

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

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

Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM with all members present. Chairman Welch noted pole hearing scheduled for 7:15 and three (3) Treasurer's warrants to be signed.

He also referenced Town Clerk's request for Cheryl A Mann's appointment as Temporary Town Clerk providing coverage for the office from December 24th thru January 4th – Motion by Selectman Alterisio, 2nd and voted with all in favor.

Letter from DEP re: Swallow Union level of copper in the water. The board briefly discussed the possible causes and noted we should get an update from the Water Commission as to the causes for the high numbers; secretary will ask Water Commission secretary for an update and to keep BOS posted. Selectman Alterisio noted he thought the only thing the BOS needs to know is Water Commission's response by January 14th – Chairman Welch noted 75 days have passed since the testing and just received notification yet only provide Town with 45 days to respond. Selectman Alterisio noted the authorities in charge are the Water Commissioners who he expects will take the lead on this with MA DEP but will be interested in Water Commission's response.

Rates – Selectman Leva advised he'd had a call from David Sweet inquiring what the story was with his rates not being approved – Chairman Welch noted the board agreed that discussion back & forth is needed in order for the Board to support decision to increase. Selectman Alterisio questioned that the BOS has requested clarification but yet Electrical Inspector has indicated he can't attend any meetings. Nothing from Plumbing & Gas Inspector and Chairman Welch suggested leaving them the way they are until we hear back from the inspectors especially since Town Counsel has major concerns with the double fee for work without a permit and Selectman Alterisio indicated he felt there needs to be something on record to support the rationale for the increases requested. Selectman Alterisio relayed his only personal view the argument that this is what other towns are doing doesn't hold water as the conditions in other towns are different they have higher cost for support services provided, including full-time inspectors, whereas Dunstable doesn't have the same situation – the majority of the permit fee is going to the inspectors. Fee meetings must be posted therefore increases must be explained by the requestors.

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Chairman Welch would like the board to agree – that Jeff should keep moving forward with the design – had the meeting and it was confirmed everyone was in agreement before the meeting was closed. Chairman Welch will talk with Jeff and advise him to ignore the voices behind the curtains. Selectman Alterisio there's the other shoe that deals with the money issue – Jeff keeps talking about additional costs – Chairman Welch noted the letter received today from MA DOT Right of Way Bureau relative to easements, etc. required to insure secured right of way to qualify for state & federal funding. Package includes samples of documentation and votes required at Town meeting.

Bob Bacon stopped in and advised the proposed pole location was right under the white oak and it's also part of the banking and don't want to disturb that banking – banking drops off there and have the same situation as down at McGovern's – any disruption will affect the banking as well as endanger the white oak. National Grid rep indicated she thought the oak was coming down and Bob advised not as far as he was concerned. She indicated can't put a push pole on cemetery side – in order to guy the only option was across the street – pole on Westford and Main Street was hit and must be replaced but needs to be guyed. Can move the pole over a little bit – maybe about 3'-5' over – Bob noted again it's in that banking and couldn't see how stable a pole they could get in there unless they went really deep with it as the banking drops off about 5'. Bob had to leave as he was driving the sander and needed to get out there and sand the roads.

Iris explained the location of the pole, noting there wasn't much they could do – but need to replace the other pole which was hit. Pole is proposed on the banking side of the guardrail – because it crosses over; the pole that got hit is on the cemetery side – physically on the road. She advised that if they didn't have anything to pull it in proper direction, the pole will fall over. The pole on Westford Road and Main has to be replaced anyway; Chairman Welch questioned whether the wires came from – up & down Main Street and then back and up & down Westford Street. If she's not mistaken they're feeding up & down Main Street with a side tap coming down Westford Street.

Selectman Alterisio noted that drawings as per usual, don't demonstrate what's actually going on out there – drawing shows straight lines whereas there are curves and referenced other poles in the area but she indicated even if there is a pole further down as Selectman Alterisio referenced must take care of the pole on the corner of Westford Street – even if it was a straight shot, would be stress on pole but with a curve and crossing over, there's more

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danger. Selectman Alterisio inquired whether it would be possible to move the pole they're proposing closer to the house – if they moved it would probably have more of the space. She indicated she'd have to come out during the daylight and look at whether there are other options – maybe 6' to 10' is all they could move it, if they could. Selectman Alterisio advised in order to have the pole secure, would be more; she indicated until she comes back out to look at in daylight, but noted it's a very dangerous location to even look at the conditions. She indicated she has a problem with highway departments shooting it down at the hearing – happens quite often in a lot of towns....much better. The board noted arguments they've had – 1st the drawing doesn't reflect actual conditions - some kind of demonstration of safety issue should be on the schematic. We don't need house numbers but we need a correct representation of the topography – curves, drop off, etc. In addition, it's been quite some time since we've had representation at the hearing from National Grid. She explained that they don't show topography, for 30 years. She'll provide her address and contact info. She further advised this particular pole is National Grid town but in other towns Verizon covers but usually National Grid attends the hearing to insure there is coverage. She indicated it's a necessity for them to have representation to insure that project can move forward, she'll need to contact Ken Dobie.

Copy to Fortune Champ – Iris, National Grid's representative provided her info so that secretary can reach directly with hearing notices. Chairman Welch suggested that it might be beneficial to run the line underground – considering the topography in there – he suggested as option to get rid of the existing pole and the proposed pole, running underground. Iris explained there is no way to get rid of the pole that was hit – because it's also feeding wires on Westford Street in addition to the lines on Main Street, some of which is probably 3 phase. She explained conditions and Selectman Alterisio asked whether they wouldn't consider using the white oak that's there as it's very stable in the ground. She further indicated it would save a lot of trouble in the future, if the highway, tree warden or the police would pick up the phone if they have an issue with the proposed location before the hearing so can investigate any other options that might be available for the location. Best move now is to get her together with Highway Foreman so can move forward, secretary to transfer information to David to have him contact her – would like to get this resolved possibly Wednesday; otherwise will need to be after Christmas. She advised that the pole needs to be replaced before the weather gets bad.

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Hearing will be continued to a later date. Back to MA DOT copy Highway, Town Counsel and Town Engineer. Selectman Alterisio noted that until Town Engineer completes the plans, won't know what easements are needed. Town Counsel will need to coordinate town meeting, etc. but Board needs to appoint a designee – Board voted to designate Town Counsel as liaison and leave it to him to solicit Jeff as needed on this project.

Chairman Welch indicated he'd like to request a weekly update from Jeff via e-mail of what's transpired during the week so that can keep track of where the project and costs are. Chairman Welch noted he didn't know whether we should reply to Judy Larter's email or just let it know – she indicated that Conservation and Historical will tie him down and just drive the cost up. Chairman Welch is going to send her an e-mail to forward all concerns to the Selectmen and Roads who will direct to Town Engineer when necessary.

Chairman Welch presented the proposed communication to DOR requesting the financial management review as approved by the Board back in November for the Board's signatures. Selectman Alterisio noted that as far as the financials go, he's cool with it but as regards to management felt it might be more appropriately handled in another avenue. Chairman Welch advised that DOR's experience would provide credence to an approach when recommended by DOR. Board members signed document for submission to Division

Chairman Welch referenced dates for initial meeting with Diane Byrnes relative to ground rules for the next session of contract negotiations for the police union. Chairman Welch indicated that Chief wants a condition in the contract that officers stay in shape – this is Chairman Welch's 3rd contract negotiations. He indicated that Chief has been good, and Selectman Alterisio advised the biggest concern was with unfunded items like sick time – maxed out right now at 175 days. Chairman Welch noted the first one was a nightmare where the town was in position of needing to lay off two officers to meet their conditions but changed.

12/13 minutes will be held over until next week. Chairman Welch's good with the draft minutes from the 12/14 meeting with MA Highway – Chairman Welch and Selectman Leva referenced some of the presentations made. 11/22 minutes approved as redlined.

Chairman Welch inquired whether board members intended to attend Superintendent's breakfast at the Prescott School.

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Selectman Leva referenced e-mail he sent to David Tully – acknowledging that it is official that work is being done on the Main Street bridge through the state. The Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed with the control unit for the Library questioned and discussed.

The secretary advised that Frank O'Connell has been scheduled for 7PM next Monday relative to the contract for new town website via Virtual Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20PM after appropriate motion and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,
Board Secretary

