

**MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
FEBRUARY 5, 2018**

**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), Richard Wall (Police Chief), Michael Hill (Fire Chief) Linda Peterson, Stephen Curley, John Brown, James McCollum, Stephen Walsh, Gary Fine, Robert DeMarzo, Jack Cocio, Linda Osborne, Kyle Harney, Sabrina Chilcott (Assistant to the Town Administrator), and others.

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

**7:00 JACK COCIO, SOUTH SHORE COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL, REQUEST FOR FUNDING**

South Shore Community Action Council CEO Jack Cocio was present before the Board to advise that SSCAC proudly served 546 Pembroke residents in 323 households last year for a 2017 service dollar amount of \$233,126. Mr. Cocio described the various programs and services offered by the SSCAC, and requested that the Board again support an article for \$5,000 funding to the South Shore Community Action Council. Mr. Trabucco stated that this organization and the services provided are a worthy cause to bring to a vote at town meeting. Mr. Stone moved to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, the sum of \$5,000 to contract with the South Shore Community Action Council to provide services to residents of the Town; Mr. Furlong seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

At 7:10 pm, Mr. Boulter 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.

**7:10 POLICE CHIEF RICHARD WALL: POLICE DEPARTMENT FY19 BUDGET REQUEST**

Chief Wall was present to discuss the Police Department's budget needs for FY19 and beyond. Chief Wall stated that Town Meeting approved the hiring of two police officers, and they are in the police academy now. With their addition, this brings his staff to 31 officers. Chief Wall advised that the International Association of Police Chiefs sets a standard of 2.8 officers per thousand, or 53 officers for a town the size of Pembroke. The Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association recommend a minimum of 2.5 officers per thousand, or 47 officers for a town of Pembroke's size. Chief Wall stated that he is striving to bring the number to 33 officers for the town, which will allow for four cars on patrol on a minimum shift as opposed to the three that run now. Two shifts per day are staffed with one person on the desk and three cars on patrol. The town is then divided into thirds, with the car in the center serving as backup for the other two sections. Pembroke Police Department responded to 14,700 calls last year, and there are 1,600 calls year to date as of February 5, pacing them to reach 16,700 calls this year. The increased call are more complicated in nature, with the first month of 2018 seeing 33 arrests, 4 drug overdoses to the hospital, 21 incidents of domestic violence, and 10 major medical calls; with three cars on patrol, two or more are diverted for these calls, leaving sections of town without coverage. Chief Wall explained that he is requesting an additional \$200,000 in funding for FY19 to hire two police officers and purchase a cruiser. The total cost for two officers inclusive of salary, overtime, in service training and health insurance is \$150,000. Discussion ensued on the need to rotate the fleet with two cruisers per year versus one cruiser; each car puts over 35,000 miles per year. Chief Wall described the outreach program that the department runs whereby an officer follows up with each overdose to offer treatment and work to secure it if desired. Chief Wall stated that the department cannot only be present to residents when things go wrong; the department needs to establish a presence when things are well to establish relationships with youth and residents within the community to build trust.

**7:20 FIRE CHIEF MICHAEL HILL: FIRE DEPARTMENT FY19 BUDGET REQUEST**

Chief Hill was present to offer an overview of departmental operations and the concerns he has with current levels of service. Chief Hill stated that he has two 6 person shifts and two 7 person shifts; on each, one person works the desk on dispatch and does not leave the station. The fire station is a 24 hour triage, Safe

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Haven location. On a six man shift, five officers are available to answer calls. The first two calls are answered by shift staff at the minimum of two persons per vehicle, and the third call must use recalled personnel (call duty). The fifth officer drives apparatus to the scene (ambulance, pumper, etc.) and waits for call duty response. The Chief stated that the exception to this is a still alarm call which can be handled by one officer and does not need recalled personnel. Chief Hill stated that this staffing level creates a potentially dangerous situation; if the call is major medical or fire, response time is seriously affected waiting for recalled personnel. Chief Hill advised that the department has not increased staffing levels in twenty-one (21) years. In 2012, the former Chief vocally expressed a need for an increase in manpower; the department had received 2,658 calls in 2012. In 2017, that call volume increased another 15% to 3,073 calls with the same manpower. Chief Hill provided detail on the 1 hour and 45 minutes round trip minimum that an ambulance needs to service a resident, and the new regulated mandate for computerized delivery of information from EMS to the hospital at the point of transfer. Chief Hill reiterated that the last increase in manpower occurred 21 years ago and call volume has gone up 42.5%, or by an average of 913 calls per year. Chief Hill stated that the department continuously responds with insufficient personnel, whereby the third, fourth and fifth calls to the Fire Department are handled by recalled personnel, by Mutual Aid, or by the Chief or Deputy Chief responding alone. Chief Hill showed call breakdown averages from 2016 and 2017; of 3,010 calls, 939 of them (29%) occurred simultaneously (within two minutes of each other). Daily average is 2.5 simultaneous calls; Chief Hill stated that today's lightweight construction fails in 68 minutes in a fire. At 7:50 pm, Chief Hill played the dispatch and response call from the January 1<sup>st</sup> fire at 22 Furnace Lane. The first call that came in sent two officers in an ambulance to South Shore Hospital, the second call sent two officers in fire apparatus to the North River Plaza for a sprinkler head break and resulting flood and alarms, when a third call came in for a house fire. It took nine (9) minutes for a second (recalled) firefighter to arrive on scene; the sole respondent used the pumper while waiting. Chief Hill marked the time and stated that it took 11 minutes and 33 seconds for sufficient personnel to arrive on scene to fight an intense house fire and find a missing 17 year old girl who was believed to be in the home. The Chief stated that minimum 7 man shifts are required to staff for a third call, and he needs six officers at approximately \$640,000. Chief Hill stated that the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard staffing level for a town of Pembroke's size is a ten (10) person shift. Chief Hill stated that Pembroke has 28 firefighters and that is no longer a safe staffing level. Advisory Board member Stephen Curley stated that surrounding towns are in a similar situation; discussion ensued on the needs of the town. Chief Hill stated that he has cut expenses year after year to maintain staffing, and vehicle and equipment maintenance is in the red as of February, with five months left of the fiscal year. Discussion ensued on the cost, benefit and concerns of a combined or regionalized dispatch center. Discussion ensued on manning the stations twenty-four hours and having a dispatch officer to do so. Mr. Stone stated that the cost for two firefighters would be a \$235,000 budget gap; Chief Hill agreed but stated that his request is for six firefighters at \$640,000 and an additional \$40,000 for vehicle and equipment maintenance. Mr. Robert DeMarzo questioned the funding of the positions in year 2 if an override passes, and recommended that the Board consider all funding options including the possible elimination of the 1% taxpayer CPA contribution.

### **CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY TOWN CLERK THROUGH MAY 17, 2018: MARYANN SMITH**

Mr. Boyle stated that he will be recorded as present not voting throughout this discussion as he will be a candidate in the May election. Mr. Trabucco moved to appoint MaryAnn Smith as the Interim Town Clerk from March 29, 2018 to May 17, 2018. Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was 4/0/1 with Mr. Boyle abstaining from the vote. The Board expressed their gratitude for Ms. Smith's 37 years of service to the town; Ms. Smith was the Building Department Assistant for 27 years prior to serving for 10 years as Pembroke's Town Clerk.

### **OPEN THE SPECIAL WITHIN THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT**

Mr. Stone moved to open the special within the town meeting warrant and to close it on February 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm; Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

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### **VOTE TO APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 22, 2018**

Mr. Stone moved to approve the minutes of January 22, 2018 as written; Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

### **VOTE TO APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2018**

Mr. Stone moved to approve the minutes of January 29, 2018 as written; Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

### **ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBER DONNA BAGNI**

Mr. Boyle requested that the chairman read Ms. Bagni's resignation letter into the record. Mr. Boulter read, "Honorable Board of Selectmen: I have been honored to serve the Town of Pembroke as an elected position on the Board of Health. My main reason so many years ago was that I truly wanted to make a difference within this department for the people of Pembroke. For the last year and half, I have found that it is not possible for me to continue to make a difference and act in the best interest of our great town. Due to the personal conflict of issues between our newest elected member and staff, putting forth own agendas/grudges, and lack of knowledge for laws, rules and regulations that the Board of Health represents and is required to uphold on behalf of the town and its citizens; it is with regret that I am writing to inform you of my decision to resign my position on the Board of Health, effective immediately. It has been a pleasure being a part of the Board of Health. I am proud of all that I and previous/present board members have accomplished in the past years. If I can be of any assistance during the time it will take to fill the position, please don't hesitate to ask. Respectfully yours, Donna A. Bagni". Mr. Boyle moved to accept the resignation of Donna Bagni with regret for the reasons stipulated in her letter; Mr. Furlong seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Boyle moved to advertise the vacancy and accept applications for the Board to consider for selection of an interim candidate appointment in one week; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Boulter stated that he is in receipt of a police report from January 27<sup>th</sup> in which a Police Sergeant was dispatched to a residence on a call. According to the report, the female at the scene identified herself as the "Board of Health Agent". The Sergeant and Mr. Boulter spoke with the Pembroke Health Agent and determined that she was not present. Mr. Boulter requested that the Town Administrator investigate this matter as it exposes the town to liability.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### Review of Minutes and Agendas on Town Website

Mr. Thorne presented the requested memorandum that was distributed to all boards, committees and commissions advising them of the town by-law and their required compliance.

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

Mr. Thorne advised that Thursday he will join the two Chiefs to produce a PACTV show highlighting their budget concerns; Mr. Thorne advised that this will be a series regarding the budget for residents in advance of town meeting. The state has notified the Town that their second Best Practice through the Community Compact has been approved for submission, and the town has submitted a scope of work for grant funding for an ADA Transition Plan. Mr. Trabucco requested that the Town Administrator update the Commission on Disabilities of this development.

At 8:55 pm, Mr. Boulter read the upcoming issues from the agenda.

Advisory Stephen Curley updated the Board on the Advisory Committee recommendation that the Town seek to include amounts from Free Cash that were set aside to balance the budget in any amount proposed for consideration of a Proposition 2½ override. Discussion ensued on the practice of balancing the budget using Free Cash amounts. Mr. Trabucco asked Mr. Curley if the town has done all it can to cut expenses and trimmed the fat in the town department's budgets. Mr. Curley confirmed that the annual increases over the last 20 years have been to fund cost of living and contractual increases in payroll with no increases to expenses or staffing. Mr. Curley further stated that departments are very conscious of their expenses and monitor their expenses responsibly. Mr. Curley advised that under Proposition 2½, the tax levy may increase 2.5% annually; last year's health insurance increase alone consumed 1% of that levy. Discussion ensued on

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Proposition 2½ intended goals and failures; inflationary rates and other mandates and statutory costs have exceeded the model for years, while state aid has gone down, broadening the budgetary gap. Mr. Curley concluded by confirming that the Police and Fire Departments are operating at 1988 models that no longer effectively serve the public, and the Department of Public Works has supported a solid, legitimate plan for pavement management that has gone unfunded.

At 9:20 pm, Mr. Trabucco moved to adjourn; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

**MATERIALS & EXHIBITS**

South Shore Community Action Council Annual Report 2017, J. Cocio (BOS/TA Office)

Department Budget Summary, Police and Fire Department (Accountant/BOS/TA Office)

Draft Minutes of January 22, 2018 and January 29, 2018 (BOS/TA Office)

Town Administrator's Memo to B/C/C RE: Minutes Posting (BOS/TA Office)

Letter, D. Bagni RE: Resignation (BOS/TA Office)