

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2014
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

Convened: 7:23 pm

Present: Walter F. Alterisio, Chair, Daniel F. Devlin member; Madonna McKenzie, Town Administrator; Luis DeLoureiro, School Committee member GDRSD; Robert Ricardelli, Assessor

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Payroll & Vendor Warrants

Open Forum

Mr. Alterisio opened by apologizing for his delay, which caused the meeting to start later than originally expected. He then commenced to explain the agenda, more specifically the Tax Certification Hearing process, as well as outlining the role and purpose of the public forum.

Public Hearing on Tax Classification

Robert Ricardelli, on behalf of the Assistant Assessor Vicki Tidman and the Board of Assessors as a whole recommended and responded to inquiry in regards to the tax classification. Mr. Ricardelli explained that the Assessors recommend a residential factor of "1." He reported that Dunstable is 97 percent residential, .6 industrial, commercial is roughly 1 percent, and presented information concerning the town's finances in tax collection. The recommendation of the Assessors is to keep the rate stable and apply only a residential factor of "1." There was some discussion about different developments in town and how they would impact the numbers in coming years. Alexander Estates is expected to eventually bring 11 new houses into town and Rivers Edge should bring in 18. Mr. Ricardelli concluded the Assessors presentation and referred any questions he could not answer to be asked of Ms. Tidman at a later date.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to accept the recommendation of the Assessors for the next fiscal year to maintain the assessed value of residential factor of 1. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio, and passed unanimously. Mr. Alterisio then subsequently thanked Mr. Ricardelli for his service and that of the other Assessors for their hard work.

Appointments

The Board made several appointments to the Dunstable Cultural Council to address a lack of quorum which occurred following the determination of several outgoing members to resign or not seek re-appointment. The Board also addressed the request of the Historical Commission to confirm its designee to the Community Preservation Committee.

Dawn Buzan is appointed as a councilor of the Cultural Council Term Expires: June 30th, 2017.
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

Lisa Ann Write is appointed as a councilor of the Cultural Council Term Expires: June 30th, 2017.
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

Lori Pestana is appointed as a councilor of the Cultural Council Term Expires: June 30th, 2017.
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

Approved and Adopted on 1/7/15

Carol Bacon is confirmed to the Community Preservation Comm. Term Expires: June 30th, 2015
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

Morgan Babcock Committee

The representative for this committee was not present due to extent circumstances and as such excused.

Fire Chief's Update

The Fire Chief was not able to be present for the meeting and as such he was excused and placed on the next meeting's agenda.

School Committee – GDRSD

The Board spoke to Luis DeLoureiro one of Dunstable's two Groton-Dunstable School Committee members. The Board started out by explaining to Mr. DeLoureiro it's bafflement after attending a recent meeting with the school where it was baffled by claims made by some of the teachers that the community does not respect them. Mr. DeLoureiro responded to the Board's inquiry by reminding the Board that in our society money equals respect and that the teachers are claiming this because they feel that a raise in pay is equal to an expression of respect by the community.

The Board contended that dialogue needs to resonate that there is respect between all parties. Mr. DeLoureiro explained to the Board that he moved here, as did many of his neighbors, in no small part for the excellent school system and that adequate funding and pay is part of what underpins this important institution. The Board acknowledged this, and affirmed a belief in putting students first and doing so in a sustainable manner. From that the Board moved on to discussing a report in the Lowell Sun about the how the School Committee and the Union have agreed to mediation on the budget. Mr. DeLoureiro assured the Board that if a decision is made in favor of a higher number than the Committee is willing to do, a discussion will have to happen at that time.

The Board touched on the budget review committee, and expressed concern over the number of issues that came up in the last year of which the Board may not have been made aware until a crisis point was reached. The Board asked that if future issues arise, that the School Committee make them aware of such issues as they occur. Finally the Board discussed the need for long range vision, including not just budget, but curriculum and what we are looking at for programs moving forward. Mr. DeLoureiro reminded the Board that the Superintendent will be holding a public forum in December to help address these sorts of questions and will likely continue to do so over the course of time. The current date for the public forum with Dr. Rodriguez is December 10th.

Consultant's / Administrator's Report

➤ The School

Ms. McKenzie started off by speaking in regards to the meeting with the Superintendent, the business manager for the school and the two school committee members from Dunstable. Two advisory board members will also be present, as will Mr. Leva from the Board. This meeting is for going over Dunstable's budget with the Superintendent so that she understands Dunstable's position. She explained that the school understands Groton's budget and see's it more often, and that this is a way for them to better understand Dunstable's. She also noted that it will allow Dunstable to see Groton's budget. Board expressed appreciation at the schools willingness to do this.

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➤ *Heating, AC, & Maintenance*

Ms. McKenzie then updated the Board on the plumbing and heating issue with the AC and Heating Systems. So far, she has not received official responses back from either of the two contractors who looked at the system. During the process Ms. McKenzie asked the gentlemen to give her reports on each system individually with special note for the issue of the AC changes that the law now requires which will likely affect the cost. She's asked them to give estimates for the cost of the new models and the current ones. Ms. McKenzie also brought to the Boards attention the issue with the fence around the units and its disrepair. The fence will need to be relocated and likely re-done as part of the overall repair to the AC units. From that point, Ms. McKenzie spoke about the issue with the heat and how the system has not been maintained properly. She took the opportunity to discuss with the Board the various maintenance issues in the Town Hall and how the town needs a maintenance program to address them. She finished discussing maintenance by noting that there has been some concern expressed that attempting to fix the heating system now might cause the unit to be down for a period of time. As such, it is recommended that we wait till spring to fix the issue.

➤ *Septic*

Ms. McKenzie informed the Board about the need for the septic systems to be pumped, including 160 Pleasant, and the Town Hall as well as possibly the Fire Dept. and River Street. She is looking to try and find a contractor who will, if doing a lot of them at once, give the town a good price. She cautioned that not doing it may lead to bad situations with repair at higher cost.

➤ *Dept. Heads Meeting & Snow Policy*

Ms. McKenzie updated the Board about the Dept. Heads meeting. She noted how productive these meetings are, including suggestions about how to make the Grand Hall warmer in winter and resolution of how to deal with snow during work hours. It was recommended by several dept. heads including the Police Chief that we go on a plan that says if the schools are closed the Town Hall and town offices will then be closed. That if the Commonwealth closes, we close. This makes things easy for people to understand and these institutions already publish their decisions on TV, radio, and internet. The Board agreed to this policy in principle. The proposed policy would also apply to meetings, since the town buildings will be closed for the day.

Ms. McKenzie told the Board that she would write up a policy and give it to the Board for review before sending it out. The idea, as the Board noted is about making sure the facilities are properly plowed out and ready for people to use the facilities, not only for the workers, but also for the public. This is about safety. The it also applies to early closing of schools too, if they close early, the Town Hall will as well. The Board noted that they want things to be clear concerning the shoveling for the town facilities and making sure that the Town Hall and Library in particular are accessible and safe for entry.

➤ *Proposed Joint Meetings*

Ms. McKenzie discussed with the Board the idea of a joint meeting concerning the Master Plan. This would include the Planning Board and Affordable Housing Committee. Ms. McKenzie clarified with the Board what points they want addressed and the limitations. The Board expressed that it wants to give some focus and direction for this and would like to express some thoughts as to what they would like to see and is sure the Planning Board would feel the same. Ms. McKenzie also reminded that there will be need to talk about the zoning by-laws which have needed reviews and possible changes that should be made.

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➤ *Capital Planning & Personnel Board*

Ms. McKenzie finished her report by speaking about the Capital Planning Committee and how very pleased she is in the members and how interested they are in their duties. She also updated on the Personnel Board and how they are starting to move rapidly. She spoke about how she wants to get these committees started before she moves on to other committees that she needs to get going. The Board expressed its desire to see positive thoughts and ideas that come up as well as vision. Ms. McKenzie spoke about the members, how they are experienced but from different sectors of the private industry, and how they are eager and willing to work on this project. Her aid to each of these committees is primarily focused on looking at areas that are confusing, and making sure that the policy is clear, updated, and makes sense. She ended by informing the Board that the template communities being used as examples are those with updated and recent policies with that have current law.

Applications for Town Hall Use

The Board received two applications for use of the Town Hall. The first was from Lt. Dow to use the Town Hall for Police and Fire training on Dec. 13th from 9am to 11am. The second concerned DYAA the local youth athletic association to use the Town Hall for their annual board meetings.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to permit the Dunstable Police and Fire Depts. to use the Grange Room for training on Dec. 13th, 2014. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed unanimously without debate.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin, to allow the DYAA to use the Town Hall for Dec. 2nd, 2014 as well as Jan. 6th, Feb. 3rd, March 3rd, April 7th, and May 5th, 2015 for their annual board meetings. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio, and passed unanimously.

Memorial Committee Update

Ms. McKenzie informed the Board that she has received a formal report from the Veterans Memorials, and was asked by committee member Joe Dean to put them on the Board's next meeting agenda. She then provided the Board with a copy of the report and asked them to look it over for the next meeting.

Old Business

The Board discussed the school budget and where things are following the meetings so far attended. The Board also discussed the need to better outline where it is on the next Town Administrator, and flushing out the details for this position including salary and benefits. It was also noted that there needs to be some discussion about having a line item specifically for maintenance to solve some of the issues we have. The Board discussed how this would help with the fact that sometimes things come up in the year that are ongoing but must be dealt with. Ms. McKenzie expressed her thoughts concerning this and told the Board that it was a good idea, because of things like septic pumping and other similar issues. She also suggested having a maintenance contract on the heating system for regular checkups and routine maintenance. Mr. Devlin noted that this is sort of day to day management is why Dunstable needs a Town Administrator.

Mr. Alterisio updated the Board that he will attend a school committee meeting as a community representative at the Greater Lowell Tech. Following this, Mr. Devlin noted his attendance of the pipeline meeting. He outlined the change in route that Kinder Morgan/Tennessee Pipeline is considering taking through New Hampshire instead of through Dunstable and Tyngsborough. There is a high probability that the pipeline will go through New Hampshire apparently since they already have rights of way for power

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lines. Mr. Devlin noted that this remains an issue and that it will be a long haul before this matter is over. Ms. McKenzie reminded the Board that the town has been in contact with the MMA about possible decreases in local aid and the situation there. She encourages all to call their members of General Court. Mr. Devlin spoke about how Governor Patrick has proposed cutting of local aid, but Governor-Elect Baker's position is still yet unknown on this topic. Ms. McKenzie noted that this could be a big problem for the schools as well as the town itself. She to the Board that she's been involved with town government before when this sort of issue has happened and that it can be devastating.

Warrants & Minutes

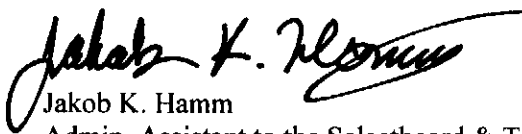
The Board signed the payroll and vendor warrants. As for the minutes, they were held in abeyance in Mr. Leva absence. The Board requested that the Administrative Assistant co-ordinate with the Administrator to put on the Agenda, which minutes (with their dates included) that are outstanding and which need to be addressed by the Board.

Perambulation

The Board announced its plans to start the Perambulation on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. They will meet at the Town Hall, at about 8am in the morning. The Board also extended an invitation to the public noting that all are welcome to come with them. Mr. Devlin indicated that he plans to bring his children with him. The Administrative Assistant was directed to publish this information on the town website, the public access channel and provide a letter to the Board which they could use as evidence of their activity and explanation to property owners whom they may meet in the course of this process.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Devlin, and seconded by Mr. Alterisio. The motion carried unanimously at 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted by



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

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