

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 1, 2022

President Letterie calls meeting to order at 7:00 PM and gives Zoom information

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilor Demarco, Councilor Honan, Councilor Fucillo, Councilor Munson, Councilor Belcher, Councilor Flockhart, Councilor Aiello, Vice President Ruggiero, President Letterie

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Ruggiero

MINUTES

Motion by Councilor Aiello to accept Minutes of January 18, 2022, as circulated
Unanimously Approved

GENERAL INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Presentation of Water Study report to the Town Council has been postponed until 2-15-22

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing Opened

Town Council Vote to Appropriate Free Cash
Free Cash allocated by the state

Public Comment

Karin Chavis requests amount of Certified Free Cash

Public Hearing Closed

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Carson P4-Discusses the schools closing and how this truly affects the parents that must take the day off and the stress that it causes as some are on low income and it also interferes with the children's eating schedules within the schools. Requests thinking out of the box on how to possibly keep the schools open. President Letterie is aware of this problem but the Superintendent does not take closing schools easily but very seriously. Public Safety is the number one factor.

Todd McKay-Discusses Snow removal and realizes how much effort went into the snow removal with the DPW workers but does express disappointment on how this storm was handled with the DPW., we knew ahead of time of this storm and he feels it should have been better prepared for. President Letterie reports the town did have several meetings and 24" is a lot of snow. The plow drivers did work over 26 hours and he is extremely appreciative of the staff of the entire town and especially the DPW. A lot of times there is nowhere to put the snow and it is hard not to blow back on street. The focus was trying to get the schools done as soon as possible.

Julia Wallerice agrees on school closures and it is difficult for many parents, also discusses the Shared Streets Grant and the need for it within our town.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee:

Councilor Fucillo, Chair of the Finance Committee reports that they have decided to keep certain items within the committee for now, that would include the Pay & Classification study, the Enterprise Funds fee study and the IT Strategic Plan and Project Management study. There needs to be more discussion around how this money is being spent and the best use for that. Other than that all things such as the general stabilization, the capital stabilization and the building stabilization are all agreed upon in the Town Charter and the North Essex Aggie Assessment amount was reduced from \$50,000 to \$44,000 as this is how the bill looks. Positive Recommendation on the amended motion.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Reports on the Snow Removal and comments on social media...deny our DPW getting so much money per hour that was mentioned and it is inaccurate. The snow is being moved, close to 100 tons of snow has been moved from areas.

Our DPW Director and Assistant Director were both behind the plow wheels and working as much as their employees. We are shorthanded and this also effects snow removal, we do not want to plow people back in, we will prioritize important areas. The level of disrespect of our DPW workers is not tolerable...it is illegal to throw snow on the street, you can be fined, if your neighbors are doing this, please notify the WPD.

3 major boilers, WPD, WFD (Beach) and the Library will be put on a motion for next week. Waiting for proposals of these costs. Meredith Hurley has been nominated for the Community Salute Award at UMass Amherst, sponsored by the Mass. Lottery. He would like to thank Karin Chavis for her recommendation of Meredith and congratulate Meredith on a well-deserved honor.

Everyone thinks he, as Town Manager has authority to do all in town, this is untrue, and he must work with Dept. Heads and especially the School Department when a closing of the school takes place. With the safety problems of the streets and sidewalks for students, it was agreed schools should be closed but he does agree with Mr. Carson and does understand what his concerns are.

Covid Report- Expects significant decrease in new Covid cases this week. Please see copy of report and also on town website.

Councilor Munson comments on the good job the DPW did and are still doing. He also asks about the AirBnB and asks for comments on how more are listed than are actually licensed.

Interim Town Manager agrees there is a discrepancy and Bldg. Inspector Director Al Legee is looking into these and looking to have the AirBnB cooperate with the town and hopefully we can get a monthly report from them on who is listing on their site. We are also reviewing budget for next year to look for another full time inspector, which will help with all inspections needed. We will also be looking at the AirBnB process as this causes some to just go out and rent.

Councilor Aiello comments and he suggests that new State Senator Edwards wrote the AirBnB for Boston and maybe notify her office for help. The other thing is people have bigger homes that are looking to rent out.

Happy on the Shared Streets Orientation about traffic, pedestrian safety, this issue has deteriorated since Covid and should be addressed for the safety of all. Requests information on the boilers and worries about losing 3 boilers at the same time, it would be great to have all the data on the boilers.....

Interim Town Manager did speak with Rich Cifuni Facility Managers and is looking for a more maintenance capital plan. He understands what Councilor Aiello is looking for and will review.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Council President noted that attendance has improved significantly since Jan. close to 90% mark. School is offering a Covid testing program for parents to opt in or opt out. Tests will be provided for tests and reporting process.

WMS will be performing Frozen

WHS will be performing Dinner Less Theater, many years have been at Prince House of Pizza but with Covid, they have decided to do dinner less.

OLD BUSINESS

Motion by the Finance Committee with a positive recommendation with an amendment to the original motion that the Town Council vote to appropriate Certified Free Cash ...Please see attached motion

Roll Call Vote

Approve: Councilor Demarco, Councilor Honan, Councilor Fucillo, Councilor Munson, Councilor Belcher, Councilor Flockhart, Councilor Aiello, Vice President Ruggiero, President Letterie

Motion Passed

Motion by the Public Safety Committee with a positive recommendation that the National Grid Petition # 30478309-Terrace Ave be approved.

Roll Call Vote

Approve: Councilor Demarco, Councilor Honan, Councilor Fucillo, Councilor Munson, Councilor Belcher, Councilor Flockhart, Councilor Aiello, Vice President Ruggiero, President Letterie

Motion Passed

Winthrop Taxi Rate Increase, referred to Rules and Ordinance by the Town Council President
Appointments:

Town Council Sub Committees-Please see town website for complete list

Town Manager Search-Town has entered into a contract with Paradigm and position has been posted and applications will be received up until 2-28-21. A packet will be put together for committee to review.

The Town Manager Search Committee will consist of the following members:

Karin Chavis, Chair
Superintendent Howard or her designee
Councilor DeMarco
Vincent Crossman
Peter Gill
John Macero
Shannon Poulos

Committee will be meeting the week of Feb. 7th for review.

Ordinance and Charter Review Committee- will be reviewed 2-15-22
Non substance change vs. substance changes will be reviewed.

Motion by Council President Letterie that the Town Council vote to eliminate the Golf Course Area and Little League "A" Field from being considered possible sites for the Public Safety Building
2nd by Councilor Aiello

Discussion

Councilor Flockhart is reluctant to take these two areas off as for the other 8 sights noted. Almost all have problems

Councilor Aiello reiterates at last meeting that his sense of study that it was not managed well and a strategic error in direction given to the consultant. He worries about a town the size of Winthrop putting the WPD and WFD in one area, this is a vulnerability the study should have asked. Looking for solutions of WFD and WPD in own areas.

Councilor Munson asks if foundational costs could be reviewed with not adding in any costs. If we could get estimates on these locations and maybe others.

Councilor Belcher feels that there are major conservation considerations especially for the golf course site, she would feel comfortable taking this area out of consideration.

Motion by Councilor DeMarco to amend the original motion to read "given the facts, feedback and information at the current time, the Town Council votes to suspend the Little League Field and Golf Course from **consideration** of the location of the Public Safety Building and request the Town Manager to provide other **options** for the Town Council to evaluate.

2nd by Councilor Ruggiero

Discussion

Councilor Flockhart reports there are two golf course sites that were presented in the Kaestle Boos report. Interim Town Manager states it was in their report but not recommended.

Roll Call Vote

Approve: Councilor Demarco, Councilor Honan, Councilor Fucillo, Councilor Munson, Councilor Belcher, Councilor Aiello, Vice President Ruggiero, President Letterie

Disapprove: Councilor Flockhart

Motion Passed

Motion by Councilor Aiello to amend the amendment to read after "**consideration**" *given the nature of the ongoing operations of these facilities* and after "**options**" *which shall include options for moving forward with separate Fire and Police Facilities*

Roll Call Vote

Approve: Councilor Demarco, Councilor Honan, Councilor Fucillo, Councilor Munson, Councilor Belcher, Councilor Flockhart, Councilor Aiello, Vice President Ruggiero, President Letterie
Motion Passed

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Original Motion as Amended and Amended that the Town Council vote to eliminate the Golf Course Area and Little League "A" Field from being considered possible sites for the Public Safety Building...refer to amendments on original motion

Roll Call Vote

Approve: Councilor Demarco, Councilor Honan, Councilor Fucillo, Councilor Munson, Councilor Belcher, Councilor Aiello, Vice President Ruggiero, President Letterie

Disapprove: Councilor Flockhart

Motion Passed

EB Newton Clock Tower –Interim Town Manager reports that RFP process has been approved. Councilor Aiello asks if there is a report on the entire building needs. At this time does the clock tower.

Interim Town Manager considers next meeting are we to also remove the Old Middle School site from the Public Safety Facilities Building.

President Letterie reports he wants to vet out options and look for the best location.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion by President Letterie that the Town Council votes to reinstitute the Senior Tax Relief program to reflect the state minimum wage. The program will continue to provide a maximum \$750.00 tax credit per household; or take any other action relative hereto.

Discussion

Councilor Ruggiero would like residents to be more involved.

Interim Town Manager reports this is done by the Sr.Center Director Dixon and the departments use these people as needed per the department's needs.

Roll Call Vote

Approve: Councilor Demarco, Councilor Flockhart, Councilor Honan, Councilor Fucillo, Councilor Munson, Councilor Belcher, Councilor Aiello, Vice President Ruggiero, President Letterie

Motion Passed

Airport Hazard Committee

President Letterie reports on this committee and the incredible members over time. This committee has been underutilized for years and is trying to get in touch with legal to reinvent this committee and give them more direction from the Town Council

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Schmidt-The Board of Health has taken an interest to some degree on what happens with Massport as for environmental, he feels some members of previous Airport Hazard Committees feel they did not have the authority to do anything. Maybe give them more authority.

Karin Chavis asks about the Ferry

Interim Town Manager reports meeting with Quincy and once he gets a monetary number he can go back to Mass DOT with the Ferry Budget. Their commitment was to help with this year only.

We will need about \$157000 to close out this year. We have no reserved money available.

Comments on the plowing, doing their house alone was a lot of work, cannot imagine what town does to plow.

PUBLIC RELATIONS / UPCOMING EVENTS

March 11, 2022, 12pm to 5pm Odd Fellow Lodge Blood Drive

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Demarco to adjourn at 8:35PM

2nd by Councilor Aiello

Passed Unanimously

Public Documents used in the meeting are available at Town Managers Office.

Documents Used in this Meeting: Handwritten Notes / Committee Openings Documents Roll Call Log

Written Motions / Verbal Motion

Respectfully submitted

Denise Quist

Town Clerk

Council Clerk
