



Office of the Board of Selectmen
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Randall V. Becker, Chairman
Andrew Jolda, Vice-Chairman
Earl Gabor, Secretary
Lisa Kontoes
Thomas Klebart

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, August 2, 2021 6:00 P.M.

Selectmen's Meeting Room

Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA
via conference call in accordance with Governor Baker's
emergency "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the
Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20"

MEETING OPENING: At 6:01 p.m., Chairman Becker called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA. The following individuals were present: Chairman Becker, Selectman Andrew Jolda, Selectman Lisa Kontoes, Selectman Earl Gabor, Selectman Thomas Klebart, Town Moderator Ted Avlas, Finance Committee Member Sarah Sansom (via Zoom meeting), Town Administrator Doug Willardson, and Executive Assistant Courtney Friedland. The Board stood and took the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Becker stated on March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing as fully stated on the agenda. As further explained on the agenda, the Executive Order relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body through adequate, alternative means. On June 16, 2021, Governor Baker signed into law An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency. This Act includes an extension, until April 1, 2022, of the remote meeting provisions of his March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Meeting Minutes

Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to approve the meeting minutes of July 12, 2021. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

ACCEPTANCE OF TOWN ADMINISTRATOR RESIGNATION LETTER:

Chairman Becker stated it is never a good sign when a Town Administrator shows up in your driveway as was the case on July 27, 2021. He stated Mr. Willardson had a great five years here in Webster. Mr. Willardson stated the only reason he is leaving was to be closer to family. He said he had an amazing five years in Webster. He said he was provided great feedback from the Selectmen and had a great team who worked hard behind him.

Motion by Selectman Klebart, seconded by Selectman Gabor, to accept Doug Willardson's resignation letter dated July 27, 2021 with an effective date of September 3, 2021 with regret. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

DISCUSSION OF PROCESS OF TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SCREENING COMMITTEE:

Chairman Becker stated Mr. Willardson included Webster Town By-Laws, Chapter 7, which pertained to the Town Administrator. He said Chapter 7 § 3, addressed the Screening Committee. He stated there is a strict time line that must be followed. He stated the Screening Committee has nine members, two of the members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The rest of the Screening Committee consist of two School Committee Appointments, 2 Finance Committee Appointments, and three Town Moderator appointments. The Screening Committee will come up with the job posting. Mr. Avlas stated he started compiling a list of good candidates for the Screening Committee, but would invite any suggestions from the Board of Selectmen or interested residents. Chairman Becker requested that a notice be put on the website and Facebook page requesting any interested Screening Committee candidate submit a letter of interest. Selectman Kontoes asked what the Board of Selectman did last time during the process. Chairman Becker stated there were two Screening Committees last time and provided some history. Mr. Becker was appointed as a representative on the first committee and no Selectmen sat on the second committee. Selectman Gabor stated he sat on the last committee as an appointee of the Finance Committee. He stated he wouldn't know if a Selectman should sit on the Screening Committee, since the Selectmen make the ultimate decision. Chairman Becker stated he would recommend one selectman and one resident sit on the committee as it will steer the committee in what the town is looking for in a new Town Administrator. Selectman Jolda asked for a recommendation from Mr. Willardson. Mr. Willardson stated he would feel a little better with having a Selectmen on the committee. Mr. Avlas and Ms. Sansom agreed. Selectman Kontoes stated she feels it might be better having two residents as the Board's representatives. Mr. Willardson stated it is a big decision to make and not a long timeframe to meet with someone.

Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to not appoint a Selectman but instead appoint two outside individuals to the Town Administrator's Screening Committee.

Discussion: Selectman Klebart stated he believes having a Selectmen sit on the committee would be beneficial to come up with important questions and provide sight and experience. Selectman Kontoes stated she would suggest one of the appointments be a Department Head. Mr. Avlas stated if the Board didn't choose one of their own, at least one of their appointments should be from within the building.

Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – no, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – no.

Selectman Klebart stated the Board needs to let residents know what the Selectmen are looking for in a Town Administrator. Chairman Becker suggested the Board can advertise along with the Town Moderator to solicit interested parties to submit a letter of interest to serve on the Screening Committee. The Board could interview the candidates or review their submissions at the meeting next Monday. He stated the deadline will be Friday, August 6, 2021 at noon.

Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Klebart, to solicit interested resident to serve on the Town Administrator Screening Committee. Submission should include name and why they are interested in serving and must be submitted by Friday, August 6, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. Interested candidates should be available for interviews at the next Board of Selectmen's Meeting, Monday, August 9, 2021. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

Chairman Becker stated the Board needs to appoint an interim Town Administrator. He said Mr. Willardson has graciously reached out to Greg Balukonis who is able to fill in as interim Town Administrator. Mr. Willardson stated Mr. Balukonis has worked for 36 years in local government. He worked closely with him as the Town Administrator in Dudley. He just wrapped up serving as interim in Blackstone. Mr. Willardson noted he is familiar with the town and will be far better than anyone else available. Chairman Becker asked if the Board could be provided a copy of his contract with Blackstone. Chairman Becker suggesting having two Selectmen sit down with Mr. Willardson to work out an agreement with Mr. Balukonis for Interim Town Administrator.

Motion by Selectman Kontoes, seconded by Selectman Klebart, to appoint Selectman Jolda and Selectman Gabor to negotiate a contract with Greg Balukonis.

Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

Mr. Willardson noted the JAR of Hope foundation sent an email to Mr. Willardson and all Selectmen. Members of the Foundation ran 300 miles through Massachusetts. One of their stops along the way was Webster. They camped out at Long Subaru to bring attention to Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Mr. Becker asked that the Board of Selectmen sign a Proclamation for their efforts to bring awareness to DMD. He stated he would like to thank Long Subaru and Chief Shaw for all of their help.

Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Gabor, to authorize the issuance of the Proclamation for Jar of Hope and Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to adjourn at 6:46 p.m.

Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Friedland, Executive Secretary to the Board of Selectmen

Next Meetings:

August 9, 2021, August 23, 2021, and September 13, 2021, Board of Selectmen's Meeting 6:00 p.m. Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570