

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
May 17, 2021**

**6:00PM**

**WRHS**

Present: Anthony Renzoni, Chiara Barnes, Geri Herlihy, Robert Lavigne, Richard Bates

Others Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager  
Stephanie King, Assistant Town Manager  
Liz Fotos, Town Recorder  
Brian Falk, Town Counsel

Chairman Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. The Board skipped over the Pledge until Town Meeting.

**Memorial Day Permit**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE MEMORIAL DAY PARADE PERMIT AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Renzoni, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO AUTHROIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPROVE ANY PERMITS THAT CAME FORWARD BETWEEN 5/27/21 AND THE PARADE.**

**Position on Warrant Articles**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO SUPPORT WARRANT ARTICLES 1, 2, 3, 4-19 AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO SUPPORT MOTION 21-30 AS PRESENTED.**

Sel. Renzoni stated that he had some questions about Warrant Article 31 and he asked Ms. Hudson, the Town Clerk to be at the meeting to discuss the new fee schedule.

Ms. Hudson stated that other surrounding towns were higher and they were just trying to keep the pace with other towns. She stated that if they adopt MGL 140 and exempt residents over 70 they will lose income.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he supported the late fees because they needed people to have the incentive to pay.

Sel. Renzoni compared this tax to the tax the Board recently discussed about connection fees; he stated that they should only charge what it costs and it is a matter of consistency for him.

Sel. Herlihy asked if they had an issue with late fees that crated more administrative work for their office.

Ms. Hudson replied that there were a lot of issues in 2020 but she was not sure if it was related to Covid. She stated that the only things she respectfully asks is to change the dates to April 15<sup>th</sup> to correspond to the Rabies Clinic that they hold. She stated the change was to stay in line with other communities.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he would commit to looking into this next year.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO SUPPORT THE WARRANT ARTICLE AS AMENDED TO SHOW A CHANGE IN DATES AND FEES WITH THE EXCEPTION FOR SENIORS.**

Mr. Challenger, Finance Committee was present at the meeting.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he had a conversation earlier in the day with Mr. Denis and the numbers on the Warrant Article were the old numbers.

Mr. Lukes stated that the number was amended and Holden would be assessed for \$359,000 lower.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he does not think that this would change anything for the Board. He stated it did not change the top it was just changing the bottom number based on their funding mechanism.

Mr. Challenger stated that with that being said, state funding is not up to snuff. He stated that the state is receiving \$2.4 million less that previously and that some of it is Covid related but some is not. He stated that the district is using their unspent money so some of what they are talking about is shuffling funds. He stated that last year the district lost 400 + students and they can presume most are coming back; although that is not currently confirmed. He stated that the state has been cutting back for wealthy suburban districts and we lose about 3% which has nothing to do with the district and will happen again next year.

Sel. Renzoni stated that as a town we have seen our share of the taxes grow at an alarming rate.

Sel. Lavigne stated the district should be more transparent.

Mr. Challenger replied that understanding the budget does not make it smaller. He stated he does not know how to lower the budget but that it is up only 2.8% which was not a bad increase. He stated the numbers will keep getting bigger as we make up a higher percentage of the district.

Sel. Lavigne replied that he understood what Mr. Challenger was saying but that he worries there is one time funding there that is not needed and the district will dial it back just to later build it back up.

Chairman Barnes replied that with a new task force they may be able to get more transparency and see where the money was going.

Mr. Lukes replied that all the towns administration and Selectboards were putting together a game plan to work ahead of the budget next year.

Sel. Renzoni made a motion to support the Warrant Article pertaining to the school budget. Sel. Bates seconded the motion.

Sel. Renzoni stated that if the district is being honest and using one time funds for one time expenses they should not be in trouble and it is a fair budget but that he wanted to hear the rest of the Boards thoughts.

Sel. Herlihy stated that the formula the state used was not their fault but it was their problem. She stated that she is not sure if it should be the Board or school committee, or administration but we have a huge district and we need to use the power that we have to get the money we are deserved from the state.

Sel. Lavigne stated that playing devils advocate, the Board spoke against the budget. He stated that it is the budget they have an issue with not the assessment.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she does not like the lack of transparency and accountability. She stated they have never been able to see a line by line budget and things such as librarians, school nurses, and school psychologists are all still missing from the district. She stated that it goes back to the lack of transparency of the budget

Sel. Renzoni withdrew his motion of support.

Sel. Lavigne stated that the Boards position was not against Fin Com. He stated that the Board just wants to let Town Meeting know that enough is enough.

Mr. Challenger stated that Fin Com voted 7-1 but also sweat over the decision. He stated that if this does not pass they would have to come back for another meeting.

Sel. Lavigne stated that they would speak to the fact that this is not sustainable.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Renzoni, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO RECESS TO ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND RECONVENE AFTER TOWN MEETING.**

**The Board reconvened after Annual Town Meeting adjourned.**

### **School Committee Open Seat Discussion**

Sel. Lavigne stated that he thinks preference should be given to the people that debated and took out papers. Sel. Renzoni replied that he did not disagree.

Mr. Lukes asked about the candidates.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he recommends that the Board does this business at the first meeting in June so that the decision can be made at a public meeting.

Sel. Renzoni asked if the position should go to the candidate that received the next highest amount of votes in the election. He makes a motion to support this.

Mr. Lukes replied that they had accepted resumes and had four candidates submit interest.

Sel. Renzoni stated it was logical to do it in succession because if there were four seats open this individual would have been appointed.

Sel. Herlihy stated that they had already opened it up and asked for those with interest to send resumes.

Sel. Renzoni withdraws his motion.

The Board agrees to take this business up at the first meeting in June to have the discussion with the candidates that debated; Candidate 4, 5, and 6 and other candidates that sent resumes in.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Bates, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE MAY 17, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 9:45PM.**

**APPROVED:** September 20, 2021\_\_\_\_\_