

A Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Wednesday, November 12, 2014 beginning at 7:00p.m. in Room 112 of the Town Hall. The following members were present.

Mark Gallivan, Chairman
Christopher Timson, Vice Chairman
Nancy Mackenzie, Clerk
Clifton Snuffer
James Stanton

Also present: James Johnson, Cindy Berube, Val Donohue, Sue Shillue, Representative from Blue Cross, Kevin Feeley, Labor Counsel

Health Insurance

A large group of Town Employees attended the Meeting to hear the discussion on Health Insurance. Mr. Johnson explained we were required to notify the Unions of this meeting. Attorney Kevin Feeley is the Town's labor and employment counsel. Attorney Feeley explained in 2011 the legislator amended C.32B it tells towns they can offer Health insurance. It allows towns to make changes to benefits. It is a process driven law, steps that have to be touched before making changes. The first step is to accept. Once accepted nothing happens, the Board can choose to do nothing, if you accept it some time in the future. The Town Administrator will come to you for consideration. Mr. Snuffer questioned if the Town was presently working under this. Attorney Feeley said no. Sections 21-23 enacted in 2011, the town had negotiated health changes union by union. You went into the rate saver plans. No direct need to use this bill to negotiate further changes. You can use it many times in the future. There is no time line on when you accept. If after the proposal and the Board makes a proposal to unions. Two prong approach, notify Public Employee Committee and Insurance Advisory committee and provide them with a computation with estimated savings. Provide employees a plan of mitigation, when you make changes you would increase co pays or deductibles. You may give up to 25% of savings to your employees.

Once we share those numbers, there is a ten day window to talk to Insurance Advisory committee, notify the Public Employee Committee. The PEC is comprised one representative of every union, retiree appointed by the State Retiree Board. There is a (30) thirty day window to negotiate the changes recommended by the town. Why would we do 21-23, in the old days it would take you years to make changes? It gives you the mechanism to make the changes. So long as the plans don't exceed the benchmark plan (GIC). The decision of whether or not to accept it is up to the Board.

Mr. Snuffer, when you go thru steps, what I see, notification requirement of the Insurance Advisory Committee, does that committee have to accept what the Selectmen has done. The next step is to convene the PEC. The Selectmen can override the Ins. Adv. Com. What is the GIC benchmark, does it meet the benchmark to a minimum. Attorney Feeley, yes they are all within the benchmark. On annual basis they designate the benchmark plan. You can not recommend higher copays than what they pay. Mr. Snuffer, so if we make a decision this evening, within ten days start when we notify them. Can that be changed if necessary. Attorney Feeley explained once we say when the meeting is we are on the clock. The clock starts when we know the PEC is. Attorney Feeley explained if we can not come to an agreement, they can go to a 3 person arbitration panel has the right to grant up to 25% savings. Mr. Snuffer noted they just validated the contracts.

Mr. Stanton felt it sounds like it would give the Board more leeway. Attorney Feeley explained that 85 or 90 other towns have used this. There have been no challenges to date. Mr. Gallivan explained the Town is not proposing any particular health plan today.

Tom Driscoll-RTM precinct 4, has been on Insurance Advisory Committee and worked with employers to control costs. I think it benefits the Town Employees and union. We have an obligation to protect the taxpayers. Very concerned that this issue has been totally neglected. My advice is to stay on top of this and demand all financial information. The information we were looking for is still not available. Financials are very important. What are the insurance companies charging to maintain your plan? We are paying about 1million dollars a month. You are paying between 20-30 % of that. Information should be provided to everyone, we should be demanding tight fiscal management. Providing answers, encourage volunteerism. Urge all of you to stay on top of this issue.

Ken Scanzio-Will there be transparency throughout this process? We had a problem back then with transparency.

Attorney Feeley explained the reason why the PEC is set up like this, they are the conduits of all information. That has to go to the retiree rep and union members. I am not sure what he is talking about. I do not recall.

Ken Scanzio-have transparency, what are you saving. Mr. Gallivan said, absolutely. Mr. Snuffer stated the retiree representative shall be chosen by the state Retiree association.

Mr. Johnson explained the Insurance Advisory Committee did meet a number of times and made a recommendation. They ran the numbers GIC, WSHG, MIIA, when we meet we will have that all on the table. Mr. Snuffer assumes there will be a cost saving.

Dave Cousie- I called WSHG, we urge you not to adopt this, work with all your Town Employees, it is not negotiations. Expedited 30 days process, you ask us to get cost under control and we did that with accepting the Rate saver Health Insurance plans.

Paul Barry-Fire Union, you are not voting on any plans, I ask that you not support this. As only 1/3 of the communities have adopted it, 2/3 have not. We understand you need to make sound decisions. There are ways to make these changes. The Firefighters have worked with the town agreeing to a 70/30 split and 60/40 split. There was no discussion on changing the plans at that time. We are disappointed. We ask that you not support this.

Liz Gaffey, Union President for Clerical, DPW and Library. I stand here asking you not to vote on this, we gave you the 60/40 split, we took the rate saver. Never was it mentioned that we were leaving WSHG. We have negotiated with you in good faith and to take that away from us and make it a power. We had Michael Boynton on the WSHG. I think he realized that GIC was not a good plan. We want to work with you we want to keep our provider. We ask you not to vote.

Rob Kilroy-Police Union President, We also ask you not to vote this. I know Attorney Feeley feels this is more sufficient. Thirty days is not sufficient time. We are in the middle of negotiations, good faith, Sections 21-23 eliminates negotiations. We enjoy having our

health insurance choices. I enjoy having Harvard Pilgrim. I urge you to work with us, to maintain a harmonious atmosphere with all employees.

Mr. Snuffer stated when he was at Town Meeting as a Selectmen and RTM he was told that the School Budget is none of your business as it relates to Teachers contracts. I want transparency in that. What if there was the opportunity to save one and ½ million dollars. Mr. Barry knows you have to come up with sound responsibilities. Mr. Kilroy felt there is going to be a cost to someone. Mr. Gallivan is in favor of this, I don't think we want to change the way the insurance works. It can save jobs. As health insurance goes up, the budget gets tighter and tighter. Looking for ways to make savings. I hate change. If we can get similar health care coverage that will work. Looking for cost savings that does not change your benefits to health ins. Dave Couise if you are looking to save money why not wait for one year and come back to the unions and talk about health care.

Mr. Timson thinks they have always tried to be reasonable and fair, I know you work hard. We are not trying to pull a fast one here. We have to answer to the taxpayers. That is not fair to them either. You are assuming this will negatively impact you.

John Webber, MIIA we deal with them in Workers comp, registrations, auto claims that we can get. You have people out on Workers Compensation and they don't get their checks. MIIA is not easy to deal with.

Frank Greco AFSCME- I have been dealing with Health Insurance for years and it is difficult to get a good deal. You will only have one plan. It does not work. Hold off for one year, sit down and see how much we can save. Lets sit down with the Board and the union. I ask that you wait and lets see what the savings are. It is a touchy issue. I suggest you take a step back and table this.

An employee stated it seems like your minds may be made up. Do you know information that we do not know? It seems like you really had a mindset. Mr. Gallivan has known for years to take a look a health plans.

Paul Barry questioned why was this not brought up during negotiations? When did you know about this? Mr. Johnson stated they have been talking about this since August.

Jim Holmes-Walpole Teacher, I understand you would be looking at Health Ins cost, my basic question is it seems is there other things that you could have looked at other than Health Care and employee benefits. It has been Health insurance concessions every contract. At some point there will be a cost savings and then that will be flat lined, than there will be another push for health care. Is this the only thing you have looked at? Or actively looking at? Mr. Gallivan stated we are always looking at cost savings, look at things that are growing the fastest. The numbers grow dramatically.

Mr. Timson hopes when we vote this you don't look at this at a dire sense. I think the Taxpayers are looking for us to do this. A member of the Crowd stated the taxpayers don't even know anything about this.

Mr. Scanzio at some point your employees have to mean something to you. Mr. Gallivan stated I am in favor of this. I would ask you to work thru the process.

Paul Barry said, we have worked with you. We are asking you to work with us. We have given you what you asked for. We are asking you to push this off. If we do not come to an agreement with you, in 30 days you make the decision. You need to think outside of the box. What is the rush?

Mr. Holmes, we have not been included in any of the discussions on money savings. A delay of the vote and time to openly look. Desire for cost savings. The way this process is going, is setting the employees at odds when we do not want to be at odds.

Mr. Timson questioned what is the time frame we would need on the basis we can not come to an agreement?

Attorney Feeley explained the most important date that WSHG would need to be notified is March 1. Few time frames, all subscribers have to have a 60 day notice. From start to finish the process 60-75 days. Looking at February 1 date for next fiscal year. Mr. Timson asked would there be a problem if we delayed the vote, seeing if we can get people on Board. Mr. Johnson would look for no more than 30 days. Mr. Timson would be ok to put off the vote to see if we can get collaboration.

Mr. Snuffer, I drill down on these budgets and the reality is I pre-studied this to come to a decision. I am comfortable in voting yes. Mr. Gallivan agrees with Mr. Timson's idea. We need to schedule our vote in 30 days. Mr. Gallivan wants the Town to be able to go down that path. You want to know what the options are before we go down that path.

An employee suggested maybe you can look at other ways to save money. Mr. Timson explained the majority of our budget is people. That is why it is very difficult to find savings. Mr. Scanzio it does show a level of respect to hear from the employees.

Mr. Johnson asked if they have to notified by certified mail again. Under the regulations we were required to notify the presidents. He is asking that they agree with that. Teachers will waive the requirement.

NO VOTE TAKEN

MOTION moved by Mr. Timson to schedule an Agenda Item for the Board to accept MGL 32B 21-23 for the evening of December 16, seconded by Mr. Snuffer VOTED 4-0-0

SHARON COUNTRY DAY

Mr. Johnson reported on the meeting with DEP.

MOTION moved by Mr. Timson to sign the Purchase and Sage Agreement with Sharon country Day Camp, Inc. 438 S. Main Street, Sharon Ma for a parcel of land located at 691 Common Street consisting of 24.7+/- acres with a purchase price of 4.5 million dollars. , seconded by Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 5-0-0

MOTION moved by Mr. Timson to sign Rider A to Purchase and Sale Agreement for 691 Common Street with Sharon Country Day Camp, Inc., seconded by Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 5-0-0

UNION CONTRACTS

MOTION moved by Mr. Timson to sign the Union Contracts with the Clerical Union, DPW and Library for July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017, seconded by Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 5-0-0

GIFT ACCEPTANCES

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to accept the gifts from Various Donors for the Library, Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 5-0-0

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to accept the gift from Analog Group Inc. for Police Safety Fund, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 5-0-0

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to accept the gift from Friends of St. Patrick for Smiling Eyes Program, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 5-0-0

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to accept the gift from Donovan for Smiling Eyes Program, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 5-0-0

RESIGNATION

MOTION moved by Mr. Timson to accept David Sullivan's resignation from the Veteran's Committee, Council on Aging and Conservation Commission, seconded by Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 5-0-0

BUDGET PROCESS

Mr. Johnson reported that if we stay on our current insurance it may go up 15%. Mr. Snuffer noted we did a great job in the vote count in Charlie Baker. I would like to send him a note to him. Send a letter regarding prison Mitigation.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to support Mr. Snuffer's recommendation to send a letter regarding prison mitigation, seconded by Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 5-0-0

Mr. Snuffer noted the budget message first Monday in February. Mr. Johnson explained what he has asked the departments for when they do the budget.

2015 MEETING SCHEDULE

Change the meeting during February vacation.

PROCLAMATION

Mr. Timson read into the record.

MOTION moved by Mr. Timson to accept and sign the proclamation for Pancreatic Cancer Month, seconded by Mrs. Mackenzie, VOTED 5-0-0

EXECUTIVE SESSION

CHAIRMAN'S DECLARATION

Under MGL Chapter 30A, Sec 21 (3) the Board will meet in Executive Session To consider the exchange of real estate on South Street and legally known as Blackburn and Union Privileges Superfund Site

- That a discussion of the foregoing issues in open session could compromise the purpose for the executive session; and
- That the Board of Selectmen shall return to open session at the conclusion of the executive session for the purposes of Adjourning

MOTION moved by Mr. Timson to enter Executive Session for the purposes and reasons stated by the Chairman and the board will return to open session at the conclusion of the executive session for purposes of adjourning seconded by Mrs. Mackenzie, VOTED roll call vote 5-0-0, Mr. Snuffer-Aye, Mr. Timson-Aye, Mrs. Mackenzie-Aye, Mr. Stanton-Aye and Mr. Gallivan-Aye

The Board moved out of Executive Session.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to adjourn at 9:30pm, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 5-0-0