

**MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
MARCH 19, 2018**

**PRESENT:** Matthew J. Furlong (Vice-Chairman), Lewis W. Stone (Clerk), Arthur P. Boyle, Jr. (Selectman), Daniel Trabucco (Selectman), Edwin J. Thorne (Town Administrator), Michael Buckley (Town Accountant), Erin Obey (School Superintendent), MaryBeth Brust (Assistant Superintendent), Michael Tropeano (School Committee), Suzanne Scroggins (School Committee), J. Michael Hill (Fire Chief), Linda Peterson, Stephen Curley, John Brown, Maria Karas, James McCollum, Elizabeth Monks, Stephen Walsh, Donna Badger, Benjamin Bastianelli, Michelle Burt, Charles Mathewson (WATD), Arthur Egerton, Sabrina Chilcott (Assistant to the Town Administrator) and others  
**NOT PRESENT:** Willard J. Boulter, Jr. (Chairman)

At 7:00 pm, Mr. Furlong opened the meeting and advised that this meeting is being made available to the public through a live video and audio broadcast on Comcast Government Access Channel 15 and is also being recorded for airing on the channel at future dates. Comments made in open session will be recorded.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE FY19 BUDGET PRESENTATION**

School Committee Vice Chairman Mr. Tropeano was present before the Board with an overview of the school year 18-19 priorities for the budget process, and reviewed the process to date. Superintendent Erin Obey detailed the budget neutral expanded offering of full day kindergarten; Chapter 70 will realize an increased allotment proportional to the cost of running the program. Ms. Obey stated that the PCMS Math Apps was restructured to have a STEM focus with project based learning, and the Technology staff was restructured to delineate between instructional and Informational Technology. Ms. Obey stated that the department is investigating options at the secondary that allow more opportunities for students. Ms. Obey expounded on the cost neutral full day kindergarten offering; currently, the charge is \$3,275 for half day or \$3,700 for full day. The state's Chapter 70 formula only counts a half day student as .5 and funds the student accordingly. With the shift to full day, the increase in the Chapter 70 allotment in year two is \$550,000, with the cost to the town of adding one teacher. Mr. Tropeano advised that the budgeting process determined maintenance of effort cost of approximately \$34.5 million in December. Once the offset for fees, enrollment shifts and other factors calculated, the MOE was adjusted to \$34.3million. The Committee factored the Chapter 70 estimate and the town's contribution to the budget, and then calculated the solar utility offset which left a gap of approximately \$950,000. Mr. Tropeano explained that the school Department has not used the circuit breaker funding in the year it is received; it is historically used the following year, but this year they will use it as it is received to balance the budget. They then reviewed the expected enrollment as it related to class size, revealing a 20:1 ratio, so they calculated the adjustment and decreased staff accordingly. The School Department is proposing to restructure the 7-12 guidance program, which will maximize staffing at that level. They reviewed and eliminated additional support staff, and estimate a \$25,000 savings for reduced kindergarten bussing for a full day offering. Of the remaining \$104,000 budget gap, the department is requesting \$80,000 from the town to come from the health insurance savings and the remaining \$24,000 may be realized in Chapter 70 funding. Mr. Tropeano stated that they hope that the House Ways & Means Committee will announce on April 18<sup>th</sup> a higher funding amount per pupil. Discussion ensued on the rising cost of out of district placement, and the cost of residence programs can exceed \$250,000 per year per student. Mr. Tropeano stated that the district is committed to increasing program offerings to accommodate students locally; he cautioned that towns are required to stay within their budget but the increased mandates have not seen increased funding. Ms. Obey stated that the Special Education additional costs beyond residence programs are transportation costs, which are often as costly as the education costs; she stated that transportation costs do not calculate into the circuit breaker figure.

**REVIEW FY19 PROPOSED BUDGET OPTIONS FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT  
REVIEW OF BALLOT QUESTION OPTIONS TO SUBMIT TO TOWN CLERK ON MARCH 27**

Mr. Thorne advised the Board that two budgets have been prepared for their consideration. After months of analysis and review, three departments have presented their need for additional funding to the Selectmen. The two budgets offer the Board choices; the first budget is balanced, and funded at a level similar to past years level funding. The second budget is contingent upon additional funding, but funds two additional

### **MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

police officers, one police cruiser, two additional firefighter paramedics with equipment and funds the pavement management program with an additional \$300,000 annually. Discussion ensued on submitting a balanced budget with four warrant articles versus submitting a contingent budget only. Mr. Buckley stated that the clear drawback to a balanced budget with articles is the split in the dialogue as the budget will be taken up first, with articles to proceed in lottery fashion over one or multiple nights. A contingent budget would then be the first item of business, and the remainder of town meeting will have the financial information necessary to proceed. Mr. Stone stated that these targeted additional expenses have been necessary for a long time and are overdue for funding. Mr. Buckley stated that a \$708,000 estimated override adds \$.28 to the tax rate, or \$105/year to the average tax bill of a home valued at the average of \$376,000. Discussion ensued on the presentation of the question or questions on the ballot. Consensus was achieved on one ballot question. Mr. Bastianelli voiced his opinion that the Board should choose separate questions in a menu format for voters to have multiple choices. Chief Hill was present on his request for additional manpower; he stated that the department needs six additional firefighter paramedics to function well, but two is a good start. Mr. Buckley advised that six firefighter paramedics will increase the override figure to \$1,174,000, which will add \$.46 to the tax rate, resulting in an increase of \$172/year on the average valued property tax. Mr. Trabucco stated that the board supports the Fire Chief having the resources that he needs, but the increase will need to be incremental. Mr. Trabucco stated that the Town is in the process of developing a five year forecasting model for revenue and expenditures that will give the town a tool for the future. Mr. Brown inquired as to the possibility of pushing this vote to the fall; Mr. Buckley advised that statutorily, the town must hold the election within thirty days of the town meeting vote. Mr. Trabucco stated that he strongly supports a single ballot question for residents to digest the public safety needs being presented to them, with the issue fully debated at town meeting. Mr. Stone stated that the public safety positions need is obvious and he believes the needs of the town roads are equally obvious. Mr. Stone stated that all three are equally important in different ways; all have been neglected for far too long. Mr. Stone stated that he joins with Mr. Trabucco in supporting one question. Mr. Boyle concurred with presenting one question. Mr. Trabucco moved to include the following question on the ballot for the May 12, 2018 election: "Shall the Town of Pembroke be allowed to assess an additional \$708,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding public safety and highway expenses for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2018? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_" Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Trabucco moved to have the Town Administrator draft an explanation for the ballot question; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Stone moved to accept the recommendation of the Town Accountant and submit the contingency budget in the warrant for town meeting; Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

### **VOTE RECOMMENDATIONS ON ROUTINE ARTICLES, ANNUAL AND SPECIAL WITHIN ANNUAL WARRANTS**

Mr. Furlong read article one through nine aloud, excluding article three which was voted in the previous action of the Board. Mr. Boyle moved favorable action on article one; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Stone moved favorable action on article two; Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Boyle moved favorable action on article four; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Boyle moved favorable action on article five; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Stone moved favorable action on article six; Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Boyle moved favorable action on article seven; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Stone moved favorable action on article eight; Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Boyle moved favorable action on article nine; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

### **VOTE TO ENTER INTO MUNICIPAL AGGREGATION PROGRAM**

Mr. Thorne provided an update on the municipal aggregation program; a conference call held last week indicates that a very favorable rate may be available in the proposal from Colonial Power. Current supplier rates are \$.12673/kwh and there may be a \$.09554/kwh option available; the confirmed rate offering will be available on Thursday for the Town to consider. Savings will vary based on usage. Mr. Thorne presented a

## **MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

chart of savings based on usage of a low, medium and high household; the savings ranged from \$11.69/mo to \$113.52/mo. Mr. Thorne confirmed that, if the rate is available on Thursday, the rate would be in effect for 18 months. Mr. Trabucco moved to authorize the Town Administrator and the chairman of the Energy Committee to enter into an agreement to purchase power at \$.09554/kwh as presented; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### Record of Approved Bills of March 6, 2018

Mr. Furlong stated that Mr. Boulter has submitted the record of March 6, 2018 whereby he reports that on that date he personally reviewed 8 accounts payable warrants totaling \$907,587.13 and 2 payroll warrants totaling \$1,248,526.68 as prepared by the Town Accountant, and authorized the itemized expenditures for payment. Mr. Stone moved to accept the report and Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

### **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Thorne stated that he will be attending the OCPC MPO meeting tomorrow where there will be an update on the Route 53 and Pleasant Street traffic signal project. Mr. Stone stated that he observed an advertisement in the Boston Globe for an RFP on this project in the amount of \$1,778,000.

### **ASK THE SELECTMEN**

Mr. Stone advised that a website inquiry was received from a resident who has been following Verizon's refusal to complete fiber optic wiring of the town; the resident contacted Verizon and was told that they do not plan to expand beyond the current infrastructure. The resident acknowledged that the Board has had Verizon reps in each year and the answer remains the same, but he would like the Board to have them back. Discussion ensued on the productivity of such an action. Mr. Trabucco pointed out that the technology is changing and cabling the town is not an investment that Verizon is prepared to make. Mr. Stone stated that he will follow up with the resident and advise that the Board has decided against inviting the representative at this time.

At 8:30 pm, Mr. Furlong read the upcoming issues from the agenda.

At 8:30 pm, Mr. Stone moved to enter executive session under M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares: River Marsh, Water Street, MH-916. Mr. Boyle seconded the motion, and Mr. Furlong declared it to be so. By roll call vote: Mr. Boyle – yes, Mr. Stone – yes, Mr. Trabucco – yes, Mr. Furlong – yes.

### MATERIALS & EXHIBITS

PowerPoint slides, E. Obey (PPS/BOS/TA Office)

Draft Budget FY19 (Accountant/BOS/TA Office)

Draft Ballot Questions (DOR) (BOS/TA Office)

Chart, Electricity Rate Comparison, E. Thorne (BOS/TA Office)

Record of Approved Bills of March 6, 2018, W. Boulter, Jr. (BOS/TA Office)