

Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting: Monday, January 7, 2013

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 quorum present. Chairman Leva made some comments reminding everyone that the position was approved by the town in 2007 and subsequent to that was recommended by the Division of Local Services of MA Dept. of Revenue and later by the Governance Committee; wasn't pulled together on their own. Selectmen invited input as a courtesy to the boards. Joan Simmons knew there had been an approval regarding Town Administrator but wasn't certain to what extent approval had gone.

Selectman Alterisio noted there were a number of items in the report from the Lowell Sun – review by the DOR was per the Board of Selectmen's request; in the process of changing the Town Accountant position – Town basically initiated the review – not because Dunstable was on a watch list, Town Treasurer was not Roberta Dean, never been a financial issue with the Board of Selectmen – it was what was appropriate for the Town. He indicated board made it clear on the meeting of the 27th that Selectmen will probably have little to do with the Town Administrator position as it is being put in place as resource for all town departments, although the board would appoint the individual, the same as it does with the Town Accountant, Town Engineer, Town Counsel, etc. Issue of who we are looking for and why – retirees need to apply – negative connotation – would like to talk with someone with experience, not for retiree who wouldn't cost the town any retirement – may actually supplement the individuals retirement, all dependent on the individual's experience; Tim Goddard wasn't at the workshop. Joan noted the newspaper article wasn't of her concern, but she understands this town administrator wouldn't have anything to do with Police Department, Fire Department or Highway Department and wonders just what is the individual going to do, if cutting out all those departments. Selectman Alterisio noted before approaching Town Meeting for funding, Board wants to be absolutely clear the job description and benefit to the Town; uncertain at this point as to the investment necessary for this position.

Chairman Leva for the record, called her privately because he was concerned that she was upset that we were definitely going to hold the meeting regardless of the responses from individuals who were unable to attend, and that was not the case. Chairman Leva advised will be holding another session. Selectman Alterisio advised that will be looking at job description and review the items that should be done. Selectman Alterisio noted in the report, that it was underscored in the report from Division of Local Services and noted that while most items were being taken care of by existing personnel, there was so much more that could have been addressed with experienced personnel. If find that have sufficient management practices in place, may not need a Town Administrator at this point. Selectman Alterisio – a lot of technical things involved in running a town that elected officials don't have the knowledge or wherewithal to address productively. Would like to move forward now with input from boards as to what they'd like to see for the town, use it for planning and putting together strategic plans for making things happen. Basically have a team in place that's doing it now, but it comes down to independent contractors rather than a ????. Chairman Leva advised the Board has been talking about this since 2010, and now at the stage of moving forward. Joan recalled a very well attended meeting a while ago, the presentation by Tim Goddard back in August of 2011 – fairly good turnout, not like no-one is interested, would hate to see them have to do the presentation all over again – but thinks it's important to make sure that boards, etc. understand. Board will be scheduling again to get a consensus from some if not all the boards, there are some who may or may not appreciate the advantages, etc. Selectman Alterisio has been around a while, newspaper articles, etc. there's no upside or gain from reviewing the article – basic resident – sees no upside in debating in the press, but sees clear advantage in discussing amongst boards, etc. the advantages.

Chairman Leva noted there will be plenty of other meetings for all boards. Alan presented for board's consideration – town meeting vote was 2007, and DOR report came forth in 2010. He referenced the report noting that the recommendation from DOR for a DPW was without any input from Cemetery. Board referenced the further review by the Governance Committee before moving forward with any recommendations. Alan opined the minutia is what the board's do and an administrator can't do it for us. Selectman Alterisio advised the intent of pulling together was to try to define the elements of the job description. Alan can see how it would be helpful but the Board's reward is in Heaven. Selectman Alterisio noted that he felt we're just about at the point where the board needs to set up meetings with different boards independently to see how might avail themselves of the services. Expectation is for the action at Town Meeting would be to fund the position. Probably the town would only be secondarily involved, to be assisted by the individual

where necessary but basically for the assistance and support of Town boards, departments and committees.

Mike Wurm inquired whether there was a statement that board could give him. Chairman Leva advised that he'd addressed directly with Hiroko who corrected immediately. Selectman Alterisio noted that some of the items she quoted him in were basically correct but the idea that the board was on a watch list, etc. is inaccurate and he and many others are uncertain where that came from – the Town of Dunstable requested the financial management review from the Division of Local Services. Selectman Alterisio and Chairman Leva continued to clarify errors and misrepresentation in the Lowell Sun articles for Mike Wurm who was representing the Lowell Sun tonight at the meeting and elaborated on the board's and town officials positions. Selectman Alterisio noted there were some concerns for town resident's misunderstandings of the town's situation as a result of the inaccuracies in the article. Discussion continued on some of the small towns in the area.

Selectman Alterisio presented minutes of 12/17 meeting – motion was made to approve and voted with both in favor; the December 10th and December 13th minutes were tabled for approval by full board at a later date.

Chairman Leva mentioned the e-mail from Jim Frey regarding articles that town would like to notify general public – deadline is Wednesday, January 9th – has been distributed to Selectmen and Fincom via e-mail last week. Chairman Leva will talk with Fincom to see if can get something for Wednesday.

Insurance issue and recommendations – town doesn't have a slush fund to finance these items, rely on the insurance carrier's expertise and authorized Town Counsel to issue letter as requested by two members of Road Commission; Chairman Leva read letter to Verizon re: Chief Downes acceptance of position as E-911 Coordinator replacing Gerald Simmons after many years of service.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,
Board Secretary