WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Meeting of Tuesday, April 9,2013 ~ 7 pm
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Minutes Approved April 23,2013

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Tuesday, April 9, 2013 at 7 pm in the Selectmen's Meeting Room in Town Hall.

With a quorum present, Ms. Martins called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
Selectmen Present: Molly Martins, Chair; Patrick Wilson, Vice Chair; Ken Whittaker, Secretary
Also Present: Mark Andrews, Interim Town Administrator; Catherine Tinsley, Minutes Secretary

Abbreviations used:
BOS Board of Selectmen
TA Town Administrator
ATM Annual Town Meeting

Public Information
Agenda

Welcome and overview of Agenda
Statements
Presentation by Guests

Announcements

Mr. Wilson made the following announcements:

- The annual elections are Thursday April 11, 2013 at Town Hall from 7 am to 8 pm
- The State Primary is Tuesday, April 30, 2013 at Town Hall from 7 am to 8 pm
- Absentee Ballots are available in the Clerk's Office
- The Police Department has scheduled an "Expired Medication Disposal Day" for Saturday April 27, 2013 from 10 am to 2 pm
- Volunteers are needed to serve on the Town Government Study Committee; interested residents should submit a letter of interest the Town Administrator's office

Old Business

Summary of Annual Town Meeting – April 6, 2013

Present: Paul Weaver, Town Counsel/ Town Moderator
Present: Michael Lucy, Finance Committee, Chair
Ms. Martins reviewed that a different approach to the budget was used this year at the ATM, which raised concerns.
Mr. Weaver and Mr. Lucy spoke to Article 1 – the Operational Budget, saying that although Town Meeting has historically approved departmental line items, Baystate Municipal Accounting Group (BMAG) recommended a different format to approve departmental budgets as an efficient way for Town Meeting to vote, and to allow for the department heads to manage the line item accounts in the best interest of the department.
Mr. Lucy added that the budget process went well, and the Finance Committee supported that the line item budget be managed by the Department Heads, through the BOS/TA. He noted that small typo's and errors are correctable; an errata sheet will be provided.
He went on to say that the end of the Fiscal Year would be constrained financially, partially due to the restriction on the transfer of the Finance Director's salary, which can not be used for contracted services, specifically the cost of outsourcing for financial services. Money in the salary line will be resolved at the end of the Fiscal Year.

Larry Swartz, Conrad Circle, was recognized by the Chair. Mr. Swartz commented that it was a dramatic difference between line item budget approval and the new approach to approve budgets by department. He stated that as a deviation from a long-term tradition of town meeting, advance notice on this important change should have been clearly specified and brought to the public.
Mr. Swartz requested that the TA/ BOS go slowly in the implementation of the budget and in the future present it in a way that can be discussed and fully vetted for a clear understanding at Town Meeting.

Sandra Stolle, 2 Great Pond Road, also spoke in support for residents being given information in advance of Town Meeting, in time to review and understand the information. She expressed her displeasure with the way the town is being run and the changes being made but seeking not to change things that are working for Wenham.

Mr. Wilson responded by observing one important driver in the changes is the unexpected departure of the Finance Director. He explained the benefit in the flexibility to meet the challenges. He went on to say due diligence was given on the behalf of the TA/BOS/ Finance Committee to build a solid budget, and noted his confidence in BMAG, saying the town is fortunate to have their expertise through the end of the Fiscal year. The BOS will continue to review the Finance Department staffing going forward.
Mr. Wilson cautioned residents not to depend on new revenue to relieve the tax rate but that new innovative ideas are also needed to meet financial challenges. He asked for understanding and patience from residents throughout this process, but added that one mistake is too many and undone work is not acceptable.
There will be regular meetings with the BOS, TA, and the FinCom Chair.

Introduction of Provisional Firefighters
Michael Allan, Zachary Ingraham, David Marsh, were present and welcomed by the BOS to the Wenham Fire Department.

Appointment - Chief of Police
Present: Thomas Perkins
VOTE: Mr. Wilson moved the BOS appoint Thomas Perkins as the permanent Chief of the Wenham Police Department. Mr. Whittaker seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
Ms. Martins commented that Chief Perkins has accepted the position and observed the Police Department was well represented.
She stated Chief Perkins has shown exemplary leadership over the past nine months and the Town is proud to have him as their Police Chief.
Chief Perkins spoke briefly and thanked the BOS, previous Police Chief Ken Walsh, fellow Police Chiefs, Fire Chief Bob Blanchard, Police Captain Toby, Wenham Officers, and residents for their support. He gave special thanks to his family.

Discussion of Town Administrator Search Process
Ms. Martins observed that the Town has been dealing with multiple transitions during the past year, including that of the Town Administrator. She went on to say a Government Study Committee (GSC) was formed to look at the structure of the town government, including the office of the Town Administrator. The BOS appointed Mark Andrews as interim TA with the anticipation of a recommendation coming forward from the Committee.
She said the GSC has been meeting longer than initially anticipated, and the interim TA contract was extended through to June 30, 2013. Ms. Martins assured the public that the BOS is working with the GSC but that the BOS will begin a concurrent process to form an ad hoc search committee for a permanent TA that is ready to go oce the GSC makes a recommendation regarding the TA position.
Ms. Martins reiterated the commitment of the BOS to begin the search process for a new town leader, but adding the timing has changed.
The BOS will begin to discuss the process to put together such a committee, and how to best go forward.
Mr. Lucy asked that the BOS avoid changes in the Town Administration during the budget season, October through April.

Operation Safety Net
Present: Chief Perkins/ Chief Blanchard
The Police and Fire Chief's were present to talk about Operation Safety Net, saying the are working closely with the schools, and seniors, regarding matters related to traffic safety and internet fraud.
The Chiefs agreed the program is successful saying the three entities are working collaboratively together.
The BOS asked the Chief's if it was appropriate use of the CTY call system to announce local voting citing the town hall location is new for local elections as is the day.

The Chief's agreed that the CTY system was initially to be used for emergencies, but the Town has periodically fused it for important announcements; they concurred the announcement regarding voting warranted the use of the system.

Minutes - None

Town Administrator Report

Mr. Andrews will be attending a Municipal Conference regarding public safety, public transportation, and green communities on Tuesday, April 23, 2013.

Council on Aging (COA) – Appointments

At the recommendation of the COA Board, the BOS agreed to expedite the appointment of two new people to the COA Board, citing without these members, there is no quorum.

It was noted that Merle Welsh has resigned. A letter of thanks will be sent to him for his years of service.

VOTE: Mr. Whittaker moved to appoint Gail McLean and Diana Lang to the Wenham Council on Aging. Mr. Wilson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The BOS and TA will begin the process to advertise for a new COA Director.

Audit Committee – Appointment

VOTE: Mr. Wilson moved to appoint David Generaux, BMAG, as a member of the Audit Committee. Mr. Whittaker seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session (ES)– Contract Negotiations: Police Union, Police Chief, and Interim Town Administrator

VOTE: Mr. Wilson moved the BOS enter into ES at 8:24 pm, according to Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25 (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (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 to include Interim Police Chief Tom Perkins, and Fire Chief Bob Blanchard and to return to open session for the sole purpose of adjourning. The contracts being discussed were the Police Union, Police Chief, Fire Union, and Interim Town Administrator. Mr. Whittaker seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

The BOS returned to open session at 10:05 pm

VOTE: Mr. Wilson moved to adjourn at 10:05 pm and it was unanimous to do so.

Respectfully submitted by

Catherine Tinsley