

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2014
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 7:03 pm

Present: Walter F. Alterisio, Chair, Kenneth J. Leva, Daniel Devlin, members; Madonna McKenzie, Town Administrator; Luis DeLoureiro, GDRSD School Committee Member; Alan Chaney, Veterans Grave Agent; Brian Rich, Fire Chief; James Dow, Police Lieutenant; Joe Dean, Memorial Committee; Michael Martin, Roads Commission Chair; Steve Boczenowski, TADS; Morgan Babcock Scholarship Fund Trustees

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Payroll & Vendor Warrants

Open Forum

Mr. Alterisio explained the propose and reasoning behind the public forum as well as the agenda and what we will be covering, including the Fire Fighters Auxiliary, the Morgan Babcock Committee, and a few others.

Teenage Anxiety & Depression Solutions

Mr. Boczenowski discussed with the Board a program he is involved with. He explained a little bit about it, and he is looking for a commitment for any funding available. The Board noted that if it gets into that, it will require a line item on the agenda, but noted that this is the right time to discuss this given our status in the early process of budgeting. He explained his sons tragic death by overdose, and his non for profit TADS. They raise awareness and enable access to care, he spoke eloquently about the need for a place where people can turn for help. He talked about a hot line established for helping people in need for mental health, and specifically depression. He discussed how this helps many people in many walks of life, from elderly to middle aged to youth like his son. TADS raises money privately for 2012 and 2013, but wants public funding in 2014. It cost \$12,000 for a year in 2013. Some funding is available from the local school district and Mark Hadid to fund some of their needs, they are asking for the rest. They want \$2,000 from Dunstable. Discussing for 2016. Mr. Alterisio explained that this is public forum and any actions further will have to occur at the next meeting with a place on the agenda.

Citizen Concerns & Questions Regarding Alexander Estate Earth Removal

Ms. Livingston, raising issues with the Alexander Estates situation. She reports that the trucks were blocking the road, speeding, and a lot of activity. Mr. Alterisio explained that he was called over this and he called the Police Dept. asking them to make a visit to the sight and he investigated whether the permit was in effect (not until today). Officer Hoar went out and he found that the activity was not related to the permit issued by this Board recently. This situation underscores the need for the Planning Board and the Board to review the criteria for issuing approvals of development plans. He spoke to the attorney for the developer and asked for consideration to the public and that while this is permissible (aside from the gravel permit) that they adhere all this trucking moving to the requirements of the permit for hours and travel routes. The Board also reminded the developer of the need for proper signage as required in the grant of the permit.

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Auxiliary Fire Fighters

Chief Rich addressed the Board concerning his proposal of establishing auxiliary firefighters for Dunstable. This auxiliary would encompass junior firefighters up to the age of 16, and allow members over 65 to be auxiliary. The Chief put forth several reasons establishing the need for auxiliary. First that auxiliary helps to establish interest from individuals before sending them for further training and the academy; essentially enabling the town to provide a non-intimidating way of bringing people on as firefighters without the same commitment as a full firefighter. Second, the auxiliary allows existing firefighters to stay on in some capacity after the legal age limits are reached which force retirement.

The Chief proposed changing how the insurance for firefighters is structured to pay for this. He also informed the Board that he would pay auxiliary \$5 less an hour since there are less things they can do. Currently the town cannot technically hire anyone as an EMT since the town lacks an ambulance, but having auxiliary could help put someone who is an EMT on the dept. without the need to make them full-fledged firefighters. He explained that the EMT's can assist the firefighters, doing things outside the fire scene. While everyone on the scene needs to know how to use breathing apparatuses, it helps to have the EMT's there who can assist any ambulances that do have to come in, and so forth.

The Chief admitted that this proposal is basically a program he's borrowing from Ashby. Ashby has done this successfully. The Chief also noted that out of about 24 in this Fire Dept. only about 7 live in Dunstable. Currently, all firefighters in Massachusetts have to have the classes, a six month process, and it is 320 hours. Currently the State pays for it, but the Chief warned, that could always change. He elaborated that in about 3 years, the former Fire Chief will no longer be able to respond, and is currently between 30 and 70 percent of the day time response in Dunstable. The Chief noted that we have to find ways to get more in town coverage because out of town firefighters cannot always respond quickly.

The Board inquired about on call wages with the Chief and when payment would ordinarily be dispensed. The Chief indicated that this pay is usually paid out twice a year during the first weeks of Dec. and July respectively. He reported that incident pay was about \$4,500 and training compensation was also about \$4,500 this year. The Chief also noted that response on calls is low. The Board finished by commending the extraordinary work done in clearing 160 Pleasant Street and mad a point of noting how they were able to do a tremendous amount of work. The Board officially recognized both Chief Rich and the Fire Dept.'s work.

Memorial Committee

Mr. Dean addressed the Board. He started out by thanking the different people who helped make the process happen, including Mr. Chaney, Mr. Metzler and others. The committee looked at each monument in town and discussed what to do with each monument, how to maintain them, and what to do moving forward. They also recommend the development of a new memorial for the community as part of the report they are submitting. By submitting the report, the committee fulfills its purpose. The Board thanked the committee for their hard work and noted that the reason for the committee was that a lot of memorials exist in town, and there was a need for an inventory of what exists. The Board elaborated that they wanted to determine when and whether it should add additional memorials and what the logic and rules and direction for this process should be. Ms. Bacon and the rest of the committee asked the Board to take action sooner rather than later on the committee's recommendations.

Morgan Babcock Committee

The Morgan Babcock Committee came before the Board to renew trustee appointments. They reported that the first time ever, they have 4 trustees who wish to renew their terms. The committee told the Board

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that they will award scholarships in April, and mid-May a reception will be held. For the last few years, about 20 applicants have applied annually. The committee also conducts outreach to area high schools to identify students who are qualified to be recipients, and they advertise in the Neighbor to Neighbor. The Board praised the committees work and informed them that that they may approach the committee sometime in the New Year for help in the development of a new scholarship fund, which is the result of a resident leaving the town funds from their will (from the sale of their home) for this purpose. The committee indicated the trustees who wish to be reappointed.

Appointments

Daniel Devlin is appointed a Trustee to the Morgan Babcock Comm. Term Expires: Dec. 31st, 2016
Motion by Mr. Leva, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

Lou DeLoureiro is appointed a Trustee to the Morgan Babcock Comm. Term Expires: Dec. 31st, 2016
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

Jayne Girouard is appointed a Trustee to the Morgan Babcock Comm. Term Expires: Dec. 31st, 2018
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

Kelly Wilson is appointed a Trustee to the Morgan Babcock Comm. Term Expires: Dec. 31st, 2018
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

Consultant's / Administrator's Report

Ms. McKenzie started off her report by discussing with the Board the need to dispose of some left over equipment and furniture at 160 Pleasant Street. She provided a list from Chief Rich to the Board, and requested a formal vote on the matter. A subsequent motion was made by Mr. Leva to permit the town to dispose of the items in question. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin, and passed unanimously without objection.

Ms. McKenzie moved to the topic of the security system. She updated the Board on the continued plans for the updated security system, which will include panic buttons. She told the Board that this project should be done by the end of this month. From there, Ms. McKenzie moved the topic to discussion of the heating and AC systems. She reported that only one bid has come back and that bid only included the heating unit and not the outside AC units. Ms. McKenzie told the Board she would be following up with the other contractors to determine why they haven't submitted bids as of yet. The Board asked about the heating system and when it could be expected to be done. Ms. McKenzie responded that the contractors mostly agreed that we should wait until after winter given the risk that our heating system could go down for as much as a week. A risk which she agreed was not worth taking this late into the winter season.

Ms. McKenzie continued reporting on heating and necessary maintenance by noting to the Board her efforts with Bob Ricardelli to winterize the Town Hall offices. This has included cocking around the windows and wood paneling as well as window coverings which helped to seal the windows. Ms. McKenzie elaborated that this winterization was necessary given issues that personnel have experienced with the thermostats and the lack of heat in areas like the Grand Hall and Ladies Restroom. She finished the topic by noting efforts made by Dana Barnes to improve the situation in the Ladies Restroom.

From that point, Ms. McKenzie moved on to discussing the progress of the Capital Planning Committee, after its first meeting, and she told the Board that at least one member probably won't end up attending meetings. This will mean that she will require a new member to be appointed in the future. McKenzie then turned to discussion concerning the Planning Board. There is a need to discuss with them the Master Plan as well as some updating to various by-laws. The Board concurred with Ms. McKenzie's opinion

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that a discussion needs to occur and asked her to arrange that the Board be scheduled on the Planning Board's next meeting agenda. While on that topic the Board discussed the River Street project that will be moving forward Rivers Edge Estates. Following that Ms. McKenzie finished her report to the Board by telling told them that she will have more on the budget, but that she cannot provide the Board with a "real" budget until closer to January. She stated that she expects to have this information for them by the end of January.

Road Commission Update

Mr. Martin updated the Board on several topics. First he noted that the earth removal process still requires that the required signs be squared away. The Roads Commission, he reported, thinks it can use some of the material which is gravel down at the Highway Garage. To this end, the Roads Commission asked for the Boards approval to have the material moved, regardless of the current signage issue. The Board noted that they prefer that the gravel and earth only be moved by the terms of the permit. The Board explained that this issue came up in the hearing, and was considered towards the terms of the permit. The Roads Commission made note to the Board that if they can get the material from this site, the cost would ultimately be \$3 to \$4 dollars less than anywhere else.

The Roads Commission finished by updating on the Salt Shed project. Mr. Martin said the new shed will be going up in a couple of weeks, and all issues with the conservation issue where cleared with the Commonwealth. In two weeks things should be starting and moving forward smoothly.

Old Business

➤ *Zoning Board of Appeals*

Ms. McKenzie started off by noting once again the Zoning Board of Appeals need for a secretary and for general clerical assistance. She reported that she had spoken with the Town Clerk concerning the matter and what needs to be done moving forward. For the time being, the Administrative Assistant has been directed to be available to the ZBA as necessary.

➤ *Budget*

The Board then turned to the topic of the budget and where we are so far. Ms. McKenzie reported that so far we appear to be in pretty good shape with current budget expenditures. No surprises appear to have occurred yet in spending and where we stand. There was one account concerning, the police which was technical services that has almost been expended, but Ms. McKenzie a promised to check into it. The Board noted that there is room to transfer from some line items to others to cover gaps. In the past Dept. Heads were told to go negative in the lines, and then in the last month or so of the year the funds were then moved around to cover.

➤ *School District (GDRSD)*

The Board then subsequently began discussion about a newspaper article from about three or four weeks ago which mentioned the school committee issuing a review of the district agreement (GDRSD). This included suggestions and recommendations on any possible changes in the agreement. The review was issued by the Mars Consulting Group and pointed out some areas that should be considered for update. On the outset, it should be noted that there is no issue of compliance with the Dept. of Education but the agreement does not reflect some of these requirements and the review suggests changes to make it so that it does.

One of these needed changes may be the school committee and how its membership selection works. The review recommends basing the membership on town population rather than student composition. The Board decided that in light of all of this sending communication to Groton and the school committee about how to approach any changes or updates to the agreement is necessary. The Board felt that while these are suggestions, there are probably several things that really should be addressed and the Board felt that since the agreement is in fact between the two towns there should be some understanding between the two Selectboards on how to proceed. The Board felt that a joint committee between the two towns that would involve community members that could give recommendations to both Selectboards would be conducive to the process.

There was also discussion concerning some known issues from last year, such as utility costs, special education, and other topics. The Board wants to know, moving forward, where we are with these specific line items that were of issue and whether these issues have been resolved or addressed. It was noted that the school is working on some of these issues, in particular the special education one. The Board felt that a need exists to better understand what is going on, to ask questions, and to ensure that commitments made at the town meeting are met. To this end, strategy needs to be deployed to know where we are going in the next 5 years and how that relates to dollars and cents, a need to understand and appreciate the school budget.

➤ *Middle School Roof*

The Board turned to addressing an issue about the replacement of the middle schools roof. Ms. McKenzie asked if the Board was properly notified by the school before action was taken concerning the borrowing of funds for the replacement. She reported that her research into this matter concluded that this matter was not taken before a town meeting. She further reported that debt related to this matter has somehow gotten into the excluded debt. As such, it must be taken to town meeting by all appearances. So it looks like it may have to go on this year's Annual Town Meeting as part of the funding for this current year. So far the process has only just begun. Ms. McKenzie finished by noting that we will be able to get the bulk of it through town meeting, but we'll have to pay for the smaller amount this year.


Minutes

Mr. Alterisio asks the rest of the Board to read the minutes and have them ready for approval on the 17th.

A motion to approve the minutes from the 10/22 meeting was made by Mr. Devlin, and seconded by Mr. Leva. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm by Mr. Leva, seconded by Mr. Devlin, passed.

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Hamm
Admin. Assistant to the Selectboard & Town Administrator

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