

Town of Princeton, Mass. – June 12, 2017 – 5:30 PM

Board of Selectmen – Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairman Jon Fudeman, Edith Morgan, and Richard Bisk, plus TA Nina Nazarian.

5:30 PM The chairman opened BOS meeting in Town Hall Annex. Advisory Cmte. members present were Chair John Shipman, Wayne Adams, Bill Lawton, George Handy, Judy Dino and Jim O'Coin. Also, state Sen. Harriette Chandler and the aide to state Rep. Kim Ferguson, Emma Schlitzer, WRSD School Business Manager Joe Scanlon, Princeton WRSD Committee Members Bob Imber and Megan Weeks, Ross Barber--Westminster Monty Tech School Committee Member--on behalf of John Mollica and others.

Representing the state's Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education, Jeff Wulfson was in to discuss Chapter 70 (education) funding from the state. He shared a Power Point presentation and explained how the Education Reform Act of 1993 has re-defined the role of the state in providing sufficient funding—combining local contribution from real estate taxes with state Chapter 70 funding—to provide an adequate education for all students. He described in detail the Foundation Budget which serves as a baseline and which most communities surpass with their contributions. He also described the 'aggregate wealth model' from 2007 which local contributions are based on, as well as the concept of "hold harmless."

Princeton officials in recent years have been digging into explanations for the excessive contribution to the education budget which the town made which peaked in FY'14 at 99.5 percent, with Chapter 70 covering the (.5%) balance. Today, Chapter 70 is supposed to cover, at its lowest threshold, 17.5 percent of a community's contribution, Wulfson pointed out. George H. and David Cruise have done extensive research and presented data and resulting graphs illustrating this arc over the last ten years. George noted that much wealthier towns during those years had flat graphs, not arcs. Wulfson asked to have the data info forwarded to him. Both WRSD School Committee members, Ms. Chandler and others spoke up about the budget battles that never end in the regional system which tries to balance five towns of unequal wealth. Several commented on the outstanding performance of the WRSD system, in spite of the fact that it has one of the lowest cost-per-pupil rates in the state. The issue of transportation came up, as it was originally promised that the state would cover 100 percent of it for regional systems—a promise never kept.

Wulfson warned that the state would not entertain any concept of a reimbursement for years gone by, even though everyone involved agrees that the foundation formula is flawed. He noted that a ray of hope may come in the form of transportation funding for regional systems which is anticipated to begin covering 80 percent.

Ms. Chandler encouraged everyone to support the Fair Share Act (millionaire's tax) as it comes up for vote on Beacon Hill, which will add 4 percent to the state income tax of anyone earning over \$1 million annually.

6:50 PM Jon F. turned to the BOS agenda and this year's board and committee appointments, starting with the Planning Board, which has one empty seat. In attendance were Chairman John Mirick, Rud Mason and Ian Catlow. John opened the PB meeting and explained the results of a previous PB session, recommending Tom Daly for the empty seat; Ann Neuburg as the PB alternate member; Tom D. as alternate member to CMRPC. In roll call, as required by MGL Ch. 41, Sect. 11, Edith, Jon and Richy voted 'aye' and also in roll call, John, Ian and Rud voted 'aye' to appoint Tom Daly to fill the empty seat until the next town election in May 2018. Both boards then each voted all in favor to appoint Ann as PB alternate and Tom as CMRPC alternate for terms through June 30, 2018.

7 PM The board considered candidates for a Conservation Commission seat; there has been turnover since recent vacancies have occurred with departure of David Getman, Holly Palmgren and Dave Caporello. Chairman Brian Keevan was in to recommend Brett Trowbridge who has served as an associate member for some years and is a wetlands engineer. Selectmen were impressed with several recommendations along with Brett's resume, but Edith noted that she still would like more diversity on the commission, which is heavy with technical experts. She favored the other applicant, Susan Hardenbrook, and Jon voiced concerns about a commission which is overly-zealous in enforcing and applying regulations. Edith noted that commissioners have a degree of flexibility and interpretation. Discussion continued among the selectmen and Brian, and Jon contended that he had no solid reason to not appoint Brett. The board then voted to appoint Brett to fill an outstanding 3-year term on ConsComm with Jon and Richy voting 'yes' and Edith voting 'no.'

7:25 PM Edith then described formation of a committee to review the role and duties of the Advisory Committee. Nina noted that this effort could be part of a larger governmental study. Jon had proposed the citizen's petition as an article at the May ATM proposing a broad revamp of the Adv. Cmte. He gave some background as to his view of the current Advisory Cmte. as not being involved in many tasks or duties that seemed relevant for them. State law give Advisory Committees scope to~consider any or all municipal questions. The board voted all in favor to establish an independent group consisting of two former selectmen, two former Advisory Board members and the town moderator, to examine the function and operating methods and related matters relative to the Princeton Advisory Committee. Selectmen request that this committee meet with BOS and discuss suitable goals and objectives and report back within 120 days.

7:40 PM Selectmen voted all in favor to advertise for members to the 5 to 7 member Environmental Action Committee who will create an Environmental Action Plan that would advise and set goals and recommendations for the Town with regard to energy and environmental considerations.

The board then considered the list of committee members up for re-appointment at end of June. There was discussion about the past/current practice of automatically appointing everyone who desires to stay on their board. Richy discussed the feasibility of opening up these positions to anyone else who may be interested in getting on these boards and committees as terms end—most are 3-year but some are one-year. Jon and Edith noted that getting and keeping volunteers on so many committees was a challenge, and having people vying for some positions might be counterproductive in the long run.

Selectmen then voted to approve the reappointment of all individuals as listed with Jon and Edith voting yes and Richy abstaining.

Selectmen focused on applicants for the Facilities Steering Committee and reviewed letters of interest and resumes. They voted all in favor to appoint Steve Mirick, Chris Conway, Karen Cruise, Larry Todd and Mary Jo Wojtusik for terms as identified on the charge.

The Parks & Recreation Commission recommended its alternate member Emily C Babbitt de Nicasio to the full voting member vacancy. The Board voted all in favor to appoint Ms. Babbitt de Nicasio to the Parks & Recreation Commission for the vacant term. Hollie L., the Parks & Recreation director, recommended Bowen Keevan for the 'helper' position. The Board voted to appoint Bowen Keevan to the position of seasonal Parks & Recreation Helper.

Nina presented a job description for the position of assistant treasurer/collector and suggested it as 20 hours with five hours or so dedicated to serving as executive assistant to the T.A. She also noted that certain tasks for the Fire Dept. may be able to be handled by current staff in the future. Then selectmen voted all in favor to post the position as written and add the (approximate) breakdown of hours.

The passed over the appointment pending for the fifth seat on PBMLP, until their meeting on Thursday at 5 PM. The board then voted all in favor to approve a Class II Auto Sales License Renewal at 4 Beaman Road for Mr. Lawrence Digney through January 1, 2018.

There was request from the promoters of the Race to the Summit, Half Marathon for the Marlene A. Mills Foundation on September 30, 2017. Nina reviewed this road race with the Public Safety chiefs and received their Certificate of Liability Insurance. The Board voted all in favor to authorize the Race to the Summit, Half Marathon event for the Marlene A. Mills Foundation on September 30, 2017.

The situation with unacceptable Princeton Center fire alarms were discussed in a memo from the deputy fire chief to the fire chief. The 2016 ATM approved \$50,000 to install fire alarms, etc. in the Princeton Center. The Board voted all in favor to initiate the installation of an appropriate fire alarm system at the Princeton Center using the available appropriation.

Selectmen voted all in favor to approve minutes from May 22 including executive session minutes (not to be released) and also minutes from June 8.

8:25 PM Edith M. moved and Richard B. seconded to go into executive session to consider the police union contract, and return to regular session for a vote, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, §21: Exemption Three – To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

In roll call Jon F. voted “Aye;” Edith M. voted “Aye” and Richard B. voted “Aye.”

Separate Executive Session Minutes

8:45 PM In executive session, the board voted to adjourn and return to its regular meeting. They then voted all in favor to ratify the police union contract for FY’18 – ’20.

The group agreed to meet at 5 PM on Thursday, June 15, to appoint someone to the fifth seat on PBMLP and approve a charge/advertise for a new Advisory Committee Review Committee.

8:46 PM The board voted all in favor to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted, Marie Auger, admin. assist.

BOS Referenced Documents: Power Point presentation on Chapter 70 Funding; List of this year’s board and committee appointments, letters of interest and emails from applicants to Conservation Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission and Facilities Steering Committee; job description for the position of assistant treasurer/collector; Class II Auto Sales License Renewal; memo from the Deputy Fire Chief to the Fire Chief.

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