



Tuesday, April 9, 2024
Hanson Select Board
Select Board Meeting Room, Town Hall
Open Session

Members Present: Laura FitzGerald-Kemmett, Joseph Weeks, Ann Rein, David George
Members Absent: Edwin Heal
Others Present: Lisa Green, Town Administrator; Lynn McDowell, Executive Assistant; Emily Sprague, Administrative Assistant; Frank Milisi, Camp Kiwanee; Katherine Feodoroff, Town Counsel; Eric Kinsherf, Town Account; Elizabeth Sloan, Town Clerk

I CALL TO ORDER

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett called the meeting to order.

II PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING MEETINGS

Ms. Rein read the public announcements and upcoming meetings.

The Select Board thanked the Library Director and her staff, as well as the Library Trustees Director for hosting a lovely event at the library during the solar eclipse.

III NEW BUSINESS

1. School Assessment Discussion

Ms. Green and Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett attended the School Committee meeting regarding the school assessment. After much discussion, the superintendent provided a scenario with a reduced assessment to both towns. The School Committee voted to accept and approve a school budget of 4.04%. This would equal an assessment of 7.68% to the Town (\$14,974,736), with the Town of Whitman’s assessment being 7.87%(\$19,135,687). The School opted to use one-time monies and not fill positions for those leaving or retiring. These reductions will not negatively affect student outcomes.

While the Select Board does not vote or approve the assessment from the School Committee, it does need to decide how to fund that budget, if voters wish to proceed that way. The Board agreed previously it did not wish to make cuts to personnel. Instead, it spoke to having a school override earmarked specifically for that delta. It will be presented in the May 2024 Annual Meeting warrant at 5%, as that is what the Town can be afford and what the budget is based upon. The other budget article would be for the would include the override for the full assessment of 7.87% During Town Meeting, those present will need to vote that to go to ballot. It will need to pass at the ballot for the funding to occur.

A similar meeting is occurring at this time with the Town of Whitman Board of Selectmen, with differing dollar amounts.

Ms. Green stated the dollar amount for the override totals to \$372,141. During the School Committee meeting last night she addressed the impact to tax payers. She did provide amounts but as she did not have the exact numbers, she updated for tonight's meeting. For a home valued at \$500,000, the estimated impact will be about \$95 annually. Ms. Green shared the revised chart will be on the website tomorrow morning.

Possible scenarios moving forward include:

- If the vote is to not go to ballot – the assessment rests at 5% for the Town of Hanson. Then wait for the outcome for the Town of Whitman. If it's the same there, then the School Committee would come back to the towns with a new assessment, or it would accept the 5% assessment from Hanson.
- If the vote is split between the towns, it is considered a rejection, and the School Committee again would be able to present a new assessment, or there would be a Super Town meeting. And until that super town meeting, the schools would operate at a 1/12 budget.
- Another option for the School Committee is to accept the lesser amount. If one town votes to accept a lesser amount and the other town votes to accept the higher amount, the School Committee can choose to accept the lesser amount and adjust the higher amount down accordingly, and work within that budget.

This option was an option always on the table; the Superintendent presented it along with several others. However, the School Committee believed if both towns were presenting respective overrides, it would ask for a fully packed budget and hold on to its free cash and one time funding.

The Board acknowledged it does not wish to micromanage the School Committee. It does want a partnership and accountability. There are plans for a forensic audit of the School budgets; trust but verify. Ms. Green noted a meeting is being scheduled for later this month with the Abrahams Group and the Superintendent and Business Manager.

Mr. Kinsherf stated the budget will be presented within the warrant at the 5% school allocation. A separate article will be presented for the override.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to place a warrant article in the May 2024 Annual Town meeting for a School override in the amount of \$372,141. **Voted 4 – 0**

Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to refer to Town Meeting the warrant article in the May 2024 Annual Town meeting for a School override in the amount of \$372,141. **Voted 4 – 0**

Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye;

Ms. Sloan stated there will only be one question on the ballot, and the ballot forms will be printed prior to Town Meeting. She continued there are two parts:

- If passes at Town Meeting and passes at the ballot, it passes.
- If it does not pass at Town Meeting, it is already on the ballot. If it then passes as the ballot, there could be another Town Meeting.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to place the following question on the Town of Hanson ballot for the May 2024 Town Election:

Question 1: Shall the Town of Hanson be allowed to assess an additional Three Hundred Seventy-Two Thousand, One Hundred Forty-One dollars (\$372,141) in real estate and property taxes for paying the Town's assessed share of the Fiscal Year 2025 operating budget of the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District for the fiscal year beginning July first, two thousand and twenty-four? Voted 4 – 0
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye;

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to place the following article for the May 2024 Annual Town Meeting warrant:

To determine whether the Town will raise and appropriate an additional \$372,141.00 from taxation to fund the Whitman Hanson Regional School District Operating Assessment in Fiscal Year 2025, provided however, that the amount raised and appropriated hereunder shall be expressly contingent upon approval by the voters at an election of a so-called Proposition 2 ½ override question in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 59, Section 21C (g) of the General Laws; or take any other action in relation thereto.

With the following Explanation:

This article refers to the FY2025 Annual budget line that would be increased if a Whitham Hanson Regional School District Operational Assessment override is voted at the May 2024 Annual Town Election. Voted 4 – 0
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye

MOTION by to Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to refer to Town Meeting the following article for the May 2024 Annual Town meeting:

To determine whether the Town will raise and appropriate an additional \$372,141.00 from taxation to fund the Whitman Hanson Regional School District Operating Assessment in Fiscal Year 2025, provided however, that the amount raised and appropriated hereunder shall be expressly contingent upon approval by the voters at an election of a so-called Proposition 2 ½ override question in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 59, Section 21C (g) of the General Laws; or take any other action in relation thereto.

With the following Explanation:

This article refers to the FY2025 Annual budget line that would be increased if a Whitham Hanson Regional School District Operational Assessment override is voted at the May 2024 Annual Town Election. Voted 4 – 0
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye

2. Announce Highway updates
 - a. Stephen Graham

During the previous Executive Session, the Select Board voted to appoint Stephen Graham to Highway Supervisor. Previous to that meeting, the Board voted to appoint Mr. Graham as Interim Highway Director, from which he stepped back.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to have Steve Graham as Highway Supervisor, pursuant to executive session discussions. **Voted 4 – 0**
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye

- b. Curt MacLean

During the same Executive Session, the Board discussed hiring Curt MacLean as the Interim Highway Director, starting Monday, April 1, 2024 for a period of six months.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to appoint Curt MacLean as the Town of Hanson’s Interim Highway Director, starting April 1, 2024 for a period of six months or until a new Highway Director is hired, pursuant to executive session discussions. **Voted 4 – 0**
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye

3. Accept donation of \$200 for the Veteran’s Gift Fund

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to accept a donation of \$200 for the Veteran’s Gift Fund. **Voted 4 – 0**
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye

4. Approve request for Hanson Middle School 8th grade students to clean up the Town’s skate park.

The Select Board reminded that any use of any Town property requires approval of the Select Board. All requests for the use of Town property need to be submitted to the Select Board office. This reminder will be posted on the website and social media.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve the request from Hanson Middle School 8th grade students to clean up the Town’s skate park. **Voted 4 – 0**
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye

V OLD BUSINESS

- I. May Annual/Special Town meeting warrant review**
 - a. Special Town Meeting

The Select Board closed the Special Town meeting warrant last week. there were no changes.

- b. Annual Town Meeting

Ms. Green presented the latest version to the Board. Town counsel has reviewed and edited.

No change for article 1

No change for article 2

No change for article 3

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to strike from the Warrant and place in parking lot for the 2024 October Special Town Meeting article 4 **Voted 4-0**

No change for article 5

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to strike from the Warrant and place in parking lot for the 2024 October Special Town Meeting article 6 **Voted 4-0**

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to place and recommend the revised article 7 **Voted 4-0**

No change for article 8

No change for article 9

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to recommend article 10 **Voted 4-0**

No change for article 11

No change for article 12

No change for article 13

No change for article 14

No change for article 15

No change for article 16

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to place and recommend article 17 **Voted 4-0**

No change for article 18

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to strike from the Warrant article 19 **Voted 4-0**

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to place and refer to Town Meeting article 20 **Voted 4-0**

No change for article 21

No change for article 22

No change for article 23

No change for article 24

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to recommend article 25 **Voted 4-0**

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to recommend article 26 **Voted 4-0**

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to strike from the Warrant article 27 **Voted 4-0**

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to strike from the Warrant article 28 **Voted 4–0**

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to strike from the Warrant article 29 **Voted 4–0**

No change for article 30

No change for article 31

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to place and refer to Town Meeting article 32

Voted 4–0

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to place and recommend article 33 **Voted 4–0**

No change for article 34

No change for article 35 – Citizen’s petition

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to close the May 2024 Annual Town Meeting warrant. **Voted 4 – 0**

For detailed discussions on each article, please view the meeting here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JtWqHe-IKk> at 34.26

VI **APPROVE OPEN SESSION MINUTES**

1. March 26, 2024
2. April 1, 2024
3. April 2, 2024

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve the meeting minutes as presented on the agenda. **Voted 4 – 0**

Roll call –Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye;

VII **APPROVE ONE DAY LIQUOR LICENSES to be updated**

1. 04/19/24 – 5:00pm – 10:00pm – Christopher Kelley – Fundraiser party
2. 06/30/24 – 2:00pm – 7:00pm – George Kernis – Party

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve the one-day liquor licenses as presented on the agenda. **Voted 4 – 0**

Roll call –Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye

VIII **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

1. Economic Development Committee

No update.

2. High Street Park Committee

Mr. Weeks reminded all wishing to attend that the next meeting is scheduled for April 15 at 6pm in the Select Board meeting room.

3. Highway Committee

No update.

4. Maquan Reuse Committee

No update.

5. Recreation Commission

No update.

6. Whitman Hanson Regional School Agreement Committee

No update.

7. Other Committee updates

No update.

IX TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Ms. Green and Ms. McDowell joined Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett and Ms. Cafardo at the Library to attend the well-attended Eclipse viewing party. Ms. Stofler and her team did a great job hosting a lovely community event
- Ms. Green submitted the ARPA Ambulance application. It is now listed as under review.
- She updated the Board that the Pratt Place Culvert design phase is now pending Level 3 review. Once approved, the next step will be to provide construction costs for a new or repairable culvert. The second ARPA application for that amount will be submitted.
- 2021 supply contract. Need to review rates for new contracts. Currently have savings in excess of \$41K.
- She spoke with the Town's MIA employee assistance representative to discuss training for department heads. It will start in May, with monthly training for three months that will include leadership skills, conducting performance evaluations, and cohesion building and navigating challenging situations
 - The Board would like staff reviews from department heads included with department head review. It would like this information to tie back to salary increases. Ms. Green noted there is a learning curve that she is addressing with training. She will have the reviews implemented after the initial training session with a due date to the department heads for the beginning of September
 - The Board also requested an updated status report for the revised Policy and Procedures manual.
- She noted the Select Board office is focused on Town Meeting and Budget preparation, as well as addressing personnel issues. She noted Ms. Sprague is now the social media contact, and should be contacted with any requests.
- She stated audit of the Whitman Hanson Regional School District data is being scheduled for later this month by Mr. Abramson's office.
- Ms. Green and the Select Board discussed meeting agendas and minutes are missing from several committees, boards and commissions. It seems several are posting with the Town Clerk's office, but not adding to the Town's website. It was also observed, while there is a bylaw stating it must be done, not all committees, boards and commissions are

recording their meetings to be posted with WHCA-TV. The Board will take this into consideration as part of its reappointment process.

X

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to adjourn to Executive Session.

Voted 4 – 0

Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye;

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn McDowell