

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING - TUESDAY EVENING
MARCH 19, 2013**

PRESENT: Parella, Herreshoff, Calouro, Stuart, and Sweeney

The Council met in special session on Tuesday evening, March 19, 2013 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 6:33 o'clock PM Council Chairman Parella presiding:

1. Interview/Appointment - Bristol County Water Authority Board of Directors (term to expire in February 2016)
 - a. Georgina Macdonald, 180 Ferry Road - interest/appointment

Councilman Calouro nominated Ms. Macdonald for appointment.

There were no counter-nominations.

Calouro/Sweeney - Voted
unanimously to close nominations
and to instruct the Clerk to cast
one ballot in favor of Ms.
Macdonald with term to expire in
February 2016.

Prior to the vote taken, Council Chairman Parella observed that today is St. Joseph's Day and wished those present a happy St. Joseph's Day.

Ms. Macdonald reported that she has been following the BCWA since before the water company was acquired from the American Water Works. She noted that she did not pay much attention to the BCWA for the first few years and later was appalled to learn that there had been no maintenance and that it appears to her that the Board is not benchmarking.

Ms. Macdonald shared that her background is in helping companies to do things smarter and that she is concerned that the BCWA has not been operating efficiently.

Council Chairman Parella noted that she is aware that Ms. Macdonald has worked to "turn around" companies that that she believes that Ms. Macdonald's experience will be a benefit to the operation of the BCWA. She asked Ms. Macdonald what she would do if appointed.

Ms. Macdonald replied that she would spend her time on the budget and working with the Executive Director.

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Councilman Sweeney stated that he believes cost-control to be very important.

Ms. Macdonald expressed concern that some employees have been allowed to withdraw large sums of money from the pension plan. She added that it is very difficult to manage a portfolio of investments if the principal amount can be withdrawn without much warning.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know the remedy for this with Ms. Macdonald responding that the practice should be disallowed.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know if Ms. Macdonald has experience with pension plans with Ms. Macdonald responding that she worked for the "private bank" of the Bank of America.

Councilman Stuart noted that Bristol does not have a "financial representative" on the BCWA and that Ms. Macdonald may well fill this role.

Councilman Calouro informed Ms. Macdonald that "your reputation precedes you." He asked to know if she would plan to change the BCWA "business as usual" with Ms. Macdonald responding that she questions the wisdom in adding three new management positions at the BCWA especially since there is no treatment plant in operation. She also questioned the recent no-layoff policy.

Ms. Macdonald stated that it did not make sense to her to close the treatment plant and put everyone on salary.

Councilman Calouro stated that the Council appreciates receiving feedback from its appointees with Ms. Macdonald responding that she is happy to do so. She added that she believes that all representatives of the Council should provide feedback.

Council Chairman Parella noted that directors from Barrington and Warren refused to attend Town Council meetings.

Ms. Macdonald stated that to her, attending meetings to provide feedback is "101."

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Councilman Calouro asked to know why Ms. Macdonald was specifically interested in the BCWA with Ms. Macdonald explaining that water is a critical resource - "the next oil."

She added that upon concerning herself with the BCWA, she was appalled at what she found. She noted that she received an unintelligible letter which she could not understand and that the letter got her attention. She noted that she was disturbed to discover that the BCWA was claiming no responsibility to provide fire suppression service.

She added that this is not a way to run a public utility and that public servants have a responsibility to provide transparency and service to the public.

Councilman Calouro asked to know if Ms. Macdonald was familiar with the B & E Report with Ms. Macdonald responding that she was and that the report was "eye-opening." She added that she prepared a synopsis of the B & E Report and will provide same to the Clerk for the Council to peruse.

Councilman Herreshoff agreed that there are many problems on the Board of the BCWA. He added that the members appear to be well-intentioned. He questioned if some of the Board members might lack the necessary background and ability and that Ms. Macdonald represented a "breath of fresh air."

Councilman Herreshoff stated that the BCWA must solve the Poppasquash hydrant problem and that the BCWA should pay at least one-half of the cost. He added his opinion that the Town is "vulnerable" to a cross-bay pipeline failure and asked Ms. Macdonald if she was in favor of a connection to the Pawtucket system as a backup.

Ms. Macdonald stated that she was in favor of such a plan and that the need was urgent.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that he was appalled by the "weak excuses" of the Water Authority and is critical of the 11% increase since 35% of the increase will go to three managers' salaries. He noted that the BCWA appears to be at the end of a large portion of its debt service and that he believes that rates may be lowered as a result of this.

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Ms. Macdonald questioned as to how much maintenance has been deferred by the BCWA and that problems may be hidden.

Councilman Stuart stated that the Council was against the 11% increase and the three salaries. He stated that he believes that the BCWA needs better planning and hopes that Ms. Macdonald will be outspoken on the Board.

Council Chairman Parella agreed with Councilman Stuart and stated that she supports Ms. Macdonald's point of view and that she hopes that her decisions will be well thought-out.

Council Chairman Parella asked to know if Ms. Macdonald thinks the BCWA will keep the Massachusetts facilities with Ms. Macdonald responding that she must get "up to speed" on the Massachusetts situation and that the management of the Authority should articulate the options so that these can be well understood.

Council Chairman Parella stated that she has been "around this issue" for many years and that she fought in the General Assembly to maintain a local supply but added that the Pawtucket option was not around at that point.

She agreed with Ms. Macdonald that the options must be well-considered and that the State is in favor of redundant supplies of water.

Ms. Macdonald stated that she agrees with Council Chairman Parella.

Councilman Stuart noted that on top of a redundant supply, the infrastructure is in need of attention.

Ms. Macdonald stated that it was good timing for the bonds to be retiring.

Councilman Calouro asked to know if Ms. Macdonald can commit to the time requirements with Ms. Macdonald responding that she sees the commitment as long-term.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that he is hopeful that there will be changes and improvements. He expressed concern that he believes that the BCWA cannot make decisions.

Council Chairman Parella stated that she was "shocked" to learn one reason for the Christmastime rate increase is

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that the Authority could not be assured of having the votes present to pass it otherwise. She stated that she hopes that Ms. Macdonald agrees that the issues are important not the counting of votes.

Councilman Stuart stated that Ms. Macdonald's background appears to be well suited to the BCWA since she is proven and dedicated and has been a member of the EDC.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Calouro, seconded by Councilman Sweeney and voted unanimously the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 7:05 o'clock PM.

Louis P. Cirillo, CMC
Council Clerk