

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
May 24, 2016

Call to Order

Mr. Guzinski called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM in the Resource Room of the Municipal Center.

ATTENDANCE:

Board: Mike Hughes, Tim Bonin, David Cortese, Hal Davis, Kevin Morse, Michael Guzinski (Town Administrator), Suzanne Kane (Administrative Assistant)
Finance Committee: Pam Holmes, Ryan Hogan, Michael Hutnak, Jerry Kocur, Howard D'Amico

Other Staff and Citizens: Representative Joseph McKenna, Jeanne Lovett (Finance Director), Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick (BVT Superintendent), John Lavin (BVT Regional School Committee Rep.), Phil Smith, Todd Zetlan, Sherry Zetlan, and other citizens.

- **Pledge of Allegiance (00:14)**

- **Reorganization (00:34)**

Mr. Guzinski opened the meeting for nominations for Chairman. **Mr. Hughes nominated Kevin Morse as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.**

Mr. Hughes made a motion to close nominations for Chairman. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. All-Aye.

The vote for Kevin Morse for Chairman of the Board of Selectmen was as follows: All-Aye.

Mr. Morse took over as Chairman of the meeting. Mr. Bonin and the BOS thanked Mr. Hughes for his leadership. Mr. Guzinski opened the meeting for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Mr. Bonin made a motion to nominate Mike Hughes as Vice Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. All-Aye.

- **Chairman's Announcements (03:39)**

Mr. Morse acknowledged Certificates of Appreciation for Adelle Reynolds, Paula Brouillette, Leon Moczynski, Peter Harper and Matthew Blanc.

- **Citizen's Forum (05:31)**

No citizens came forward.

1. Meeting with BVT Superintendent Dr. Fitzpatrick to Discuss Post-Secondary LPN Program and FY17 Budget (05:39)

Handed out at the meeting is a BVT Budget Contract, Practical Nursing Certification, Items for the Good of Douglas Selectpersons, letters to Dr. Fitzpatrick and related newspaper articles and emails.

Dr. Fitzpatrick joined the meeting. Mr. Morse acknowledged receipt of the information he requested from Dr. Fitzpatrick. Dr. Fitzpatrick stated that none of the members of the Blackstone Valley Tech. Regional School Committee (BVTRSC) keep office hours, but they do maintain open communication in a variety of ways. He spoke of the ways Mr. Lavin contributes to Blackstone Valley Tech. (BVT) and the community.

Dr. Fitzpatrick stated that a K-12 system has a number of opportunities to include expenses to assist the school system within the municipal, non-educational side of the budget. He presented documentation. He encouraged the public to compare BVT's request to all additional requests supported by the communities for their K-12 systems. He spoke about how BVT's budget increase is lower than other regional vocational schools.

He spoke about Douglas' low cost/student, the cost benefit of the regional system for vocational education and BVT's return on investment.

Mr. Morse redirected the conversation to speak about the increasing costs and the participants in the LPN program being rolled into BVT's foundation budget. Dr. Fitzpatrick stated that he researched 14 vocational schools that offer Chapter 74 approved nursing programs. BVT has exactly followed the approach of those 14 schools in including the post-graduate program in the foundation budget. The Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) response was provided and they confirmed that BVT is doing what they are supposed to do and is in concert with the State approach. Mr. Bonin and Mr. Cortese asked if Douglas could opt-out of the LPN program. Dr. Fitzpatrick replied that, to his knowledge, Douglas cannot opt out of a Chapter 74 program.

Ms. Holmes joined the meeting. She asked why BVT can't increase tuition. Dr. Fitzpatrick replied that there is a State limit. They cannot exceed the community college rate.

When a student becomes a foundation student, it falls under all of the ways the budget is allocated. Ms. Holmes read Section 8a under Chapter 74 (attached) which says "...a municipality shall not be required...to provide transportation for a person who has completed the twelfth grade of school or the equivalent thereof." Dr. Fitzpatrick replied that transportation costs are driven by the bids. Mr. Bonin argued that the number of LPN students are figured into the formula that creates the transportation cost and that directly affects Douglas' budget. Dr. Fitzpatrick replied that 94% of Douglas' enrollees are in the 9-12 program.

Mr. Morse asked, if the post-secondary students are figured into the Town's transportation costs, can that be modified on behalf of Douglas? Dr. Fitzpatrick will present that inquiry and investigation to the BVTRSC.

Mr. Morse asked if the 52-year-old regional agreement with BVT has been reviewed or amended to accommodate for participation in a post-secondary

program. Dr. Fitzpatrick answered in the negative.

Ms. Holmes feels there should be a limitation in participation for the post-secondary program. Dr. Fitzpatrick will look into the possibility of placing a pre-announced quota on participation on a town-by-town basis. Mr. Morse will also look into the laws around Chapter 70 and Chapter 74 regarding what is bound and what is not bound.

A discussion was held regarding how the post-secondary program was originally presented to the participating schools.

Mr. Bonin asked if the BVTRSC has recognized the user fees that the participating towns need to charge. Dr. Fitzpatrick replied that BVT students are assigned duties and services which generate money which equals more than \$300 per student.

Mr. D'Amico asked if Dr. Fitzpatrick stated that when BVT was prepared to address the financing for the LPN program, it didn't want to take that money from a State school program. Dr. Fitzpatrick agreed. The BVTRSC cannot redirect money from the daytime program for programs of that nature when adding programs. BVT's fiscal prudence is that they make a one-time fiscal request and live within that number. Mr. D'Amico feels that BVT fails to appreciate that Douglas needs to pull that funding from their K-12 programs. Dr. Fitzpatrick answered that when BVT makes its funding request, it assumes the money will come from town receipts. Mr. D'Amico asked if Dr. Fitzpatrick is willing to work with the towns if they ask him to back down from the LPN program. Dr. Fitzpatrick stated that that is up to the BVTRSC.

Phil Smith, 135 Franklin Street asked if Dr. Fitzpatrick's opinion is that it is reasonable for taxpayers to pay for a person's college education. Dr. Fitzpatrick replied that the LPN program is not a college program; it is an investment in the wellness in the trained professionals in the district to serve any citizen.

Mr. Davis stated that citizens have stated to him that they feel BVT picks from the cream of the crop of the Douglas school system. Dr. Fitzpatrick stated that there have been significant changes in the evolution of employment opportunities. Emphasis on grades has been reduced and the interest in attending BVT has greatly increased over the years. He feels it is always wrong to deny a vocational student an opportunity. Mr. Bonin asked about opportunities for students that do not do well but like to work with their hands and cannot get into BVT. Dr. Fitzpatrick replied that recommendations from the sending school and the interview can allow admission.

2. Review and Affirm BOS Operating Policies and Procedures (1:15:22)

In the packet is a copy of the current BOS Operating Policies and Procedures.

Mr. Guzinski did not have any recommendations.

Mr. Cortese made a motion to affirm the Board of Selectmen Operating Policies and Procedures as currently stated in the packet. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. All-Aye.

3. Look Back Period Policy-1st Reading (1:16:35)

In the packet is the Town of Douglas Policy and Procedures for Health Insurance

Under the Federal Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Guzinski stated that this policy relates to the federal Affordable Care Act. Part of this is to measure qualifications for employees to be part of the Town's health insurance program.

4. Discuss Chapter 70 Formula (1:18:20)

In the packet is an email from Deborah Saviano dated May 7, 2016.

Mr. Guzinski stated that the recommendation of Town Counsel is to follow up with the State Auditor to see if anything was done inappropriately by the State. The City of Worcester and other communities are looking to challenge the current level of Chapter 70 aid based on inflation numbers used by the State in FY11 from an inappropriate quarter of the year. Mr. Guzinski will work with Town Counsel to put a formal letter together. A discussion was held.

Rep. McKenna joined the meeting. He had no opinion on the topic just discussed. He presented the Local Aid Cherry Sheet numbers. (attached) The Senate began their debate on their budget today. The Senate and House Chapter 70 Aid recommendation is \$77,000 higher than the Governor's recommendation. He spoke about the Kindergarten Expansion Grant. It appears as though the Senate is recommending a drastic rollback.

He has a meeting next week with the Dept. of Education to discuss the contents of the discussion of agenda item #1. Mr. Morse asked Rep. McKenna to get an answer on the State's position on the municipality opting out of the Chapter 74 program. Rep. McKenna agreed.

Regarding PILOT, Rep. McKenna has reached out to the Dept. of Revenue and they are willing to come to Douglas for a meeting to discuss the PILOT formula. Mr. Guzinski said that he is working to set up a meeting with Michael Daley of Financial Advisory Associates to do a presentation of his findings as far as the assessments and evaluations of Douglas' state-owned land.

5. DCR Wallum Lake Update (1:32:06)

In the packet is an email from Mr. Guzinski dated May 4, 2016.

Mr. Guzinski stated that he, Rep. McKenna, Sen. Fattman, Chief Foley, Mr. Bonin and Mr. Cortese went to the State House and met with DCR Commissioner Leo Roy as well as the Colonel and Lt. Col. Of the Environmental Police on May 4, 2016 and discussed issues related to the park. The Commissioner did agree that he would maintain the single closure policy at the park, and he agreed to look at several of the other public safety issues, such as the rock in the off-limits area that people frequent, concerns about the staffing levels, and other issues.

The entrance fee was also discussed, reiterating the desire of the BOS to have the out-of-state fee be at least double the in-state fee. The Commissioner agreed to visit the park after July 4, 2016. Mr. Guzinski feels that most of the immediate goals were met at the meeting. The Environmental Police were very supportive of the Town's concerns.

Regarding the revenue sharing, right now it is a \$1 surcharge added to the

entrance fee. Rep. McKenna stated that the revenue sharing account is a separate, dedicated account whereby the Town needs to approach DCR with receipts and requests for reimbursement. Rep. McKenna will follow up with those that were at the meeting. A discussion was held.

6. CORI Policy-2nd Reading (1:39:52)

In the packet is the proposed draft CORI policy.

Mr. Guzinski stated that nothing has changed since the first reading.

7. Town Administrator Review (1:40:38)

Mr. Morse stated that the evaluation scores ranged from 79-98. The average score is 87.2. In general, people are very happy with Mr. Guzinski's overall performance and he continues to be a good leader and a good fit for Douglas. Mr. Morse read Mr. Guzinski's strengths. They would like Mr. Guzinski to develop more new, unconventional and creative solutions.

Mr. Morse would like to set some Town Administrator goals. That discussion is on the agenda for June 21, 2016. **It was decided to meet from 6-7 PM on June 21, 2016 to discuss the Administrator's goals.**

Mr. Guzinski thanked the BOS, Ms. Kane, Ms. Lovett and all department heads and staff for their support and hard work.

8. Approval of the Minutes (1:48:07)

April 5, 2016: Mr. Hughes made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2016 Board of Selectmen meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Cortese. All-Aye.

April 19, 2016: Mr. Hughes made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2016 Board of Selectmen meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Cortese. All-Aye.

May 2, 2016: Mr. Cortese made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 2, 2016 Board of Selectmen meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Bonin. All-Aye.

9. Town Administrator's Report (1:49:45)

Mr. Guzinski recommended July 12, 2016 and August 2, 2016 for meetings in the summer.

Mr. Guzinski stated that he received a letter from the Cemetery Commission stating that the screen house on the property next to Douglas Center Cemetery would be helpful in protecting the fallen stones. They asked permission for use of the screen house. They will maintain it while in their use. The BOS had no objection and left the decision to Mr. Guzinski's discretion.

Mr. Guzinski looked at the issue regarding the failed debt exclusion. Town Counsel said that the Town can place a ballot on the presidential election, however permission needs to be sought from the Secretary of State. **Mr. Guzinski will place this item on the June 21, 2016 agenda for discussion.**

10. Old/New Business (1:55:01)

Old Business: Regarding the Old Grammar School Committee, there will be another ad for bids in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette on June 1, 2016. This will be the third attempt. Mr. Guzinski will ask Mr. Cundiff what the cost would be to place an ad in New England Real Estate Journal.

Mr. Bonin would like to task the Strategic Budget Committee to look at things that might be cut in light of the current financial situation.

New Business: Mr. Cortese was asked by a resident if the Town could have a fund where people can contribute towards buying a rescue pumper and catch basin cleaner. Ms. Lovett stated that a donation account could be set up. Ms. Lovett and the BOS would like to first explore a ballot on the presidential election ballot.

11. Adjournment (02:01:49)

Mr. Hughes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 PM. Mr. Cortese seconded the motion. All – Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Wright
Recording Secretary