

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the sixteenth day of April 2018 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council Vice President Thomas Buck at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Thomas Buck, Barbara Capalbo, Sylvia Thompson, David Husband; Town Solicitor Kevin McAllister; Town Manager William McGarry; Town Clerk Elizabeth Cook-Martin. Absent: Frank Landolfi.

The meeting opened with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the Flag.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Executive Session Minutes of April 2, 2018 were removed from the Consent Agenda as they were not in final form.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR THOMPSON TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA AS

FOLLOWS: Approve Town Council Meeting Minutes of April 2, 2018; Accept the following monthly financial/activity report: Town Clerk.

IN FAVOR: Buck, Capalbo, Husband, Thompson

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

PUBLIC FORUM

Nathaniel Mitkowski, Assistant Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 21 Ashaway was present with the Boy Scouts. He explained that they were there in order to earn their Citizenship in the Community merit badge where they were required to attend a Town Council meeting, planning meeting or similar meeting and thereafter discuss what happened at the meeting, the process of the meeting and their impressions of the meeting. Councilor Thompson asked Mr. Mitkowski to explain the Earth Day clean-up that they have planned for Sunday, April 22, 2018. Mr. Mitkowski stated that Scouts, Everett Mitkowski and Logan Pratt, had organized the Earth Day clean-up of Ashaway. They are trying to gather as many people in the community as they can, including other Scout troops, Girl Scout

Troops, the Cub Scout pack, and bringing everybody together on Earth Day so they can go around Ashaway and collect as much garbage as possible. Council Vice President Buck questioned if this was being done to earn a merit badge and Mr. Mitkowski indicated no, but all Scouts had to perform community service. They have different Scouts run different projects so they can get used to what an Eagle project will be like. Council Thompson reiterated that this event will occur on Sunday, April 22, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. with people meeting at the Crandall House; all must bring their own bags, gloves and other equipment. Mr. Mitkowski stated that they will divide people into groups and try to cover as much of the Ashaway area as they can, as safely as possible.

Thereafter, Julie Dumas of Ashaway spoke and indicated that she had a statement she wished to read pertaining to the Ashaway Ambulance. Mrs. Dumas indicated that she has lived in the Town for 39 years and has always felt safe knowing that police, fire and ambulance were available. She believed that the Town needs to support the ambulance corps and keep it in the Town. She went on to state that in the summer months the Town's population increases due to campgrounds and RV parks which means that there are more calls and the ambulance is busier. If the ambulance is not in Ashaway and we have to get Westerly or Hope Valley to respond there is a very long response time and time could be of the essence. Mrs. Dumas stated that Ashaway Ambulance has responded to the ten items the Council had requested and she was hopeful that the Council could move on and grant them the funds that the taxpayers agreed to give them. She is not in favor of spending our tax dollars to support another town. She stated that by saying the Town will pay \$250 to Westerly Ambulance for every call they respond to in Hopkinton, that changes it from mutual aid to paid calls. The patient's insurance is also covering the charge for the call so the Westerly Ambulance Corp would be getting paid by the insurance company as well as funding from the Town - our tax dollars, so our tax dollars would be leaving Ashaway. She went on to state that by requiring information from one organization and not others that the Town is granting money to, means that the Town is not operating fairly; maybe it was time to have an ambulance tax just like we have a fire tax and then the Ashaway Ambulance would be funded and staffed and able to keep the ambulances up to

date. Mrs. Dumas indicated that she had appeared before the Council about six years ago and had asked why the Council gave money to Hope Valley but not Ashaway at that time as well.

Eric Perrin, Treasurer of Ashaway Ambulance thanked Council Vice President Buck and Councilor Capalbo for meeting with him and other members of the Ashaway Ambulance to work on their responses to the ten questions asked by the Town Council. He was disappointed that a vote would not be taking place tonight for he was under the impression it would be. It was his understanding that once they answered the ten questions at least some of the grant money would be released. Mr. Perrin indicated that he had sent an email to Council President Landolfi about being placed on the agenda and he did not receive an adequate response and does not believe this is a good way to operate the Town. He stated that the Town wished to know how the grant money was being used and every single year he believed they have proven where the money has gone. Mr. Perrin indicated that they have put the money in payroll every year and used it to provide a crew to cover one shift. He agreed that improvements can be made. He also believed that Mr. Dumas was bullied the first time he appeared before the Council. Mr. Perrin stated that the ambulance company is not an employee of the Town pursuant to the Town Charter. Nowhere in the Charter does it state that the Town Council or the Town Manager has any authority over fire or ambulance, so to bring in an outside agency is actually against the law because of the Mutual Aid Agreement written by the State of Rhode Island. Kevin McAllister interceded and went on to explain that there is law in Rhode Island called the Open Meetings Act which requires that before a Public Body can discuss any substantive topic it has to be posted on the agenda with at least 48 business hours' notice to the public, so the Council members are prohibited by law to respond to topics that are not on the agenda. He wanted this to be explained to those present. Mr. Perrin indicated that he had tried to be put on the agenda but after three or four emails he still did not have an answer, only a statement that he couldn't get on the agenda because there was no decision to be made. He did not believe that to be true. He asked the Town Council to look into this issue and noted there was nothing on the website to indicate how someone can be placed on the agenda.

Further, he stated that the other issue had been that the ambulance company's license being suspended for two days because a medication was out of date.

Thereafter, the Town basically ensured that Westerly Ambulance was coming into our Town; however, pursuant to the Charter, the Town has no authority to do that. He questioned if Ashaway Ambulance responds to Westerly should they be paid \$250? What happens if Charlestown Ambulance responds to Ashaway, will they request \$250 from the Town because the Town is now paying Westerly and Hope Valley? The Mutual Aid Agreement is in place so this does not happen. He believes they are the last ambulance company in Rhode Island that does not have full time crews because they are a small company. They would love to receive \$250 a call and believes that if they did, they would receive approximately \$133,000. He believes going forward they may need to head in that direction so they can provide proper service. He mentioned the corps will be needing to purchase another truck which will cost \$400,000 as well as equipment. Lastly, at no time since 1989 has he ever received a complaint about improper service or that a patient was treated wrongly. The only complaints they receive are that someone doesn't wish to pay their insurance bill.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Town Manager William McGarry reported that on April 4, 2018, he and Chief Palmer attended a meeting with Attorney Vincent Ragosta in preparation for the up-coming collective bargaining negotiation with the Police Department union and other related labor matters. He reported on April 5, 2018 the Town received confirmation from PRISM that they had now converted 498 of the 519 existing streetlights to LED lights which represents about 96% of the lights in Hopkinton. They are currently in the process of working with Seimens Corporation to install and National Grid to energize the remaining 21 streetlights. The good news is that we are only paying for those 498 LED lights that have been installed. Council Vice President Buck asked if the Town had received a bill on the cost of those lights and Town Manager McGarry indicated this was a very complicated task and Brian Rosso, Finance Director, was coordinating with National Grid and PRISM. The expenses now shift, they are National Grid and we still pay Direct Energy, and they have a formula that they use, but the bottom line is just paying

principal and interest for the first ten years, will save between \$25,000 and \$30,000 as a result of not having to pay National Grid their rates which were exorbitant. By purchasing the streetlights and turning them into LED lights, the savings will continue and will increase after 10 years.

NEW BUSINESS

ZONE AMENDMENT HEARING DATE RE: 35 MECHANIC STREET AP 15 LOT 13B

This matter had been scheduled to discuss and consider setting a hearing date for Zone Amendment to the Zoning Map filed by Town of Hopkinton and Coastal Plastics, Inc. as owner of the property located at 35 Mechanic Street identified as Assessor's Map 15 Lot 13B. The Council set May 21, 2018 as the hearing date. Kevin McAllister explained to the audience that it had come to the Town's attention that the zoning map for this particular property has been incorrect for a number of years through no fault of the property owner and it needed to be fixed. Attorney McAllister had spoken with several of the Town department heads including the Tax Assessor, Zoning Official, Planner and the Town Clerk and everyone did research on this property and came back with the conclusion that the property should be zoned manufacturing as this has been a manufacturing plant since the 1880's.

PUBLIC FORUM

Scott Bill Hirst of 20 Maple Court, Ashaway, spoke as Town Moderator to remind people of the Financial Town Assembly being held on May 1, 2018. He stated it was very crucial because no vote is taken and that is the time for people to address the Town Council on their final thoughts on the budget before the Town Council adopts it and submits it to the voters in June. Mr. Hirst also wished to remind the viewers and the public to go on the Town of Hopkinton's website to view the statement written by the Town Solicitor which stated the reasons and concerns the Town has with the Ashaway Ambulance Association and people could thereafter draw their own conclusions.

Councilor Thompson stated that the Ashaway Library is starting their capital campaign for their proposed addition and they have a fundraiser coming up on May 5, 2018 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. called Boots and Books at the Carriage Barn. Their flier explains that this is a rare opportunity to visit a private museum

just over the Connecticut border. Also, Arthur Smith, the Animal Control Office in Westerly wished to thank Chief Justin Lee of the Hope Valley Fire Department for hosting the Town of Hopkinton's Rabies Clinic and he specifically wished to thank Deputy Chief Jason Caswell for helping with the layout of the building and Deputy Chief David Caswell for opening and closing the building. In two hours' time they were able to vaccinate 92 animals and everything went very well.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR THOMPSON TO ADJOURN.

SO VOTED

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk