

TOWN OF WENHAM

APPROVED 12.16.14

Board of Selectmen  
Meeting of Tuesday, October 21, 2014  
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30 A, § 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) was held on OCTOBER 21, 2014 at 7 PM in the Selectmen Chambers.

**WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF THE AGENDA**

With a quorum present, Chairman Wilhelm called the meeting to order at 7 PM

Selectmen Present: Jack Wilhelm, Chair; Catherine Harrison, Vice Chair; Ken Whittaker, Clerk

Also Present: Catherine Tinsley, Minutes Secretary

Not Present: Mark Andrews, Town Administrator

Public Information

The meeting was recorded with permission by HWCAM.

Agenda

Announcements

Budget Schedule FY16

Performance Review of the Town Administrator from March 2014

Appointment Process – Draft

Minutes – September 2, 2014 & September 16, 2014

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. Chairman Wilhelm announced that Mark Andrews is a finalist for the Town Administrator's position in the Town of Pepperell.
2. There is a Joint Hamilton & Wenham Board of Selectmen Meeting with the Joint Recreation Commission on Monday October 27, 2014
3. The State General Election is Tuesday, November 4, 2014 at Town Hall
4. There is an opening on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) with the recent resignation of Timothy Mansfield. It was noted that Mr. Mansfield was an architect and the other board members are both lawyers. Ms. Harrison confirmed with ZBA member Tony Feeherry, that is was the preference of the sitting board members that an architect be appointed to the ZBA.  
Mr. Whittaker introduced Chris Vance, who submitted a letter of interest to serve on the ZBA and is a licensed architect. The Chairman recognized Mr. Vance who spoke briefly on his interest in serving on the ZBA and his knowledge and background as an architect saying he specifically designs schools and is very familiar with municipal zoning laws. Mr. Vance said he understands the commitment and is ready to serve, either as the alternate or the sitting member.
5. There is a new position for a Deputy Town Counsel as part of the transition of the present Town Counsel retirement. Anyone interested should submit a letter of interest to the Town Administrator.
6. Dedication of the new War Memorial is Veteran's Day on November 11<sup>th</sup> at noon. The memorial is being delivered to the Car Barn Lot on Friday October 24, 2014.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Historic District Commission (HDC) – Update**

Jim Howard, Chair of the HDC was present and summarized the current activities of the Commission.

He reviewed that the Historic District bylaw was amended by the Town Meeting and is officially the Wenham Historic Commission/Historic District Commission. The Commissioners have the duties and responsibilities to both commissions.

The Commission is required to certify those projects which request Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for historic use. In addition, the HDC is responsible for identifying to the state those projects that may affect historic sites in town i.e. a cell tower.

The Massachusetts Historic Commission has grant money to assist communities with the cost of identifying historic and archeology sites in their town. The estimated cost for such a survey is \$10,000. The HDC is putting together information in preparation to apply for this grant to be used in conjunction with the possible use of CPA funding. This will be brought before the BOS for consideration.

The HDC is proposing to put the Demolition Delay Bylaw on the 2015 Town Meeting warrant, with the recommendation for 6-month delay for houses built before the Civil War (1860). This bylaw mandates a conversation between the HDC and the homeowner before an historic house is demolished. A list of such buildings/ houses will be created in preparation of Town Meeting. Mr. Whittaker offered to assist the Commission going forward with this. The HDC recently sent homeowners in the historic district a letter reminding them that permits are required in the historic district for work such as stone wall, fencing, signage, etc. There is an open seat on the HDC. An architect is sought to fill the position.

### **Discussion of the FY 2016 Budget Message and Budget Schedule**

Chairman Wilhelm noted the BOS had a tentative Fiscal Year 16 budget schedule in their packet and reviewed the time line.

Department Heads have budget packets to prepare and turn in by November 4, 2014. Budgets are to be level serviced and include a 2% COLA. The Department Heads will be making a presentation to the BOS at a meeting on Saturday, November 22, 2014.

Mr. Whittaker observed that home sales are reportedly down in Wenham by 52 percent. This is more than double compared to other North Shore Communities and went on to initiate a discussion regarding the high tax rate in Wenham and suggested this be part of the budget discussions. He suggested this may be the year to make hard, but important changes to hold the tax rate. Mr. Wilhelm added that the market is slowest for houses over \$800,000. One goal of the BOS is to make a formal recommendation to the Finance Committee regarding the tax rate goal. Ms. Harrison opined that these statistics be further considered but that the increasing revenue to the town also be part of the goal. She stated the importance of understanding what budgets the Department Heads recommend to run their departments before making cuts or supporting a freeze in the tax rate.

Ms. Harrison referenced the budget schedule and questioned the BOS role in the preliminary discussions with the School District, saying the school budget should no be driven by the Finance Committees only. Chairman Wilhelm noted that this meeting is to provide a preliminary indication from the School District of what the towns could expect in this budget.

### **Update Comcast License Renewal**

Present: Attorney Bill August; Bill Melville, HWCAM

Attorney August referenced the follow up memorandum to the BOS. He indicated the best chances for a third access channel is through informal negotiations and Comcast has agreed to the third access channel at no cost to the town. Mr. Melville also confirmed his support that the Town continue with the informal negotiation process.

*Vote: Mr. Wilhelm moved, and it was seconded to approve, accept, and continue the "informal renewal process" for the Town of Wenham's Comcast Cable License as presented by Attorney August to the Board of Selectmen. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **Appointment Process Procedures**

Ms. Harrison offered edits to the draft Appointment Process Procedures for consideration:

1. Start with the verification of opening and term on board/committee/ commission
2. Have parallel paths after Letter of Interest is submitted to be reviewed by BOS/ Committee simultaneously
3. Eliminate any formal group interview process
4. Remove requirement for that board/committee/commission to vote a recommendation but allows them input to the BOS
5. Remove HW Patch from the media postings

KW 10.27

Chairman Wilhelm noted each Committee/Board/Commission needs different levels of input and recommendations. Using the ZBA as an example of one of the Towns more important boards, he agreed that the committee recommendations would be an important part of the appointment process.

Mr. Whittaker reiterated the importance of having a recommendation from the Chair/Committee to which the candidate's appointment is being considered.

Mr. Whittaker will amend the draft to reflect the opinions of the Board.

#### **Discussion of Criteria for Town Administrator Evaluation**

Chairman Wilhelm stated that in the absence of the Town Administrator, this agenda item would be held over to the next meeting. It was noted that a copy of last years' evaluation process was in the BOS packet.

#### **OPEB Committee (Other Post Employment Benefits)**

Mr. Whittaker reported that he is in the process of preparing a formal process/ charge for an ad hoc OPEB evaluation team.

#### **REPORTS**

In the absence of the Town Administrator, there were no reports and these items were deferred to the next meeting.

#### **MINUTES** - September 2, 2014; September 16, 2014; October 7, 2014

- *Vote: Mr. Whittaker moved, and it was seconded, to accept the minutes of **September 2, 2014** as presented and it was unanimous to do so.*
- *Vote: Mr. Whittaker moved, and it was seconded, to accept the minutes of **September 16, 2014** as presented and it was unanimous to do so.*
- The minutes of October 7, 2014 were held for review. No action was taken.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The BOS unanimously adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Catherine Tinsley  
10.25.14