

*BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND ADVISORY BOARD
JOINT MEETING MINUTES*

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING**

This meeting was aired live and taped for local television.

PRESENT: Duncan Phyfe, Chair, Leo Janssens II, Member, Kyle Johnson, Clerk, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator, and Sylvia Turcotte, Executive Assistant. Advisory Board members present – Bill Johnson, Chair, Joe Oliveira, Vice Chair, Bruce Whitney, Allison Weissensee, Ron Putnam, and Gail Dumont. Also present – Larry Barrett, Police Chief and members of the 250th Committee – George Cornwall, Sue Brennan, Patty Johnson, Barbara DiVito, Linda Ramsdell and Karen Mattus.

I. SALUTE THE FLAG

Duncan Phyfe called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT None

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Leo Janssens motioned to approve the agenda as presented and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS None

A. Liquor License Hearing – Mr. Mike’s (6:35 p.m.)

Attorney Karen D. Simao of the McDermott, Quilty & Miller LLP law firm representing Global Montello Group was present.

Leo Janssens made the motion to open the hearing and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.

Attorney Simao stated that this was just an administrative change of the Chief Financial Officer at Global Montello re: Mr. Mike’s. She added that there would be no significant impact on the day to day activity at Mr. Mike’s. Duncan Phyfe stated that there were no comments from the Board, and no one against this action. ***Leo Janssens motioned to close the hearing and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.***

Leo Janssens made the motion to approve the license change and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. All in favor.

B. Loan Resolution – Water Line Project with USDA

Doug Briggs stated that the Board needs to vote to exercise the borrowing through USDA. He also noted that the closing would be on November 10, 2015. ***Kyle Johnson motioned to accept the loan resolution and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.***

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of 250th Parade held on Sunday, September 27th

Duncan Phyfe stated that he enjoyed the parade and noted that it was very well run. Kyle Johnson stated that the work of this Committee is just tremendous and it was great to see it all come into fruition and so well organized. He expressed his thanks to the members of this Committee and all their hard work. Leo Janssens noted that there was a lot of hard work that went into this and it turned out great.

George Cornwall, Co-Chair of the 250th Committee stated that the Committee was thankful for all the back-up and support of the Board of Selectmen and Doug Briggs which was great. Barbara Divito thanked the DPW, Light Department, Police and Fire for all that they did to make the parade such a success and also noted that both George Cornwall and Steve Coswell worked really hard behind the scenes and should be acknowledged.

Karen Mattus stated that she hoped to see all the Town Officials at the Oktoberfest event on October 17th.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Special Town Meeting of October 27, 2015 – Review Warrant Articles

Doug Briggs began by stating that originally the first draft had 16 articles, but with free cash at only \$40,000 to \$45,000 some articles had to be removed. He stated that the reason free cash is so low is because the Snow & Ice deficit was covered by transfers, the building loan for Briggs School deficit was taken care of and a few other items were also handled.

He stated that he took the articles out for road improvements, stabilization and capital, and the post retirement funds.

Mr. Briggs also noted that the two possible citizen petitions never came in and the bylaw change regarding exempt employees was not needed after a closer review of the bylaws. He also noted that the Watatic Dam article was taken off and may be a possible capital plan expense. He stated that the dam is structurally sound but that the valve hasn't worked for some time and the spillway isn't substantial enough. He noted that USDA has 40 year loans available for these repairs and engineering. He added that the Watatic Dam was picked due to it being at the top of the hill.

At this time Mr. Briggs stated that there were 8 articles.

Article 1. Replace bulletproof vests for Police.

Article 2. Replace Police electronic control weapon (tasers) and related equipment.

Article 3. Sick leave buyback cost associated with employee retirement. (He stated that this is a \$225k liability and we would vote to add \$10K to this account.)

Article 4. Retirement benefits for Town Clerk. (He stated that this would cover the overlap of costs \$3k.)

Article 5. Increase Sewer budget by \$40k. (He stated that this was due to the Gardner rate hike and that they would also need to increase the sewer rate. He added that Gardner will increase their rate in the next two years \$.15 and \$.20.

Article 6. AWRSD Regional Agreement amendment. (He stated that he has asked for a red-line and clean copy and he has not received them yet.)

Discussion followed on this article. Joe Oliveira noted that he would not support this article. Bill Johnson stated that they can place this on the warrant and if it's not how it

should read, then we can vote no at the Special Town Meeting. He added that we want clarification. Kyle Johnson stated that we need a timeframe and we should leave the article on and apply carefully positioned pressure to get this amendment for our review now.

Article 7. Railroad property under control of recreation for purposes of developing a rail trail. (He stated that it would start at the DPW and go to South Ashburnham and it does need work. It would be placed under the Parks & Recreation to allow the work and to use funds.) Duncan Phyfe inquired as to what would be done with the funds and Mr. Briggs stated that it would be all volunteers. Mr. Briggs also noted that the Parks & Rec Committee is okay with this as well. Leo Janssens asked if both groups were in agreement to work together and Mr. Briggs stated that they were. He stated that the Rail Trail would bring issues to the Parks & Rec and they would say how the funds were spent and it won't be a battle.

Article 8. Exhaust the debt of North Country Sustainability Center. (Mr. Briggs explained how this transpired. He also noted that no bills are out there and it's no cost to the Town.) Leo Janssens stated that as a Board member he would not like to see this on the warrant. Mr. Briggs stated that Town Counsel said it was up to the Board of Selectmen. Duncan Phyfe stated that the minutes said that the Board of Selectmen voted this in and that we should take it off the warrant. Kyle Johnson stated that they should have the community decide and that it is valuable to have this on the warrant as a show of transparency.

At this time the Board voted to place the articles on the warrant and whether to recommend.

Kyle Johnson motioned to approve and recommend Articles 1 and 2. Leo Janssens seconded and the motion carried.

Leo Janssens motioned to approve and recommend Article 3 and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.

Kyle Johnson motioned to approve and recommend Article 4 and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.

Kyle Johnson motioned to approve and recommend Article 5 and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.

Leo Janssens made the motion to approve but not to recommend Article 6. Kyle Johnson seconded and the motion carried.

Kyle Johnson motioned to approve and recommend Article 7 and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.

Leo Janssens motioned to remove Article 8 and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Kyle Johnson vote no.

Bill Johnson stated that he has pushed for this article for a long time. He stated that the Town has been bad-mouthed by this group and this would be an opportunity to put the records straight. He noted that this should be placed on the warrant and have residents vote on it to set the record straight. Joe Oliveira stated that there may not be any benefit to place on the warrant. Leo Janssens agreed with Joe Oliveira and said he wanted to see this go away.

Doug Briggs asked the Board what they thought about the articles and the explanations on the warrant and Kyle Johnson said that he wanted to see more explanation in a non-political format. Mr. Briggs asked if he should decrease the verbiage on the warrant and put more in the briefing book? Kyle Johnson stated that they shouldn't read from the briefing book word for word and Joe Oliveira agreed stating that they should understand the articles.

There was a question on the cost to mail the warrant and Mr. Briggs stated that it was approximately \$2,000. He suggested that we use “Code Red” to get the word out and to post the warrant at Town Hall and on the website. Duncan Phyfe stated that the Code Red should be done the next day.

It was noted that the North Country Sustainability Center issue would be on the next agenda.

At this time the Advisory Board voted on the warrant articles.

Articles 1, 2, and 3 – **Joe Oliveira motioned to recommend and was seconded by Bruce Whitney. All in favor.**

Articles 4 and 5 – **Bruce Whitney motioned to recommend and was seconded by Ron Putnam. All in favor.**

Article 6. – **It was noted unanimously that this would be voted on at Town Meeting.** Ron Putnam stated that a drop dead date was needed. Allison Weissensee noted she had concerns and Bill Johnson stated that he would reach out to Supt. Mazolla to tell him that we need the Regional Agreement amendment by the end of this week as there wasn’t that many changes.

Article 7. – **Joe Oliveira motioned to recommend this article and was seconded by Ron Putnam. All in favor.**

B. Discussion on Proposed License Fee Changes

Doug Briggs stated that Sylvia Turcotte conducted a survey of towns to determine if we were in line with other towns regarding license fees. He stated that we were in line with most fees except the Common Victualler and One-Day Liquor License fees and we were proposing the following:

Common Victualler	from \$20.00 to \$30.00
One-Day Liquor License	from \$10.00 to \$20.00

Kyle Johnson motioned to approve the proposed increase in fees and was seconded by Leo Janssens. All in favor.

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S UPDATE

Doug Briggs began his report by stating that Weston and Sampson is installing the automated feed system in the Westminster pump station into the discharge end as well as getting the aerators working in order to try and fix the odor concerns from Gardner. There was a short discussion on where the odor was originating. Mr. Briggs stated that Gardner is threatening to shut us down in three years but it won’t happen as the DEP won’t allow it and they want us to work it out. He also noted that our W/S operators are getting additional training from Weston & Sampson.

He stated that B2Q has been chosen to be our engineering firm to oversee the Green Energy project at the Library. He stated that they are working diligently to repair the boiler or get a new one quickly as the Library is without heat.

Mr. Briggs stated that Michelle Johnson will be our next Town Clerk starting November 1st. He stated that she is working and training with Linda Ramsdell.

He noted that a Design Public Hearing has been scheduled by MassDOT for Monday, October 26th at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building on the Williams Road and Route 101 intersection. He added that this is a part of the process to get information out to the public.

Mr. Briggs stated that he met with the Ashburnham-Westminster School District, the Town of Westminster and representatives from NFP and Boston Mutual about Group Life Insurance enhancements, which they are presenting to the Town's employees. He said he also met with the Department Heads today on this which would be 100% covered by the employees with no physical or medical questions required.

He also noted that there was some disconcerting news from our insurance advisor regarding a projected increase in our health insurance of 17% as they thought it was going down. He added that this on top of the 10.2% increase last year was not good news and that they are going out with an RFP and will be negotiating with BCBS to lower the proposed increase. Bill Johnson inquired if they looked at GIC and Mr. Briggs stated that we have and will.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 21, 2015 Minutes – Regular

Kyle Johnson motioned to approve the minutes of September 21, 2015 and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.

The Advisory Board needed to vote to approve minutes from the Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen on August 4, 2015. ***Gail Dumont motioned to approve the minutes of August 4, 2015 and was seconded by Bruce Whitney. Joe Oliveira abstained.***

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE None

X. OCTOBER MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kyle Johnson read the following:

He stated that there were openings on the following boards and committees – (1) Conservation Commission; (1) Council on Aging Board; (2) Historical Commission and (1) Parks & Recreation Committee.

He read the following meeting notices:

- Monday, 10/12 – Columbus Holiday
- Tuesday, 10/13 @6:00 p.m. – Water/Sewer Comm. – Lower Level Room at Town Hall
- Wednesday, 10/14 @5:00 p.m. – Bd. of Assessors - Assessors office at Town Hall
- Thursday, 10/15 @ 6:30 p.m. – Planning Board – Lower Level Room at Town Hall

Town Clerk Reminders:

- January 1st and on – Open registration of voters at the Town Hall, Town Clerk's Office, 32 Main Street, from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Mondays and 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday thru Thursday.
- October 16, 2015 – Friday – Final Registration for the Special Town Meeting at the Public Safety Building, Dispatch Center, 99 Central Street – 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- October 26, 2015 – 6:30 p.m. MassDOT Design Public Hearing re: Intersection of Williams and Route 101 – in the Training Room at Public Safety Building. Public is invited.

- October 27, 2015 – Tuesday – Special Town Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Oakmont Regional High School Auditorium, 9 Oakmont Drive.
- Reminders were sent recently to all residents who have not yet licensed their dogs including a deadline of Sept. 3rd to do so. Those still unlicensed will be receiving a \$50.00 fine per dog. Those fines will be issued by the Animal Control Officer this month.

The next scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Monday, October 19, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit) None

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION Not required.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:10 p.m. Leo Janssens motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Executive Assistant