

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING
JANUARY 5, 2021**

In attendance were Acting Chairman Daniel L. Salvucci; Clerk Brian J. Bezanson; Member Dr. Carl F. Kowalski; Member Randolph G. LaMattina; Member Justin R. Evans; and Interim Town Administrator Lisa M. Green. Acting Chairman Salvucci opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Acting Chairman Salvucci read the following into the record:
In accordance with Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, §20, this meeting is being held remotely in an on-line conference mode hosted on Zoom.com and members of the public are not able to physically attend. The meeting is being broadcast live on Comcast channel 12 and can be viewed via live stream at WHCA.tv. It will subsequently be broadcast on YouTube.com.

Acting Chairman Salvucci asked everyone in attendance to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. This was followed by a moment of silence dedicated to those affected by COVID-19.

Dr. Kowalski **MOVED** to approve bill and payroll warrants. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Dr. Kowalski – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Acting Chairman Salvucci – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

Dr. Kowalski **MOVED** to accept correspondence in the Read File. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Dr. Kowalski – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Acting Chairman Salvucci – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

COVID-19

Update from Chief Grenno

Chief Grenno advised the Board of 101 new cases over the past 14 days. Currently there are over 300 positive cases in Whitman. He reminded everyone the first line of defense is a face covering.

COVID Related Requests Submitted by Chief Grenno

Chief Grenno briefly outlined his requests that were included in the Board's agenda packet.

Dr. Kowalski **MOVED** to authorize Chief Grenno to hire a part-time, temporary administrative assistant for the COVID-19 vaccination program and to fund said position from the COVID-19 CARES Act. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Dr. Kowalski – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Acting Chairman Salvucci – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

Dr. Kowalski **MOVED** to appoint Mr. LaMattina to serve as fiduciary authority on any further expenditures from the CARES funds and any further stimulus funding, in conjunction with the Town Accountant and Treasurer/Collector. **Second** Mr. Evans. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Dr. Kowalski – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Acting Chairman Salvucci – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

Dr. Kowalski **MOVED** to assign the Recreation office (located in the lower level of Town Hall) as the COVID/Board of Health office through June, 2021, or longer if required. In the event said office is needed by the Recreation Commission, another available office will be designated as the COVID/Board of Health office. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Dr. Kowalski – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Acting Chairman Salvucci – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

Chief Grenno advised the Board that he has rolled his department back to the strict policies of last spring which include limited to no in person inspections, no outside training, modifications to response policies and members allowed inside residences. The fire station will remain closed to anyone who is not an employee of the department and mutual aid companies will stage for station coverage. Chief Grenno recommended the Board do the same with other town operations such as no inside pick-up of books at the library and employees only inside the Council on Aging. He suggested each department head examine their operations and make sure their departments are locked down.

Dr. Kowalski **MOVED** to authorize the Fire Chief and the Board of Health to set guidelines and/or impose restrictions on Town operations/Town buildings in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Dr. Kowalski – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Acting Chairman Salvucci – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

SCHEDULED EVENTS

Conduct Interviews for the Position of Veterans' Agent/Veterans' Graves officer/Veterans' Services Director

Interviews were scheduled as follows:

Sara Lansing

Ms. Lansing is a veteran who has more than 20 years' experience with military personnel and veterans. She currently serves as the general manager of the Duxbury American Legion where she has helped to grow the membership to more than 600 members. She is familiar with bookkeeping and administrative duties, as well as QuickBooks and all Microsoft programs.

Ms. Lansing's interview began at 7:15 p.m.

James Murphy

Mr. Murphy is a former Marine and an officer of the Whitman American Legion. He has management experience and worked for more than 30 years as an accounting professional. He is also familiar with many different computer programs.

Mr. Murphy's interview began at 7:29 p.m. and ended at 7:48 p.m. Because Mr. Richards had not yet joined the meeting, the Board recessed until 8:00 p.m.

Brian Richards

Mr. Richards is a veteran with strong ties to the veteran community. He has a passion for supporting veterans and advocating for their needs. He has also served as President of the Veterans Club and Coordinator of Veterans Center Benefits at Massasoit Community College.

Mr. Richard's interview began at 8:00 p.m.

All candidates were asked the following questions by temporary Veterans' Services Officer Christopher Buckley:

- In your own words explain M.G.L. c.115 and what type of benefits it offers veterans.
- What experience do you have that would benefit Whitman veterans in your role as VSO?
- Talk about a time where you had to face a difficult situation in your job and how you handled it.
- Explain the VA claims process.
- How have you managed budgets in your previous employment?
- How do you plan to organize your day?
- What computer programs do you use to remain organized in your daily routine?
- What experience do you have working with veterans?
- How do you plan to use community outreach in your role as VSO?
- What is your passion in working with veterans?

In addition, all candidates were asked by Acting Chairman Salvucci if they will have any issue with completing and submitting the proper paperwork in a timely fashion each month.

Following the interview process, Mr. Evans thanked Mr. Buckley, Mr. Bezanson and Mrs. Green for bringing forward three great candidates. He then asked for their opinion.

Mr. Buckley stated that he feels Ms. Lansing is a good candidate for the position.

Mr. Bezanson agreed Ms. Lansing would be a good choice.

Mr. LaMattina stated that he liked Ms. Lansing right away. He was also impressed with Mr. Murphy.

Dr. Kowalski stated he was impressed by all three candidates.

Acting Chairman Salvucci felt all candidates were outstanding.

Mrs. Green stated she feels Ms. Lansing will be a good fit for Whitman.

Mr. Bezanson **MOVED** to appoint Sara Lansing to the position of Veterans' Agent/Veterans' Graves Officer/Veterans' Services Director for a one-year term, through April 30, 2021. **Second** Mr. Lamattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Dr. Kowalski – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Acting Chairman Salvucci – yes. **So voted 5-0.**

Mr. Buckley agreed to contact the three candidates and notify them of the Board's decision.

At 8:20 p.m. Dr. Kowalski **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting and move into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a) (2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, to wit, the Town Administrator; and (3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation between the Town and Edward Slocum, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Town, as declared by the chair. **Second** Mr. LaMattina. Roll call vote revealed: Mr. Bezanson – yes; Mr. Evans – yes; Dr. Kowalski – yes; Mr. LaMattina – yes; and Acting Chairman Salvucci – yes. **So voted 5-0.** Acting Chairman Salvucci declared having this meeting in open session will have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Town. The meeting will not reconvene in Open Session.

Acting Chairman Salvucci read the following into the record:

In accordance with Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, §20, the Executive session portion of the meeting will be held in an on-line conference mode hosted on Zoom.com and members of the public will not be able to physically attend. No broadcast of Executive Session will be made.

The meeting did not reconvene in open session.

Brian J. Bezanson, Clerk