

Board of Selectmen

August 26, 2015

A regular meeting of the Deerfield Board of Selectmen was posted for 6:30 PM on August 26, 2015, at Town Offices, 8 Conway Street, South Deerfield, Massachusetts.

Present: David Wolfram, Mark Gilmore, Carolyn Shores Ness

Also Present: Kayce Warren (Town Administrator), Douglas Finn, Exec. Assist.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

Minutes of previous meetings for review and approval

The Board reviewed meeting minutes from May 29, 2015, June 19, 2015, July 29, 2015, August 5, 2015, August 12, 2015

It was MOVED by Ness, SECONDED by Wolfram

To approve the minutes of May 29, 2015, June 19, 2015, July 29, 2015, August 5, 2015, August 12, 2015 with corrections.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Public Comment

Mr. David “Bud” Driver spoke about the archaeological permit, as signed by the Massachusetts Historic Commission. Mr. Driver asked about archeological artifact attachment, as related to private lands, public lands, and the proposed “Northeast Energy Direct” pipeline project.

There was some discussion as to the impact of local archeological excavations on the decision making process related to the permitting of the pipeline project.

Selectmen’s Comments / Announcements

Ms. Ness reminded viewers about upcoming Deerfield Recreation Department activities. Ms. Ness also spoke about a HUD meeting that she attended. She reported that it is unlikely that the town would qualify for HUD grant money for WWTP upgrades or repairs, but that there might be HUD money available for culvert repair.

Mr. Wolfram reported that the Rec Department is looking for a field hockey coach.

Board of Health Comments

Ms. Ness reported that mosquitos in Greenfield have tested positive for West Nile Virus, and offered precautions for local residents.

Hearings/Apearances before the Board

Community Playground

Ms. Julie Chalfant reported on the progress of the DES Community Playground project. A total of about 150 individuals participated in the three-day project, which was by all reports a success. The final touches should be complete by end of the weekend.

The board thanked Kevin Scarborough, Mike Phillips, and a number of other individuals who participated in the planning and coordination of the project. It was a community effort that proved to be a success.

Kevin Scarborough, Superintendent of Public Works Operations

Mr. Scarborough appeared before the Board.

Discussion on Contract Labor vs. Full-Time Employees

Mr. Scarborough spoke about the benefits – and detractions – of hiring full-time employees vs. Contract Labor. The legal limitations of hiring someone to do a specific job for a limited time, without being bound by legal obligations to pay benefits, unemployment, etc.

Question: What is not being done now, without the foreman position filled?

Answer: Building maintenance. Roadside mowing. Other regular jobs.

Mr. Scarborough spoke about the difficulty of finding someone who is capable, licensed, and ready to work, at the rates the town can offer.

"I feel that, in some aspects, I'm failing – because we're not getting some things done – but I know that it's because we're short handed..."

Mr. Gilmore spoke about the potential of hiring someone for a specific job, for a limited time. Mr. Gilmore expressed concern about paying benefits for full-time staff.

Gilmore: "This isn't sustainable. We are left with two options: To not provide the service, or to charge the taxpayers for providing the service."

Mr. Gilmore stated that 'how we manage the job' will determine how much we can do, and for how much.

Mr. Scarborough spoke about the difficulty of finding someone to fill the position. Further, the difficulty was how to pay for contract labor without a budget for same.

There was further discussion.

It was MOVED by Ness, SECONDED by Wolfram,

To approve the posting for and hire of a foreman.

There was discussion about the motion, and about the success of finding a potential candidate for the position. Ms. Ness expressed concern about uncompleted work due to a short-handed highway crew.

Mr. Wolfram stated that the position should be advertised, to determine what kind of candidates are there, and who might be available to fill the position.

Mr. Gilmore stated that to advertise a position, as a means of ‘testing the waters’, has proven unsuccessful in the past. Mr. Gilmore suggested that similar result could be expected this time. Mr. Gilmore suggested that the current model is unsustainable.

VOTED: 2, 1, 0.

Mr. Wolfram suggested that, in relation to the WWTP, if no one responded to the advertisement for a WWTP operator, to check with the company that services Sunderland, and see if they have someone who could fill in on an interim basis.

Related to Contract Labor, Mr. Wolfram suggested that perhaps construction workers might be able to fill in over the winter.

Update on Work:

Mr. Scarborough that the piping for the retention pond was installed, and part of it was being backfilled. The fencing will likely have to be acquired through a procurement process, due to the cost.

Tree Work: Mr. Scarborough spoke about the progress of tree work this year. The department continues to make its way through the list. Jim’s Tree Service has been exceptional in their service to the town. Mr. Scarborough spoke about specific locations in town where additional tree work would be beneficial.

Wendell Open Space Commission is holding a seminar on Japanese Knotweed coming up. Mr. Scarborough suggested that the seminar would be a good opportunity to learn more about the invasive species.

Pothole patching continues. Repaving on North Main Street will likely wait until next Spring (2016). There was also discussion on culverts on Pogue’s Hole Road. There was some discussion about stormwater management near Wapping Road, and the role that DEP may play in working through the situation.

The Board thanked Mr. Scarborough for his time.

Discussion/Decision Items

The board considered several items:

FERC Comment Submission

The board reviewed the draft submission as assembled by the Town Administrator.

The work done by David Driver will be submitted The Deerfield Energy Resource Committee will also be submitting comments to FERC.

IT was MOVED by Ness, SECONDED by Gilmore

To sign and send the FERC Comment Submission as presented.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Discuss/Approve/Vote – Appointment of Treasurer / Collector / Town Clerk

It was MOVED by

To appoint Barbara Hancock to Town Clerk, Burial Agent, Treasurer, Collector

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

MASS Community Compact

Ms. Warren spoke about the Community Compact, .

Discuss/Approve/Vote – New England Natural Bakers

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Ness

To table discussion on the Purchase and Sale Agreement matter until September 9, 2015.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Town Administrator's Report

Landfill Solar: Ms. Warren reported that the town was successful in its grant application for Technical Assistance related to a potential solar-energy project on the capped Town Landfill. The Board requested that Kristen Bakker and M A Swedlund be kept in the loop on the issue, as well as the Energy Committee.

Civil War Monument: Town Administrator has spoken with John Nove in regard to recent information related to the Civil War Monument at Old Deerfield. It is likely that there will need to be conversations between Historic Commission and the CPA committee in order to determine how to proceed.

ODWWTP Solar: Work is mostly complete, and the town (and M.L. Schmitt) is waiting on Eversource.

Mail Items: The board was advised to review the materials presented in relation to the Deerfield Railyard, and recurrent and new issues.

Upcoming Training: Two upcoming training session have been scheduled, and both Town Administrator and Executive Assistant will be attending. Additionally, a training session is planned that will provide information in relation to Enterprise Funds. Potential town partners will be informed of the final date.

Police Resource Officer: The Board will welcome the Police Chief at the next meeting to discuss matters related to a School Resource Officer.

Public Comment

The board entertained questions from Jeff Upton, related to the police consolidation study being conducted. The board reiterated that the study was being undertaken to consider the sustainability of three separate, smaller departments, and not in reaction to any recent event or incident.

The board also entertained a question related to whether or not multiple municipalities could co-own property. The response was that, it was likely that a multi-town organization probably could own real estate.

Question: True or not true: is the Whately Building a done deal?

Answer: Not true.

Mr. Wolfram stated that the board has been looking at a number of options related to the Tri-Town EMS. Mr. Upton suggested a few options that might be able to be considered.

There was ongoing discussion about the options, and issues, related to finding permanent housing for the South County EMS.

Matt Russo spoke to this subject, revisited the history of the SCEMS project, and the successes of the service.

Matt Russo: "The Town doesn't have an appetite for another \$2-3 Million dollar construction project at this time."

There was further discussion about the potential of building a new SCEMS office at the Whately Library Building (4 Sandy Lane), the costs of renovation of that space versus new construction, and the issues related to moving the SCEMS to that location, including the opening up on West Industrial Drive (South Deerfield) to Sandy Lane.

There was additional discussion on ongoing issues related to non-profit organizations, payments in lieu of taxes, etc.

Upcoming meetings:

- September 9, 2015, 6:30 PM – Town Offices, South Deerfield
- September 23, 2015, 6:30 PM – Town Offices, South Deerfield

Adjourn

There being no further business, it was MOVED by Ness, SECONDED by Wolfram

To authorize signing of payroll and vendor warrants, upon completion, and at the convenience of the Board members, and thereafter to adjourn.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Finn