

## Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, March 8, 2010

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

Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM with quorum present. Fire Chief Charlie Rich and Emergency Management Director Bill Ahern met with the Board to provide an update on activities and recommendations for subscription to the Blackboard Bill 3 items very fast – Blackboard.com which is reverse 911 software that's internet based – it's something that the chief has wanted on line for a few years now – very inexpensive product @1.91 per year per residence – basically a 911 product where chiefs could send out emergency notices. Selectman Alterisio inquired how this squared up with the E911 county sheriff's - Bill advised it's not as reliable – the same as Nixle. You get what you pay for – this has a 99.9% reliability rate – has support which keeps it in service and readily available. Selectman Alterisio questioned what the implications were relative to what we've signed up for with the reverse 911 from the state. 911 would be controlled by police & fire – emergency only, forest fire, evacuation, missing child, etc.; would have nothing to do with the delay of school, or anything like that. Selectman Alterisio inquired at what point the BOS would need to be involved – Chief Rich indicated he felt that the board would probably be contacted if there was a call through; advising Chiefs & Emergency Management feel it should be emergency only – 911; if you overuse it, people just hang up on it.

Cost is \$1.91 per year per household – no additional costs. Selectman Welch referred to the contract noting for the period of March 1<sup>st</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup> of this year \$984.00 and from June 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> of next year \$2400. Selectman Welch noted there are about 1100 houses in town – some people may opt in or out. Selectman Alterisio asked if it could be on cellular phone – Bill advised could have option, landline, cell phone or e-mail or all of the above. This would take care of most of the problems related to lost power – etc. with the cell phone, etc. Selectman Welch noted that must be sure it's worth it at the price, advising it will only go up in price. – Selectman Alterisio didn't recall the terms of the other E911 agreement – Charlie advised that if he recalled it was for nothing, but Selectman Alterisio indicated we thought it was for nothing for the 1<sup>st</sup> year, but would be per subscribers. Bill for this would come to the town, and town would only pay for those that opt in. The closest town to us that uses it is Acton, with the exception of the high school. The board agreed that what has been used in the past has been sporadic and this would provide a dependable service.

Selectman Welch inquired how many residents now have signed up Nixle but Bill did not know. Selectman Welch noted he couldn't get too excited about it but if Fire Chief, Police Chief and EMS Director felt it was worthwhile, he'll support it. Fire Chief advised the text portion of it is very good to have – works a lot of times when the pagers don't because of range. Board approved and Selectman Alterisio was authorized to sign the agreement.

Bill – 2 other things – emergency management related – there's a group of emergency management agencies in Ayer – need a representative on the group – recommends Charlie Rich with Brian as his backup. Secretary will prepare

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letter of designation on letterhead for board's signature before transmittal to MEMA.

Other is a planning issue, wants to do a risk assessment for the town with Charlie Rich, Chief Downes, Maria Amodei and representative from the Highway department as to exposures, assessment of risks and current mitigating action and status. Causes the town to take an inventory of their exposures and prepare a plan with the appropriate action to address.

Bill advised one of the things that bugs him is tornadoes, noting some experience with tornadoes in the past. He worried that we're not prepared for something running through town like that. On the plus side of National Grid, they brought in their foreman to meet with the Chief and reported to the chief every 2 hours. Selectman Welch disagreed with National Grid's response feeling they didn't provide sufficient coverage; Charlie felt they worked very well with us – provided coverage as possible – considering there were other areas with greater outages. Selectman Welch advised that he went after National Grid who advised they'd sent their crews to Worcester. Charlie noted it takes time to pull in sufficient coverage – just like when our local utilities were sent down to Virginia in the recent snow & ice storms. Discussion continued on what each thought was the best approach for addressing the outages. Charlie advised he met with National Grid last week noting that they have a new individual putting together a plan to address outages and problems – new public relations officer addressing issues. Selectman Welch advised that someone in town should be addressing these issues – relating to a recent outage on Century Way where it turned out over 30 houses were out when a transformer burned and blew a fuse on another pole. Pursuant discussion relative to the process and timing for response with Selectman Welch noting he is looking for far better response relating to towns that have their electric companies who cooperate and get service up and running in now time. If Groton, Belmont & Peabody can coordinate response with only 10-15 trucks, why can't a company with a much bigger force like National Grid.

Fire Chief Rich advised on a very serious situation on Off Pond Street, where pole came down, power out, phone out and fire at house and couldn't reach anyone, had to put the fire out themselves. Fire Chief advised again on his most recent discussion with representative from National Grid. Bill Ahern advised if the Board gives him a contact, he'll be happy to represent the Board of Selectmen to see what can be done – Bill will be happy to serve as the contact for the Board of Selectmen? All agreed it needs to be coordinated – so they have a principal contact.

Bill related to the contract with Blackboard, the matrix and plans for action in the case of a microburst, etc. Selectman Alterisio recalled he'd been in one up in Waterville Valley a few years ago and it took them 3 years to clean up. Need to have a plan for reaction – can't really prepare but need to have reaction plans. Chief advised it was the same as with the H1N1 scare and inoculation clinics, etc. as a result of plans put together by the Emergency Management Group.

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Road Commissioner Mike Martin appeared before the board requesting they designate Robert Bacon as a special municipal employee. Mike advised the intent was for him to serve primarily as highway employee, noting he would occasionally work with water department and works for the cemetery – (30 hours for highway and 10 hours for water department). Selectman Alterisio reflected on previous designation of David Tully as special municipal employee for the same reasons.

Selectman Welch asked whether he met the requirements as specified in the requirements for designation as a special municipal employee. Commissioner Martin was uncertain of all the requirements. Question the board was addressing was would there be a problem next year with the qualification. Mr. Martin advised that he expected to be coming before the board again on the same item. Highway Department needs a third man so that can address the items that come up for the water department – FEMA money required a lot of hours of preparation to qualify, etc. BORG has worked out money wise what it costs to bring Bobby Bacon to come in to plow, etc. Fincom indicated that should be charging for everything – if highway does something for water department, need to charge. Mike, if we go dig a hole, at whatever time, thought it was covered by transferring \$1000 a year from one department to the other. Discussion continued on how municipal departments can operate together – Mike has no problem with doing it the right way. Selectman Welch noted the complex management isn't meant for little towns like this – it's the larger towns and cities. The board agreed they'd be willing to deem Robert Bacon as a special municipal employee – noting there's no problem right now but need clarification from Rich as to whether once the hour limitation for special employee has been exceeded. Board will get it going and hopefully Rich can come up with something.

Fire Chief Rich reported that he's hoping that town is going to move forward with plans for his replacement – put together committee, etc. but advised that a problem has come up relative the extension for Patriot Ambulance and the Town of Dracut. He noted he's spoken with Tyngsboro who just wants to keep status quo, they're not looking for any compensation and has spoken with Dracut manager who indicate his understanding that we were going with Town of Pepperell. He got back to Chief Rich to advise that the Town of Dracut and Tyngsboro will not sign anything without determination from Dunstable and provisions for Dunstable to be included in the contract. He's spoken with Pepperell and reached understanding that if we were to go with Pepperell, it couldn't cost Dunstable anything. He explained where Dunstable is in region 2 for EMS and Dracut & Tyngsboro are in region 3. Selectman Alterisio recalled that the towns put together what their costs were and reimbursement could/should be no greater than that cost. Towns need to be able to qualify the costs in order to determine a figure – Charlie indicated he understood the costs were related to dispatch. He advised he'd love to get in with Pepperell, feeling it would give us better service. He advised on a call this morning on Adams Street, patient wanted to go to Nashoba and ambulance didn't want to take them there – wanted to go to Lowell General. Discussion continued – last 2 years we did 124 calls one year and 125 the next with 84 transports average per year. Pepperell would have a shot at gaining \$40K – Pepperell EMS is going to their

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Selectmen with proposal. Pepperell has two ambulances – right now have two at Park Street, would move one to Jersey Street. Discussion continued on the coverage from Patriot now with coverage coming in from another area, would have a mutual aid agreement for service. Charlie advised plan to tread very lightly – need to be able to maintain 24/7 coverage as we have now. Pepperell is full time – every day of the week. They have full time Chiefs, etc. He advised they would always try to come with 2 EMTs on the truck, would tone Dunstable, Dunstable EMTs would have to go on the ambulance and Dunstable EMTs would be eligible to work for Pepperell. Board indicated it sounds like have 2 good choices – Charlie agreed we've started the wheels in motion in case the other breaks down.

Selectman Alterisio indicated his initial reaction to arrangements for a new Chief was to look at outside first because we hear that we don't seem to have anyone prepared to fill the position. All agreed that while they'd like to see more Dunstable individuals step up to the plate, they don't appear to be available.

Noted in the mail were recommendations from Town Accountant on documentation requirements and Selectman Alterisio will follow-up with her. Minutes of 5/18, 6/1 & Oct 19<sup>th</sup> were all approved as written.

Selectman Welch noted that we should take a stab at the Selectmen's budget requests. He further reported some of the proposals that have come before Fincom again this year from various departments. Selectman Welch noted zoning hearing scheduled for 7:30 next Monday and advised Zoning Review Committee was expected to present their recommendations to Selectmen next week as well for a couple of zoning amendments. He also suggested scheduling with Fincom for possibly Tuesday of next week.

The Board, after confirmation of Mr. Palumbo's continued interest, nominated Michael Palumbo to continue as Animal Inspector.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35PM after proper motions and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,  
Board Secretary