

*JOINT BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES*

**MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2016 – 6:30 P.M.
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING**

This meeting was aired live and taped for local television.

PRESENT: Board of Selectmen - Duncan Phye, Chair, Leo Janssens II, Member, Kyle Johnson, Clerk
Advisory Board – Bill Johnson, Chair, Gail Dumont, Bruce Whitney and Jaime Piedrafite, Secretary
Bill Fraher, Auditor, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator, and Sylvia Turcotte, Executive Assistant.

I. SALUTE THE FLAG

Duncan Phye 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 Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. 2015 Audit Review with Bill Fraher

Bill Fraher began by stating that the 2015 Audit went very well with no material corrections. He noted that this year we had to have a single audit due to the Water Project, a \$1.4m loan and a \$605k grant. He stated that they usually don't need to have a single audit.

Mr. Fraher presented some slides with pertinent information regarding the audit. He noted that the Town's 5-year average for Revenues & Expenditures of 3.5% was close to what other towns are experiencing. He noted that the school debt kicked in but the numbers should level off. On the Use of Reserves and Budgetary Results slide, he noted that the Town's budgets were very tight and that the goal should be a 1 to 2% variance. He stated that we were able to keep the Town Reserves steady. He also noted that on the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Liability & Outstanding Long-Term Debt that the Town has started to put away money to cover the Retiree Health Insurance benefits. He added that under Net Pension, GASB requires to show the Town's share of unfunded liability and this should go away around 2036. Duncan Phye noted that the OPEB number was high and Mr. Fraher stated that they take all the employees and calculate the numbers and that GASB wants people to be aware of these numbers.

Bill Johnson asked Mr. Fraher to quickly review his Management Letter. Mr. Fraher stated that there were no material weaknesses. He stated that there were only 7 comments. He noted that Item 2 was to make the Town aware that there are always some risks, and he noted the Light Department accounts that under Chapter 164, should be under the control of the Town Treasurer. Bill Johnson noted that they have discussed this with the Light Department to no avail. Doug Briggs was asked to talk to the Light Board about this to get it off the Management Letter.

Bill Fraher noted that the Town's Chart of Accounts was inconsistent with the guidelines and that having a Policies and Procedures Manual is a good idea and can come in handy. He noted that the MMA may have a model to work with.

He also noted the receipt of money in different places, departments, in the Town. Doug Briggs stated that money is only received at Town Hall, the Library and the Public Safety Building.

Mr. Fraher recommended that internal auditing should be performed by the Accountant.

At this time Kyle Johnson made the motion to accept the 2015 audit as presented and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried. The Board thanked Mr. Fraher.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update – DPW Building Committee

Kyle Johnson stated that the next public forum has not yet been scheduled but will be posted soon. He urged residents to stay involved and ask questions as the Town desperately needs this building.

B. Update – Downtown Focus Committee and Regional Agreement Committee

Duncan Phyfe noted that he has no new information on the Downtown Focus Committee. He stated that the Regional Agreement Committee, which was made up of the four chairs from both towns, has agreed on changes and a letter will be written by John Fairbanks to be sent to the School Committee with these suggested changes.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of revised "Application for Use of Town Property" form

Doug Briggs noted that he asked his Department Heads and Parks & Rec for their input. He noted that it's the same form with a few modifications such as Sweeney and Winchester Park use and a fee if lights or electricity are requested. He stated that only non-profit or Town committees or boards may use the Town's property. Kyle Johnson inquired about how Farmers' Markets could be set up and Mr. Briggs stated that they needed to go through the Agricultural Commission. ***Leo Janssens motioned to approve and adopt the revised form and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.***

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Mr. Briggs began by stating that there was a question regarding the Water/Sewer Building and whether we are still paying for it. He responded by stating that it was erected in 1987 and paid off through Sewer revenue in 1998.

Doug Briggs stated that they received the budget from Monty Tech and it decreased by \$18,000. He also noted that along with Karen Murphy he met with Gary Mazzola and Sherry Kersey, per Mr. Mazzola's request, on the AWRSD budget deficit. They looked at several issues but with teacher negotiations ongoing, its effect on the budget is still undetermined. He added that he will be asking the Selectmen to accept sections 21-23 of MGL 32b regarding Health Insurance Plan design at their next meeting on April 4th. He also noted that notification of the vote was sent out to all bargaining groups. He also stated that it couldn't be done last year because of the Teachers contract but will be done this year by the School and Westminster as well. He stated that it would become effective July 1st and this will allow us to drop to a 7% increase compared to 11% at present with 25% of the savings going back to the employees, lowering their payments in July and August. He stated that there wasn't any capital plan in the schools budget.

He noted that Kevin Flynn, who was employed at MRPC, has reached out and is looking for an agreement where he will look for and write grant applications for us on a retainer basis. His fee is \$2,400 annually and will cover one grant submission. Mr. Briggs noted that for only one grant, he suggests that they hold off for now.

He stated that the Energy Committee's Library project was going very well with the insulation and carpentry work completed. He noted that they are meeting on Wednesday, March 23rd and will discuss the heating part of the project which is an issue. He stated that the heating system needs to be replaced but with the insulation part done, the heating bill has been cut in half. He added that there is \$70,000 remaining in this grant and they will be looking at applying for the next grant soon. He also noted that Chief Barrett has already seen a decrease in the PSB electric bill with the new LED lights.

He stated that he met with Steve Nims and the Joint Water Authority to review the contract for Veolia. After discussions about whether we wanted to look at taking over the operation of the plant, it was determined not at this time and they entered into a five year contract with the next contract due to be rebid. At a cost of \$160,000 annually, it operates well the way it is.

He noted that he has been in discussions with the Winchendon Town Manager about taking over ownership of the Sherbert Road water line. Currently it is owned by Winchendon. We would take over ownership and Winchendon would reimburse us for the cost of installing a new line. They would be billed off a new meter at the town line area. There are currently over 300 water users billed off this same line. Once the new water lines are in we will pave Sherbert Road.

Mr. Briggs then stated that back in May we notified the Water Sewer Commissioners that they would not be reappointed and that the Board of Selectmen would take over as Commissioners. The current Commissioners whose terms end this fiscal year will simply not be reappointed. He stated that the current Commissioners are ineffective and this has even affected the Joint Water Authority. Kyle Johnson stated that it's clear that Mr. Briggs' suggestion is justified. Leo Janssens noted that the Special Act doesn't give the Selectmen the authority to make these changes and Mr. Briggs stated that he would check. Mr. Briggs noted that the Commissioners oversee construction projects as well as rate increases and that along with Steve Nims he has been overseeing these projects as well as monitoring the budget. Leo Janssens stated that the Board of Selectmen is guilty of not doing anything. He also asked Mr. Briggs to check with Town Counsel regarding this issue and the Commissioners charge/role. Mr. Briggs stated that he would look into this and get back to the Board. Leo Janssens stated that if they don't know what their job is how can they do it? Bill Johnson stated that the Selectmen should take over as Commissioners. Leo Janssens responded that the Special Act doesn't allow this and Mr. Johnson noted that they are the appointing authority and MGL specifies the Board of Selectmen's authority. Kyle Johnson stated that if they can't or won't do the job then we need someone who can and will. He added that if they're prepared to do it, great, but if not, then move forward. Mr. Janssens once again asked Mr. Briggs to do some research as to their job description or mission statement.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 7, 2016 Minutes – Joint Meeting with Library Trustees

Kyle Johnson motioned to approve the minutes of March 7, 2016 and was seconded by Leo Janssens. All in favor.

B. March 14, 2016 Minutes – Joint Meeting Advisory Board and BOS

For the Advisory Board Gail Dumont made the motion to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2016 meeting and was seconded by Bruce Whitney. All in favor. Kyle Johnson motioned to approve the minutes of March 14, 2016 and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE Kyle Johnson stated that the Board received an invitation from Representative Niki Tsongas inviting them to the Twentieth Third District Day in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, April 13th and Thursday, April 14th.

Mr. Johnson also noted that they were also invited by the Chamber of Commerce to attend an after-hours business event on March 23rd.

He also noted that he received letters from two residents of Lakeshore Drive and one from a So. Main Street resident, regarding the proposed DPW facility. He stated that it's nice to be involved and to be part of the solution. He thanked the residents for their comments.

X. MARCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kyle Johnson read the following 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, and closed on Friday.
- Thursday, March 24th is the last day to file objections or withdrawals of nomination papers to the Town Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 6 if the final registration for the Town Election – Registration of voters at Town Hall, Town Clerk's office – 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 13 is the final registration of voters for the Town Meeting – Town Clerk's office at Town Hall.
- Monday, April 25 12:00 noon deadline for filing applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for the Town Election.
- Tuesday, April 26 – Town Election – Polls open at 9:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. at the J.R. Briggs Elementary School Gym, 96 Williams Road.
- Tuesday, May 3 – Annual Town Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Oakmont Regional High School in the Auditorium, 9 Oakmont Drive.

The next scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Monday, April 4, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit)

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION Not required.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:35 p.m. Leo Janssens motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte, Executive Assistant