

Town of Warwick

Selectboard

March 4, 2019

Minutes

Members present: Lawrence Pruyne, James Erviti, Todd Dexter (arrived at 6:08 p.m.)

Others present: Town Secretary Rosa Fratangelo, Fire Chief Ron Gates, HEART Committee member Tom Wyatt, Finance Committee members Diana Noble and Laurette Crane

I. Call to Order

Chair Pruyne called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall.

II. Minutes

Erviti MOVED to accept the minutes of February 19, 2019 as printed. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

III. Presentations and Discussions

1. Fire Department— Fire Chief Ron Gates said that the SCBA (breathing apparatus) packs cost about \$80.00 apiece to be recertified. He noted that twelve packs will be recertified by the State on Friday the 8th and explained that three packs are currently out of service and will have to be worked on before being ready for recertification. The Chief was not certain of the cost to repair those packs but would pay the cost out of the Fire Department's FY 2019 budget. Chief Gates said that he is waiting to see if we are awarded grant funds before replacing twelve bottles. He explained that the department has twenty-four bottles and that two bottles per pack are taken to a fire. Gates said that money has been put aside each year since he became Chief in 2012 and estimated the total to be around \$11,000.00 which could be used to cover replacing twelve of the outdated bottles if grant funds are not received. He explained that the steel bottles are no longer made, but we have about six that can be checked out to see if they possibly could be used if necessary. Chief Gates corrected what he said at the last meeting by saying that the composite bottles are three years out-of-date.

Pruyne asked about the new fire station building. Chief Gates said that frequent rain last year set them back, but he hopes the weather will cooperate and the floor can be poured. He noted that

the plumbing will be re-inspected prior to pouring the floor, and that as long as the weather permits the floor to be poured, he anticipates no hold-ups in the progress of the necessary work. Dexter arrived and the Chief went over the information he had previously given on the packs and bottles. Gates explained that he has attended a class each year on how to submit the grant, and that this year a person from FEMA had looked over the grant application prior to its submission.

2. Highway Department—Dexter presented a document on Personnel Policy Revision from the Highway Advisory Committee with language not discussed at the last Selectboard meeting written to address Larry Delaney’s questions on his ability to administer vacation and comp. time. He read aloud the new language: “All Vacation and Compensatory time requests will require a three-week notice to the immediate Supervisor. The Supervisor will respond to the employee within one week of the original request. Earned vacation and compensatory time may be granted earlier pending the department’s operational needs.”

Both Pruyne and Erviti wanted to specify a timeframe. There was a consensus of the Board to replace the word “earlier” with “72 hours or later” and the words “as determined by the Department Supervisor” will follow the words “operational needs”.

Erviti MOVED to accept the language as modified, contingent upon the vetting and approval of Town Counsel. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-1. Pruyne and Erviti: AYE; Dexter ABSTAIN, as he was an author of the language.

3. HEART Committee — Tom Wyatt said he had received a summary of the changes to the Regional District Agreement to be presented at the joint HEART Committee/School Committee meeting on March 6th. He handed out copies of the PVRSD HEART/Regional Study Committee document that had been Emailed to him. This draft proposed 50% cost of a fully functioning school for each of the first three years after the school is closed.

Pruyne said that he cannot support this and present it to our voters if WCS is closed. Finance Committee member Diana Noble agreed with Wyatt that the insurance numbers are very low. Erviti pointed out that these numbers should be easily obtained, as insurance paperwork would show the real numbers, and was bothered by the fact that there is a disagreement with even these figures. Dexter noted that insurance costs go up every year. Noble said that the discrepancy in these numbers is small and explained that the numbers given by PVRSD Financial Director Tanya Gaylord and those given to David Young by the insurance provider are close. Wyatt said that should the amended District Agreement be passed by the towns it will go into effect July 1, 2019.

Wyatt read aloud Section 11 regarding the withdrawal from the District by a member town. Noble said that withdrawal should come at the end of a school year which also would be very close to the end of the fiscal year. She said retirement debt is concerning to her and noted that \$1.8 million is a figure heard by several people. Noble also said that there is no provision in the proposed amendment to the District Agreement to withdraw at the elementary school level but

remain with PVRs for the junior and senior high school students.

Dexter said that there is still no response from Tanya Gaylord to our Treasurer. He also stated that all ideas that have been discussed need time so that all our options may be explored, which is why it is crucial to keep WCS open for at least one more year. Dexter pointed out that we need facts in order to push back against the District.

The Green Communities grant was discussed, but as long as WCS building is open for public use the grant funds can be used. Noble reminded everyone of the meeting of all 4 member town Selectboards and Finance Committees at 6:30 p.m. in Bernardston on Monday, March 18th. Wyatt said that by or before the March 14th School Committee they may have heard back from the State and could make a decision and not wait to hear what comes out of the joint meeting on the 18th.

Pruyne expressed his objection to the 5-year contract given to the PVRSD Superintendent that comes with a 5% raise each beginning with the 2020 fiscal year (July 1, 2019).

4. Letter from the Northfield Selectmen and Finance Committee—Lois Stearns and Tracy Rogers, Chairs of the Northfield Selectboard and Finance Committee respectively, wrote a letter to the PVRSD School Committee expressing the desire for a 5-year term of repayment for the loan to cover the District's operating debt, and to have a separate debt assessment separate from the District's operating budget. Dexter said that he wanted input from our Finance Committee about our budget. He expressed concern that the other three member towns were not included and that this issue should be discussed in the 4-town joint meeting on the 18th. Noble said that the loan should be paid off as expediently as possible, and that it would be good to project out five years while looking for ways to pay it off sooner. She suggested that if extra funds were to be discovered they could be used to pay down the loan. Dexter approved of the debt assessment being a separate warrant article for Town Meeting rather than part of the District's operating budget.

Dexter MOVED to have this issue forwarded for discussion and clarification on the five and the ten year options and our first year payments on those options. Erviti SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 3-0-0.

5. Discussion of School Closure, District Finances, Building Lease and Related Topics—

Wyatt returned to the 50/50/50 discussion and noted that the custodian was not included in the budget to maintain a fully functioning school. Erviti said that in order to keep things in working order an unoccupied building must be maintained. Noble said that it was reasonable to request the custodian salary and custodial supplies be added; Wyatt said he will bring the request to the HEART Committee on Warwick's behalf. Pruyne commented that PVRSD administrative costs are high. Erviti pointed out that if schools close there is less work on an administrative level and there is a number associated with that. Wyatt encouraged everyone to come to the March 14th School Committee meeting and pay close attention to when they hear from DESE.

6. Discussion of Town Publicity Efforts and Funding—Pruyne said that he had asked for this to be put on the agenda to open a discussion. He said he had been approached by a resident who suggested that a small fund be set up for publicity to get the word out to the Boston area about Warwick and all it has to offer. Crane said it is a well-kept secret just how lovely this town really is. Pruyne said that a fund of between \$5,000.00 and \$10,000.00 could be used to publicize our town. He said that he would like to invite a publicity professional to attend a future meeting to discuss this issue further.

7. Selectboard Reports—Dexter said that he had sent State Representative Susannah Whipps letters from residents and the Selectboard letter to be presented to DESE Commissioner Riley. He said also included were photographs of the interior and exterior of WCS taken by Tom Wyatt. Dexter said that Whipps had suggested the DESE Commissioner Riley be invited to come to see Warwick and WCS, but he has not received an update from her as to whether the invitation was extended and if so, was there a response from the Commissioner. Pruyne said that State Senator Jo Comerford will be in Warwick on Friday, March 8th to visit WCS and Town Hall. Senator Comerford will meet with the Selectboard at 8:30 a.m. Dexter said that he would like Whipps and Riley to be here at the same time if at all possible. Pruyne noted that he had just visited David Young and that he was mending at the typical speed, but Pruyne was not sure when he will be back in the office.

8. Coordinator Report—There was no Coordinator Report prepared for this meeting, as Town Coordinator David Young has been out of the office recuperating from hip replacement surgery.

9. New and Other Business Unanticipated at Time of Meeting Posting — Dexter said that the letters to the PVRSD School Committee from the HEART Committee and from the Northfield Selectboard and Finance Committee should be put on the agenda for the March 18th meeting of the Selectboards and Finance Committees of the four District member town. He asked Town Secretary Fratangelo to Email a request for these letters to be added to that meeting's agenda.

10. Public Comment—None.

Adjournment

Pruyne MOVED to adjourn at 7:53 p.m. Dexter SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 3-0-0.

Documents consulted at this meeting:

*Draft Minutes of February 19, 2019 Selectboard meeting

*Memo to the Selectboard from the Highway Advisory Committee dated February 25, 2019 RE: Personnel Policy Revision

*Letter to PVRSD School Committee from Northfield Selectboard and Finance Committee dated

February 14, 2019 RE: Repayment of loan to cover District operating debt

*HEART Letter to PVRSD School Committee from HEART Committee dated February 22, 2019 RE: 5-year contract for Interim Superintendent

*PVRSD DRAFT Language Regarding Admission of Additional Member Towns and Withdrawal of Member Towns*Draft of Proposed Changes to PVRSD Agreement dated February 18, 2019

*PVRSD HEART/Regional Study Committee Changes/Amendments to PVRSD Regional Agreement