

Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, February 8, 2010

Present: Walter F. Alterisio, Clerk and Procurement Officer and Member Kevin Welch; Chairman Wesley D. Goss absent

Fire Chief Rich advised on progress in past 2 ½ years and provided projections for the next 2 ½ years. He indicated he's not very satisfied with Groton Dispatch for EMS dispatch. He presented a copy of the letter he'd submitted to Police Chief re: calls dispatched to Groton for Dunstable calls; has scheduled a meeting with the dispatchers and give them a copy of the protocol expected to follow. Charlie is suggesting looking in another direction for dispatch of EMS, possibly consolidating it with Fire EMS thru Pepperell. He noted in the past 2 ½ years it's happened 4 times and when you're dealing with emergencies, you can't have this type of mistake. He reported on his concern for not only the patients but liability problem due to lack of tone, etc. Chief Rich explained the particulars for each of the misdirected calls. He advised there were also other instances previous to his becoming chief.

Chief Rich advised on information he's compiled from the fire chief's association and reported that anyone who gets any amount of money now is a call fire department – once turn 65, done at the end of the month. He provided information on the new fire chief credentialing program which has been approved. From now on when you appoint a Fire Chief, the Fire Marshall has to delegate authority for permit inspections, etc. The Fire Marshall will confirm the chief is qualified to conduct inspections, etc. He noted that in order to qualify for Chief credentials, you must be an officer for a minimum of five (5) years and we only have a couple who are qualified and he'll be turning 65 soon.

On another item, he noted he's disappointed with response from EMTs with calls. He indicated he thinks they're turning their pagers off at night. He advised even with fire calls during the day, they hold their breath. Discussion continued on how difficult it is to get people to step up to serve. Chief Rich noted that really need to proceed into getting ready for his replacement. He noted that all indications are that they'll be losing all their present force that would be qualified.

Next, on the ethics letter, everyone has to take the test that's on the fire department, does that mean they're off if they don't? He indicated that only about ½ of his department has done it.

EMT's – the Chief indicated that according to Region 2 we don't have any EMTs, only first responders because we don't have our own ambulance service. Question is whether there's any liability – if not

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considered EMTs by Region 2; another question now that EMTs are under the fire department is it necessary to have them sworn in. Selectman Welch indicated that we appoint all police officers and specials. Discussion continued on whether EMT appointments were required by the Selectmen since they're under the Fire Department. Harold indicated that first responders are required to have maintained continuing education. Chief Rich advised they are working on a service agreement for ALS – paramedic transport amendments noting Patriot cancels the paramedic not the town anymore. He advised that now she understands if the P1 isn't close enough to intercept, we're not waiting for them to arrive, we're continuing on to the hospital. The agreement with Patriot works out very well. He provided report on response, etc. advising they've set up a new protocol for attendance by Fire Department until ambulance arrives.

Upon Selectman Alterisio's arrival, the meeting was called to order at 7:15PM with quorum present. Selectman Alterisio advised he'd be interested in how the EMTs felt about it. Charlie advised that if some of them would show up for meeting, he'd get some input. He advised part of the problem is that majority of people in town have hi tech job. Fire Chief advised that basically in 2 years he's done, town needs to think about what direction they'll take. No new people applying from town, only ones applying are from out of town. Selectman Welch advised the demographics of this town, only graduate 50-55 kids per year from school. Charlie advised that within the next five years you're going to see training requirements that are increasing to the point where they'll need to take 1 & 2 for their safety. He's going to meet with Fincom re: increasing pay for firefighters to \$10 an hour (have mechanics working on vehicles where it would cost him \$100, should at least pay \$10 hour for time). Selectman Alterisio noted that in the past he's heard that most of our calls are mutual aid, how would he handle at that? Charlie responded \$10 an hour.

Road Commissioners Mike Martin and Tom Dumont presented snow overrun request noting this new form would allow the snow bills to be paid without them coming back repeatedly. Selectman Alterisio asked what the amount was at this point, but neither of them had any idea what it was, didn't think they'd need it since this would just allow the bills to be paid and would eliminate them having to keep coming back for more money. Both Selectman Alterisio and Selectman Welch noted that the Board needed to have an idea of where the snow overrun stands. They noted it's less of big brother watching than having a continuous general understanding of where the finances stand when they're dealing with other departments and looking

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forward to budget projections for the following year. Selectman Welch noted the bills get paid either way – Selectman Alterisio noted that he'd be comfortable if the Board received weekly updates on where the snow overrun stands. The Road Commissioners will insure that board is updated frequently. Selectman Alterisio noted that the board knows that what they're dealing with is not discretionary spending – snow & ice issues have to be addressed as they come forward.

Selectman Alterisio noted again that Town Accountant has suggested that whenever Reserve Officer Downes appears on a payroll voucher, the board will need to sign the voucher as well as the payroll warrant. Selectman Welch felt that it shouldn't be necessary, we're acknowledging it on the warrant, and it's a one time deal, will follow up with Town Accountant.

Selectman Alterisio noted the budget requests included in the packets and referenced selectmen's salaries – if required by statute not interested in giving up salaries. Discussion continued briefly.

Selectman Welch provided update on Chief Rich's concerns re: dispatch for EMS and lack of response from EMS; no one stepping up to the plate to volunteer and concerns about getting people from out of town but what else can you do. He further advised on copy of letter from Fire Chief's association re: retirement requirements and credentialing requirements for next chief. Sounds like the 3 Richs are going to be gone within 3 years – Brian's moving south, Greg will be moving to Hudson NH and Charlie will be retiring. Harold would be at the point that if he were willing to take it on, he could only be on for maximum of 5 years. Discussion continued on the issue where Fire Chiefs can't go out on call after age 65. Selectman Welch noted that 90% of our calls are mutual aid, when these guys wanted their pay a couple of years ago, he indicated they're no longer volunteer department – have to call themselves a call department but they wouldn't hear of it back then. Now it comes back that they must be considered a call department. Charlie reaches retirement age in 2 years sometime in March.

The board noted that last round they interviewed applicants from surrounding towns. Selectman Welch noted that Dunstable is called down quite often on mutual aid – called to Nashua last week.

Selectman Welch reported that Planning Board has decided to take on the zoning changes on their own and presented a number of zoning

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amendments outside the zoning review committee. Selectman Welch suggested giving this to the zoning review committee, let them get back to the Selectmen and the Selectmen get back to Planning Board. Selectman Alterisio noted that what they're recommending is something that's basically come before town meeting repeatedly in the past few years. Selectman Welch noted that we have some 200 acres of business zone available but there's been no interest in developing it. Also have our 5000 sq. ft in the MUD but there's been no interest with RFPs, so can't spot zone and personally can't understand why this group can't come up with something else – why keep bringing it back.

Selectman Welch is out next week, and Selectman Alterisio's out the following week. Secretary to post for Thursday night's zoning review committee. Next week's meeting will be on Tuesday night – will basically be coming in for the purpose of signing the warrant – not putting anything on the agenda.

Selectman Welch noted that Fincom is not paying Minuteman and we're in a position of authority now – is it Fincom or Selectmen – need to move forward. Selectman Welch contacted Dan St. Jean who contacted Ron for some input – have heard anything further. Discussion continued on just how to move forward at this point, some uncertainty on how to handle this and the issue with the River Street railing and the quagmire we're in with the contractor over payment and bringing into code. – Selectman Alterisio will see if he could talk with him to see what he can do.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM after appropriate motions and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,
Board Secretary