

Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, September 20, 2010

Present: Kevin W. Welch, Chairman, Kenneth J. Leva, Clerk and Walter F. Alterisio, Procurement Officer and Member

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM with all members present. BORC member Mike Martin advised that if we were planning a Special Town Meeting, they would like to put on article for a third person for the highway department. The board and Commissioner Martin discussed the particulars and how the funding might be appropriated. Discussion included use of funds and how they are allocated – Mike seemed to think the funds might already be allocated and would just be transferring funds into another account if that's necessary. If the town were to hold a special town meeting, they'd like to put an article on, but not interested in scheduling specifically for that purpose. Chairman Welch inquired whether the plans were to replace George or an additional person. Mike indicated he didn't think that George would be retiring as he has 2 children in college – Chairman Welch addressed the recent equipment damage and cautioned that he doesn't want to see anyone getting hurt. Mike advised the reason they're looking for an additional person for the highway department is because there should be two people – David does a lot of research, etc. and leaves George working by himself, also with vacation time, leaves one person on. Mike advised that he's told George repeatedly, he doesn't want him down at Salmon Brook at the beaver dam all by himself – it's too dangerous to handle by yourself. Chairman Welch indicated the beaver dam issue should be addressed differently. Mike advised they've put grates in a lot of them and it's taken care of it but for some reason the grate on this one keeps getting moved. Discussion continued on the best way to address. Mike noted there're a lot of things that George does by himself that he shouldn't be doing – need to be more careful. Selectman Alterisio felt there may be a good argument for the need for an additional person to address particular applications – whether they're reserved for highway department, etc. Selectman Alterisio indicated he felt they need to come to some sort of agreement with the other boards that need that type of work. Mike indicated that the men are busy, whether it's repairing the equipment to save funding. Mike advised that different departments wanted BORC to charge them – Chairman Welch indicated that they weren't talking about charging an amount – just accounting for the services provided. Anyone off the street has the right to ask how much it costs for specific services but Mike indicated then you'll have to have time for them to do the paperwork. Mike indicated that most of the time when someone comes in and asks for something unreasonable, they're moving out of town the next week. Selectman Alterisio recommended bringing it to the advisory board's

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attention and Mike advised that they already have one of the members on their agenda. Mike further indicated he felt it would save the town money in the long run.

Selectman Alterisio advised that he received confirmation last Wednesday that the road project has been approved. Selectman Alterisio indicated it's a 9 member board, one member from each district. Mike advised the day after he read the letter from Commissioner Sullivan, he noted a sound barrier wall along 128 that they're spending millions on but won't spend a few hundred thousand on a retaining wall that supports a roadway.

Lieutenant Dow stopped in relative to the country western thing advising Chief Downes has confirmed there is no way a one-day license can be issued as the town is a dry town. BOS had questions – Chief Downes contacted ABC who confirmed the town cannot issue license. Selectman Alterisio advised while it's on private property, there are concerns for impact on road way, etc. Selectman Alterisio advised he felt with an event like this it might be pertinent to require a private detail. While it's for a good cause, need to be sure that the police department is not in any way considered responsible for policing the event. Chairman Welch cautioned once you open premises to the public for a charge, it's no longer a private event. Lt. Dow advised it seems like it's going to be a good size event, but appears the group is prepared to handle and expect to provide sufficient coverage. Lieutenant Dow advised he thought the Chief might have just wanted Jim to be there in case there were any questions. Jim confirmed that Chief has contacted ABC and under no conditions could the Board of Selectmen issue any license, one day or otherwise as the town is one of a few dry towns in the Commonwealth.

Lieutenant Dow will talk with the Chief tomorrow afternoon and suggest that he contact them and advise what he found out from. Official invite to Wes to next week's meeting and ask him to bring Selectman Leva's key. The Lieutenant advised there's been considerably good sized events down there and have gone pretty well. He indicated he understood that the concert was being set up in the back off to the right of the corn maze.

Lieutenant Dow advised that in recent years we haven't dealt with a lot of large parties, etc. but have in the past with functions at Camp Wannalancitt and YMCA. The board briefly discussed plans for Octoberfest road race scheduled for the 1st weekend in October. Lieutenant Dow advised Sunday mornings are usually pretty quiet and

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sheriff's department has offered their support if needed for traffic control, etc.

Minutes of 9/13 were approved as amended with just couple of typos to be fixed.

Chairman Welch reported he'd had an interesting meeting with the school superintendent on Thursday, and another meeting of the think tank group – who is basically ready to let the whole thing go while the new administrator has it on the top of his list to address the efficiency issues that have been identified. Chairman Welch noted it would be a shame to see the group fall apart when people have put so much time into it and come up with great ideas. Chairman Welch noted some of the items – the boiler at the High School is a disaster – no-one knows how to fix it – Chairman Welch noted that Richard Mitchell did evaluation on Swallow Union boiler for free. Selectman Leva indicated there may be another individual who specializes in that type of equipment. Chairman Welch noted Richard's analysis of measures to reduce costs. Just a heads-up – see what happens. Selectman Alterisio advised that he's spoken with Berta a couple of times on some of the suggestions but hadn't been asked to follow up. He understood the committee had come up with recommendations to be presented to the school committee for research and follow-up where necessary.

Chairman Welch reported on some of the initiatives including the grant which provided some partial funding for the replacement windows for Swallow Union. Selectman Alterisio noted some of the funding through the education fund and interested what the strategy is for that money and how it will be used. He thinks some real clear thought ought to be put into how the money will be applied and the long range plan for future spending.

Chairman Welch advised he spoke with Mr. Mastracolla and his initial review with the new business manager indicates there's no issue that necessitated the override attempted last year. Chairman Welch indicated that the school committee gets tied up with many different issues – and the think tank group has worked very hard to keep the pressure off and come up with suggestions for cost savings. Chairman Welch noted that if you live in the State of NH you can get your high school education and diploma on line. Discussion continued on what other communities are doing to address the educational advantages. Chairman Welch advised the idea of the think tank isn't to cut out anyone's job; it's to keep the district operating efficiently.

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He advised they're also up for negotiations again this year – beginning in January.

Chairman Welch indicated it's time for the board to get Marc Terry in here to finalize the personnel policy – don't have one that works very well. Discussion continued relative to the previous attempts at finalizing the policy and issues with personnel records retention – some concerns with proposed language changes and how it might affect their positions. Need to develop a concerted effort to move forward but the risk the other departments don't pick up the mantle to move forward toward creating additional unions for protection. Chairman Welch noted that the Chief and Lieutenant want the board to provide document in their files relative to their tenure. Marc has provided document which they find acceptable. Discussion continued on how best to address the policy – Selectman Alterisio suggesting that addendums be created to address issues – feedback or sense that Selectman Alterisio has had is that there's a level of suspicion as to what the board is up to. Chairman Welch noted that it's the BOS policy and if something happened that we needed to terminate someone we can't the way it's written and we had a personnel board that gave up. It's been dragging along for a long-long time.

Chairman Welch noted the letter Selectman Alterisio has prepared for Senator Panagiotakos to thank him noting at the last MPO meeting, the project was put on the list and there aren't any hooks that Selectman Alterisio is aware of. The board signed letter he'd prepared, and Selectman Alterisio indicated he felt a similar letter to Bev Woods and the NMCOG staff would be a good idea. He reported that Beverly, has been at the table for the meetings, fought hard as she would for any member.

Selectman Alterisio, in general discussion, need to start to put the rubber to the road as to where the town is going – see often in the paper of Groton's initiative to generate more revenue business, and their plans to leave us in the dust – going to continue to come with the gap as to what Groton demands and Dunstable's inability to generate additional revenues. He indicated he thinks we've got to come to fundamental strategy as to where are we going and how are we going to come up with it. We're not set up for the type of government that would work under a town administrator, government made up little fiefdoms, thinks that need to take initiative to create committee for study to formulate components of looking at what would resemble a master plan for the governing of the Town of Dunstable. Why should we continue to beat our heads against the wall? Chairman Welch

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noted it's always the same people who come forward with their plans for change in the last few weeks before or after town meeting but we're a tiny town. He's suggested for years that we need a town administrator – but there was no interest. People are going to put a lot of time in, good but people have to be ready to stand up. Chairman Welch advised we'll never be able to keep up with Groton financially and they made a huge mistake with the schools last year and had to lay off people to make up for it.

Chairman Welch advised his meeting with Superintendent Mastracolla went very well and he was comfortable with his approach. If Groton wants to play game and Dunstable can't come up with funding to support, may be time for town to take a look at the district agreement and whether it makes any sense to continue. Selectman Alterisio felt it's going to come up sooner or later down the line and we need to wrestle at how to address, and if we're unable to support, whether the town can continue to participate. Chairman Welch noted the spending problems communities are facing and how they're being addressed. Chairman Welch advised that Groton knows what they've got with Dunstable as a partner and Groton isn't big enough yet to support the system. Selectman Alterisio indicated the question is "is the town structured properly to continue to provide support the town needs, whether through a town administrator, town manager, etc. Current master plan identifies maintaining a rural atmosphere but how to do that.

Chairman Welch advised that he's spoken with members of the zoning review committee and many aren't interested in continuing – doesn't see how we can afford to address – Selectman Alterisio will see what he comes up and request some interpretations of professionals on how best to address. He's really not looking to take over the issue as he doesn't have a good handle on how to move forward, then leave it to the pleasure of the boards. Chairman Welch noted some of the items that people up on the zoning review committee would like to see opened up – more agricultural, etc. He also noted that another approach would be to work with the people on Blodgett Street to open the parcels up for the B3 so the town wouldn't be impacted in.

The board was further advised that apparently there's a question on article 32 on the attorney general's office – they're still researching some issues with it. When it is approved, how will the town move forward with the permitting process and what are the implications of the vote on the General Store across the street, are they authorized to continue since they were operating lawfully before the zoning change.

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Chairman Welch noted that the town needs to be sure that zoning changes are moved forward properly to protect the town. Chairman Welch indicated he felt it was a nightmare because right now General Store has a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals – question is wonder what the attorney general is thinking. Discussion continued on how it may be addressed; Selectman Alterisio wants to understand moving forward what the implications are to the General Store and what needs to be done.

As far as the special permit for 215-219, Selectman Alterisio is going to push for them to look into the complete picture and poll all pertinent boards for their input into the permitting process. Chairman Welch noted that the present operation doesn't fit the model for a B-2. He indicated it wasn't thought out well – just pushed forward for what Planning Board wanted to put thru. Selectman Alterisio cautioned once the permit is put in place it's our job to administer thru the zoning officer to enforce compliance. Chairman Welch agreed but noted we're not here to sit back and have Planning Board decide that Martians and only Martians qualify for specific permitted uses.

Selectman Alterisio is going to take a look at long time strategy of town in moving forward and how we're going to deal with the zoning change once approved by Attorney General.

Discussion continued on what the possible effects might be from the zoning changes and whether or how to do due diligence to insure process has been done properly. Chairman Welch advised the reason for working with Mark Bobrowski was because he's an expert on zoning – he's not going to take one person's side but maintain the position of zoning. Selectman Leva asked how many violations are handled in a year.

Secretary was asked to follow up with Lisa Gervais to see if she's contacted Dunstable Property Services relative to trash removal for the fields. The Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed and the meeting adjourned at 8:40PM after appropriate motions and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,
Board Secretary