



Tuesday, February 27, 2024  
***Hanson Select Board***  
Select Board Meeting Room, Town Hall  
Open Session

***Members Present:*** Laura FitzGerald-Kemmett, Joseph Weeks, Edwin Heal, Ann Rein; David George

***Members Absent:***

***Others Present:*** Lisa Green, Town Administrator; Lynn McDowell, Executive Assistant, Eric Kinsherf, Town Accountant; Frank Milisi, Capital Improvement Committee; Thomas Hickey, SSRVTHS; Becky Malamut, North & South Rivers Watershed Association; Phil Clemons, Conservation Commission; Matthew Dyer, Sean Kain, Whitman Select Board member

**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.

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett requested a moment of silence for Mary Foley.

**III                    EXECUTIVE SESSION**

***MOTION*** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to Open Meeting Law (Chapter 30A Section 21 (a)(1)) – To Discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or discuss the discipline or dismissal or, complaints or charges against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual. – Building Inspector; pursuant to Open Meeting Law (Chapter 30A Section 21 (a)(2)) – To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel. – Town Administrator. ***Voted 5 – 0***  
***Roll call – George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye***

6: 16pm            ***MOTION*** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to return from Executive Session to Open Session. ***Voted 5 – 0***  
***Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye***

#### IV NEW BUSINESS

##### 1. Appoint Jeffery Myers as Town of Hanson firefighter

Ms. Green informed the Select Board that Chief O'Brien forwarded correspondence stating Mr. Myers has completed satisfied all preemployment requirements to be a firefighter for the Town of Hanson, commencing February 28, 2024. He will be temporarily assigned to days starting March 11, 2024 until his acceptance to the Massachusetts Firefighter Academy Recruit Training program on April 18, 2024. He was previously a firefighter for the city of Attleboro.

***MOTION*** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to appoint Jeffery Myers as a Town of Hanson firefighter, effective February 28, 2024. ***Voted 5 – 0***  
***Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye***

##### 2. South Shore Regional Vocational Technical High School building project update

Mr. Hickey thanked the Select Board for taking time to share his updates.

He shared with the Select Board some of the updates at South Shore Regional Vocational Technical High School, most notably admission to the School is in great demand; it experienced its highest enrollment to date this year. Currently there are over 100 students participating in the coop program. Due to this growth, the school has expanded district to now include Marshfield. The School has received several state grants, notably from Rethinking Grading, Sills Capital and CTI. Also, the School was one of five schools to be awarded a two-year state grant to update its assessment system, making it more competency based.

He stated Budget process is a zero-based process. All department heads and supervisors are required to create a new budget annually, emphasizing what is needed including capital requests. The budget process has a 4.2% increase in the aggregate – 3.41% for the Operating and Capital budget and the remainder to the District Election for the MSBA project.

He noted the past three years the School has been graduating several non-resident students, who would come with tuition. As he needs to be certain state aid will cover expenses as the School transfers to nearly all district. While there was no issue for the previous fiscal year, FY25 had a shortfall that was covered by grants. There are some personnel additions as each year he is moving federal grant funding positions to full time staff in the budget.

He spoke to the changes in the total enrollment, in district vs out of district. Going forward he does see a modest reduction in not resident tuition. The School is at its enrollment ceiling. For the Town of Hanson, consistently mid-seventies to mid-eighties. He did predict, with a redistribution of existing seats, Hanson may see a decrease in enrollment.

##### 3. MSBA project update

Mr. Hickey continued with the MSBA update.

He stated last week, the School Building Committee recently approved a preferred design and enrollment plan. The website [www.southshoretchproject.com](http://www.southshoretchproject.com) has the project details and the design layout. It will be submitted this week and meet with the MSBA in April 2024 to review and discuss. Then to meet with the MSBA Board of Directors in Fall 2024 to vote. If it goes forward, there will be a district ballot question in January 2025 for all towns involved. If approved, project design borrowing would begin in FY26. He some flexibility with the timing but the vote needs to happen on the same date. The final decision will be based upon the aggregate vote.

Also working on a regional agreement amendment that would make deb share adjustable based on enrollment changes; he anticipates bringing to the respective towns in Fall 2024. May also address adding the Town of Pembroke. While there will be a total project number, voters will pay for their share. It will not be a fixed number. He is proposing a four-year rolling average which will level out the peaks and valleys. He stated while there is no maximum per town, he can provide projections. He will also provide a look back to review.

He shared the preferred design of new school, which will be located behind the current school, with anticipated opening fall 2028. It would be three floors, with fields in front of the building. he shared the projected costs, including local share, based on enrollment of 900 students. He acknowledged the school committee will need to address the staffing issue with a larger school.

There will be a construction manager hired during the design process. This is intended to maintain costs by maintaining the proposed scheduled and having reduced number of change orders. A construction manager can also address immediately design issues before they are implemented. The last slide Mr. Hickey presented demonstrated the proposed cost per household for the Town of Hanson. It noted the difference if the Town of Marshfield has students attending.

The Board noted if more towns participate, the numbers of Hanson pupils will be affected, most likely reducing. Mr. Hickey offered to come back with a detailed presentation to discuss. He has done an analysis of readmissions, based on the eighth-grade population. Based on this, seats are allotted to each community. If seats are not filled, they are reallocated as appropriate.

For needing a new building, Mr. Hickey noted currently the cost of repairs needed in the current building total close to \$110M. While he believes the new building is the preferable option to meet the needs of more students, he requested his project time work with this number for possible solutions.

The Select Board noted the Town is currently addressing Regional School budget as well as finding and building a new highway department space. He stated he understands its position but feels there is no inexpensive option.

He thanked the Select Board again for the time. He would be more than happy to come back to provide further details and answer any outstanding concerns.

A copy of the presentation is posted on the Select Board webpage. The detailed presentation of both bullet points can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEpAcucEyKM>, starting at 8:58.

**4. Green Hanson cleanup for Saturday, April 27, 2024 on Town Green**

Ms. Green will follow-up with the budget request related to trash disposal.

**MOTION** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve the use of the Hanson Town Green for the Green Hanson annual cleanup on Saturday, April 27, 2024, 9:30am – 12:30pm. **Voted 5 – 0**  
**Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye**

**5. NSRWA letter of support discussion**

Ms., Green presented Becky Malamut of the North & South Rivers Watershed Association (NSRWA) to the Board. Ms. Malamut updated the Select Board of the current status of the Indian Head River Restoration Feasibility study results. Work on the study was completed in the fall, with project update in December 2023.

The highlights of the study revealed that the dams can be removed and will not cause flooding or impact the infrastructure in the area. There are still questions related to sediment. Ms. Malamut focused on the State Street, noting there are three samples of sediment behind the dam. One area in which the levels lead and mercury exceeded thresholds for sediment. This was the upstream bank; the downstream has not yet been addressed. Removing the dam is not expected to create any changes.

NSRWA has had conversations with DEP and it is believed the dam will be approve to be removed without additional excavation. The is the conclusion of the study.

Ms. Malamut continued and addressed the superfund. While upstream is unknown, State Street area was already breached in two areas. Ms. Malamut shared there are some remaining funds from the study and would like to extend contract and do additional work, including furthering the designs for State Street bridge to maintain its footings. This is not approving the removal of the dam, just the next steps in the project.

She is requesting the Select Board sign a conditional letter of support says that the Town sees dam removal is ideal for this site and river, to do additional sampling behind both dams and to better understand what is there, and to include NSRWA in the process. She shared a sample letter for the Board to use. She noted both Hanover sign a letter of support while Pembroke decided to review and discuss further.

The Select Board questioned how it could commit to a dam removal when more work is needed before any decision is finalized. Ms. Malamut stated the Board will be committing to the vision of the site. The Board would also like to be reassured that the Town will not be responsible for

the repercussions related to the removal of the bridge. Ms. Malamut could not answer at this time.

Ms. Malamut continued about funding, noting majority of dam removal projects do not have sufficient funding to complete said projects. While there is money remaining for the dam removal, there will be an ask to the towns for additional funding. She stated the project is anticipated to cost about \$600,000, with requests to towns of additional \$50,000-\$100,000.

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett read the sample letter of support. Ms. Rein requested a third bullet point related the safety of the State Street bridge. Ms. Malamut agreed. She emphasized the letter is a gesture, not a binding document.

Mr. Clemons stated he has not seen the document but supports the Board committing to the vision as it needs to be done right for the right reasons.

Ms. Malamut shared she will return to update the Board as needed as well as discuss the feasibility study in greater detail. She will make herself available to address questions and concerns. Mr. Dyer, as the Town's representative, will also make himself available to touch base with comments and concerns.

***MOTION*** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve Ms. Green signing documentation noting the Town of Hanson's support and forward to Ms. Michelle L. Craddock, Natural Resources Damages Program at the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, with the noted modification related to the safety and security of the State Street bridge. ***Voted 5 – 0***  
***Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye***

#### **6. Planning Board report for MBTA Zoning bylaw**

Mr. DeFrias updated the Select Board that the report is being edited and will be available at next meeting.

#### **7. Building Inspector update**

The Select Board announced during its February 13, 2024 Executive Session meeting, it accepted the Building Inspector's resignation. Earlier this evening, during its Executive Session meeting it accepted the Building Inspector's rescinding of his resignation, continuing his employment with the Town of Hanson.

***MOTION*** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to accept Mr. Glass's rescinding of his resignation. ***Voted 5 – 0***  
***Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye***

8. Accept Economic Development Resignations

**MOTION** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Mr. Heal, to accept resignation of Kenneth Sweezey from the Economic Development Committee, with regrets. **Voted 5 – 0**  
**Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye**

**MOTION** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Mr. Heal, to accept resignation of Daniel Bathalon from the Economic Development Committee, with regrets. **Voted 5 – 0**  
**Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye**

9. 2024 Annual Licensing: Common Victualler license – Hanson Rod and Gun Club

Ms. Green shared the club hosts a weekly breakfast for members. The Select Board office reached out to encourage the Club to apply for a license.

**MOTION** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve the Common Victualler license for Hanson Rod and Gun club, effective February 27, 2024.  
**Voted 5 – 0**  
**Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye**

10. May Annual/Special Town meeting warrant review

Ms. Green shared with the Select Board initial first drafts of the Annual and Special Town meeting warrants for review. Several placeholders for articles are still in place as further information is coming. She stated the budget should be inserted for the March 12, 2024 meeting.

The Board questioned both Ms. Green and Mr. Kinsherf what will happen is the requested assessment from the Schools is not decreased. Mr. Kinsherf stated all budgets are in and he reviewed them with Ms. Green. He reviewed the warrant, noting requests currently total \$698,000 for Free Cash, with \$1.4M available.

Mr. Kinsherf continued, stating there are two possible scenarios for the Schools. The first would include a 5% increase of the school budget. it would not be ideal as it would use \$986,000 to balance the budget. And if some one-time funding was used to meet the difference, the Town would avoid needing an override. However, if the Town chooses to simply go with the 5%, it would leave a \$960,000 shortfall.

He suggested the following, at the 5% level –

- have no override using Free Cash for operational expenses or
- have a structurally balanced budget requiring an override of \$960,000 or
- cut \$960,000 from the budget to balance.

The second scenario, at 10.2%, there would be a \$700,000 swing. If using no Free Cash, he projected \$1.7M override. Or, using the \$986,000, an override would still be needed, but the amount would be \$700,000. This percent will create some very hard decisions.

Mr. Kinsherf also did a quick review of how this would affect the average tax bill. He predicted a range from \$171 – \$413 increase per year, based on a home value of \$500,000. He noted the Finance Committee is still reviewing budgets and he expects to hear back from the chair next week.

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett read correspondence from John Galvin, a former member of the Town of Whitman's finance committee. As he was not able to read it during the Town of Whitman's previous meeting he shared with both boards.

The Select Board questioned what the School has done to address internally; why is it including as reoccurring budget services that originally were paid with one-time funds that are no longer available. The Board further asked why does the School declare a truly level-funded budget when it used one-time funding and expected the funding to continue. The Board appreciated Mr. Galvin's analysis but noted the Board is not in the place to make final decisions. The Board is requesting its other departments to work within the means that can be afford, proposed by the Town Accountant, the Finance Committee and FitzGerald-Kemmett. If the School needs the additional funding to run its operational budget, it should be the owner of an override, not the Town.

The Board sees two budgets. The first to be with the 5% increase; the second would be with the override of 10.2%, and let the voters decide what will be funded for the schools. The Board followed up noting the 5% was not yet approved, as its number is lower than Whitman's.

Mr. Kinsherf stated the 5% figure to be more practical and a good compromise. He also noted that Whitman is offering the same figure. If the vote is not accepted at the respective town meetings, it will lead to a super town meeting. He suggested, while not liking the 5%, the Town needs to be willing to move forward and be in step with Whitman.

Mr. Milisi noted, due to the breakdown, if Whitman offered 5%, Hanson will be lower. Mr. Kinsherf stated he can make the adjustment, which will be closer to 4%. The Board suggested meeting with the other two boards to get a better sense of what is going on with all boards, and keep the relationships from being adversarial. It will be better to have the difficult conversations with all present in the same room. While the school committee is elected to advocate for the students, it still needs to work within budgetary means. Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett offered to reach out and schedule meeting.

Mr. Kain, a member of Whitman's Select Board, attended in the anticipation of this conversation. While he cannot speak for the Whitman board, he believed it would be open to meeting and working together. For the override, his board also wanted to avoid challenges on the floor of town meeting.

If an override was placed on the ballot, Ms. Green thought the timeline for the Town clerk will need at least 30 days, but she needs to be confirmed.

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett reached out the chair of the Finance Committee to meet and have an overall discussion, similar to last year.

## **11. Town Administrator Review**

For this year, the Board used an updated performance review form and had individual reviews with Ms. Green. All forms were forwarded to Ms. McDowell for tabulation and rollup. The Select Board saw final results for the first time during the meeting.

The overall ratings, with 5.0 being the highest, was positive. Ratings ranged from 3.5 – 4.3 ,with an overall average of 4.0. Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett read some of the comments from Board members. The Board would like to see improvements on communication with department head and performance reviews of department heads and their respective teams.

The next step for the Board would be negotiating a contract renewal with Ms. Green. Ms. Green thanked the Board for its support the past three years. She has enjoyed working in Hanson and would like to stay to see the new projects implemented to completion.

## **V OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Municipal Flag Pole Policy discussion**

Ms. Green presented to the Select Board the draft flag pole policy. She noted it was compiled from other towns to make the best for Hanson, concluding with a review by Town Counsel.

The Board requested the removal of end part of the opening sentence as it seemed to be opposite the purpose of the policy.

***MOTION*** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to accept the proposed flag pole policy, with the removal of *any other flags deemed appropriate by the Town for parades, holidays, and other events and celebrations*, as discussed. ***Voted 5 – 0***  
***Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks -Aye; Heal-Aye***

## **VI APPROVE OPEN SESSION MINUTES**

### **1. February 6, 2024**

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

## **VII APPROVE ONE DAY LIQUOR LICENSES**

- 1. 03/16/24 - 5:00pm - 9:00pm - Susan Schwede - Food Pantry Fundraiser**
- 2. 05/10/24 - 5:00pm - 9:00pm - Stefani Lydon - Vendor Fair**



3. 06/29/24 - 4:00pm - 10:00pm - Alyssa Parsons - Wedding
4. 07/07/24 - 2:00pm - 6:00pm - Janice Howard - Party
5. 09/28/24 - 1:00pm - 6:00pm - Samantha Davis - Wedding

**MOTION** by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve the one day liquor licenses as presented on the agenda. ***Voted 4 – 0- 1***

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

## **VIII                    COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **1.   Economic Development Committee**

No update.

### **2.   High Street Park Committee**

Next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2024. .

Mr. Weeks read a Letter of Concern from the Hanson Conservation Commission regarding the increasing vehicular traffic at the park. Would like to the Town to purchase.

Mr. Clemons suggested a contractor should be hired, and believed it to be relatively inexpensive cost to the Town but insisted Conservation cannot do it.

Ms. Green requested estimates of cost and time, as well as a game camera. She also noted it would require an article in the next warrant. The Board suggested Mr. Clemons reach out to the Highway Director, as his staff may be able to assist with barriers.

### **3.   Highway Committee**

No update.

### **4.   Maquan Reuse Committee**

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett would like confirmation of the next meeting. Ms. Green will review her notes

### **5.   Recreation Commission**

Ms. McDowell included a warrant article to change from a committee to a commission.

### **6.   Transfer Station Taskforce**

No update. Mr. Weeks will follow-up with Ms. Dias for next steps.

### **7.   Whitman Hanson Regional School Agreement Committee**

No update.

## 8. Other Committee updates

No other updates to report.

## **IX TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

- Ms. Green informed the Select Board that the Master Plan update is underway, as the Town received a grant. Old Colony Planning Council created an online survey for residents to provide feedback. For additional information, please contact the Town Planner directly.
- She commended the Town's first responders – Fire, Police, Building Inspector and other resources – who reacted swiftly to a tragic construction accident. She noted the Town is fortunate to have experienced and knowledgeable staff to respond to such a situation. Our Highway Master Mechanic also assisted with operation of the heavy equipment to assist in the removal of the concrete debris. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of the deceased construction worker.
- She coordinated Town resources for the reopening the Hanson animal shelter. The Water department reconnected the water supply, and she assembled a team of volunteers and vendors to help with overall clean up, restoration of the gates, fencing and heat. There will be costs but she intends to keep them as low as possible. She thanked Impressed LLC offered to donate time and personnel towards cleaning the shelter.
- She noted that Hanson Inspectional Task Force invited Assessor Lee Gamache to join the force as it recognized her input to be crucial the Task Force related to any abnormalities with properties.
- Ms. Green attended the Bruins PJ Drive Kick off event, hosted by the Hanson Library. It was well attended and the kids loved seeing the Boston Bruins mascot Blades, who assisted in a story time and photos. The Library will be collecting pajamas until March 15 to benefit local children through the Cradles to Crayons and DCF Wonderfund.
- She attended the Whitman Hanson Regional School Committee meeting where the Superintendent unveiled a budget, resulting in a 10.20% assessment to Hanson. The Town will have to do some extreme belt tightening to balance the budget. She noted the Town of Whitman is considering an override. At this time, Hanson is not planning to move in that direction. She and the Town Accountant are looking for reductions in any area possible, to prevent cutting services and/or staff.
- Early voting is underway at Town Hall. Please come in and beat the crowds next Tuesday. Early voting hours are on the website.
- Lastly, the Town was awarded a Cyber security awareness grant to allow continued cyber security training. As this training is required by our insurance carrier, the grant provides additional savings for the Town. Kudos to the Town's IT Director for finding and applying for the grant.

**X**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

***Voted 5 – 0***

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

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Lynn McDowell*