

**MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING
DECEMBER 18, 2017**

PRESENT: Willard J. Boulter, Jr. (Chairman), 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), Kathleen McCarthy (Treasurer), Erin Obey (School Superintendent), J. Michael Hill (Fire Chief), Richard Wall (Police Chief), Eugene Fulmine, Jr. (DPW Director), Catherine Salmon (Chief Assessor), Patrick Chilcott, Suzanne Scroggins, Michael Tropeano, Margaret Struzik, George Emanuel, Stacey Curtin, Linda Peterson (Advisory Chairman), Stephen Curley, John Brown, James McCollum, Donna Badger, Bonnie Pajick, Sabrina Chilcott (Assistant to the Town Administrator), and others.

At 7:00 pm Mr. Boulter opened the meeting.

7:00 DISCUSSION OF THE FY19 BUDGET PROCESS AND TOWN MEETING BUDGET

Mr. Thorne advised that the Advisory Committee has stated their intention to review the smaller departmental budgets with the Town Administrator during the budget preparation process. Mr. Thorne confirmed that he will be delivering his budget message the first week of January which is a month earlier than usual. Mr. Thorne is working with the Town Accountant to take the recommendations of the department heads, pare the numbers down as much as possible, and propose funding sources. Mr. Thorne stated that the town and school have been operating with very tight budgets for many years and it is important to clearly set expectations for this budget cycle. Mr. Buckley reiterated to the Selectmen that, over the last years the goal has been to maintain the level of services within the confines of 2½ % but that is not possible this year. There is an anticipated budget gap; Mr. Buckley stressed that the warrant for town meeting will be opening shortly and much continued discussion is required. Mr. Trabucco asked how the new process is working; School Committee chairman Mr. Chilcott stated that the Committee values their relationship with the Board of Selectmen and the Superintendent enjoys the benefit of a strong relationship with the Town Administrator and Town Accountant.

VOTE TO OPEN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ON JANUARY 22, 2018 AND CLOSE FEBRUARY 9, 2018

Mr. Boyle moved to open the warrant on January 22, 2018 and to close the warrant on February 9, 2019 at 4:00 pm; Mr. Trabucco seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

VOTE TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF TIMOTHY BRENNAN FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Boyle moved to accept the resignation of Timothy Brennan from the Advisory Committee with regret; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Ms. Peterson rose and voiced a need for volunteers to serve on the Advisory Committee and others.

VOTE TO ADOPT SELECTMEN'S 2018 CALENDAR

Mr. Stone moved to adopt the Selectmen's 2018 calendar as presented; Mr. Furlong seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 11, 2017

Mr. Stone moved to accept the minutes of December 11, 2017; Mr. Trabucco seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF EARLY/NON-MEDICARE ELIGIBLE RETIREES HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION RATES

At 7:15 pm, Mr. Boulter turned the Chair over to Mr. Furlong stating that he is recusing himself from this discussion. Mr. Boulter exited the Veteran's Hall.

Ms. Struzik stated that of the twenty members within this group, sixteen are between the ages of 47 and 64, two will never be eligible for Medicare and two are disability pensions. Chief Wall recalled that the Insurance Advisory Committee made the decision to shift the burden to working employees from retirees.

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Mr. Emanuel stated that one retiree makes \$26,400 after taxes, pays \$3,000 in property taxes and in increase in health insurance contributions will cost him \$6,000, forcing him to live on \$11,000 per year. Mr. Trabucco stated that the intent of the Board of Selectmen and recommendation of Advisory Committee was to achieve 25% contribution toward health care costs across the board as the town needs to react to rising costs and burden on the taxpayers; there was never a desire to adversely impact anyone or cause hardship. The Board inquired of town counsel whether a hardship abatement, similar to a tax abatement, could be offered; however, town counsel's opinion is that it is not legal to segregate within a classification. Mr. Trabucco explained that the Board needs to make a choice; either all retirees contribute 25% or not. Mr. Thorne stated that town counsel advised that the town would require a Special Act of the Legislature to examine hardship cases; under M.G.L. c.32B, the town must treat all members of the unit the same. Mr. Thorne stated the choice becomes either all retirees go to 25% or all down to 15%, and he advised that it will cost the town \$100,000 to bring all retirees down to 15%. Discussion ensued on the three year schedule to raise early/non-Medicare eligible retirees versus extending the schedule to five years. Mr. Boyle moved to table this discussion to the next meeting and investigate the legislative angle; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor 4-0.

At 7:40 pm, Mr. Boulter returned to the Veteran's Hall and resumed the Chair.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Stone called the Board's attention to the Financial Management Review, specifically DOR recommendation #3, a comprehensive review of the town's bylaws. Mr. Stone noted that this task has a notation "to be reviewed by the Town Government Study Committee". Discussion ensued on the Committee's mission. Mr. Trabucco cautioned that this task is a long and difficult task to be performed by a volunteer committee who has been diligently working toward the proposition of a Town Manager bylaw for the spring. Mr. Trabucco further pointed out that this recommendation is a standard recommendation included in every town's review.

Mr. Boulter requested that the Selectmen's representative to the OCPC reach out and inquire about a traffic study to address the streetlight at the Mattakeesett-Center Street intersection. Mr. Trabucco will report back. Mr. Furlong re-visited the bylaw review discussion by pointing out that the students studying government at Pembroke High School are an untapped resource; Mr. Boyle stated that he would assist Mr. Furlong in working with a team to review the bylaws, with a concentration on the "miscellaneous" article.

NEW BUSINESS

School Superintendent Erin Obey was present before the Board with the sad news of active School department employee Linda Mulkern's passing, and requested that the town join the School Department in lowering the town flags to half-staff in honor of her passing. Mr. Boyle moved to lower the town's flags to half-staff in honor of Linda Mulkern through the day of her interment on Saturday; Mr. Furlong seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

At 8:10 pm, Mr. Boulter read the upcoming issues from the agenda.

At 7:40 pm, Mr. Stone moved to enter executive session under M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(a) (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares: Pembroke Permanent Firefighters Association, Local 2351 of the IAFF Union Grievance. Mr. Trabucco seconded the motion, and Mr. Boulter declared it so be so. By roll call vote: Boyle – yes, Furlong – yes, Stone – yes, Trabucco – yes, and Boulter – yes.

MATERIALS & EXHIBITS

Draft Minutes of December 11, 2017 (BOS/TA Office)

Email, T. Brennan RE: Resignation (BOS/TA Office)

Report, E. Thorne DOR Review (BOS/TA Office)

Summary and Minutes: 3/27/06,4/3/06,4/10/06,4/18/06,1/23/17,3/20/17,3/27/17,9/18/17,12/4/17 (BOS/TA Office)

Draft 2018 Calendar, Draft Warrant Schedule (BOS/TA Office)