

## **Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, February 14, 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. Senator Eileen Donaghue introduced herself to the board and provided an update on program available to communities. Selectman Alterisio provided background on the frustrations the town has experienced with grant requirements and town's attempt to qualify for stimulus funds. Need advocates to represent small town.

She advised she's been in contact with Representative Sheila Harrington and will try to work along with her to provide the assistance needed. She indicated she'll be available to aid local officials whenever possible. Selectman Alterisio asked her to keep Dunstable in mind as we don't have the administrative personnel to research grants, etc. Her thought was if there is something in particular that Dunstable needed, they can keep their eyes open and keep the town informed. Someone who does this stuff all day long, will figure out where the assistance might be available. The board noted that the school district is such an enormous part of the town's budget (64%) & the senator indicated they'd be advocating for the communities to get the budget out as soon as possible – everyone is living with numbers. Selectman Alterisio basically comes down to the final answer that town's hands are tied with the formula the state puts together – 64% of our budget is manipulated by people who have nothing to do with the Town of Dunstable. Senator Donaghue indicated she's made it a priority of hers to learn what the towns need and how the school budgets are figured. Discussion continued on the budget process, assistance available via DOR, etc. Senator Donaghue advised if there are any issues where she can provide assistance, just let her know and she'll see what she can do to help out and work with Representative Harrington. Before Senator Donaghue left, she provided contact information for the board members.

The board then met with Fire Chief Charles H. Rich Jr. to review his budget request for FY2012. Selectman Alterisio presented breakdown of expenditures to date on the pertinent accounts, taken from 12/31/10 report. Allocated \$15.5K, probably going to finish up around \$17K. He noted the consolidation of EMS budget into the Fire Department budget for next year on forward.

Charlie advised he'd made a change from his initial proposal– should have included batteries into account 0001-###5580###, done the same way as Selectman Alterisio did – took last year's total numbers

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compared to last year and estimated where going to be. Fire repairs & maintenance listed at \$8500 (\$3500 of that was for the windows which was a one time item) but they have maintenance, tests on equipment, etc. that have to be done every year, or every other year. The Chief explained the maintenance operations as performed. He indicated he thinks that you're going to see where the men will need a CDL license. He noted that Scot pack bottles have to be replaced every 15 years – Fincom told them to increase item to provide coverage when needed instead of running an article. He indicated they have a grant application in for a new thermal imaging camera as theirs will need to be replaced soon. Discussion continued on the operation of the camera and the benefits of improved technology over the black and white version they're using now. Current camera was discontinued approximately 8 years ago – difficult to get parts.

Chief indicated overall their equipment is in good shape but express concerns relative to the Rescue truck which needs to be looked at – explained that he thinks we should get a poly tank for this truck or possibly take the tank off and make it into a flat bed to use for another forestry truck.

Chief reported on response and training requirements for the teams. Selectman Alterisio inquired whether Chief is satisfied with attendance, morale, since new changes. He indicated that has been better response, and have some old timers who had stopped responding and are now coming back due to pay. This is his 1<sup>st</sup> year paying \$10 hour for fire calls – checked with other towns around, Tyngsboro starts out with \$15 hour with every training certification increases the rate. Selectman Alterisio asked if we are making any headway – is it getting better and has the investment paid off. Chief felt the changes he's incorporated since he's made Chief has helped tremendously – increase in insurance coverage, updated equipment, training, etc. has been very helpful and overall attitude of the men is good.

He referred to an article in Fire Rescue One about volunteer firefighters in Pennsylvania – at one time had 200K now down to 50K; expect at some point there'll be no more volunteer/call firefighters. He advised that there is additional equipment they'd like to have but space is limited – don't have a boat and trailer – dependent on other communities around here. Brian advised that fire personnel have been digging out hydrants now as can use direct fill. He also provided article by Fire Chief from Barnstable relative to 1099 & W2's and implications of each.

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Harold Simmons advised on certification of fire personnel as first responders until EMTs arrive – the reason wages voted last year is in trouble is because of the responses required for calls. He advised they spent substantial amount of time in Groton, etc. – took a hit for that – going to happen every once in a while. Brian advised that with Firefighters responding as first responders – sometimes no EMTs show up; yet @4AM received call on Kimberly Lane and 4 EMTs responded – never know who's going to respond. He indicated if we could put 2 EMTs on call, would be guaranteed EMT response. Brian advised that they now have a new expense – no grant for epipens anymore although police carry them in their cruisers. Brian advised that every emergency vehicle that responds must have an AED in it and batteries, which last about 3 years, are \$324 each.

Selectman Alterisio noted Fire Chief alluded to item a little bit earlier, were some discussions as to where we're going with facilities; possibly a combined facility for fire & police – maybe not this year but before chief moves on might be good idea for plan in place. Selectman Alterisio indicated property behind Gates might be a good location since it's centrally located. Selectman Alterisio suggested it's something that should be put on the table at some point.

Does BOS have any words of wisdom or guidance before the Chief goes into advisory board next week? Brian advised another thing on new equipment – current cutters won't work on the new steel used in vehicles – cutters upgrade run about \$5K. New equipment - \$5200 set aside for equipment upgrades per year. Chief can provide roster of individuals, noting majority are from out of town. They have one more new member they'll be bringing paperwork in for in next couple of weeks – has already been through fire academy training – will come down and do whatever is needed.

Chief advised on radio communications are in situation where they're going to have to decide what they're going to do as to upgrade equipment for pagers, two different radio frequencies - \$5200 to upgrade would rather see dispatch of EMS moved to Pepperell under fire frequency because it's a stronger repeater – something that should be discussed quickly – sure Groton gets a lot of grant money because of their dispatch for EMS; most of the time when we call for the ambulance via portable radio, they don't hear us whereas through the fire radios, they do – much stronger. Transition is something he believes should be done ASAP – Chief Rich has spoken with Police Chief who didn't want to change over because it would mean they'd need to carry 2. Chief Rich would like someone from the Board to

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meet with him and Pepperell to move forward with this. He also indicated that he's spoken with Pepperell Dispatch who advised that if we transition over to them for EMTs as well and they get grant money wouldn't increase our cost. Brian reported on the changes in bands which will take place by January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2013 which will mean some of the existing radios will need to be replaced.

Chief Rich referenced the mutual aid agreement – fire and police. Chairman Welch noted the recent law passed also refers to out of state which means a totally new game change – refers to all emergency – fire, police, highway. The last Chairman Welch heard is they haven't finished the police provisions – want to see them all before we move forward – need to be sure we're covered by MIIA. C48§59a has been in existence for quite a while; but Chairman Welch noted need to be sure we're covered. Discussion continued on previous agreements – association has paid for membership in mutual aid. Chairman Welch noted we're trying to get okay from attorney and insurance company – it's a big deal if we're not covered by insurance. Charlie advised he'd spoken with the Senator about the special legislation that would allow him to serve thru the end of the year.

Discussion continued on funding, budget, and plans for the coming year. At least one member of the Board will participate in the Fincom meeting next week. Selectman Alterisio visited Conservation Commission representing the board relative to the Woodward Mill Dam.

Chairman Welch advised the Highway Department is requesting permission for mounting a repeater antenna on the turret at Town Hall – best signal was here. The board noted the possible problems with the slate roof, possible historical impact, which prompted brief discussion of the Route 113 retaining wall project submitted for state approval and the complications and interference being caused in the approval process. The radio engineer has indicated this location is the best – board will research the language in the historical preservation restriction on the Town Hall.

Upon his return, Selectman Alterisio reported he'd reiterated to Conservation that the Board received a notice some time ago that the Woodward Mill Dam needed to be inspected – we solicited proposals, came up with funding and report has been provided by Haley Aldrich as to conditions and recommendations. He reported that Bill Moeller will take it on and they'll report back.

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Chairman Welch noted that Library is on Fincom's agenda tomorrow night and advised that John Callahan had a heart attack over the weekend. He advised on his discussion with Ron Mikol relative to an energy audit conducted on the Library – secretary was asked to send copies out to the board members. Chairman Welch noted that year in year out we're spending exorbitant amount of money on energy at the Library especially considering the usage as it compares to Town Hall.

Chairman Welch also reported that police department has to keep a hard drive in a safe environment off site – went to staples the other day and purchased a safe that they'll attach to brick wall in old jail downstairs. Chairman Welch expressed concern over getting things under control with Fire Department requirements – need a breather at this point. Chairman Welch noted that we've been back in forth numerous times – he indicated we need to talk to him – we've got to push back some. Chairman Welch noted that spending isn't doing it – trying to be as professional as can be but the issue of a full blown public safety facility for 1100 homes. Selectman Alterisio questioned whether we should keep throwing band-aids – now the issue with the floor; Chairman Welch felt he didn't think we could justify the building this year or any year soon, never mind the personnel to man them. Chairman Welch indicated a 50-60 year building isn't that old, further, we couldn't build a public safety complex for under a million – need to be realistic.

Chairman Welch noted the complications with the Cultural Council and the lack of participation and how it would affect the funding from the state for a number of programs people look forward to. The board approved use of the town common for the Summer Concerts.

Minutes – board agreed they're way behind. Board will set aside 1<sup>st</sup> hour at their next meeting to read through outstanding minutes and approve. On the same subject, Chairman Welch provided his notes from January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting and secretary will compile into minutes for the board's approval.

Selectman Alterisio advised he'll be at NMCOCG on Wednesday evening – won't be able to attend GDRSD meeting. The board noted that next Monday is a legal holiday – President's Day, deciding their next meeting will be 2/28 – police union meeting at 2PM and regular BOS meeting at 7PM – and asked secretary to set aside 1<sup>st</sup> hour at that meeting for minutes review and approval.

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Selectman Leva advised on correspondence from Jeff Tidelbaum from People GIS, who wants to do a demonstration on their software – Selectman Leva will provide contact information to secretary so she can take care of scheduling.

Alan advised River Street property has been marked for cutting – cut will be limited. He reported he'd spoken with Ann Gagnon of Fish & Game re offer and would like rationale for offer – went before their land purchase committee last Thursday – she'll know by sometime mid March if they've approved. Counter offer was noted as means of being more readily saleable at town meeting. Discussion continued on how best to approach.

Alan provided map of the trails – GIS based of public and land trust properties – a little bit of work in progress; this is kind of the Cadillac approach with aerial photographs, etc. – used for lot of activities. Selectman Leva noted plans for parking area for Blanchard hill at end of Sky Top Lane.

Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed and the meeting adjourned at 8:50PM after appropriate motion and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,  
Board Secretary