

Minutes: Selectmen & Advisory Meeting: Thursday, October 24, 2013

Present: Selectman Chairman Daniel F. Devlin, Kenneth J. Leva, Clerk and Walter F. Alterisio, Procurement Officer and Advisory Committee Chair and Ron Mikol and Members Dana E. Metzler, Kevin W. Welch, Harold Simmons; Town Counsel and Road Commission Members

The meeting was called to order at 2:04PM with quorum present. Selectman Alterisio noted the focus was of meeting is on warrant the board has to sign on 28th for posting on the 29th.

Discussion proceeded on the funding available for each of the warrant articles. Selectman Alterisio noted that if funding isn't available discussion may proceed on the subject. Don't want to fiddle with the budget as it stands – not advocating nor anticipating any raise. Dana advised have \$87-89k that can raise & appropriate without going over 2 ½%. Motion makes the final decision. Discussion continued on the language in the articles vs. the motion. Selectman Alterisio advised the board doesn't anticipate funding beyond the budget. Ron – built budget from current year – anticipated the salary funding for Town Manager which will come out of the tax levy that will be recalculated. The remainder of the articles will come out of free cash. Selectmen are looking to Fincom for how to do within current budget.

Article #2 = feasibility study – redraft to reflect feasibility study which would suggest where the Fire Station would be located and then the town needs to write an RFP. Ron advised would look at the needs and where best to locate – Selectman Alterisio and Selectman Leva felt that Highway should probably be included in the feasibility study for public safety complex and which departments were best served by a joint venture. Ken – getting back to water yet related to article 2 – Capital Projects made decision for Articles 1,2,3,4 & 5 – why withdraw. Karl was on board with the approach but has rethought it – trying to chart a different cost with plan of using Tighe & Bond for evaluation. Dana questioned whether Karl is thinking the study with Tyngsboro is sufficient. Selectman Alterisio noted not going to be blindsided – Ron would prefer to leave Article 1 on there and take no action at town meeting and try to get together with Karl in the meantime. Discussion continued on the quandary.

Ron Mikol continued to explain his concern that goes to TM in May looking or \$1M – and it fails – pumping system has gone long by death's door and will cost town so much more for emergency repairs – Selectman Alterisio it's our job to make sure it doesn't fail. Ron continued, if pulled and it's done – getting it back out there isn't a simple option. Discussion continued.

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Article on town hall air conditioning – when talk about repair need to do something to protect the air conditioning equipment – explanation was \$20K to replace two air conditioners that got smashed – to get two more condensing units and move out of line of snow path.

New fence for Transfer Station: Selectman Alterisio indicated his thoughts were where they operate via enterprise, shouldn't it come from their enterprise funds – Dana advised two thoughts it's for benefit of abutters. Dana Kinne asked if there was any insurance money from when it was hit. Discussion continued on the Enterprise Fund – when it was built, the budget still subsidized it – when it was built – don't have a lot of surplus. The gates and fence are more for the abutters than for the Transfer Station. Kevin questioned since the \$15K isn't a public safety thing, let the enterprise fund support the needs. Fincom forced the users to fund most of it. If going to do something major, are going to do a bond but this is more for Fincom to discuss. Selectman Alterisio suggested pulling it out and dealing with it at the next annual town meeting – if there's an issue, would rather not have articles that there isn't an immediate need.

Selectman Alterisio related to the note from the Water department requesting withdrawal of the 27k article as (enter from Cheryl's email). Selectman Alterisio hoped to accomplish an assessment of the water system – originating back to 1916 – where are we, what is the exposure, what needs to be done emergency wise – where is the system going from this point forward. Before we kick in money to patch together to avoid a catastrophic failure, must understand where we are.

Next item of discussion was the article for the Fire Department Chief's budget – is there something that may be able to get in the interim – a utility vehicle like 2009 that will keep the cost down. Selectman Leva advised on his discussion with Brian and explanations of reasoning – may need more diligence into the breakdown. Brian advised could go with just a vehicle – would probably be 8-10k less but there's been so many occasions when he's had to go back to his house to get truck for equipment, etc. Selectman Alterisio noted the people you're asking for the money are still looking at why we need a full time chief and relate back to what George did for the Town. Discussion continued into whether now is the time to do this – hold over to spring town meeting when we have better supporting information. Ron indicated looking at its use – this likely to be a 10-12 year truck. Selectman Leva was

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hoping to have some more palatable options; discussion continued on how best to address.

Ron advised that Karl has done several presentations of the water department – if we get to the floor of town meeting and ask for a huge number which isn't sufficiently grounded in fact, unsure that can sell it. The Tyngsboro evaluation doesn't speak to the system in its entirety – more what needed to be done. If spend \$27K to look at the department evaluation – would also assist the town in getting a grant or low interest loan. Board was concerned why he wasn't agreeable – in his opinion that he has sufficient information, Ron being from corporate America isn't sure can sufficiently support. Selectman Alterisio – withdraw the article on the condition that whatever is presented for annual town meeting includes documentation of a defined study of the existing system and what is needed. Dana suggested the article remain and maybe Karl has what is needed and can always take no action at the town meeting. Dana worried that if you eliminate it he might not have the option of a presentation. Selectman Alterisio – moving forward

The articles from Highway for the building are for repair costs to address needs for a three year term – Mike advised this isn't a patch – it's a new roof, complete. \$10K figure is for setting up a maintenance fund line item for Highway building maintenance as we move forward as there's never been one.

Rich advised on the articles for the Pelletier parcel – town departments don't own property – have to give custody and control to some board if it's their salt shed. If going to consider carving a piece out for the salt shed, and going to define a specific location. If going to take a piece of it and give it to them for the salt shed, have to be given control. Rich advised should be some reference in the article to transfer control. Discussion continued into the dilemma with the present location – town forest is under the custody and control of the Town Forest committee...Article 97 issue – if going to take various dedicated land and protected land and change purpose – must go before legislation. Ron questioned if there was an issue where the charter prohibited use of the town forest land for any other uses. Rich explained some of the possible steps that may be required. BORC would like to stay where they are but are being pushed out. Ron noted some of the Advisory Board's concerns with placing it on River Street – doesn't know that it makes good sense to put it there – thinks we're being forced into it as the Town Forest Committee won't consider adjusting the arrangement to accommodate the town's needs. Dana

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noted the problem is need to go to the committee – Harold advised that he suggested a long time ago that Highway go to the Town Forest Committee – seems to fall on deaf ears. Harold further advised on a previous proposal to take 25 acres of Town Forest land for a school and indications for every acre taken would have to replace it somewhere else. Harold has been saying we need to approach the subject with Town Forest Committee since back when Ed Fahy was still alive – and he’s been gone for a while now – and it seems like no-one has ever approached the Town Forest Committee. Rich advised on the legislative process – most of the legislature wants to be familiar and comfortable with the proposal and its support. Rich would guess if well organized...

Selectman Leva suggested that it makes sense – we’ve missed the 1st step – let’s get the Town Forest Committee to sit down. Harold advised the Board of Selectmen appoint the Town Forest Committee can’t the Board require them to sit down and talk it out – Dana suggested need to get Town Forest in and make them aware that not looking at a lot more – already being used – it’s all about working together. Mike Martin advised would prefer to stay there- Dana’s opinion was it’s a dead end step. Rich – if there’s a salt shed on the parcel since like 1975 – it might be in their best interest to carve a parcel off of the town forest. Joan Simmons questioned whether there might be endangered species on the Pelletier property. Representatives from Conservation Commission have confirmed there isn’t a problem.

Ron Mikol advised on Fincom’s approach for the Town Administrators’ salary – looking at like \$35K for remainder of the year. Discussion then briefly turned to the zoning amendment for temporary moratorium on marijuana treatment center.

Ron – on Town Administrator article, noted Advisory’s hearing on Tuesday night on the warrant – discussion continued on funding and how funds are allocated. Kevin advised on difference between Town Manager & Town Administrator. Typically trying to come up with managerial position – Dana Metzler asked whether the person is going to be in charge of employees, noting other than elected officials have 2-3 people who work here, have personnel policy guidelines: calls out everything but keeps referring to appointing Board or Board of Selectmen and if you want them to report to the Town Administrator, need to change the language to reflect. Discussion continued into the practice – who hires the individuals – a semantic thing – there’s a spectrum of differentiation in the roles – job description. They’re

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going to bring what can on Tuesday – have a number of role charts from a number of towns. Rich cautioned when reading job descriptions from other towns, need to be certain that's what this town wants them to do. Dana advised that he thinks it has to be all sorted out before you pass the motion because people need to understand what's going to happen. Want a policy point of view – can't be fighting with each other all the time – need to establish position – Kevin can't go on to town floor and say we're not sure it's a work in progress.

Annual Town meeting is only a few months away, Kevin cautioned need to be sure you're ready and have everything in place before town meeting – failure is not an option – if this thing gets picked apart because we don't have a set structure, we're back to the drawing board. None of the Advisory Board has been comfortable about the process – Advisory Board is worried that there isn't control. If town doesn't give set guidelines and structure, organization chart and a clearly defined path, we're in trouble. Advisory Board wants everything in place – supports concept but needs everything in place – to eliminate conflicts. Discussion continued – Ron advised are saying Town Hall staff will report to the Town Manager or Administrator. Police, Fire, etc. will report to Administrator. If the individual is worth his weight, will be prepared to handle – clear cut definitive process and plan. Willing to put down on paper that he's the guy – can't have personnel who run to their board for their support against. Rich advised that because of a small number of employees who multi-task, take on the needs of the departments, will this administrative person create a clash between the boards and their personnel. Discussion continued on how to proceed via structure, unification and process to implement. Ron advised that issues may come up with Town Administrator- if don't have something solid, could just come in collect paycheck and not get any of the management to cooperate - need to get buy-in and make sure everyone understands what the person is going to do.

Discussion continued on how implementation will work – want the person to take on responsibility of maintaining policy. Kevin advised need someone who's technical enough to get things done. Dana – if going to use \$92K of free cash – certified @\$550K raise & appropriate \$42900. Motion has to specify how much money and where it comes from.

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Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed, and meeting adjourned at 3:55PM after appropriate motion by Selectman Leva, 2nd and vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Danice N. Palumbo,
Board Secretary

