

Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting: Monday, October 15, 2012

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

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM with all members present. Chief Downes met with the board to provide update on policies & procedures accreditation process number of items including – he advised they go through them every 3-4 years or so; are provided thru MA Chief's Association so are pretty standardized. Right now going thru them all to confirm they make sense and would like to present them to the Board for their approval. Most of them are accredited so meet current standards; hopefully after updating will be eligible for accreditation from outside sources, if meet standards, would receive accreditation – doesn't happen overnight will be ongoing process for a term. Chairman Leva asked how often department personnel review – Chief Downes noted accreditation standards are created by MA Chiefs of Police and Chiefs of police throughout – if we are involved with situation of liability, having the 54 standards in place, not only enhances professionalism but provides additional accountability. Selectman Alterisio-all of these things tend to be codes of conduct type as opposed to adding new requirements to the department; and inquired whether there could be any serious impact on the police union contract. Chief Downes noted that the town has maintained the ability for Selectmen to maintain and incorporate operational requirements, etc.

Financially hasn't seen any that would have an effect on the Town at this point, or with labor management. National accreditation body and MA created accreditation body and took many of the standards from the National standards. Chairman Leva inquired if members of the department review on annual basis – Chief Downes advised all members have the information electronically so they can review any time they want, as well as there is a hard copy at the station.

Ron Mikol asked few questions, noting he's familiar with ICO certification, what happens if this doesn't go well. Chief Downes advised that our accreditation is not mandatory; but Ron questioned once accredited, and lose it, what's the impact. Other than pride there is none. Chairman Leva indicated it goes back to initial question – Jim advised that it's basically implementing guidelines and standards. Chief Downes advised that they train once a month, pull policy & procedure out and train on it. Chairman Leva asked when would anticipate certification – Chief Downes advised with 139 polices – looking about 1-3 years. He indicated that 2 or 3 years ago he went thru the policies & rules & regulations – now will be comparing the

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existing with standard and modifying where necessary. He indicated that having individuals come in and identify our vulnerabilities is a good thing – this is all about trying to make the department better. Ron asked the area towns – and Chief Downes estimated out of 53 NEMLEC communities 50% have been accredited or certified. Ron inquired whether it helps with litigation or prosecution to have policies and procedures certified.

Chief Downes will send up the policies and ask for their stamp of approval on the policies. Ron asked to confirm that the server at the station and the tracking software was all up and running. Chief Downes confirmed it's working – have couple of glitches once in a while – has been very helpful for him to compile data for reference and updates.

Chief Downes then provided update on communications with National Grid and Verizon – have met with their representatives and National Grid has been in contact with Tree Warden addressing some trees that are a concern. Verizon has also been addressing some of the hanging wires identified. He advised we're unfortunately still awaiting a response from Charter but are hoping to get one soon. Chief Downes encouraged residents to sign up for blackboard Connect with their cellphone so they can be reached. Ron advised that the statistics state that Verizon provide about 98% coverage in the town so Charter is just about extinct.

Chief Downes advised on the neighborhood captain annual meeting coming up and the board discussed some of the activities. Chief Downes advised in essence neighborhood captains are there to disseminate information to their neighbors so that residents can be kept advised in the case of an emergency. Most neighborhood captains have around 200 households. CERTS are used in emergencies – will do 1st responder with them once a year, are uniformed; provide support for functions, etc. and in emergencies.

Selectman Alterisio noted that Officer Ryan is back – extend good thoughts that we're glad to have him back. Chief provided Halloween hours for the community – Wednesday 10/31/12 from 5-8PM. Will have officers out for patrols and encourage parents to have children wear bright clothing and to contacts police with any concerns.

Selectman Alterisio brought up issue of GLTHS and whether we should consider holding STM for the building project. Ron advised that he spoke to George Garabedian – and received the schedule – only

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looking for \$1400 from TOD for that year – district votes in the building program and towns and cities are kind of obliged to support – if it were \$17K a year would definitely need to bring it to town meeting but based on his conversations with him, it's not necessary. Selectman Alterisio advised that he'd spoken with Town Counsel who reminded him of a quirk, in the agreement; Town only calls a town meeting to disapprove the expenditure, just a cursory vote to support. Ron noted that Tyngsboro had town meeting scheduled for tonight. When it comes to around \$30K, town might need to vote to exclude the debt from 2½ but not right now. Selectman Alterisio is to understand that it really is in the towns best interest to go ahead and do this as if it was addressed as just a mere upgrade or repair in bits & pieces; district could just go ahead and do as minor projects.

Alan Chaney stopped in to witness democracy in action – he advised he understands that CPA match is going to be a little higher than last year.

Selectman Alterisio reported on his conversations with counsel on the inspector's emergency call situation – have to come up with an agreement between the inspectors and the board on how to proceed, will also have to work with Fincom. Selectman Alterisio reported that has come up recently where inspectors have been called out on some number of occasions and doesn't get paid for it – no compensation been paid to date. Issue has been raised, must now come up with some sort of standard or some kind of policy to follow from now on. Ron advised right now has split of 80/20 from permit fees. Selectman Alterisio advised that Electrical Inspector has come forward with adjusted rates, and have been approved. Selectman Alterisio noted that looking at the number of permits and the portion maintained for administrative costs doesn't really cover any of her salary. As long as we come up with some sort of agreement that we're going to fold in the administrative service as a function of the town. David and his son have proposed something – must be a policy reflecting the level of understanding – number of \$150 per emergency call-out has been identified. Doing due diligence are going to have to qualify how the number is derived. Gas & Plumbing inspector as well would be subjected to same conditions and would have to be supporting documentation for payment. Knows it's leaving David swinging in the breeze right now, but has never been brought to anyone's attention before this. Town is not really excited about creating a slush fund – must be distributed on appropriate documentation. Selectman Alterisio advised that secretary has compiled data from other communities.

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Selectman Alterisio reported he'd also spoken a little with town counsel about town administrator position – not taking about taking authority away from existing positions, will still be able to hire & fire, etc., town manager would just basically play a supporting role in directing staff as to the steps that need to be taken and what needs to be accomplished - would be providing assistance as needed, not hiring and firing or determining budgets, etc.

Keeping with the schedule, Bonnie here at 7:45 providing update – signed contract with Point Software a year ago, and they have contracted with Invoice Cloud for billing. Update once a month and tax payer can choose to pay on line, will now cost them 40 cents per payment and the town 40 cents per bill generated. She noted it's still less expensive than cost of mailing all bills out quarterly; has also spoken with Unibank who would generate for 25 cents a bill, but uncertain whether Point Software will charge for the information.

Selectman Alterisio reviewed current options – Bonnie advised new option would mean that invoice cloud or Unibank billing, whichever option individual choses, either to have it emailed or mailed. For the individuals who do through their mortgage company, how would it be handled, Bonnie advised in many cases now, there are tax processing companies who go directly to Point Software for the tax information, and then Bonnie receives check from the mortgage company. Bonnie advised that if already pay with credit card, pay fee but question is whether she has the authority to make the decision. The Board advised they felt the authority on which process or company to use, lays with Bonnie. Selectman Alterisio felt if the town was to try to force individuals to use electronic payments, etc., there might be some resistance. Bonnie advised that deputy collector is now Point Software and they provide technology credits for the collections, so could possibly apply some of those credits to limit extra charge.

Ron questioned the proposed charge of \$150 for an emergency call and Selectman Alterisio noted that number was thrown out but will need to look at the material and determine whether it can be qualified. Electrical Inspector is looking to move forward and receive payment – Selectman Alterisio noted will need to document call out from National Grid, Police, Fire or Emergency Management. Like any department would submit requisition for payment and get paid. Ron indicated Fincom would need to look at what's involved and how to best address. Selectman Alterisio again indicated for due diligence to the

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town and its residents, have to come up with something rational, along with policy and procedure.

Ron reported on meeting few weeks ago with GDRSD beginning their budget process on Thursday. Former superintendent discontinued that process but indications are the former process will resume and looking for a hefty increase. Selectman Alterisio advised that he doesn't believe that the system has been virtually hurt by the last two years – uncertain that moving forward, just because held fast for last two years, have to start catching up – need to understand that communities are somewhat restricted with 2 ½ % and Groton has a stronger revenue source than Dunstable, school district must appreciate that Dunstable is constrained – we have 2 ½ and to work it through within 2 ½ must come from services. Ron advised he has no indication of what the driver behind the suggested increase is, will know more soon. Selectman Alterisio indicates it all has to be part of a long range plan and unions have to be brought into the realm of understanding constraints – at last meeting was advised that their obligation is to provide the best program and town's job is to come up with the money to pay for it. In order to support, have to come up with a plan that's town-wide and understanding of residents of what's needed to keep it going.

Back to administrator's role – elected board maintains control – medium is general agreement that as a professional, only the Board of Selectmen have the authority to hire professionals. Each position has a role; Town Administrator would work with those entities to map out level of understanding for directing daily operations. Money decisions etc. would stay with the elected authority. Need to put something in place that would allow for the process to move forward and have administrator provide day to day direction for staff, shouldn't be a problem, would mean don't have to have official called in and could take care of problems as they come up. Rich didn't think was going to have a problem, and will work to review a job description to address. All agreed that it would only help the situation – go out and determine what needs to be accomplished and come up with a plan. Next step is to get job description down along the lines that Selectman Alterisio has described – the models that we've acquired are pretty much in concert with that objective.

Minutes from 10/9 were tabled; Chairman Leva announced deadline to register to vote is 8PM on Wednesday, October 17th. Teen Captains Meeting is Saturday October 27th at 10AM at Dunstable Public Library.

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Selectman Alterisio reported annual meeting of NMCOC is Wednesday at the Radisson in Chelmsford. Chairman Leva reported he'd attended CTI event last week, spoke with Steve Joncas and some of the staff at CTI and has sent out invitation for CTI to come in to a meeting and review the services they provide. Selectman Alterisio reported on his visit to the senior meeting at the Library last Wednesday some interest expressed in anything going on. Tomorrow is Dunstable's 339th Birthday.

Minutes of 9/17 were tabled on 24th, approval of the 24th and the minutes of 10/9 are still outstanding.

The Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed and the meeting adjourned at 8:20PM after appropriate motion and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,
Board Secretary