

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Minutes of the Meeting

January 22, 2019

1. Vice-President Logan called the meeting to Order at 8:00pm.
2. Vice-President Logan requested that a roll call be taken to record the attendance for the meeting. The Clerk called the roll – Councillors Darcy, Fowler, Harris, LaCava, D. LeBlanc, R. LeBlanc, Mackin, McLaughlin, McMenimen, Nabulime, Romard, Stanley, Vidal and Logan were present. President Brasco was absent.
3. Councillor McMenimen moved to approve the minutes of the COW meeting held on December 26, 2018. The motion was adopted on a voice vote and the minutes of December 26, 2018 were approved.
4. A resolution concerning the lease or purchase of the property located at 23–25 Gordon Street and 0 Union Street was submitted by Vice-President Logan and Councillor R. LeBlanc. Councillor R. LeBlanc spoke of the need of additional parking in the downtown area and the acquisition of these properties would be beneficial for both business owners and customers. At the City Council meeting of December 26, 2018 a request to the Mayor to pursue the acquisition was approved. Councillor R. LeBlanc moved to place the matter on the table. The motion was adopted on a voice vote and the matter was tabled.
5. A resolution concerning the marijuana hearing at Government Center was submitted by Councillor Mackin. Councillor Mackin spoke about the limited capacity of the Council Chamber and the need to provide additional space or access to a meeting that could be heavily attended. Councillor Mackin suggested either having an alternative venue for the meeting or have monitors in City Hall for viewing the meeting. A concern was raised about the ability to have a “live” broadcast of the meeting if were held at an alternative site. Councillor D. LeBlanc moved to request WCAC–TV to respond to the feasibility of a “live” broadcast of a City Council meeting at Government Center. Councillor Mackin asked the response be provided by the next COW meeting. The request of Councillor D. LeBlanc as amended by Councillor Mackin was adopted on a voice vote. A concern was raised about the need of additional parking for the public attending a meeting at Government Center. Councillor D. LeBlanc moved to request permission from the ELKS to use their parking lot and to respond by the next COW meeting. Councillor Darcy stated he was not in favor. Councillor LaCava stated people would probably park there anyway. The motion of Councillor LeBlanc was adopted on a voice vote, with Councillor Darcy audibly against. Councillor Vidal asked about the using monitors in City Hall. Councillor Darcy gave a brief summary history of the funding request for the monitors.

Councillor Harris moved to table the matter. The motion was adopted on a voice vote and the matter was tabled.

6. Councillor D. LeBlanc move to take the matter of the Site Selection Committee for the Police Station (12/26/2018) from the table. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Councillor D. LeBlanc moved to hear from Police Chief MacPherson and Purchasing Agent Joe Pedulla. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Councillor D. LeBlanc stated she had requested information about the process used by the Site Selection Committee for their recommendation and to provide copies of any minutes/documents that were utilized. Councillor D. LeBlanc asked a number of questions to ascertain how the Site Selection Committee arrived at their recommendation. Councillor D. LeBlanc stated the minutes of the meetings were brief and vague. Councillor D. LeBlanc spoke about the pros/cons of the sites that were considered. Councillor D. LeBlanc specifically focused on the potential use of the Leary Field site. Chief MacPherson gave a brief overview of the process used by the Site Selection Committee, stating the need to pick a site where the project could get done quickly. Chief MacPherson explained the purpose of the Committee and it was solely to recommend a site. Councillor D. LeBlanc asked several questions about the recommended site at Fernald. Councillor McMenimen rose and recused herself from any discussion concerning the Fernald property. Councillor Nabulime raised a "point of order" citing a council rule that limited speaking on a matter to ten minutes. Vice-President Logan stated the cited rule was not applicable. Mr. Pedulla stated the Site Selection Committee was formed to pick a recommended site and do it expeditiously. Councillor D. LeBlanc asked additional questions about the access to the Fernald site via public transportation, the CPW Director's input if the CPW Department was to be located at Fernald and the impact of the Mayor's master plan. Councillor Mackin raised a "point of order" asking if a different council rule that limited speaking time applied. Vice-President Logan stated Councillor D. LeBlanc was finishing up her speaking time. Councillor D. LeBlanc asked if any community input had been sought or any architectural, legal or engineering expertise was utilized for the Site Selection Committee's recommendation. Mr. Pedulla stated some areas of the Fernald site had been evaluated. Councillor D. LeBlanc raised a prior concern that if the site was not suitable for children, how it would be suitable for employees. Councillor D. LeBlanc asked if we chose the Fernald site, how long it would take to complete the project. A concern was mentioned about environmental issues. Councillor Nabulime rose to question an environmental study and cited a "conflict of interest" concern about an employee and a former City Councillor. Vice-President Logan ruled Councillor Nabulime "out of order" and spoke about discussing a personnel matter without following the proper procedure. Councillor Nabulime spoke about the same remediation at Fernald for a new Police Station or a new Waltham High School. Councillor Nabulime stated the process should be fair and well thought. Councillor Nabulime spoke of the conditions at the existing police station; the City should not dishonor the police with delay tactics and to support the new police station. Councillor Stanley stated the City Council has not

delayed the project and the Council has always been supportive of the project. Councillor Stanley spoke of the need to conduct a full environmental study on the entire Fernald site. Councillor Stanley stated he would not be comfortable without a full study. Councillor Romard asked about the goal of the Site Selection Committee. Chief MacPherson stated it was to find the best site for the police station and the Chief stated everyone on the Site Selection Committee was in full support of the site recommendation. Councillor Romard stated we don't know enough about the property from experts and there is a need for a professional feasibility study. Councillor Romard stated we should move CPW to Fernald and build a combined police/fire facility on the existing site. Councillor Romard asked for the estimated cost of the new police station. Mr. Pedulla replied it would be approximately \$35 million. Councillor Harris asked the Chief go back and explain the purpose and intent of the Site Selection Committee. Chief MacPherson stated the goal of the Site Selection Committee was to find a site. Chief MacPherson explained the various factors they considered, including land area, length of time, accessibility, etc. Councillor Harris asked how they went about looking for a site. The Chief explained they considered sites of at least 5 acres, with the potential for future growth, conducted visits to other police station, did not look at design, but only sites. Councillor Harris asked if the Fernald was the Site Selection Committee's preferred site. The Chief responded in the affirmative. Councillor R. LeBlanc stated there could be different levels of cleanup and remediation depending on the intended use and purpose. Councillor Fowler spoke of the need and what would be the next step. Mr. Pedulla stated that once a preferred site is selected a feasibility study would be conducted. Councillor McLaughlin stated the Site Selection Committee was just to choose a "site" and he commended the Chief and the other members of the Site Selection Committee for their efforts. Councillor Nabulime also praised the Chief and the Site Selection Committee members and also stated both police unions supported the recommended location. Councillor Darcy moved to table the matter. The motion was adopted on a voice vote and the matter was tabled.

7. A motion by Councillor Harris to adjourn was adopted on a voice vote, and the Chair declared the Committee adjourned at 10:00pm.

Paul G. Centofanti - Clerk to the Committee of the Whole