

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 7, 2015**  
**Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

**Convened:** 7:04 pm

**Present:** Walter F. Alterisio, Chair, Daniel F. Devlin member; Madonna McKenzie, Town Administrator; Brian Rich, Fire Chief

**Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:**

- Payroll & Vendor Warrants

**Open Forum**

The Board decided to dispense with the public forum since no members of the public were present. However, the Board reaffirmed its commitment to hold an open forum period at the start of meetings whenever there are interested citizens.

**Continuation of Pole Hearing**

The Board re-opened the pole hearing with Mr. Devlin outlining the previous part of the hearing held during the proceedings of the last meeting. This included National Grids stated intentions for pole placements as well as some concerns and questions asked by the Board including the placement of a pole near some sensitive wetlands, and the placement of another pole either in a wooded area that might require clearing or on an affected property owner's lawn. The Board acknowledged that National Grid was continuing to work on an appropriate course of action and response. As such, the Board determined that the hearing should be continued. A motion was made to continue the hearing until January 28th by Mr. Alterisio, and seconded by Mr. Devlin. The motion carried without opposition.

**Victualler's License**

The Catalono Companies applied on behalf of their Dunkin Donuts franchise for a victualler's license. The Board was satisfied by the application that Catalono had demonstrated it had the proper certifications from the Board of Health and other relevant parties. Accepting the application and payment, the Board moved to grant the license. A motion was made by Mr. Devlin and seconded by Mr. Alterisio to approve the victualler's license for the Dunkin Donuts located in Dunstable inside the Dunstable General Store. The motion carried without opposition.

**Fire Chief's Truck**

Mr. Rich, the Fire Chief, started off by explaining to the Board what happened to his fire truck. The engine began to make a noise and emitted smoke. After seeing a mechanic, it was determined that the vehicle is no longer suitable for its purpose. The truck was purchased used and has been in service to the town for a number of years. Repairs done to the truck in the past 30 months have cost the town approximately \$10,000. The Chief explained that he is currently using his own personal vehicle and has put about 400 miles on it. He further reported to the Board that he has done some research in conjunction with Ms. McKenzie, the Town Administrator, to find a possible replacement. He recounted such activities as internet searches and reaching out to various entities and other municipalities to find out what the total cost will be to replace the truck and what options are available.

The Chief explained that for a new vehicle, it would be about \$38,000. He further noted that he has spoken to the Advisory Board and come to an acceptable plan that would help solve this issue. The Board

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inquired for more information, and the Chief explained that there is a way to have two six month payments, then after that go to once a month. He explained that he would be able to take the initial funds out of his current budget and the Advisory Board told him that perhaps in May they could reimburse his budget, and if not they would be able to muster the payments thereafter. The Board explained that they understand the need for the vehicle, and the extent of how important this is for the community. This year, we would be looking at a payment in the ballpark of \$7,000 for that six month payment. Note that this is a “high” mark.

The Board expressed only reservation in what this would do to the Fire Dept.’s budget, and concern to how it might domino in later years. The Chief explained that his vehicle would usually have a breathing apparatus and that because he is often a first responder could mean his responding before other personnel can reach the sight of an emergency makes this equipment critical. Without this, he would not be able to otherwise respond quickly. The Board returned the discussion to the Chief’s ability to pay the initial costs from his current budget, which the Chief affirmed he can do. His replacement equipment account has about \$15,000 or so left in it. As a result, the Chief feels that funds from this may be used without putting anyone at risk. With this understanding, the Board feels comfortable with determining support for this. The Advisory Board is in support, and the Board determined it should move forward on this and work with the Town Administrator to make it happen. A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to authorize the Fire Chief to proceed with the procurement of an appropriate vehicle in accordance with the agreed upon plan with the Advisory Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio, and passed without objection.

#### **Fire Chief’s Update on the Alarm**

Mr. Rich, the Fire Chief, started off by noting the progress made so far on the installation of the radio transmitters for the fire alarms. He then explained that for the security alarms, the panic buttons that will be part of the system are still on order, but should be done within the next two weeks. One of these buttons will be mounted on each floor with a carry button for around the building. Both the Town Hall and the Library will have these buttons.

#### **Consultant’s / Administrator’s Report**

Ms. McKenzie started off by discussing with the board recent communication from MIIA. The insurer has asked member towns to put forward nominations for their property and casualty incorporated board. MIIA has asked that member communities propose someone every year. The only requirement for the nomination is that the person must be a Selectman. The Board determined it would consider the request. From that Ms. McKenzie turned to maintenance by reporting on the state of various town buildings septic tanks. She noted that the septic tanks for the Town Hall, Library, Fire Station, Police Station, 91 River Street, and 160 Pleasant Street were emptied and that the cost was lower than originally thought.

Ms. McKenzie moved on from maintenance and updated the Board on the plans to invite Groton’s Selectboard to a joint meeting. She gave the Board copies of a letter she prepared for the Board to send to them concerning the Regional School District agreement. The letter suggests the joint meeting. Topics that would be covered by this meeting would include the election of the School Board and the need to have it based on each community’s population rather than on student population. The Board noted that the current agreement looks to student population rather than the town’s population. This agreement was penned in 1967 and there is clearly a need to take a new look at this. How this would be done would be a subject of discussion for the two Boards.

Ms. McKenzie then turned toward the Snow Day policy which she wrote at the Board’s direction. The policy outlines that the Town Hall will follow the GDRSD’s snow policy, closing when the school does. This policy is intended to help the Highway Dept. have time to clear the roads and parking lots. The Board noted that the schools have clear policies that are publicly known and widely so with wide spread

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media coverage. This policy is written broadly to help all boards, committees, and commissions know when to cancel meetings and whether the Town Hall and related public buildings will be open. A motion to adopt the policy was made by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, and passed without dissent.

Finally, Ms. McKenzie reported on the budget. She reported that she still hasn't received all the budgets back from the different depts. There was some discussion of where the different budgets stand so far, including some of the schools. The town appears to be doing very well on its budget so far this year. The Board feels that seasonal considerations need to be more emphasized in the budget process moving forward. Ms. McKenzie noted that the town's heat bill for its various buildings will be at the highest in the next three months and agreed that such seasonal considerations will need to be kept in mind.

### **Administrator Position**

The Board feels that there should be a meeting held to talk to various parties within the town government about what they feel we need in an administrator going forward. The Board felt that its next meeting may be an appropriate time. This is to find out where are we, and moving forward, how do we want to proceed? Do we want to have a search committee? Etc. Ms. McKenzie noted her department heads meetings as well as her plan to have a separate meeting for commissions, boards, committees, and so forth. She would like to take that on first and have this meeting in February. The Board is open to this, but would like to have clarity with how to proceed. The Board would like to have a job description put together so that they have an idea for the budget process moving forward on this subject.

### **Discussion of the Water Commission**

The Board discussed the meeting minutes of the Water Commission. There are some things they have been discussing which are of interest to the Board, and the Board would like to determine if there is anything they can do to help. They caution that when the Commission starts to talk about financing, they need to be talking to the Board and Advisory Board. Ms. McKenzie suggested scheduling a joint meeting. The Board expressed a feeling that the town needs to have people in the community understand what is going on rather than expect the public to absorb it all at the Town Meeting. Having joint meetings may be useful towards that end since the Boards meetings are normally televised.

There was also discussion by the Board about the Mixed Use District or MUD and how this area will need to have water piping to potentially support it and any future development. A water tank might very well be needed. From that point, the Board moved to discussion relating to the need for investments in the water system to be lasting and to take into consideration vision for the future. Ms. McKenzie noted that she has expressed to relevant parties the need to take into consideration such aspects as potential development and future developments. The Board decided to invite the Water Commissioners to come to one of the Board's meetings.

### **Conservation Commission's Request**

The Conservation Commission requested approval from the Board to spend \$115 from the Wetlands Protection Act Fund so as to send their Secretary to the Annual Environmental Conference to view exhibits and attend two workshops. A motion was made by Mr. Devlin and seconded by Mr. Alterisio to grant approval to the Conservation Commission to expend \$115 from the Wetlands Protection Act Fund as requested. The motion carried without opposition.

### **Old Business**

- *Herbicide Application 2015*

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Ms. McKenzie explained to the Board what National Grid is doing in regards to the use of herbicides and how they will be checking the power lines, removing brush, etc. The Board briefly discussed National Grids activity in regards to maintenance of its lines and vegetation management.

➤ *Affordable Housing & Master Plan*

Ms. McKenzie noted that \$10,000 in funds may not be available due to the outgoing Governor's recent change in the budget. There is some talk of the new Governor reversing some of this; therefore the process may be delayed. This impacts updating of the Master Plan which includes plans for affordable housing. The issue extends into any 40B proposals, currently in place, which is important because having a plan for affordable housing means that the Commonwealth will not step in and impose an affordable housing plan on the town. Ms. McKenzie explained that having the plan shows good faith towards the 40B requirements that Dunstable is required to uphold. The Board noted that they had a plan like this one, but it was preliminary and expired a few years ago. As a result there needs to be an update put in place.

➤ *The School (GDRSD)*

The school has promised so far that nothing substantial will change on the budget, but for FY17 there will be greater expenses. They have said that they will not ask for any new programs in the FY16 budget. The budget they have sets their growth at 2.9 percent. The Board noted news coverage of what Groton will be doing. Ms. McKenzie noted that she has heard nothing from the school district that would indicate a change from the 2.9 percent number and that whatever agreement Groton has come to, this is so far what Dunstable and the school district have. There was discussion of the School Superintendent's transparency, and how well she has been working with the town (which has been very good so far). Ms. McKenzie informed the Board that she would contact the school district to affirm the towns understanding of the budget so far and confirm it that nothing has changed in regards to the 2.9 percent.

➤ *Town Hall Issues*

Ms. McKenzie reports to the Board that the floor of the elevator may have been compromised at the time that the building experienced water damage. The Board determined that it may be prudent to have Delta Beckwith, the town's elevator maintenance company, take a look at it and determine if the floor is compromised. The Board noted that they have not always been made aware of these sorts of problems as they arise, and therefore not hearing about them until sometime later, but expect that to change with a having a Town Administrator.

➤ *Kinder Morgan*

Kinder Morgan sent a letter about its change in route of the proposed pipeline and informing the Board and town in general, that they will no longer plan on putting the pipeline through Dunstable. Groton may still have a "spur" routed through it, but it appears that the line will no longer be routed through Dunstable at all. The Board was pleased to receive this news.

## **Minutes**

The Board determined that due to the absence of Mr. Leva it would not consider the December Minutes outstanding. But the Board did agree that the minutes from November 19<sup>th</sup> should be adopted. A motion to adopt the minutes of November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 was made by Mr. Devlin and seconded by Mr. Alterisio. The motion carried without opposition.

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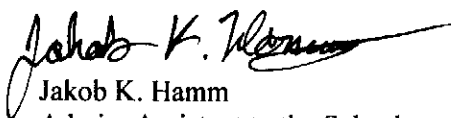
## **Action Items/Mail**

The Board started off by considering requests for use of the Town Hall by several parties. The first application was by Mr. Chaney to use the Grange Room on January 31<sup>st</sup>. The second application was for the Grange to use the Grange Room and Upper Level of the Town Hall for an event on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The third was also by the Grange, asking to use the Town Common and the Gazebo for August 15<sup>th</sup>. A motion was made by Mr. Devlin and seconded by Mr. Alterisio granting all of the applications. The motion passed without objection.

From there the Board moved to the Alzheimer's Association's proposed Memory Ride through the town. The Board briefly considered their route through town and resolved that Chief Downes receive a copy of this. A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to support the program and allow it to proceed with its planned event. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

Motion to adjourned at 8:10pm by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed.

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Hamm

Admin. Assistant to the Selectboard & Town Administrator

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