

## Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting: Monday, November 19, 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. Mr. Tom Murray, a student from University of Lowell was in attendance in preparation for a term paper he's working for his political science course. Chairman Leva noted the items scheduled for this evening on the agenda.

Selectman Devlin drew attention on the communication from the City of Lowell relative to the composition of the Greater Lowell Regional High School agreement.

Tax Levy Hearing opened with Assistant Assessor Victoria Tidman providing [packets](#) and advising that with such a small commercial/industrial base it made no sense to have a split rate. Majority of Sky Meadow is under Chapter 61 as it is classified as recreational land under 61B. Should they decide they wanted to sell the property or take it out of Chapter 61B would require payment of roll-back taxes. The Board of Assessors recommend that the Board adopt a residential factor of one so that the Assessors can set the tax rate, all based on the budget voted at Town Meeting.

Chairman Leva clarified the process for viewers and Mr. Murray so that he might understand. Currently the tax rate is \$14.88, pretty reasonable compared to Townsend which is at \$16.66. Projected rate is \$15.53 with a residential factor of one – all property levied at the same rate. Vicki advised she didn't see any significant devaluation of property this year. Selectman Devlin provided the motion to set the residential factor of one for FY2013, based on Assessors recommendation. Building has been slow but Selectman Alterisio noted probably within 3 years there's going to be some activity on the NRLC property – but Vicki noted it's difficult to project. Selectman Alterisio noted some uncertainty on how the developer will proceed. Board signed the necessary paperwork for submission to DOR on Wednesday. Vicki advised that everything would be sent into the state on Wednesday and hopefully will have a tax rate by sometime Thursday morning.

Selectman Alterisio referenced the letter from City of Lowell who has a position but would like to have town counsel take a look at it and advised Board as to where do we stand, how best to move forward. Lowell asking for review of the composition of the regional school committee and whether it might violate one person one vote principal,

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providing opinion from their counsel. Ask our counsel to take a look at where we stand and then schedule joint meeting with counsel, and our GLTHS representative. Time established within 6 weeks – has significant impact to the Town and young people who are at GLTHS.

Minutes of 11/5 were accepted as amended by Selectman Devlin and Selectman Alterisio and the minutes of Tuesday, 11/13 were approved as written.

Selectman Alterisio wondered if it might be appropriate to take a look at the board's schedule moving forward as Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve both fall on Monday, joking that the board might not want to scare away Santa. Board discussed and indicated hopes that they could take care of things in their meeting on December 17<sup>th</sup> and schedule their next meeting on January 7<sup>th</sup> with the understanding that they could always schedule a meeting in the interim should the need arise. He also suggested coming to some sort of conclusion and posting modified hours for holidays in advance.

Chairman Leva then referenced letter (attached) from Chief Downes requesting the Board promote Matthew Tully to permanent and full-time police officer, a position previously approved as part of the budget process and our Annual Town Meeting in May for FY2013. Chairman Leva then made recommendation to go along with the Chief's recommendation. Selectman Alterisio moved to accept recommendation and appoint Matthew Tully of Dunstable to full time police officer. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chairman Leva and vote was taken with both Selectman Alterisio & Chairman Leva voting in favor and Selectman Devlin abstaining as he is related to the officer in question.

Selectman Alterisio advised he'd also brought up issue of town administrator job description and once it's available will forward to counsel to look them over. Going to focus on position responsibilities and duties and will meet with at least chairs of departments. Town Counsel doesn't have anything yet, but will be forwarded once Mr. Ahern presents the amended version, expected no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of December.

Selectman Alterisio noted the issue with historical collection and has addressed with Town Administrator in Tyngsboro who is going to have the Chairman of Historical Commission in Tyngsboro contact him.

Town Clerk Carol A. Skerrett then met with the Board relative to her memos re: the election equipment, BORC transporting election

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equipment. She advised the Highway department has been responsible for moving equipment, setting up polls, etc. and Highway is down one man right now as George is out on medical leave. Most important part of it is the equipment, very expensive equipment – gets moved to the Library and this year, because of the labor shortage was left at the Library for about 2 weeks. Uncertain what to do to insure the equipment is moved. In the back of her head, she's thinking that it might be appropriate to also look at the polling location, which originally started at the school in their Library, and was relocated to the Dunstable Public Library which only has 44 parking spaces. In addition she needs the booths inspected as a couple of them broke at the last election, but uncertain who to have look at them or how to pay for it as there's nothing in her budget to cover. She also noted where a Special Election may also be in the offing, this would necessitates their repair fairly soon. Need to have some level of discussion with Road Commissioners, and the reasoning for using the BORC is that Highway is the only department with equipment and personnel to take it on. Selectman Alterisio suggested first connection would be with BORC with alternative being temporary help. Carol advised she could also look into the folding booths but prefers the sturdier booths. Selectman Alterisio noted that it shouldn't be a burden she has to deal with. Carol advised another thing is the Special election which may be pending, and may fall within the winter months. Carol was asked to put together some form of logistical check list which can be on the table for discussion with the Road Commissioners. Carol had no problem with their not doing it, if they can't accommodate her, but needs to know in advance so that other arrangements can be made.

Carol continued advising the other thing is the memo she sent to the Board in August relative to the dog licensing, can no longer enforce Section 5C. Current Dog Officer has indicated that she'd worked with Groton Town Clerk but cost of maintaining the program was more than the fees collected. This bylaw is so labor intensive, and the courts don't want to provide assistance. She indicated the Town will probably have to take a look at tweaking the bylaw anyway with the new amended animal control law. She advised she doesn't think it's fair to charge individuals who come in late a \$10 fee for late registration, whereas those who don't bother to license their dogs don't have to pay anything. Board agreed it was somewhat of a moral dilemma, will have to kick it by Rich and see what he can come up with.

Carol – every town has a different bylaw, some are more successful, the ones who are successful, enforce it. She suggested skipping the

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late fee portion and going to like June with provisions where it could accrue monthly. Is there an opportunity where collectively a number of towns could get together to have someone enforce, on a percentage basis, to cover costs, etc. Carol explained that nothing gives her the authority to fine anyone, adding that it's something that no town clerk wants to address. Selectman Alterisio noted arrangement was to put out interest that are in need of dog officer who understands what was needed and Dunstable would assimilate our needs along with Groton's rules & regulations. Selectman Alterisio indicated the important step in getting it done, is for her to work with Carol. Carol advised that her point, in bringing it to the Board, was that it's our bylaw and yet we don't have anyone to enforce it. Selectman Alterisio wondered if it might be something that a constable could do. Carol recalled when the town adopted the provision that would allow the town to refuse a permit because of outstanding taxes and had looked into including dog licenses but it's not possible. Selectman Alterisio advised that it's always an argument that he's had, that someone has championed from a consortium of info from multiple towns, a bylaw, etc., that they get pushed thru town meeting, even though it doesn't work in Dunstable, and then the town is in a dilemma trying to work it through even though it doesn't make any sense for this town. Selectman Alterisio further noted that Town Clerk's plate is always full, as it should be, but maybe something creative can be put together and look into a possible consolidation with surrounding towns.

Carol reported that right now we have about 190 dogs unlicensed, that she's aware of because veterinarians are required by law to provide copy of the rabies certificate to the Town Clerk. No reminder is sent to the dog owners, although used to send a post card to new owners. Bylaw requires registration within 30 days of bringing dog into town. Discussion addressed how Groton and other towns handle and recommendations for how to proceed.

Board secretary called the board's attention to GDRSD budget meeting and today's correspondence from Brookline NH Selectmen expressing their thanks for Fire Department's assistance at the Bingham Lumber fire on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Selectman Alterisio explained some of the background on the GLTHS contract and inquiry from the City of Lowell on concerns with the representation and possible conflict with state law.

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Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed, and meeting adjourned at 8:10PM after appropriate motion and vote. It was noted that Town Hall offices would be closed on Friday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,  
Board Secretary

