

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Minutes of the Meeting

August 5, 2019

1. Vice-President Logan called the meeting to Order at 8:30 pm.
2. Vice-President Logan requested that a roll call be taken to record the attendance for the meeting. The Clerk called the roll – Councillors Brasco, Darcy, Fowler, Harris, LaCava, D. Leblanc, R. LeBlanc, Mackin, McLaughlin, McMenimen, Nabulime, Romard, Vidal and Logan were present. Councillor Stanley was absent.
3. A motion by President Brasco to approve the minutes of the COW meeting held on June 24, 2019 was adopted on a voice vote and the minutes of June 24, 2019 were approved.
4. A request was received from the Mayor to approve the acceptance of the Hazard Mitigation and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan 2019. Vice-President Logan stated the information was in process of being provided to all Councillors. Councillor McMenimen moved to place the matter on the table. The motion was adopted on a voice vote and the matter was tabled.
5. A request was received from the Mayor concerning a communication received from the City Clerk pertaining to the old and new voting machines. Councillor McMenimen moved to hear from the City Clerk, Robert Waddick. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Mr. Waddick explained that the Secretary of State required confirmation that the City Council authorizes the discontinuance of the current AccuVote machines and authorizes the use of the new Image Cast Precinct Tabulator machines in the upcoming elections. Councillor McMenimen moved to approve the authorization. The motion was adopted on a voice vote and the authorization to discontinue the current AccuVote machines and to use the new Image Cast Precinct Tabulator machines in the upcoming elections was approved.
6. A request was received from the Mayor to approve a loan authorization of \$374,567,387 for the Waltham High School project, including the cost of design, construction, original equipping/furnishing and all other related cost incidental or related to the project. Also included in the Mayor's communication were copies of other project related documents. Councillor McMenimen gave a brief overview of the project, citing her reasons for support and that it was fully vetted by the abundance of information that was publicly available. Councillor McMenimen moved to give the loan authorization of \$374,567,387 a first reading. On the motion, Councillor Romard stated that there were individuals present to give a presentation and they should be heard before taking a vote. The Mayor stated that the following individuals would each give their portion of the

presentation – former Superintendent Dr. Drew Echelson, Interim Superintendent George Frost, representatives of the architect firm SMMA–Lorraine Finnegan and Brian Black, and City Auditor Paul Centofanti. Councillor Romard moved to hear from the Mayor and the previously mentioned individuals. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Dr. Echelson gave a PowerPoint presentation to highlight the timeline and the efforts that have been made on the project. Dr. Echelson introduced the following current and former Waltham High School students who expressed their thoughts and reasons for the need of a new Waltham School – Sweta Patel, Alicia Duce, Samantha Contreras, Maris Mendiola, Melissa Nicolas and Jaison Patel. Interim Superintendent George Frost gave an update on enrollment projections and explained that Waltham was experiencing growth in enrollment like no other community. SMMA architects Lorraine Finnegan and Brian Black presented a slide show of the before and after comparison of the current WHS and the new WHS building interior and education programs layout. They also gave visual renderings of the site and use of space including roadways, fields and parking. The City Auditor distributed an information packet illustrating the estimated total project cost, the anticipated State reimbursement, debt repayment schedules and the estimated tax impact on the average single family residential property. After the presentation Councillor Romard moved to table the matter. The motion did not pass on a roll call vote of 1 in favor (Romard), 12 opposed (Brasco, Darcy, Fowler, Harris, LaCava, D. Leblanc, R. LeBlanc, Mackin, McLaughlin, McMenimen, Nabulime, Vidal) 1 absent (Stanley) and Logan presiding. Councillor Romard asked questions about the “not to exceed” cost and what the additional cost for the land might be. The Mayor responded that the matter was still in litigation. Councillor R. LeBlanc stated that property values would likely rise with the new school. Councillor D. LeBlanc asked questions about access roads, special education needs, the capacity to deliver the master plan and what will happen to the school in fifty years from now. Councillor D. LeBlanc asked the City Auditor if a “peer review” had been performed on the property tax impact analysis. The City Auditor responded in the affirmative and Councillor D. LeBlanc moved to request the City Auditor provide a copy of the tax analysis that was performed by Hilltop Securities. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Councillor D. LeBlanc moved to request copies of all traffic related studies. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Councillor D. LeBlanc moved to request the City Auditor to provide the commercial property tax rate on his analysis. The motion was adopted on a voice vote. Councillor Nabulime spoke about the very public process and transparency for this project. Councillor Nabulime asked questions about security and the how the design of the building would accommodate security. Councillor D. LeBlanc stated that she was against the land taking but once it was done, she was in full support of the WHS project. Councillor D. LeBlanc expressed concern about borrowing money without written notification or citizen input on the finances. Councillor D. LeBlanc asked questions about the traffic study and if children would be safe in an emergency. SMMA architect Lorraine Finnegan stated a traffic study was performed in 2018 and it was included in the Schematic Design submission to the MSBA. The original motion of Councillor

McMenimen to give the loan authorization a first reading was approved on a roll call vote of 12 in favor (Brasco, Darcy, Fowler, Harris, LaCava, R. LeBlanc, Mackin, McLaughlin, McMenimen, Nabulime, Vidal and Logan), 1 opposed (Romard), 1 voting present (D. LeBlanc) and 1 absent (Stanley).

7. A motion by Councillor Darcy to adjourn was adopted on a voice vote, and the Chair declared the Committee adjourned at 10:50pm.

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