

Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting: Monday, September 17, 2012

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

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM with all members present. First – looking over minutes from last week – wanted to go over again discussion regarding Town Administrator. Selectman Alterisio advised that basically counsel's concern is with the description of the role of town administrator dealing with personnel matters – administering personnel policy, etc. Not necessarily writing one but to administer the policy – simple things like CORIs, background checks, and doing any of the administrative tasks connected to for the town. Counsel's concern is that it might be overstepping into another board's realm where funds are already appropriated for their use. Selectman Alterisio's question is, if we decide to go with a town administrator, does it have to go that way – taking position direct oversight of the administrative staff would be fundamental requirement of the town administrator. Clearly are many technical issues that the board of selectmen deals with on a regular basis that make sense to have administrative experience but are a number of other boards who the town administrator could serve. Chairman Leva noted secretary had sent job descriptions to town counsel from other towns – who also have other towns. Does it make sense to go in another direction from what they're doing? Selectman Alterisio felt it best to put together what we feel is best for Dunstable – put together description with things we think the person should be responsible for, if we find items that encroach on another board's authority, work through those.

Selectman Devlin suggested after comprehensive understanding of responsibilities listed in job description – boards will see that it makes sense to relinquish some of the responsibilities to the town administrator. Selectman Alterisio reported that town counsel hasn't yet been scheduled but will move forward to do so; if comes down to an administrative secretary to the Board of Selectmen, we don't need that. Administrator would also work with the two enterprises. Rich will look closely at the job descriptions, make some recommendations and hopefully Mr. Ahern will work on the job description as well. Good point – mission statement – if coalescence on a mission statement will go a long way to make other departments and boards see why it's important to make this happen.

The board noted visitation from David Crandall and Julienne Caruso from Bishop Guertin, freshmen who are taking citizenship & government, and sitting in on meeting as part of their course requirements.

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Mail: Selectman Alterisio noted he'd be attending NMCOG meeting this week – no earth shattering issues on tap but 911 Regionalization project has begun – came up with 5 steps for moving ahead – one being to resolve issues that some communities have with regionalizing the service – moved to #1. Address issues as 1st item – getting together and trying to address concerns that communities who are lukewarm or uncertain of any interest in moving forward with the initiative. Westford is one that will have an issue – now have two separate services one for fire and one for police who seem to have trouble talking with one another. Selectman Alterisio most of the issues is not the service, but the political aspect related to it. Some seem to have reservations with another community being responsible for their communication – Dunstable is a big example of how well it can work.

Chairman Leva presented recommendation for David E. Tully to continue serve as Dunstable's representative to the LRTA, Selectman Alterisio provided motion, and after brief discussion was 2nd and voted with all in favor. Chairman Leva endorsed document.

Chairman Leva reported interview scheduled for 3:30 on Wednesday with Susan Hogan, candidate for Dog Officer position. Selectman Alterisio won't be able to make meeting, interested in what rules this individual has in the Town of Groton and plans for adapting to the new state animal control provisions. Interested in what she'd be looking for us to do in joining program and budget requirements. Would also recommend if could get Chief and Town clerk in on the meeting, might be beneficial.

If can strike a deal and sounds reasonable, Selectman Alterisio is all for it. More communication today noting another issue that's come up; Selectman Alterisio noted he wasn't certain what the number of calls was, but for some reason thought 72 was mentioned somewhere along the line.

Selectman Alterisio noted amendment needed on page 2, 2nd to last sentence, instead of dissention should be decision. And in 2nd paragraph on page 3 – should reflect "David did an extraordinary job but ended up having to do the MEMA & FEMA applications in addition to his other responsibilities" – noting it's an example of the type of things a Town Administrator could do to help out the Road Commissioners. Selectman Alterisio explained to Road Commissioner Crandall, being present, some of the things that Town Administrator

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would be able to handle for them. Selectman Devlin provided motion to approve minutes of 9/10/12 as amended; 2nd and voted.

Selectman Alterisio inquired whether there'd been any follow-up discussion with Karl as to whether something exists for assessment of infrastructure and maintenance. Discussion continued on former discussion relative to the McGovern wall and replacement of pipes. A slew of issues that Karl has mentioned from time to time – do we have an understanding of what needs to be done so that it can be incorporated into a capital expenditures plan. With all due respect to Karl and the board, what we know about is what has come up – would like a full picture so that might be more aware of where the town is with the system and its need, once we bring it up to a level of compliance, where are we and what are plans for moving forward, how would it evolve and what, if any benefits, would the town get from expanding the system. A number of residents on Parkhurst Street want the water expanded to include their area. Discussion continued on the research that's been done over time. Dave indicated that while many people don't want to hear it, typically it would be cheaper to put wells in. Dunstable has a valuable resource with the water available in town. Eventually are going to have to bite the bullet, to get it ready for market. Selectman Devlin noted legally, if the line were to blow apart, could be an emergency situation which would/could require a 2 ½ override to fund, etc.

Selectman Alterisio questioned whether the cancelled agenda item dealt with recommendations and/or concerns relative to placement of memorial structures and alternate placement for future memorials and Chairman Leva reported it had and was being researched further.

Selectman Devlin asked Dave Crandall whether he had any concerns with Town Administrator – only thing he could see coming up is whether it would limit some of the their authority. Selectman Alterisio advised see it as the Board maintaining authority for hiring and firing – on a project basis the administrator would work with personnel making things happen. Selectman Devlin suggested, with items like with the salt shed initiative, would work through the process, bidding, etc. He further indicated as well intended as individuals who run for office may be, could free up some time and have someone who's experienced in the everyday requirements, etc. Dave Crandall asked if going to hire someone, need someone very qualified –whether have any idea what town administrators are being paid – all over the chart. Selectman Alterisio noted there is some level of anxiousness as to how it affects their job. Selectman Devlin, while all of the current officers

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understand the time that's required, well will run dry. Would put a little more professionalism into every board if have someone who's experienced in the process.

Chairman Leva asked if the students had any questions and answered one regarding the mission statement being prepared for the Town Administrator's position. Selectman Alterisio explained we don't have a town administrator or town manager now – deal with a lot of complex issues that don't completely understand whereas an individual with professional training would provide the town with the support needed. Dave Crandall inquired in the position of Town Counsel, while he likes Rich, does it come up to bid. Nothing against Rich, but from his position – sometimes he seems lackadaisical and response time is slow. He questioned whether the town would be better to deal with someone younger who could better deal with the issues. Chairman Leva noted the appointment inquiry that the board began sending off requesting not only confirmation of continued interest but any other individuals who were interested in applying for the positions. Commissioner Crandall advised the Board of Road Commissioners were unimpressed with him and/or the Town Engineer. The board members agreed if there's a better way of doing it, owe it to the Town to insure have appropriate coverage, noting while experience is extremely helpful, it shouldn't be the governing factor.

Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed and the meeting adjourned at 7:55PM after appropriate motion and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,
Board Secretary