

Board of Selectmen's Special Meeting: Minutes
December 22, 2014, 2:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present: First Selectman Gayle Weinstein, Town Administrator Tom Landry, Administrative Assistant Randi Derene, members of the Board of Education and Board of Finance, Weston Residents.

Selectmen David Muller and Dennis Tracey participated in the meeting via conference call.

Ms. Weinstein called the meeting to order at: 2:00pm

This meeting was recorded and videotaped. Copies are available in the Selectman's office. The meetings are available for viewing online via the Town's website.

Pledge of Allegiance: Ms. Weinstein led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance

Discussion/decision on the reappointment of Nina Daniel to the Commission on Aging for a term to end December 31, 2016: Nina Daniel

Ms. Weinstein asked Ms. Daniel why she would like to continue to serve on this committee. Ms. Daniel states that she has been previously reappointed to this board and would like to be reappointed again as there is much work to be done. Her goal is for all generations to co-exist in the community and have equal access to the town's resources. She is also head of the "Friends of the Senior Activities Center" and has helped to fund raise privately to supplement the town's efforts.

Ms. Weinstein thanked Ms. Daniel for all of her efforts. Ms. Weinstein is concerned about the potential for Ms. Daniel to be conflicted, since she is also an elected member of the Board of Education. Discussion took place about the needs and wants of the Senior Center and of the Board of Education, especially with the new topic of the possible relocation of the Senior Center. Ms. Daniel does not feel she will have a conflict of interest, and if a situation does come up she will consider recusing herself.

Mr. Tracey moved to reappoint Nina Daniel to the Commission on Aging for a term to end December 31, 2016. Mr. Muller seconded. Mr. Phil Shaeffer then adds a comment that the Board of Education sought outside counsel regarding this potential conflict of interest. Ms. Weinstein stated that she did not ask the Board of Education to get involved with this issue. No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision on the reappointment of Bruce Lorentzen to the Commission on Aging for a term to end December 31, 2016: Bruce Lorentzen

Mr. Lorentzen will be starting his 3rd term on the Commission on Aging. With the expansion of the Senior Center, increase in activities, improved parking...it is a very exciting time for the seniors in Weston.

Mr. Weinstein moves to reappoint Bruce Lorentzen to the Commission on Aging for a term to end December 31, 2016. Mr. Muller seconds. Motion carried unanimously.

Board of Selectmen's Special Meeting: Minutes
December 22, 2014, 2:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room

Discussion/decision regarding submitting a letter to the Board of Education with regards to the North House Wing of Hurlbutt Elementary School:

Ms. Weinstein first provided background to this topic. With the discussion of declining enrollment at the schools, mostly in the elementary school, there has been a lot of talk regarding what we can do, as a town, to manage this issue. The comment was made at the last Facilities Meeting by the Superintendent that perhaps because of this declining enrollment (a 42% decrease in a 10 year period of enrollment in the K-2 population) 2nd grade may be able to move to WIS, and freeing up North House. Ms. Weinstein thought this conversation already happened and was decided by the Board of Education, but she is hearing now that this is once again being discussed. It was also mentioned that after the 5 year MOU is up between the Senior Center and the BOE, there is the potential that the Senior Center may be asked to move from the South House to the North House of Hurlbutt.

The Board of Selectmen is looking for a formal response from the Board of Education as to what their plans are before going to the town to ask for a \$10 million appropriation for the Town Public Safety & Facilities project. If there is the potential for North House to be utilized by the Town, we need to have that discussion prior to going for bonding on the new Public Safety Complex and relocation of Annex employees. Mr. Tracey added that it is key to have the most up to date projections of the BOE and the most up to date assessment from the BOE of their need for current facilities, as well as what facilities will become available.

Mr. Tracey has drafted a letter from the BOS to the BOE which addresses these issues; both the declining enrollment and the potential excess school space, as well as the future of the senior activities center. Once Mr. Muller and Ms. Weinstein review the letter and make any necessary edits, it will be formally sent to the BOE.

Mr. Weinstein and Mr. Ezzes of the BOF would like to schedule a Tri-Board Meeting for the end of January to settle all these issues and decide how to move forward.

Mr. Phil Shaeffer expressed confusion as to why this meeting had to take place and why it is during the day. Ms. Weinstein explained the main purpose of this meeting was to reappoint members of the Commission on Aging, which needed to happen prior to their next meeting where officers would be appointed. Also, the subject of sending the letter to the BoE came up at the last meeting, but it was not appropriately noticed, so the discussion of whether to send a letter was tabled for today.

Dr. Colleen Palmer joined the conversation to present what was discussed at their recent BOE workshop. It was a meeting to discuss long range plans for the district. Key points were keeping plans cost effective, discussing educational resources, future trends in education, enrollment data, and the 5 year MOU between the BOE and the Town. Dr. Palmer added that if we were able to reconfigure Hurlbutt, we could save on some on the infrastructure. The BOE has been clear and consistent in its message regarding its facilities. The BOE and the Town entered into a 5 year MOU, in which there was an exit plan in case there was a need to take back the Senior Center space. There have been no changes in how the BOE feels about the proximity of Town

Board of Selectmen's Special Meeting: Minutes
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Town Hall Meeting Room

offices to the schools. The BOE has not said it would entertain Land Use in North House, or other offices. BOE will respond to the Selectman's letter by updating enrollment statistics... otherwise there is no change in where they stand in regards to facilities. They are still concerned about proximity of offices close to the school. The purpose of the BOE workshop was to try to use their resources the best way they can to keep expenditures as low as possible for the highest quality of education for our students.

Ms. Weinstein stated that she is glad to see all the planning going on, but the confusion is coming from a statement made about a year ago from the BOE that blowing up a hallway to create two separate buildings was not a possibility. The BOE stated they weren't comfortable giving up classrooms in case the enrollment increases. The BOF has questioned that as well. What if in 10-20 years you need additional space...so perhaps it makes sense, due to the age of our buildings, to do an addition onto another building instead. This comment was made at the previous Facilities Meeting which is what prompted this discussion now. The other question that needs to be cleared up is will the Senior Center be asked to move in 4 years, as the Town will not want to invest any more money into the Center if they know they will have to exit at the end of the MOU.

Mr. Muller confirms that the Selectman's letter is simply looking for clarity from the BOE and the BOF in order for the Town to plan future expenditures.

Mr. Shaefer adds that this was a 5 year MOU, and that at the time it was publicly brought up that there would a possibility in the future that the Senior Center may get moved to North House. He stated that it was the Towns decision to spend money on the Senior Center. It was never stated that it was going to be indefinite space for the Senior Center.

Dr. Palmer agreed that a Tri Board meeting is the best approach. There needs to be a comprehensive presentation of several scenarios. The complexity is that there are so many things that are going to happen at the same time... the annex is coming off line in 5 years, employees will need to be relocated, and the BOE will need to find offices for their own district staff, etc. All scenarios will need to be analyzed.

The goal as Ms. Weinstein states is to save money where you can in operating costs, and apply those savings to the education of our students.

Mr. Tracey leaves the meeting.

Discussion/decision regarding a supplemental appropriation of \$2100 to purchase Kaseya Software Licenses –

In order to reduce expenses in the next fiscal year, we are looking to merge our technology departments. In an effort to do that we are hopefully having a trial run in January to see if this will work in the long run. Erik Haakonsen, Director of IT for the BOE, has asked the town to purchase this software so that when they need to fix a problem on our computers, they can do it remotely, which saves the time of having to travel back and forth and makes it a lot easier to see what is going on with our computers.

Board of Selectmen's Special Meeting: Minutes

December 22, 2014, 2:00pm

Town Hall Meeting Room

Mr. Muller moves that the BOS approve a supplemental appropriation of \$2100 to purchase Kaseya Software Licenses. Ms. Weinstein seconds. Motion carried. .

Meeting adjourned: 3:01pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Randi Derene
Administrative Assistant

Minutes Approved: February 5, 2015