



## Board of Selectmen Ware Town Hall, 126 Main Street, Meeting Room

### Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, October 17, 2017 6:45 p.m. Executive Session: MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) #2, Negotiations

Chairman Talbot opened the Regular Meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Selectman Fountain moved to enter into Executive Session at 6:45 p.m. per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) #2 Negotiations TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION; Selectman Whitney seconded the motion. The motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Carroll):

|                     |        |
|---------------------|--------|
| Nancy J. Talbot     | Yes√   |
| Alan G. Whitney     | Yes√   |
| Tracy R. Opalinski  | Yes√   |
| John E. Carroll     | Absent |
| Michael P. Fountain | Yes√   |

Selectman Fountain moved to Adjourn Executive Session at 6:52 p.m., TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION; Selectman Whitney seconded the motion. The motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Carroll):

|                     |        |
|---------------------|--------|
| Nancy J. Talbot     | Yes√   |
| Alan G. Whitney     | Yes√   |
| Tracy R. Opalinski  | Yes√   |
| John E. Carroll     | Absent |
| Michael P. Fountain | Yes√   |

### 7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting Minutes

Meeting Reopened by Chairman Talbot at 7:00 p.m.

Opening Remarks, Announcements, and Agenda review by Chair – Chairman Talbot noted that Selectman Carroll was absent.

#### Consent Agenda

- Approval of September 19, 2017 Meeting Minutes
- Vote to Amend Application for Toll Road: Ware Rotary Club, Saturday, November 4 and Sunday, November 5, 2017 (Approved on September 19, 2017 for dates of October 14-15, alternate dates October 21-22, 2017)
- Approval of Special Event Permit Application: Ware Children's Halloween Parade, Friday, October 27, 2017, 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm.

Selectman Opalinski made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Selectman Fountain seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Carroll).

## **Comments and Concerns of Citizens**

John Desmond stated that the Hancock building was unsafe and should be preserved. Mr. Desmond also questioned the contingency plan regarding BMLH emergency room and suggested a committee to explore options should be formed before the ER closes.

Bill Jackson questioned the number of Ware residents that have been hired by the Town and criticized that the DPW position was given to a person who is not a Ware resident.

Keith Krukus also questioned the employee hires who are not Ware residents.

John Desmond state that a residency requirement should be enforced; Mr. Beckley noted that only Fire Department employees must be Ware residents.

## **Scheduled Appearances – None**

## **Old Business – None**

## **New Business**

- **Tax Rate Analysis**

Selectman Whitney gave a simplified version of property tax rate information, noting that the tax rate is a ratio with effect of home values on tax rates. More homes and businesses drive the tax rate, as well as improvements to the water system and an increase in the school reputation.

Resident Keith Krukus stated that low income housing has allowed many pedophiles into Ware, businesses are not coming to town, and Hardwick has a lower tax rate than Ware.

Resident Bill Jackson noted that his taxes have more than doubled since he bought his home in 1995.

Danielle Souza, of Buy Ware Now, noted that housing values have increased by 7%.

Selectman Opalinski stated that “Ware is a community with full services: town sewer, town water, ambulance, police, and public school system. The schools lost accreditation over 20 years ago, and we worked hard to get accreditation back. Consultants told us that the number one thing to do for community is to talk positively about the community. We hurt the community when we say negative things. To get people to move to Ware, we need to speak highly about the community. People in Ware are amazing, we have a lot to offer with over 23 non-profit organizations, town pool, playgrounds and we are working hard to bring new business. The Optimus group will bring new business to South Street, and that is a substantial win for the town. We have Buy Ware Now to help families to move into Ware. Main Streets are coming back and we need to work together to bring Main Street back.”

Chairman Talbot asked Ms. Souza about the trend of new people coming to Ware; Ms. Souza noted that realtors have told her that first time homebuyers can buy more house in Ware, and sales are on the rise. What drives property values is what the buyers are willing to pay. Ms. Souza noted her years on the School Committee, an extremely hard-working and invested group.

Resident Keith Krukus stated it is unfair to those here asking questions, and noted his house is an investment and it is discouraging to see his home's value decreasing.

Chairman Talbot noted that we can be part of the problem, or choose to be part of the change, we get good things for services and much more than other communities.

Resident Jodi Chartier noted many positives as great people in this community and great services.

Resident Dar Sojka noted that she used to be positive about the Town, but very discouraged when the Slum and Blight designation was done "behind our backs".

Selectman Opalinski state that the "Slum and Blight Designation" is a checkbox on a grant application and brings needed funding. Chairman Talbot note that the designation qualifies the Town for additional funding in the grant process.

- **Acceptance and Signing of Police Chief Contract**

Vice Chairman Whitney announced that the contract with Police Chief Crevier has been accepted and signed.

- **Approval of November 13, 2017 Special Town Meeting Warrant**

Selectmen reviewed the articles in general with Mr. Beckley; a special meeting will be held Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. to review the warrant with Finance Committee and Moderator.

**Selectman Opalinski moved to add an Article to impose a 2% local sales tax on Marijuana; Selectman Fountain seconded the motion.**

Selectman Whitney stated this was unfair if not taxing alcohol. Selectman Opalinski stated the town should not lose revenue.

**The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 1 No (Selectman Whitney), 1 Absent (Selectman Carroll).**

**Selectman Opalinski moved to add an Article for Additional \$25,000 for State-mandated Valuation Certification Process for Fiscal Year 2019 for Board of Assessors Office; Selectman Fountain seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Carroll).**

Mr. Beckley stated he wished to point out that there are no articles to address residential properties that are in disrepair. There is a great cost if the Town removes these properties. Articles relating to these properties have been defeated in past town meetings. The Town Manager and Building Inspector have not yet finalized this process with the Town Attorney.

**Selectman Whitney moved approval of the warrant articles, as reviewed; Selectman Fountain seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Carroll).**

- **Discussion/Selection of Community Compact Best Practices**

Mr. Beckley noted that the Town is eligible to apply for the regional grant for two best practices, and suggested the design of a regional animal shelter. Presently, Palmer, Monson, Warren and Ware share the facility in Palmer. Selectmen discussed a regional senior van service to assist the Quaboag Connector program.

**Selectman Whitney moved to authorize the Town Manager to apply for:**

- 1) Regional Animal Shelter Design**
- 2) Regional Senior Van service**

**Selectman Opalinski seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Carroll).**

- **Discussion of Non-Bargaining Employee Benefits & Guidelines**

Selectman Opalinski noted that the contract should be updated regarding sick time, vacation, and holidays to explore change and less cost to the Town, to be more in line with current employment environment. The Board discussed an Executive Session to be held on November 21, 2017 to discuss this with the labor attorney present.

### **Town Manager Report**

Mr. Beckley noted that the Board originally set no specific hours for Halloween trick or treat. Citizens have asked for hours, it is posted for October 31 at 5-8 p.m. on the Town website and Town board; Police Chief Crevier agrees to the date and hours. Chairman Talbot noted that Knights of Columbus will hold the parade on Friday, October 27 from 6-9 p.m. The SMK and Middle schools will hold Trunk or Treat on October 20 from 5:30 – 7 p.m.

Jodi Chartier stated that residents want leadership, with a suggestion for a committee to be formed to plan future Halloween activities from the parents' perspective. Chairman Talbot noted that the Board of Selectmen should not decide this, but the community should work together to plan activities.

**Selectman Whitney moved to approve a Halloween Activities Coordination Committee, with seven (7) members, to report recommendations to the Board of Selectmen; Selectman Fountain seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Carroll).**

Mr. Beckley noted that the Capital Planning Committee will continue discussions in February for articles for the May 2018 Town Meeting. The residential houses in need of removal or repair are a topic of discussion with the Town attorney. A plan for any demolition or to take property, remove, or add liens (which can take from 2-5 years) must also consider that the cost of removal is usually higher than the value of the land that is left.

Selectman Opalinski suggested that the Town Manager contact MMA to research any other towns with experience in these situations.

Resident Keith Krukas noted that the property on West Main Street must have a value and/or liens; Mr. Beckley noted that property value has decreased.

Selectman Opalinski noted the new Code Enforcement Laws effective January 1, 2018; Chairman Talbot suggested this notice be mailed with February tax bills.

Mr. Beckley suggested the Board consider whether to use a ballot question regarding the ban of recreational marijuana. The Board will discuss this in-depth at the December 19, 2017 meeting.

Town Manager: *Stuart Beckley*  
sbeckley@townofware.com

Mr. Beckley announced that the Cemetery Commission invites all to the Dedication & Recognition Day on Saturday, October 28, 2017 from 2-4 p.m. at Aspen Grove Cemetery. A memorial headstone will be dedicated to Charles Welsley Eddy, graves of Candy Cummings, Doctor Segur and Bernie Satz will be visited, and the memorial garden will be visited. This event is advertised on the Town website.

Danielle Souza, of Buy Ware Now, noted that 101 properties have been sold in Ware in 2017 to date.

Mr. Beckley noted that, since he has been Town Manager, 10 of 19 hires are Ware residents.

**Selectman Whitney moved to Adjourn Regular Session at 8:13 p.m.; Selectman Opalinski seconded the motion. The motion passed on a Vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Carroll).**

Attest: *Mary L. Midura*  
Mary L. Midura, Executive Assistant  
Transcribed via Video 10/31/2017