council either waive the license fee for 2010 or authorize the Town Manager to waive the license fee for 2010.

A general discussion took place regarding the possibility of changing Town ordinances to allow for pro-ration of the annual fee. Several Councilors expressed concern over charging the license fee prior to the business actually being allowed to exercise the license. TM McKenna suggested the Town Council look into when the ABCC approved the license. The Council discussed referring this matter to various committees and/or the License Commission.

The proration of license fees and the three year history of same are referred to the License Commission for their input. The Town Manager will forward the request.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager James McKenna reported on the following items:

- Thanked Prof. Lavin of Suffolk University for conducting a human resources workshop for department heads.
- Update on EB Newton school. Discussions with prospective tenants. One tenant is already fixing up space. Re-keying of doors to take place. History/Art room on first floor.
- Updating sprinkler system.
- Looking at access road issues at GFB school. Discussion with Governor's Park management regarding this issue.
- Department heads will be submitting mid-years reviews. These reports will give an indication of how much is actually going on in the Town of Winthrop.
- Transfer requests for consideration by the Finance Committee: 1) \$40,000 for litigation expenses and 2) \$175,000 for health insurance.
- Update on efforts of working group on Hockey Rink balance sheet issues.
- Received a request from Chairman Joseph Boncore of the Ordinance Review Committee for input/suggestions from department heads regarding need for change in ordinances.
- Discussed report from Planning Board RE: possibility of revising zoning ordinances regarding allowance of Bed and Breakfasts.
- Received today report on Ferry progress and ridership from ferry boat operator.

Councilor Letterie asked for an update on how much money has been brought in from the 0.75% sales tax surcharge and how has the money been spent. Councilor Letterie also asked about the status of the \$240,000 withheld from the Winthrop Public Schools. TM McKenna noted much of that money will be used to cover the health insurance deficit most of which comes from school employees. Councilor Letterie asked for update on possibility of changing bus routes in town. TM McKenna noted matter is in TSAC and he will push them to make a decision. Councilor Letterie also asked who has final say: Town of Winthrop or the MBTA. Answer is not quite clear.

Councilor Maggio followed up on monies withheld from schools and suggested that the WPS should be partially responsible for expenses with respect to the EB Newton.

President Turco asks if there is any objection to a three minute recess. There being no objection, the Town Council is gavelled into a brief recess.

The Town Council returned from recess and, without objection, took a matter involving the Board of Assessors out of order to discuss tax levy percentages for FY12. The matter was advertised in the newspaper but was not included on the posted Agenda. The Council agreed to begin discussion on the matter but to continue the public hearing and vote until a special meeting to be held on December 21, 2010 at 6:00PM. Councilor Letterie and Council President Turco have prior commitments and will not be able to attend the special meeting.

Public hearing opened. Chairman Marruzzi and Mr. Peter Gill discuss the options before the Town Council with respect to setting the tax levy percentages for FY12.

Councilor Sanford suggested the Town Council keep the same tax rate for residential and commercial taxpayers as small business owners contribute to our community.

Vice President Call agreed with Councilor Sanford.

Public hearing recessed to be reconvened on December 21, 2010.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) Designation of SDOD stays on the table as the matter has been referred back to the Planning Board. TM McKenna spoke with Chairman of Planning Board on behalf of the Town Council. Report expected in January.
- 2) Appointment of Clerk of the Town Council. President Turco discusses the December 6, 2010 meeting in which applicants were interviewed. Further, President Turco discussed the agreed upon process to vote on appointment of a Clerk of the Town Council.

Councilor Sanford had requested a legal opinion as to whether the Town Council could appoint someone for a ninety day appointment. Attorney Lane answered in the affirmative. The Council may, if it chooses, offer a ninety day appointment.

The matter was put before the Town Council for its consideration. There was much discussion on the merits/demerits of a probationary appointment.

MOTION to hire the selected applicant for a ninety days appointment subject to further re-appointment. Moved by Councilor Sanford/Seconded by Councilor Powers.

Councilor Boncore raises a point of order and requests that the Council President rule the motion out of order.

Councilor Varone inquired if the appointment will be to fill the remainder of the term or for a set three year term.

President Turco states that he believes the ninety day period is preferable but that Councilor Boncore's point of order is well taken and therefore the Motion is ruled OUT OF ORDER. Further, President Turco ruled that the appointment will be for the remainder of the term rather than for a new three year term.

APPOINTMENT OF A CLERK OF THE TOWN COUNCIL.

MOTION to elect one of four candidates to be Clerk of the Town Council to fill the remainder of the three year term. Moved by Councilor Sanford/Seconded by Councilor Maggio.

The result of the first ballot was: four votes for L. Strangie (Calla, Sanford, Powers, DelVento), three votes for C. Buchman (Boncore, Letterie, Turco), two votes for G. DaCosta (Maggio, DaCosta), none for J. Darcy.

The result of the second ballot was: four votes for L. Strangie (Calla, Sanford, Powers, DelVento), three votes for C. Buchman (Boncore, Letterie, Turco), two votes for G. DaCosta (Maggio, Varone).

The result of the third ballot was: five votes for L. Strangie (Calla, Sanford, Powers, DelVento, Varone), four votes for C. Buchman (Maggio, Boncore, Letterie, Turco),

L. Strangie is elected to serve as Clerk of the Town Council subject to the required CORI check.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Creation/Appointment of a Town Energy Committee per the request of TM McKenna.

Motion to create a Town Energy Savings Committee. Motion by Councilor Sanford/seconded by Councilor Powers. Motion passes unanimously.

Motion to approve the appointment of John Rogers as Chairman of the Town Energy Committee said appointment to expire on 6/30/12. Motion by Councilor Letter/seconded by Councilor Powers. Motion passes unanimously.

Motion to approve the re-appointment of Jan Twombly to a be a member of the Citizens' Advisory Finance Committee said appointment to expire on December 31, 2013. Motion by Councilor Letterie/seconded by Vice President Calla. Motion passes unanimously.

Discussion on budget goals/priorities for FY12 budget. Council felt that our recent roundtable provided the necessary information.

President Turco discussed a news story from the State House News Service regarding the projected deficit for FY12.

At the suggestion of former Councilor Richard Gill, the Council observed a moment of silence and adjourned in memory of former Selectman Walter VanDalinda

Motion by Councilor Sanford, seconded by Councilor DelVento to adjourn. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

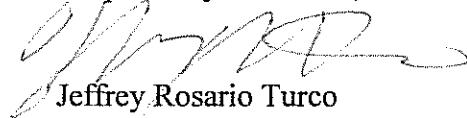
Jeffrey Rosario Turco
Council President

Documents Used in this meeting are as follows:

1. Letters of Appointment for John Rogers and Jan Twombly.
2. Town Manager's written submissions.

These documents can be found in the Town Clerk's Office upon request.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeffrey Rosario Turco
Council President