



Approved May 9, 2023

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Hanson Select Board

Select Board's meeting room, Town Hall

Open Session

Members Present: Laura FitzGerald-Kemmett, James Hickey, Joseph Weeks, Ann Rein;
Edwin Heal

Members Absent:

Others Present: Lisa Green, Town Administrator; Lynn McDowell, Executive Assistant;
Eric Kirsherf, Interim Town Accountant

I CALL TO ORDER

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance

II PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING MEETINGS

No announcements this evening.

III DISCUSS WHRSD ASSESSMENT

As previously discussed, the assessment from the District was much higher than anticipated. The Town forwarded notification to the District that it would be able to provide 3.75%, being \$916,000. The District will also be using over \$500,000 one-time ESSR monies again this year; it supplemented its budget last year also with ESSR funds; about \$300,000. By doing this, the Town is not truly level funding. Instead, it is closer to 8-9% increase over prior years. The Town cannot rely on taxes for revenue and growth as the tax levy projected only 3.5% growth over last year.

The Board demonstrated its support of education by providing more than what is expected for growth, and more than any other department. Along with the Town of Whitman, the Select Board forwarded correspondence to the District stating it cannot support the school budget as presented, as it is not sustainable nor allow staff reduction within the Town.

Last week the School committee met, but has not yet voted, to reduce the assessment to both towns by \$654,000 but still requesting about \$166,000. The Board would like to use this as a n opportunity to forensically exam how this occurred to prevent future occurrences.

There are some options:

- Option 1 – Stand firm as it is what the Town can truly afford at 3.75%.
- Option 2 – Use \$166,000 in one-time ARPA funds to cover one-time expenses.

As the School committee has not yet voted on its budget, the Select Board will include contingencies in its own vote to ensure it will not be increasing the percentage beyond 5.0%.

More concerning, all other departments do not receive more than 2.5%, yet the District is expecting more. Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett reminded the Board that the District was told the Town could afford 3.5%; currently able to up a bit more. Ideally would prefer the District taking revenue into mind while building budgets. It appears something is broken down to create the unrealistic view, but not sure where and when. The School committee is advocating for the students to best provide education for the students; if there are deficits, all need to be included in the budget, regardless of cost.

Moving forward, all need to do better, and the baseline cannot be the beginning of May. Next year, the Town must anticipate a substantial override to balance the budget. And all options will be on the table for discussion. There needs to be a more planful way of doing this budgeting. While there are scenarios that will interfere, the budget must be reflective to capital improvement, personnel, additional investments that will not raise citizens' taxes significantly the following year. This year's budget needs to be viewed as a baseline for a May 2, 2023 discussion.

Mr. Kinsherf stated, if the Board stands firm with 3.75%, the District will need to add an additional \$426,000 in cuts to its budget. Even if the Board stayed at the 2.5% as with other departments, it would still be in a deficit. All have wish lists, but reality prevents all from being needs/wants. It is incredibly challenging to create a mindful budget with two weeks' notice. The Board would like to the School committee, at the beginning of May, to start thinking about what it would like for the next year, allowing the Board to calibrate what needs to be done with each department instead of scrambling.

FitzGerald-Kemmett shared when the joint meeting starts, she would share with the School committee the Board's position. This will then lead to the School committee's own voting decisions. The Board agreed to stand with the budget presenting of 3.75% as that is the best it can offer this year. It is willing to hear what the School committee discusses and will take that under advisement.

The Board questioned Mr. Kinsherf about differences in the percentages and wanted to know if there a spreadsheet with formulas. He stated the State makes this determination based on several points. Further related to transparency, is there information available to explain the formula used to make the determination? Mr. Kinsherf suggested a formula prima workshop scheduled during a Select Board meeting. He recommended Mark Abrahams, who is a financial, operational and performance management consultant. Ms. Green will reach out to try to schedule a meeting.

IV ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Mr. Hickey, to adjourn and will reopen at Whitman Town Hall. ***Voted 5 – 0***

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn McDowell



Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Hanson Select Board

Whitman Town Hall, 54 South Avenue, Whitman

Open Session

Members Present: Laura FitzGerald-Kemmett, James Hickey, Joseph Weeks, Edwin Heal
Ann Rein

Members Absent:

Others Present: Lisa Green, Town Administrator; Lynn McDowell, Executive Assistant;

**JOINT MEETING BETWEEN HANSON AND WHITMAN SELECT BOARDS WITH
WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

1. Discuss WHRSD assessment

The Whitman Hanson Regional School District Committee invited the Town of Hanson Select Board and the Town of Whitman Selectmen to discuss the outstanding issues related to the assessment being levied to each town. Mr. Howard shared that he had a brief conversation with the chairs of the respective boards the previous week regarding this meeting.

The School Committee made two separate motions, leading to a discussion of whether or not to remove up to \$650,000 from its budget and the assessment to the respective Towns and use one-time funds instead to cover the costs. Motion to use \$500,000 of one-time ESSR funds passed; motion to remove an additional \$150,000 of programming passed. Motions for the respective WHRSD assessments for the Town of Whitman and the Town of Hanson were passed.

The Town of Hanson Select Board noted it discussed the assessment in great detail and had both the Town Administrator and the Interim Town Accountant review the Town of Hanson's budget for any possibility of adjusting its share from 3.75% to 5.0%, making a gap of \$160,000. By using one-time funds, Mr. Kinsherrf believes he can make the budget work for the Town. The Select Board noted there is a pattern of one-time funding being used to fill budget gaps; it is not sustainable to move forward with this process. Nor does it wish to see any Town personnel subject to job eliminations.

MOTION by Mr. Hickey, seconded by Mr. Weeks, to increase its contribution by using one time funding of \$160,000 to close the gap of the WHRSD assessment. ***Voted 3 – 2***
Roll call – Hickey -Aye; Rein-Nay; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Weeks-Aye; Heal-Nay

The Town of Whitman Selectmen noted with the Town of Hanson's vote, its funding, which was already an overcommitment, will now increase an additional \$160,000 as well. It is also working very hard to prevent layoffs of its town employees. The Board presented a motion to also

increase its contribution by using one time funding of \$161,000 to close the gap of the WHRSD assessment, increasing to 5.96%.

The Board noted it as well as the Town of Hanson, discussed with the School Committee what it could afford to spend on assessment, yet the School Committee develop a budget the superseded. It does not want to stripped department budgets, nor request an override. While it is not a fiscally responsible act, the Board provided its support. Motion passed. ***Voted 3 – 1***

The School Committee and both respective Select Boards agreed, moving forward, there will be respective representation from the Towns for budget meetings. The School Committee adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn McDowell

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING MEETING		
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 18-25 OF CHAPTER 30A OF THE GENERAL LAWS THAT A PUBLIC HEARING MEETING OF THE		
WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE		
(board, committee, commission, authority, etc.)		
WILL BE HELD AT	5:00	P.M.
ON	Tuesday, April 18, 2023	
LOCATION OF MEETING	WHITMAN TOWN HALL	
	54 SOUTH AVENUE, WHITMAN	
(full description of location - street address, hall, office and building)		
IN THE TOWN OF WHITMAN MASSACHUSETTS		
(signed by)	Jennifer Kroese	ADMIN. ASST. TO SUPT.
	(Signature & Title)	
(for)	School Committee Meeting and Joint Board Discussion	
	(Title of board, committee, commission, etc.)	
Date	4/13/2023	

Agenda

Pledge of Allegiance

- A. Regional School Committee Budget Discussion - Vote assessment if necessary

Adjournment