

Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, March 5, 2012

Present: Daniel F. Devlin, Clerk and Procurement Officer and Member
Kenneth J. Leva; Chairman Walter F. Alterisio absent

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM with quorum present. The Board was visited by Senator Eileen Donohue who provided an update on the budget process. She thanked them for taking time out of their schedule to hear update and provide any priorities the Town of Dunstable has. She advised that in January governor moved his budget consensus revenue figure \$21.950B which reflects \$4.5B reduction from last year. She noted all the figures – left with \$18.8B – governor proposing plan which will be reviewed in the house. In particular largely money comes from 15% increase in cigarette tax and expansion of tax via bottle bill and gas tax, etc. To look at where gas is going, without looking at longer term solutions, governor proposed to use 40M from snow & ice budget. Early steps – proposal did include \$5.2 billion in local aid and increase over last year. She reported the Governor's proposal for ch70 @\$4,426 and \$192,992 for local aid for Dunstable. Last year based on surplus, not within these numbers, but surplus Dunstable received was \$15K. Each month goes by, have a better picture of tax collection – January was down, not alarmingly so, but were down. One of the advantages when Senate takes up budget in May, have a better picture of what the benchmark is. She indicated will have to carefully watch what's happening with the monthly receipts. Decision made recently was that state was wrong in their approach for health care coverage where it included coverage for illegal residents. When do budget, there's a lot involved; this is early and some of the savings Governor is proposing may be amended by the legislature. One of the questions that comes up, is when can we know more clear numbers so that local government knows where they stand. She advised that based on discussions last week, it will probably be sometime next month before they have a clearer picture. Speaker of the House indicated no more taxes – taxes have to originate in the house.

Selectman Leva asked if they were in on the bill relative to public utilities emergency response – senate has voted on it but the house hasn't taken it up yet. Very disappointed with response to Dunstable – had been on the phone with National Grid who reported all the crews – who actually weren't here. Selectman Leva applauded the efforts that Senator Donohue put into pursuing assistance for the towns. Have to have updates twice a day for localities so that residents and officials know what and when to expect. Penalty imposed – utilities will pay and can't come from the rate payers – hopeful that this new legislation will make a positive impact. She indicated there are some things that

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can be done on the state level to create the possibilities for competition for the utility companies. The board thanked her for her update. Selectman Devlin asked, in the discussions with the utility companies, are there talks of how the efforts might be better handled – efficiency, cost savings, etc. Group also discussed the research into shared 9-1-1 dispatching facilities, etc. and how it could be beneficial – equipment, efficiencies, etc. She indicated there are some real challenges but the more thorough the research and presented some handouts on the budget situation.

Selectman Devlin noted the research conducted by the Governance Committee and the meeting scheduled for Wednesday where their recommendations will be reviewed

Selectman Devlin provided motion to approve minutes of 2/27 as written, 2nd and voted with both in favor.

The board noted Chief Downes packet on volunteer certification program included in the members weekend packets and look forward to reviewing more thoroughly.

Selectman Devlin read the public service announcements provided by Town Clerk for tomorrow's presidential primary and dog licenses.

Selectman Leva noted that Fire Chief has submitted his official notice of resignation effective March 30, 2011 and the plans for retirement party, information available on website and cable channels.

Selectman Devlin noted update from NMCOG on budget cuts for train service, etc. and impact on residents and their travel, especially when heading into Boston.

Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed and the meeting adjourned at 7:30PM to allow board members to attend Fincom's meeting, after appropriate motion and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,
Board Secretary

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