

Town of Warwick
Selectboard
January 22, 2019
Minutes

Members present: Lawrence Pruyne, James Erviti, Todd Dexter (arrived at 6:07 p.m.)

Others present: Town Coordinator David Young, Town Clerk and Town Secretary Rosa Fratangelo, BMAG Accountant Justin Cole, Treasurer Beth Gilgun, Moderator David Koester, Police Chief David Shoemaker, Fire Chief Ron Gates, Finance Committee members Clyde Perkins, Sr., Diana Noble, Olivier Flagollet, Laurette Crane, Highway Advisory Committee member Kevin Alden, HEART Committee member Tom Wyatt, Recreation Committee member Leanne Limoges, Cemetery Commissioner Jim Toth, School Committee members Sue O'Reilly McRae and Jessica Marshall, Constable George Day, Council on Aging members Betsy Lochhead and Carol Foote, Tax Collector Jessica Foote, Susan Wright, Clare Green, Anita Alden, Nathan Swartz, Adam Holloway

I. Call to Order

Chair Pruyne called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Town Hall.

II. Minutes

Erviti MOVED to accept the minutes of January 7, 2019 as printed. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

III. Presentations and Discussions

1. Ethics Exemption (MGL 268:20D)—Young explained that three of the newly appointed Finance Committee members need ethics exemptions because they also have other positions in

Erviti MOVED to grant an MGL Chapter 268 Section 20D Ethics Exemption to Gregory Brodski so he may serve on the Finance Committee and the Conservation Commission; Laurette Crane so she may serve on the Finance Committee and the Cultural Council; Clyde Perkins, Sr. so he may serve on the Finance Committee and the Council on Aging. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

2. BMAG Accounting Update—Justin Cole of BMAG spoke about his firm's work as the Town's Accountant. He started off by stating that the FY 18 closing of the books will be fully

submitted to the DOR by February 1st. Cole noted that he will have to double check with the Treasurer to confirm a few transactions that may not have been entered correctly on the accounting end. He said that he hoped to get the FY 18 full and complete financials to our auditors by mid-February, once the State approves the balance sheet and Schedule A. Cole said that he would also provide this information to the Town. He explained that sometimes a change in the accountant will draw extra scrutiny from the DOR, but he expected about a two-week turnaround from the State once all paperwork and documentation has been submitted. Cole said that by the end of February he will release funds statements and reports to the departments with account numbers and balances. He said in future he plans to do this on a quarterly basis, along with a management summary. Dexter requested a monthly consolidated report of management summaries; Cole said that can be sent out a week after the month ends. Erviti inquired about WBS funds, which had been Funds 30 and 67 but much of 30 is for the Highway. Cole explained that now Fund 30 has to do with Chapter 90 for the Highway, and now the WBS capital account in Fund 31.

Young asked about billing; Cole explained that there are ebbs and flows to the work, but as BMAG contracted for a certain amount of money, the contracted amount will not be exceeded. Erviti said that no one other than Cole has come to Warwick from BMAG and he wanted on-site visits on a more regular basis. Cole said that he interacts mostly with the Treasurer and Tax Collector and noted that he could alternate morning and afternoon hours to provide availability for most people. He said he would work with Young to determine the most convenient schedule with the best split of time.

Cole pointed out that the firm is available by telephone 40 hours per week (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday). Young said that he wanted that made known to all department heads. Cole wanted to make sure that all departments put the correct account number on the revenue paperwork turned into the Treasurer as this will streamline the posting of revenue. Clyde Perkins, Sr. said that he has had trouble obtaining information on how to submit bills and turn over revenue. Young explained both the revenue turnover and bill submission processes. Cole said that he will send the revenue account numbers so all departments will have the correct numbers. He said that he will also include a contact sheet for the firm, so people know whom to get a hold of if they have questions.

George Day asked about closing accounts; Cole stated that accounts are not closed without the express confirmation from the Town that the account can be closed.

3. Treasurer—Treasurer Beth Gilgun explained that we have spent over \$500,000.00 on Chapter 90 roadwork and need to borrow short-term (6 months) at 2.65% interest. She said that the loan would run from January 28, 2019 to July 26, 2019. This needed to be done in anticipation of property tax revenues and Chapter 90 reimbursement from the State coming in before the note is due.

Erviti MOVED to sign the short-term borrowing papers. Dexter SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 3-0-0.

Dexter MOVED to sign the Chapter 90 reimbursement documents for Mass DOT. Erviti SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 3-0-0.

4. Warwick Police Department Report—Police Chief David Shoemaker said that there were almost twice as many motor vehicle accidents in 2018 compared to 2017: 27 in 2018; 15 or 16 in 2017. He said that cell phones and the comfort and quietness of modern cars may contribute to the driver being less connected to the road, which can contribute to accidents. The Chief noted that service calls went up by about 33% in 2018. He pointed out that the cruisers are getting older and require more repairs and service.

The Chief also spoke about the School Resource Officer (SRO) situation and how it may have a significant impact on the Police Department budget going forward. He explained that currently half the cost of an SRO is paid by Northfield and the other half by the District. Chief Shoemaker said that the position is a half-time position for a Northfield police officer without much presence at the elementary schools. He said that up for discussion now are the salary, job qualifications, MOU, and funding. The Chief noted that all four member towns' police departments may be asked to equally fund the position, and he wants to sit down with the Finance Committee to discuss the potential increase to the PD budget. He stated that he sees the SRO as a huge asset and that he is a proponent of having this position filled. Young said that the School Committee sub committee would bring a recommendation to the full School Committee once details were worked out.

5. Finance Committee Update—Laurette Crane and Olivier Flagollet were sworn in by the Town Clerk. The Finance Committee's first meeting was scheduled for Thursday, January 24th at 7 p.m. Tom Wyatt reminded everyone about the joint meeting of Selectboard and Finance Committees of the four PVRSD towns on Monday, January 28th at 6:30 p.m.

6. Discussion of Projects and Goals of Departments, Boards and Commissions—Erviti asked if anyone had any specific goals or projects that they wished to make public at this time. Young said that WBS has will finish building broadband in the next year and is presently about 60-70% of the way there. Erviti said that there are currently 210 active subscribers. Jim Toth said that the Cemetery Commission needs to clearly define cemetery boundaries. He also wants to get the finances and the records in better shape. Highway Advisory Committee member Kevin Alden said that Northfield Road will be finished and that they will be applying for a grant for work on Wendell Road, as well as grants for other projects. Open Space Committee member Clare Green said that our Open Space plan has expired and needs to be reviewed and updated with assistance from FRCOG. She said that a town survey will be done and once the plan is updated we will be eligible for grants.

7. Highway Department Personnel Policy—Erviti said that he was not yet prepared to proceed with this discussion. Dexter said that this was a topic of discussion at the last Highway Advisory

Committee meeting. He said Highway Superintendent Larry Delaney now has a current copy of the Town's Personnel Policy and pointed out that the supervisor of any department has to approve vacation time, so Delaney has to pre-approve vacation for his crew. Dexter said there was still more discussion to be had. He said that with regards to the cap on comp. time the maximum is 60 hours earned time and more must be gone over with Delaney and his crew. Erviti suggested written documentation that the personnel policy has been received and understood. Dexter noted that this is all based on Town policy, and that there has been no vote by the Highway Advisory Committee or Selectboard yet to change anything. He said that the committee will discuss this and make sure that Delaney fully understands every aspect of the policy.

8. HEART Committee Update —Wyatt said there were four issues on the revised District agreement, one of which is the definition of capital costs. He said that beginning in FY 2021 buildings, structures and structural systems exceeding \$10,000.00 assessed to the Town that owns the building. Wyatt said with respect to capital costs for an elementary school in a town without one, that town is not responsible for the costs. Wyatt said that compensation for a town losing its elementary school would be up to \$15,000.00 per year for three years to maintain the school until it is repurposed; after three years the District is no longer responsible for any costs. Erviti said that the “up to” must be well defined. Young said that there should be no “up to”, just define the specific length of time. Pruyne said that all reasonable costs should be borne by the District as the District agreement is written to apply for the next twenty to thirty years. Erviti reiterated that terms need to be much better defined that it is now, as it lacks crucial specificity such as an amount for year one.

Jessica Foote asked the Board members if WCS were to close, what the expectations are from this Board. Dexter said that the District estimated a \$214,000.00 savings to close, but we have not come up with a definitive use for the building. Foote asked what the Board as a whole hoped to receive from the District; there was a consensus of the Board that they have nothing collectively decided at this time. When Foote asked what our town needs, Diana Noble said the Finance Committee could discuss the matter at their meeting later this week. She mentioned one year's worth of insurance until the decision is made on how to repurpose the school. Noble suggested making whatever the Town is willing to do to keep WCS open far more attractive than what we would get if the school were to be closed. Erviti said that we have to come up with a number for the intangibles and to quantify the value the school has to our community that is way above and beyond the actual appraised value. Nathan Swartz suggested pursuing grants for education so that we may be able to support WCS ourselves. Dexter proposed exploring making WCS a charter school or a private school. Perkins said that it seemed to be a foregone conclusion that the District wants to close WCS. Sue O'Reilly McRae disagreed with this statement and noted that is also not a foregone conclusion with her a School Committee member. Noble said that she is concerned that this will become an “us against them” adversarial process.

It was agreed that transportation and health insurance are the biggest costs to be looked at. Wyatt said that Gill/Montague has a definite interest in exploring everything from shared services to

becoming a 6-town District. A planning committee to pursue eventual consolidation would consist of three people from each of the PVRSD towns, plus Gill and Montague, with one of those three being a School Committee member. Wyatt said that it could be about a two-year time frame if they really push it. Green asked if Mahar was a possibility; Pruyne said that by the end of March Mahar should complete the revision of its District agreement. Wyatt said that the Gill/Montague projected deficit was \$700,000.00 which is less than PVRSD's. Wyatt noted that in future District agreement revisions will be conducted every five years to avoid such long lapses as the one now being faced.

9. Discussion of Possible School Closures, District Finances, Building Lease and Related Topics—

Young said that in 2011 the legal advice was even though the lease was not signed we would continue to abide by its terms. The old lease for the old building was signed by then Selectmen Dick Whiting, Paul Hadsel, Jr. and Larry Carey and was valid from 1991 to 2011. However, no new lease was signed when the WCS moved to the new building. Young said that in the 11 years he has worked here no Board has signed the lease, but the terms have been faithfully upheld, and the relationship continues on the expired lease.

O'Reilly McRae said that no one has found a signed lease for Warwick or Leyden, but the legally required 180-day provision for notice under the lease was sent in order to cover all legal bases so the process would not be held up until a signed lease is found. This notice states that the District will not lease the building as of September 1, 2019. Young said that the Finance Committee can look at costs to close the school and to apply it to keep it open, using real and believable numbers.

Dexter read aloud the letter from the Board to DESE Commissioner Riley about potential WCS closure. Erviti wanted the language refined before it is sent.

10. Discussion to Consider Establishing an Account Earmarked for Supporting WCS—

Clare Green proposed the creation of a donation account for WCS so that people who wish to make contributions to bring more funds to the School. She said that she believes that there is a larger community that would want to support our situation. Green pointed out that establishing such an account would send a strong message that we believe in the importance of our school and its value to the Town. When she asked for ideas about what to call the donation account, Laurie Crane suggested "SOS – Save Our School".

Erviti said that he thought it appropriate to inform the public just where the money would go if WCS closes. Young suggested that a non-profit entity rather than the Town take and manage the donations. Tom Wyatt suggested Metcalf Chapel or the Arts Council. Pruyne will speak with Town Counsel for legal direction. Erviti said that there would have to be an MOU with a non-profit that specifies who handles the funds and how the money can be spent. Young mentioned the Foundation for Academic Excellence as a possibility.

11. Franklin County Emergency Communication System—There will be a county-wide meeting at Greenfield Community College on Thursday, January 31st at 7 p.m. entitled Options

for the Future. Erviti, who will attend this meeting, explained that the options are sticking with the current County system of Shelburne Control, or going with the State for Dispatch. Erviti noted that both our Police and Fire Chiefs will also attend the meeting, and he will report back to the Selectboard with information from this meeting.

12. Selectboard Reports—Pruyne said that he attended a meeting at Mahar that included a discussion of Mahar’s new District agreement, which should be completed by this March. He said that that district is welcoming to the idea of Warwick joining their District and that we would not have any buy-in fee were we to join. Pruyne said that it would make some sense for us to pursue this option further. Young said that we would have to be sure not to buy into the District’s retirement history and start only once we have actually become a part of the District. There was a consensus of the Board to further investigate this possibility.

13. Coordinator Report—Young had nothing to add to his written report.

14. New and Other Business Unanticipated at Time of Meeting Posting — None.

15. Public Comment—None.

Adjournment

Erviti MOVED to adjourn at 9:12 p.m. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 3-0-0.

Documents consulted at this meeting:

*Draft Minutes of January 7, 2019

*Town Coordinator Report dated January 17, 2019

*Town of Warwick Personnel Policies

*Letter from Warwick Treasurer Beth Gilgun to PVRSD Director of Finance Tanya Gaylord dated January 16, 2019 RE: Calculation of Warwick’s liabilities as member town

*Email from David Young to Lawrence Pruyne dated January 16, 2019 RE: January 22 opportunity for boards to meet with new accountant and meet together

*Town of Warwick Snow and Ice Policy

*Definitions of Capital Costs and Operating Costs PVRSD District Agreement

*PVRSD Lease Agreement dated December 19, 1991

Proposed Act of the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: An Act Relative to the Leasing of Certain Property by the Town of Warwick, passed on December 13, 1996

*Letter to Selectboard Chair Dawn Magi from PVRSD Superintendent Dayle Doiron dated July 11, 2011 RE: Lease of WCS building and grounds *Email from Clare Green to Warwick-L dated January 10, 2019 RE: Email from Shauna Mallet to Warwick-L and other recipients including individuals in the Massachusetts Legislature , also dated January 10, 2019 RE: WCS

*Email from FRCOG to Warwick Town Clerk dated Monday, January 7, 2019 RE: Future of Franklin County Public Safety Communication (FCECS)