

## **Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, January 31, 2011**

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. The board noted some questions relative to the fire department budget request and suggested the need to meet with the Fire Chief for better understanding of request. Chairman Welch referenced the reported calls over the years and Selectman Leva noted 116 fire calls for 2009 and 121 medical calls as compared to calls recorded by Chief Bacon in the prior year but it was questioned whether they were all Dunstable calls. The board discussed further and Selectman Alterisio noted reference to 3% increase, questioning where it comes from. Selectman Alterisio indicated we need to find out where we are coming from with the percentage, noting energy is down by \$500.00, technical services down as opposed to training which has increased. Chairman Welch advised the two big items are wages & equipment; Selectman Alterisio where are we with equipment now – allocated \$25K, would like to see where we are at the ½ year point, before we decide to increase the allocation for the following year. Chairman Welch asked if anyone wanted to follow up with the Chief and Selectman Alterisio indicated he didn't have a problem with taking that on.

Chairman Welch noted talking about salaries; indicating managers can't be expecting the 3% increase without being told to do so. Selectman Alterisio indicated the implemental difference between 1.5 & 3% isn't that much, but must have reasoning for the request. Chairman Welch advised that by law we can only raise taxes by 2½%, and referenced how the tax rate is figured, including increases for new construction, etc. which isn't applicable at this time. Chairman Welch noted he's not blaming Charlie, he's blaming Fincom who's whispering in his ear – 3%. Revenue isn't increasing, new Town Accountant has been excellent at working with Fincom trying to keep them focused. Police Chief is to be invited for next week's meeting so we can go over the budget. Discussion continued on the best approach with Fincom; BOS going in for uniform support of the budgets presented. If Selectman Alterisio can't find the police budget request submitted, he'll be in for a copy. Chairman Welch cautioned want to start with understanding of the budget.

Chairman Welch referenced the update from Town Clerk relative to redistricting – precincts, etc. noting that the official federal census numbers aren't yet completed – board will need to vote sometime in March on whether or not to maintain single precinct. The board also

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noted Town Clerk's request for appointment of Amy Schembechler to the Board of Registrars, and voted to appoint as requested.

Speaking of budgets, might as well go right to ours – discussion on the roof needed at 91 River Street and how best to approach the budgeting. General decision for the roof was to approach via article. Special Legal budgeted for \$7500.00; Selectman Alterisio will compare the expenditure report for year to date to determine the appropriate request.

Selectman Alterisio commented on the snow noting that expenditures haven't resulted in any overage that we've seen at this point, indicating the warrant entries for snow so far this season have been amazingly light.

Town Engineer: Chairman Welch indicated he's received conflicting reports on activity and concerns for whether it might be appropriate to look into other options for coverage. Selectman Alterisio didn't have a problem with taking a look at what options are out there. The board noted discrepancies in the past and possible effects. Selectman Alterisio noted that Jeff has been with the town for a number of years and therefore he has history of projects, etc. which can be helpful. Chairman Welch noted that he's been working with Planning Board and continually looking for items to increase his billable hours. Selectman Alterisio indicated he had no problem with taking a look at the whole situation. Secretary reminded the board of the invitation to meeting in Harvard MA on this type of inter-municipal services that might be provided and both Chairman Welch and Selectman Leva expressed interest in attending. Secretary will post accordingly. Chairman Welch indicated he'd like input particularly from Roads.

NMCOG request for proposals for 4<sup>th</sup> round of DLTA funds – can always sign up though Chairman Welch couldn't recall Dunstable getting anything out of – Chairman Welch was uncertain whether the Town was required to come up with matching funds but Selectman Alterisio advised the matching funds is from NMCOG; Chairman Welch inquired if the town was on the hook for it if we sign up – he indicated he's not interested in sustainable developments but was interested in municipal partnerships for services like animal control, etc. We could fill out the form indicating interest in municipal partnerships instead of sustainable development. Chairman Welch noted the assumptions in the document are based on communities like Lowell, Dracut, etc. and there's no way that these assumptions would apply to a community like Dunstable – because we don't have the sustainable structure to

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support most of these initiatives. Secretary will submit the back page as completed by Chairman Welch.

Chairman Welch noted the Police Chief has chosen Bernadette Georges to serve as his administrative assistant – Selectman Leva questioned whether we know how many individuals were interviewed and the board did not. Chairman Welch advised that initial approach was to use the highway secretary, moving coverage for existing departments around to accommodate – the public safety administrative assistant would serve the highway, fire and police as well as emergency management director. Chairman Welch noted the Chief has reported they'd interviewed 3 finalists on January 15<sup>th</sup>; Selectman Leva inquired whether someone from the board shouldn't have been part of the interview process or did we care. Selectman Alterisio noted over the last 4 or 5 years the Board has been less involved in Fire & Police decisions; feels it's not the need to micromanage but to have better understanding of decisions made and how departments are run. Discussion continued on the different methods and how it affected relationships. Selectman Leva felt it makes sense for us to go back to the old method; Selectman Alterisio indicated he felt it maintains a better rapport than when it's at arms length. Chairman Welch explained the changes and how they've affected relationships and procedure and support. The board will address with Chief at next week's meeting.

Chairman Welch reviewed some of the past year's budget process and town meeting. He indicated he's been negligent in review of minutes and hope to address this week in preparation for acceptance at next week's meeting. He reported he'd met with GLTHS superintendent relative to their construction and building upgrades needed for the voc. He provided them with information on energy grants the Town and GDRSD had procured for some of the upgrades they needed for the school. Selectman Alterisio indicated he felt they were going thru the transition to the new superintendent.

Secretary was reminded to set up for BOH to give Board report on where they're going with Transfer Station. Secretary will schedule.

Selectman Leva inquired whether either of the board members had received call from Sheila Harrington and Selectman Alterisio indicated he'd received communication from National Grid relative to a coverage plan for outside wires, meters, etc. The other item he wanted to speak with her about is disconnecting service to households in time of a state of emergency when people need to know what's going on, for

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whatever the reason. Invitation is for next Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup> @12 Noon for lunch. Secretary will post accordingly. Police Union meeting is also scheduled for 2PM on Monday.

Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed and the meeting adjourned at 8:42PM after appropriate motion and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,  
Board Secretary

