

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
October 15, 2014
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 6:59 pm

Present: Walter F. Alterisio, Chair, Kenneth J. Leva, Daniel Devlin, members; Michael Martin, Chair of the Road Commission; Madonna McKenzie, Town Administrator; Richard Larkin, Town Counsel; Carol Skerrett, Town Clerk; Robert F. Nelson, Town Moderator; Alan Chaney

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Payroll & Vender Warrants

Open Forum

Mr. Alterisio spoke briefly about the forum, its purpose, and how discussed topics cannot be voted on with immediacy, but will be taken into consideration by the Board for its agenda and action at future meetings. The Board then outlined the purpose of the evenings meeting; to clarify the warrant for the upcoming Special Town Meeting.

Special Town Meeting Warrant

The Board began by explaining that some articles in this warrant are for housekeeping, such as paying unpaid bills from the prior fiscal year, while others are proposed specifically by different entities in town such as the Board, the Advisory Board, the Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. The Board discussed how each article would be read and explained to the public. For articles brought by specific entities, those entities, would be responsible for helping to explain and defend the article to the town.

The Board proceeded to discuss each article briefly, talking about why it was recommended and its purpose. The Board spoke with the Mr. Nelson, the Moderator, about explanations for each article and how to answer different possible questions. This included some discussion as to why, for example, the school choice issue involved more than one article. Mr. Alterisio explained that this was due to the fact that tuition would stay relatively the same over the course of time, but that the transportation costs would change from year to year. There was a question as to why the town would pay for transportation costs, which was explained by Mr. Larkin, Town Counsel, as being a matter of MGL. He explained that when a student chooses a vocational school skill or vocation that is not taught by schools in the normal regional agreement by law they have to be able to go to a vocational school that does and if so the town must pay transportation.

Another article essentially pays for this situation by moving funds from a not yet commenced project in order to pay for this while keeping the approved budget. Subsequently the Board discussed the Salt Shed, and spoke with the Mr. Martin, Chair of the Roads Commission, about how to explain to the public this article and its necessity. From there the Board moved to discussion about the Main Street Project and how the process has proceeded. Ms. McKenzie, the Town Administrator, explained the bid process and where the town stands currently. The Board emphasized how it has considered the concerns of all related parties to this project from the roadway to the wetlands, to the cemetery and historical concerns. All interested parties have been involved in this process from the start.

The Board then discussed 160 Pleasant Street. As the building stands now, it poses a danger to the public in its current condition and repairing its structural issues would be too costly, the Board feels that demolition is the proper solution. There is also the issue of possible asbestos, and other related matters

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which indicate that demolition is the best choice. The Board moved on to discussing the article relating to a new police cruiser requested by the Chief of Police. The Board feels that it should listen to the Advisory Board (Finance Commission) which has recommended taking no action on this article. Mr. Leva moved for the Selectboard to recommend taking no action on article nine. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin, and carried unanimously.

Thereafter the Board moved to discussion concerning the alarm situation for various town buildings. The consensus was that action needs to be taken to ensure that valuable town property, especially at the Highway Garage, be secured with an updated and current system. The total cost as delineated in the article covers all town buildings at need. The Board subsequently proceeded to discuss the safe pathway article, explaining that the article funds the engineering and designing of a walking route from the center of town to the Library. As the Board noted, this sort of project is an overall goal of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments in their constituent communities, and the project will provide safety and recommend whether to put in place a full sidewalk or other sort of walking path alternative.

The Board then discussed the MS4 permit with the Moderator, working out how to explain the process. It was concluded that this issue concerns technical questions and the Board decided to ask Mr. Rider, the Town Engineer, to explain the process. After that the Board discussed the Water Commissions article for transferring funds from their enterprise account for repairs. Ms. McKenzie told the Board she would recruit someone to read the motion, and the Board consensus was that the Water Commission provide the person. Mr. Larkin then spoke to the Board about the community preservation article which will study the feasibility for putting several units of housing on the Best Triangle for senior and disabled housing.

The Board transitioned into discussing the articles concerning the changes to the Zoning By-Laws specifically in-law apartments and changing the acreage requirement for subdivisions involving senior housing from 50 acres to 5 acres. Mr. Chaney spoke to the Board about the in-law apartments and noted that there are currently 27 in town and he clarified that this article does not address the issue of converting in-law apartments to ordinary use. The Board wrapped up discussion on the two articles by discussing Mr. Larkin's recommendation that some kind of procedure be established for permits to move in law apartments to ordinary apartments should the town allow it.

The Board finished discussing the warrant by addressing the article concerning the Tennessee Pipeline. Mr. Larkin reminded the Board that the town needs to focus its discussion of this matter on the physical impact of the pipeline rather than the political issue of fracked natural gas. He told the Board that he has written a shorter abbreviated version which may be substituted by motion at the Special Town Meeting. Ms. McKenzie agreed that this substitution would be for the best. The Moderator asked for clarification regarding the process, which Mr. Larkin provided. Mr. Chaney noted that politics have no purpose here and that the town needs to focus on the physical impact on wetlands and open spaces. Carol Skerrett, the Town Clerk, reminded the Board that people will likely want a vote tally and suggested the Board ask the assembled people if they do at the start of discussion. Finally, the Board considered a motion by Mr. Leva to approve all of the warrant articles except for nine and fifteen. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed without further debate.

Minutes

The Board postponed consideration and adoption of prior meeting minutes until its next meeting.

Treasurer's Warrant's/Mail

The Board signed the warrants as requested by the Town Treasurer. They then proceeded to discuss and consider correspondence received by mail.

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The Grange sent a formal request to the Board asking for a key to the Town Hall that would allow them access to the Grange Room on the lower level for use and for maintenance. The Board readily agreed noting that this not an issue and that the Grange should be allowed such a key.

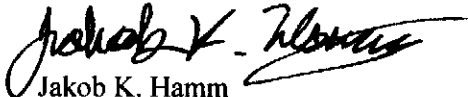
Mr. Larkin than brought the Board's attention to a matter concerning a suit at law involving the Greater Lowell Technical High School. The matter involved a proposed settlement offer which would potentially include the town as a party. The Board briefly discussed the various options the settlement proposed and ultimately instructed Mr. Larkin on its position.

Next Meeting

The Board discussed the agenda for its next meeting, outlining to Ms. McKenzie what it expects to discuss. Several matters such as the Zoning Board of Appeals need for a dedicated secretary as well as appointment of a new accountant will all need to be considered.

Motion to Adjourned by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Leva, passed unanimously at 8:34pm

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Hamm

Admin. Assistant to the Selectboard & Town Administrator