

**Town of Nahant, MA
Board of Selectmen**

**Executive Session Meeting Minutes
December 28, 2017 5:30pm**

**Frank Barile, Chairman
~~Chesley R. Taylor Jr., Vice Chair~~
Richard J. Lombard, Secretary
Jeff Chelgren, Town Administrator**

1. Meeting Opening 5:30 pm

- a. Mr. Barile opened the meeting and distributed a copy of letter sent to Ms. Waters, Ms. Schumann and Ms. Lowe who acknowledged they received it re: their right to meet in open or closed session.

Present at meeting were Ms. Kougias-Treasurer/Collector, Ms. Waters, Town Accountant, Ms. Lowe and Ms. Schumann, Administrative Assistants, Attorneys Darren Klein and Dan Skrip, as well as Mr. Barile, Mr. Lombard and Mr. Chelgren and various department heads. Ms. Kougias wants discussion as it pertains to her in executive session. Mr. Lombard made a motion that the Board move into executive session per MGL Ch. 30A Section 21 (a) (1) (7) to discuss complaints about town employees. Mr. Barile seconded the motion. Roll call – Mr. Lombard yes. Mr. Barile yes. Moved to executive Session. Department heads left.

Mr. Chelgren stated that the purpose of the 12/7/17 executive session meeting was to alert the BOS that a reserve fund transfer would be necessary to bring in help to get Ms. Kougias up to date. This discussion turned into a personnel issue with Ms. Kougias complaining about lack of teamwork and about coworkers Mss. Waters, Lowe and Schumann.

Discussion about intent of the 12/7/17 meeting.

Mr. Klein explained executive session was time for the employees to address Ms. Kougias complaints against her coworkers. Ms. Schumann said Ms. Kougias threw them under the bus at the 12/7 meeting, blaming their lack of assistance for one of the reasons she is behind. Ms. Waters stated that 12/7 meeting should have been about getting training for Ms. Kougias. It is frustrating for the Accounting Office because they are behind because of her. Ms. Waters is angry because people's jobs were threatened. Messrs. Barile and Lombard denied threatening jobs. Ms. Schumann read an excerpt from the 12/7 audio stating "Two Administrative Assistants – I recommend you lay one off per Mr. Barile. Ms. Schumann stated she appreciated the fact that Mr. Chelgren tried to stop the 12/7 personnel discussion.

Ms. Kougias said she wanted a vote of confidence in the Board at the 12/7 meeting. She felt verbally abused by Ms. Waters who expressed lack of confidence in her ability to do the job. She stated she has "carried a lot" without administrative and manager's support and had to defend herself at 12/7 meeting.

Ms. Schumann stated that after listening to the tape the 12/7 tape it was obvious that the personnel discussion was premeditated and Mr. Barile knew about Ms. Kougias complaints about the Admin team ahead of time as he voiced some of her complaints.

Mr. Chelgren stated the 12/7 meeting turned in to a performance evaluation of administrative assistants, a charge to introduce a performance enhancement program and then termination if no improvement

Ms. Waters stated that Ms. Kougias is a difficult person to work with. She tries to be helpful and has gone above and beyond to assist her but there are rules about separation of duties. She admits she did blow up for the first time in 23 years but was pushed over the edge. She was also upset about Ms. Kougias stating they use two sets of books and the negative connotation that implies. Ms. Kougias clarified that it was she, the treasurer that uses two sets of books – not the accountant. Ms. Waters didn't mean to hurt Ms. Kougias – she needs training to get up to date.

Ms. Kougias is getting quote form Mass Treasurer's Association to help her. Mr. Barile stated the Board had voted not to give additional funding for training so they would have to rescind their vote.

Ms. Kougias said she has asked for administrative support and has not received any. Ms. Schumann stated Ms. Kougias complained to the Board about them walking, watering plants and smoking instead of helping her, and they have helped her in the past whenever they can. Ms. Lowe stated she spent the entire day of 12/7 helping her and is offended by her hurtful comments to the Board. Ms. Schumann stated that the Admin Assistants are assistants to the Board and Town Administrator, not the Treasurer's office and is hurt by Ms. Kougias comments to the Board.

Mr. Lombard apologized for criticizing performance of Mses. Waters, Schumann and Lowe without investigating Ms. Kougias' complaints. It was the first time he had heard about performance issues in the Treasurer's office. He assured them that no one was losing their jobs.

Mr. Barile made a motion that the Board of Selectmen adjourn and move into open session. Mr. Lombard seconded the motion. Roll call vote. Mr. Barile Yes. Mr. Lombard Yes. Unanimous vote to move into open session at 6:35PM/

Meeting Minutes prepared by Mary Ellen Schumann, Administrative Assistant

Minutes approved by the Board of Selectmen on the ____ day of _____ 2018.



Board of Selectmen.