

**Minutes: Selectmen's Meeting: Monday, December 2, 2013**

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Chairman Devlin with all members present. First item on the agenda is the Tax Levy Hearing – Assistant Assessor Victoria Tidman (Vickie) advised that Assessors needed the board to look at the [information they'd provided](#) and the Assessors were recommending single rate. She further advised that land values have gone down a little and have 3 new houses. Vicki explained the pages – 1<sup>st</sup> showing values by class; 2<sup>nd</sup> page shows different percentages for each class with residential @97%; 3<sup>rd</sup> page shows excess levy capacity; significance is to maintain lower tax rate; estimated 25 cent per thousand increase in the new rate; next page debt exclusions for this year (continuing to go down); last page reflects growth, etc.

Walter noted that there are a couple of developments coming forward which will have some effect on future tax years. Bob Ricardelli inquired how the gravel proposal for the Hall Street project worked out and Selectman Alterisio indicated at this point it doesn't seem to be an option – spirit of the bylaw that was put in place to shut down gravel operations does exempt the town from the bylaw provisions for specific uses by the town. Selectman Alterisio indicated he felt the town may be a need to take a look at amendment of the gravel bylaw and how realistic it is with regard to new development.

The board voted to approve the residential factor of one as recommended by the Board of Assessors after motion by Selectman Alterisio, 2<sup>nd</sup> and unanimous vote.

Selectman Alterisio referenced the issue of the Flanagan property and questions about a codicil that prevented building on a portion of the property. Vicki reported that some of the parcels were broken out at different times and without a close in the deeds for the parcels in question. Vicki further advised that codicil is about to run out. The Board noted input from boards with no interest in picking up option and will send release.

Selectman Alterisio also referenced notification from DOR relative to things that must be done by 2017 in the assessments – Vicki advised there are a lot of areas relative to assessments for personal property that Assessors may have Patriot Properties come in and take a look at. Vicki advised when they did it in Townsend it cost around \$2000 and only took a couple of months to complete.

David Tully stopped in to drop off the shovel from the groundbreaking at Greater Lowell Regional High School renovation and amendment process.

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David advised that the new superintendent will begin next Friday. Other item is the one man one vote - Dunstable has advised their recommendations for addition of another delegate from Dracut and Lowell with elections for area representatives by the related town. Discussion continued on the background of the representations vote and David provided background of the new superintendent's experience. Discussion followed on the change in vocational schools in Massachusetts - training, operations and commitments, etc.

Selectman Leva presented motion to approve minutes of 11/4, 11/12 as submitted by Selectman Alterisio, 2<sup>nd</sup> and voted to approve; Selectman Alterisio provided motion to approve 11/18 and 11/25 as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> and approved by all present.

Chairman Devlin will follow up with Dog Officer on kennel inspections reports, etc., and the issue having been brought forward by Town Clerk.

Police want to begin negotiations - meeting with Marc and Kevin is willing to continue to work with the Board. Selectmen Leva and Alterisio will represent the Board.

Selectman Alterisio has approached NMCOG in reference to the two RFP's one the Pelletier property survey as well as for the replacement of the damaged air conditioning systems and they have some language they'll forward to Walter so Board can take a look at it.

Selectman Alterisio presented document for board's review in their presentation for the town administrator's responsibilities.

The board discussed plans for Christmas and New Years - they'll be holding their meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> but none on the following week. Town Hall will be closing at noon on Christmas Eve.

The board briefly discussed the Main Street bridge project - hearing by MADOT on Wednesday evening, December 4<sup>th</sup>. Town Counsel is working on the issues of rights of way, easements, takings, etc. that will come into play for that project.

The board also discussed the budget process coming up and the police budget which needs to be reviewed. The Board would like to schedule the Chief for either the 16<sup>th</sup> or the 23<sup>rd</sup> to go over it and try to get a handle on where we are with respect to filling slots and how the project went in terms of details and what to expect with Salmon Brook detour. Selectman Leva suggested trying to do a 2 hour slot during the day to work those through. Schedule for 12Noon to 2 on Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup>. Board will schedule another session with Fire Chief at later date.

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The Board then met with Advisory Board – Selectman Alterisio advised he's basically a non-confrontational person – confrontation to him just generates headlines and creates session where real issues tend to get lost. With that said, activities recently have raised some questions as to relationship with entities of the town - by state elected officials have responsibilities and authority and have to stand the task to the public and voters. He's raising the issue as to whether or not the relationship is being interrupted or interfered with. When began the process for FY2014 BOS had entered for a line item in the budget for Town Administrator – wasn't included whether overlooked or however it happen. Were advised that it would be taken care of later at Special Town Meeting however ran into an issue where the Advisory Board did not support the line item. He understands the decision had nothing to do with whether they supported or agreed with the Town Administrator – despite recommendations from Department of Revenue and another committee. It appears that resistance or non-support from Advisory was due to lack of job description. This meeting is about getting a release of what the process should be in the best interest of the town. Selectman Alterisio indicated he understands if the Advisory Board finds a deficiency in the funding, etc., the role of Advisory Board is to come forward and say how can we make this happen, be it financial adjustment, override, etc., as more of a complimentary support to make things happen. Kevin indicated that Advisory spoke about it for a long time, noting that BOS was the last board to get their budget in; Fincom asked them several times to get their numbers in – Selectman Alterisio, Kevin advised their budget wasn't dependent on the Town Administrator. Selectman Alterisio indicated need to straighten it out – BOS stated the number and asked them to support the number. Selectman Alterisio further advised he was disappointed having to work through this confrontation here; Advisory Committee Member Kevin Welch advised that Advisory is an elected board as well as the Selectmen and have some reservations with the process. Discussion continued as to how best to approach, on the basis of the position at Special Town Meeting – prior to that BOS were free to present the number – Selectman Alterisio – lack of appropriate job description. Selectman Alterisio reported many months ago after the public presentation on the subject the proposed job description was circulated. Kevin advised he'd stuck his head into Selectmen's meeting one week before the meeting and noted still didn't have the number, despite continued requests for a number. Selectman Alterisio's position is it's not Advisory Committee's call as to whether there should be an appropriation for the Town Administrator – Advisory does not approve the funding. Selectman Alterisio advised it is the position of the board that it is not Fincom's call, it's BOS call as to hiring and specifying the role of requirements of the Town Administrator. Chairman Leva suggested that going forward, the groups should work together and cannot nail down a

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job description because want Advisory's input. Discussion continued – Selectman Alterisio inquired whether it's the Advisory Board's position that generally they've not received a job description. Selectman Alterisio again the job description is BOS call, what's to be included lays with them. Ron attempted to indicate that want to be sure there's buy-in. As the board worked through the issues over a number of months, the board was in agreement that this individual is going to be possibly the highest paid individual in the town and the board wanted to insure formality is followed to be sure that the position gives the town what it's looking for. There are going to be a number of heated discussions. Selectman Alterisio – 1<sup>st</sup> it will not be highest paid employee of the town for some time going forward. Strategy of bringing the person on was really to take a look at an individual who has a vast experience as in prior retired town manager or administrator – an experienced individual who could come in and help the town develop the role for what the Town of Dunstable needs as Dunstable's needs are going to be modest as compared to many other communities.

As far as Advisory Board going outside the realm of their responsibility, Road Commissioners have responsibilities as well, we may disagree but as long as it's within their financial capacity, this is outside Fincom's realm. Kevin advised that the role of Advisory is to advise not just financial – Selectman Alterisio advised that can be fixed by amending the article. Selectman Alterisio continued to explain the roles and responsibilities are clear in his mind and moving forward need to be followed. Advisory Chairman Ron Mikol asked Selectmen to work with Advisory to weigh in on articles whether they are concerning funding or not – did so with Solar bylaw as well – board's charge is to look at any articles as to whether it makes sense for the town. Discussion continued on the responsibilities of elected officials and the Board of Selectmen has the authority to put together and hire town administrator. Selectman Alterisio saying there was something else going on with reference to this new role, but the authority stands with the Board of Selectmen. Advisory is a supporting role to the Board of Selectmen. Ron advised can't always expect Advisory to go along with everything that's put forward. BOS can string this out or can move forward and put together approach. Selectman Alterisio's saying that Advisory is supposed to be supportive to the Elected Officials of the town isn't accurate. Ron advised that while the bylaw relative to the Advisory Board's charter has been amended slightly it's primarily along the same lines as the original bylaw position. Joe Dean interjected, will all due respect, the responsibility of the Advisory is to look at financial responsibility but also to help train and advise boards of complexities involved with proposals. In almost every other effort the town has moved forward with, have taken the extra step to help each other and to get the money needed for the betterment of this town and the citizens of this town. He doesn't

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think that by saying are going to put together an article restricting authority. Discussion continued on feelings each of the boards had as to their approach. Ron agreed with Joe that there were some pieces of the decision process that should have been put in place – not particularly liking taking debate to town meeting, but this is a small town, if we can't make it work here, it's not going to get better. We can't always look at argumentatively or with turf wars – need to have benefit of discussion to make things work. For the most part, works okay but when have argumentative issues, need to look at the whole picture and what's best for the town. Selectman Alterisio reiterated that the Advisory Board works the numbers to make the projects that need funding work, when the money is there. Selectman Alterisio recalled an earlier discussion where Advisory Board indicated the money was there. Chairman Leva noted all had good positions but don't want a Town Administrator to be put in a position amongst turf wars.

Conservation was looking for a transfer of \$4K from Fincom to tear down the barn on Conservation property – could possibly fund it in the spring. Selectman Alterisio supported that type of decision – but how to do a budget is a different story. Selectman Alterisio suggested that the Advisory Board and Selectmen have some series of discussions to see if they can come to a general agreement as to roles and responsibilities moving forward, noting that the roles of any elected officials are not subservient to the Advisory Board. In this particular instance Advisory was interfering with the efforts of the elected Board of Selectmen. He suggested that the Board and Advisory come together and sort out roles – even though may put them in confrontational position. On the flip side, Ron is in agreement should have further discussions to clarify and work together to move forward.

Ron Mikol referenced the article for repair of the air conditioning noting he was working on language for an RFP but Selectman Alterisio reported NMCOG will be presenting some possibilities for RFP language for the survey and that article as well. Treasurer's warrants were reviewed and signed, and meeting adjourned at 8:35PM after appropriate motion by Selectman Leva, 2<sup>nd</sup> and vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Danice N. Palumbo,  
Board Secretary