

Board of Selectmen Minutes
Meeting – November 7, 2013

Present: Selectmen - Mark Gilmore, Carolyn Shores Ness
Interim Town Administrator – Wendy Foxmyn

Absent: David Wolfram

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm at the Deerfield Town Hall at 8 Conway Street.

Minutes: Approval of minutes of October 9, 2013 was postponed.

Public Comments: Skip Olmstead was present with two letters for the Board to consider regarding the recently voted regional EMS service.

Hearings/Appearances before the Board:

7:00 pm – **Removal of property from MGL 61A** – Present Steve and Katherine Melnik
A motion was made by Ms. Ness, seconded by Mr. Gilmore, and unanimously voted, to exercise the Town of Deerfield's right of first refusal pursuant to MGL Chapter 61A, Section 14, and decline to purchase the property of Stephen D. Melnik and others as identified on the Deerfield Assessor's Map 92, Parcel 2.1, and recorded in the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 121, Page 92, as Lot 2.

Selectmen's Comments / Announcements: The Quarterly Selectmen's meeting will be November 21st. Ms. Ness said the topic for the evening is drug use; she is hopeful the whole board can attend.

Board of Health Comments/ Announcements: Ticks are still active.

Discussion / Decision Items:

Set Sewer Rates:

After last meeting's discussion of sewer rates, the numbers have been recalculated. The resulting rate is up, but consumption is down, the result being that most bills won't change much. Ms. Ness made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilmore, and unanimously voted, to set the 2013-2014 billing cycle sewer rates at \$5.85 per 1000 gallons which is based on the actual water usage for the winter period and an abatement for summer water use above 125% of each individual's previous winter use (residential accounts only), as long as the abatement is greater than \$25.00. Minimum consumption billing is \$40 and the service connection fee is \$50.

Bond authorizations for Public Works Building:

Ms. Foxmyn presented bonding paperwork received from the Treasurer. Ms. Ness made a motion, Mr. Gilmore seconded, to authorize the sale of \$4.9 million in General Obligation Building Bonds of the Town dated November 15, 2013 to Morgan Stanley & Company, LLC at the price of \$5,047,514.50 and further votes per the "Vote of the Board of Selectmen" document attached to the Minutes of this meeting on November 7, 2013. The term of the bond extends to 2033; interest rates range from 3% to 4%. Mr. Gilmore had questions about the interest rate, which he thought was excessive, and the ability to refinance. Later in the meeting, the motion was brought back for a vote. The motion was unanimously approved for signing.

Appointments:

1. Ms. Ness made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilmore, to offer the position of Town Accountant to Brenda Hill, at the Grade 5, Step 1 level of the employee classification plan, for a three-year period per Mass. General Laws Chapter 55. Ms. Hill has not worked in a municipal situation; she has previously been a CPA. Mr. Gilmore was concerned about the statutory requirement of a three year term for a person who he said doesn't meet the stated requirements. Ms. Hill is willing to take the next certification training available in March at UMASS. Following discussion, the vote was in favor.
2. Ms. Ness made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilmore, to accept, with regret, the resignation, effective November 8, 2013, of Police Officer Kurt Gilmore. The vote was unanimous. Mr. Gilmore added his thanks for a job well done.
3. Cultural Council appointment- Ms. Ness made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilmore, and voted, to appoint Candace Bradbury-Carlin to the Cultural Council for a term ending June 30, 2014.
4. SCEMS Board of Oversight –The latest version of a proposed Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) was presented. Ms. Foxmyn pointed out some changes. One being the minimum qualifications for the director (Item 2, section 2B). There was conversation about whether a Board of Oversight could be appointed prior to signing of the IMA. The Board needs to have an opportunity to review the document before further discussion. It has been sent to legal counsel.

A motion was made by Ms. Ness that Mark Gilmore be appointed to the transition team. That group will meet Nov 19th. The Town can have a second member, however one was not appointed.

Ms. Foxmyn will meet with representatives from the other towns to work on a Community Innovative Challenge grant that could be used to offset some of the initial operating costs. The application is due on November 22nd.

Budget: Present – Skip Olmstead

As the Finance Committee Chair, Mr. Olmstead said he was hoping the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and Capital Improvements would meet and set a cap on the budget requests, something like 2.5% over the current budget. If the budget request is greater than the cap he would like a meeting. He would like the Selectmen to have first crack at reviewing budget requests. He would also like to see a chart that showed budget and actual expenses for the past three years. Mr. Gilmore said he would like to see how expenditures for the current year are conforming to those anticipated during the budgeting process.

Interim Town Administrator's Report:

Energy Committee - The Committee wishes to participate in a FRCOG exploratory community solar project. A motion was made by Ms. Ness, seconded by Mr. Gilmore, and unanimously voted, to authorize the Energy Committee to participate. The solar project on the Town landfill is on hold. There is a possibility that the money originally planned for the windows on the north side of Town Hall, turned out not to be feasible, be used to install solar panels at the treatment plant.

Tax Classification – Ms. Foxmyn reported that certification has been received from DOR; she expects there will be a tax classification hearing at the next Board meeting.

Candidates for Town Clerk/Treasurer/Collector – Three candidates out of 17 will be interviewed for the position. Ms. Foxmyn said that for some reason employment opportunities advertised in the newspaper seem to be circulated to a large area, resulting in receipt of applications from all over the country. She was not in favor of this practice as it resulted in dozens of applications, many unqualified candidates, and lots of extra work.

The DOR report – The Board has received copies of the DOR report regarding the town's management practices, including a sample Town Administrator job description. The report has been sent to the Personnel Committee for comment. Ms. Ness said she had read it and did not agree with it. Mr. Gilmore said it had some good points to consider and would like a meeting to discuss it and how to move forward.

Oxford Property – Mr. Gilmore and Ms. Foxmyn met with Ann Burke of the Western Mass. Economic Development Council regarding the Oxford property. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for sale and development of the property has been prepared for release, has been posted on the town's website, and is being circulated by the Council.

Donation – Jane Trigère and her husband recently donated office furniture, having purchased the bank building next to their property, to the highway department for use in the new building.

Scheduling of a meeting with the Personnel Board, possibly for 5:30 pm just prior to a Selectmen's meeting on November 20th was proposed. Note was made of the number of items already scheduled for that evening.

A motion was made by Ms. Ness, seconded by Mr. Gilmore, and voted, to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Priscilla Phelps

Attachment: "Vote of Selectmen" bonding