

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2015
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

Convened: 7:03 pm

Present: Walter F. Alterisio, Chair, Kenneth J. Leva, Daniel F. Devlin members; Madonna McKenzie, Town Administrator; Richard Larkin, Town Counsel.

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Payroll & Vendor Warrants

Open Forum

Mr. Alterisio explained the forum, its purpose, and asked whether there were any questions or members of the public expressing interest. He explained the agenda, and the thrust of the meeting which would cover topics spanning from recommendations on town monuments to a consent decree for the Lowell Technical School.

Following this, Alison Tully of Lowell addressed the Board. Ms. Tully explained her organization, The Center for Hope & Healing, its purpose, and its event "take back the night." The Center for Hope & Healing is an organization based in Lowell that has provided 10 years of services to victims of sexual abuse. This year, in recognition of the past 10 years, the organization will be holding a candlelight march and rally including which will include a speech by the Mayor of Lowell and other local political figures. What Ms. Tully and her organization are looking for is mainly promotion. This is critical for them and they asked for help from the Board in connecting with local press for their event. The Board inquired into more specifics about turnout and the impact of the event. Ms. Tully indicated that last year's event had a 100 person turnout, but more are expected this year since this will be their 10th year. The Board noted that they would be open to publication of this matter on the town website, and that they would be willing to put Ms. Tully in touch with Anne Paquin of the *Neighbor to Neighbor*. The Board extended its good wishes and assured that they would help where possible. Ms. McKenzie noted that she would talk to Chief Downes who has a tie in to local cable public access, suggesting that he may be able to help as well.

Monuments – Next Steps

Ms. McKenzie started off the discussion by informing the Board that she had spoken with Mr. Chaney from the Monument's Committee and he indicated to her that the Committee had hoped for the Selectmen's next step to be that of prioritization. The Committee also hoped that Parks would be made responsible for taking care of the monuments moving forward. The special Committee also recommended establishing a permanent committee for this subject. The Board expressed general agreement with the Monuments Committee and further expressed an interest in seeing the same committee members serve on any new permanent Monuments Committee.

Ms. McKenzie told the Board that she would inquire with the committee members to gauge interest. The Board also noted that they would like to see a new permanent Monuments Committee establish a process and design criteria for future monuments. The special Committee had some projects which they would like to see done and immediate action on some other issues as well. Some of the monuments do not indicate what war they are attached too. These include those for the Civil War and WWI. The Board noted that the Boy Scouts put the Civil War monument up after it was concluded that there were persons from Dunstable that served.

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Ms. McKenzie moved the discussion on to the memorial benches. These benches will require some assistance to move, including for some possible financial costs that may end up being incurred. Ms. McKenzie indicated that if the Board feels that moving the benches ought to be a first priority, she would contact the relevant parties to determine what the cost would be and include it on the warrant. There was some discussion as to how the families who donated the benches would feel about movement. Ms. McKenzie noted that the Monuments Committee would have to talk to the families concerned to that end. The Board also expressed a desire to see a process put in place for monuments and felt that a conversation with the Parks Commission is necessary to determine how upkeep will be conducted.

The reason for Parks being involved is that they have the authority by virtue of their office to expend funds on such a project if placed under their domain. At this point Ms. McKenzie turned the discussion of monuments to the matter of restoration, and suggested that any such projects could be done with CPC funds. The Board noted that some monuments have become abandoned, and expressed the opinion that it should be determined if lingering families or interested parties exist in relevance to these memorials. There was also the opinion that such monuments should be moved to a public location and from that the Board turned to a brief discussion of the merits and feasibility of a memorial park. In conclusion, the Board noted that several of the Memorial Committees recommended priorities may be concluded easily and resolved that these should be done.

Parks & Recreation

The Board started off the discussion by noting that the Town Clerk has informed them that the Parks Commission has only met once in the past year and done so in what appears to be a joint meeting with the Recreation Commission which also appears to have only met once. From that point, Ms. McKenzie turned the Board's discussion to a matter that she explained had arisen in recent weeks, that being the issue of who approves and tracks usage of Larter Field. The Board indicated that the Recreation Commission is supposed to be in charge of this process and coordinating it with other groups in the area including DYAA, soccer groups, and GDRSD.

Ms. McKenzie then informed the Board that the town appears to have assumed at some point in the past some responsibility for the schedule for Larter Field and usage requests. Further she noted, that the Recreation Commission has told her that they want the Town Hall to schedule and approve usage of Larter Field. The Board responded that while it may receive requests on Recreation's behalf, these requests should be forwarded to the Recreation Commission, and Recreation needs to administer the field. Further, the Board noted that to their knowledge this is not something that was done historically by the Town Hall in the past or by the Board's previous Secretary. But, the Board noted, the Recreation Commission would like to do this differently, they should step forward and do so.

From this point the Board moved to discussion of how the Parks Commission is elected and the Recreation Commission is appointed. Both Commissions appear to share members. At this point Ms. McKenzie reminded the Board that Recreation never returned a budget as requested and Parks only returned one once she met with Commissioner Neil Atwood the most recently elected member of Parks. The Board concluded on the note that if elected officials do not feel that the process works the way it should, they need to step forward to the public and explain this. The Board is hesitant to encroach on the authority of an elected Commission, but determined that it would be prudent to reach out to Parks as well as Recreation to determine what, if any changes, need to be made going forward.

Appointments & Resignations

The appointment of Evelyn Metzler as a registrar was requested by the Town Clerk.

Evelyn Metzler is appointed as a Registrar

Term Expires: March 31st 2018

Motion by Mr. Leva, seconded by Mr. Devlin, passed unanimously

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The Board took the opportunity to follow up on the annual appointment of the towns Animal Inspector. Ms. McKenzie informed the Board that this appointment is normally made by the Board of Health, with the blessing of the Board. The Board concurred in this assessment and requested that the Board of Health be directed to contact the current Animal Inspector to inquire whether he would like to continue his service for another year. The Board highlighted Mr. Palumbo's outstanding service to the town in this capacity for a number of years. Ms. McKenzie told the Board that she would discuss the matter with Joan Ferrari the agent of the Board of Health.

The Board then subsequently turned to the issue of the Roads Commission vacancy caused by Mr. Kinne's resignation. Ms. McKenzie clarified that she's spoken to the Commission about what needs to be done and they have a candidate in mind to fill the vacancy between now and the election in May. It was agreed that this matter will be addressed again at the next meeting of the Board.

Consultant's / Administrator's Report

Ms. McKenzie started off by announcing to the Board that the town finally received the bond from Carolina Properties. The Board responded by noting that not all of its conditions have been met by Carolina Properties so far in regards to signage and safety concerns. It was determined that the matter would be looked into. From that the Ms. McKenzie turned to the budget. She noted that she has emailed a copy of the budget to the Board and requests that they take a look at it. She informed them of some different aspects of the budget and asked the Board if they want the budget electronically or on paper. The budget appears so far to be roughly about \$34,000 more than the previous year due to the funding needed for the Town Administrators budget. However, some good news, Accounting will be running \$23,000 under.

Ms. McKenzie explained that this has to do with how the audit was paid for in past years and noted that the manner by which it was paid was really not how this was supposed to be done and so a change was made. From that point she also informed the Board that accounts for the Town Hall, Town Counsel, and Council on Aging will be \$5,000 under. Council on Aging will actually be up a little bit. No warrant articles have been added in as of yet. Emergency Management is \$2,000 under, Fire is up by about \$13,000, and Police are about \$48,000 up. All the accounts the Board has monitored appear to be level funded. Ms. McKenzie noted that the Town Clerk's still needs to be modified. And there are a few other small items that may require some movement.

Ms. McKenzie also noted that she spoke with the Town Accountant about such considerations in terms of adjusting. Police wages should be at 58 percent, but running at 62 percent. There was a question of whether the Advisory Board has received this. Ms. McKenzie explained that she meet with them and they do have the budget. She also wanted to let the Board know that at their next meeting that they will be approving ballot questions (we have three). One will be for the \$3.5 million for the water storage facility, one is for the Lowell Regional Tech project, and the other for the GDRSD Middle School roof issue. There was the question of the TADS funding and the commitment to that. Ms. McKenzie expressed a desire to better clarify where the funding for this would be. The Board indicated that it seemed appropriate to put this under Board of Health. Ms. McKenzie indicated she would talk to Joan Ferrari about this from a Board of Health perspective, but otherwise she intended to have it as a warrant article.

From that Ms. McKenzie moved to the School District's certified budget. The operating is going up 2.5 percent, but the assessment is down by 5.9 percent so the overall is number is 2.2 percent. The Board expressed happiness with the Superintendent on this issue, but concern that it does not know more about the School's budget process. Ms. McKenzie noted that the School is trying very hard to figure out what the best way to organize and use the money the best way including for special education and for the cost of busing. She feels that they are truly trying to figure out how to do this the best way and this is a process that will likely take a few years.

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The Board then moved to the matter of the Pelletier Property on River Street. There was a question of funds to do a survey. Mr. Larkin expressed an opinion concerning thoughts that the cost is high. He indicated that in his opinion the ballpark given (about \$30,000) was a bit high. Mr. Larkin further noted that there is a significant river front to that property, but even so, he still felt the cost was high. It was noted that when the town purchased the property it was thought to be about 45 acres, but is now estimated to be about 60 acres.

Ms. McKenzie started to finish out her report by noting that the bids for printing the Annual Town Report are in. She requested the Boards permission to go with the lowest bid (Flagship Press). From that she pivoted to her rewrites of the Zoning By-Laws, noting that her current work will change since she's had some comments come back in, primarily from Mr. Larkin, and she will need to take these into consideration.

Old Business

➤ *Greater Lowell Tech*

Mr. Larkin started off by noting that the consent decree has changed yet again, and a new copy came out today. Before the mediator, it was agreed that district wide elections with residency requirements would be considered. The School Committee preferred a weighted vote of the existing School Committee with a quorum adjustment to minimize Lowell's ability to control them in totality. Dunstable was from the start the only "player" that did not favor Lowell's desired outcome. Dracut towards the end was talking about becoming a plaintiff with Lowell. Once Lowell's outcome became the majority and the court went in their favor, the question turned to implementation. Mr. Larkin elaborated that there is an issue that under this new organization, the election will occur not at the annual town election in May, but rather at the State and Federal Election in November. This further creates an open question of term length that is not considered in this consent decree. So as a result, the Board cannot vote on the consent decree tonight since it is not in its final form.

Mr. Larkin then moved to the issue of the town being able to decide the length of the term. The Board asked if they should consult with the Town Clerk. So the implication is that the term be two years, however, if the town goes over 15,000 we could end up with two members on the School Committee. For Tyngsboro's extra member, the term is for three years....so there is an out of kilter issue with the election cycle chosen. Ms. McKenzie noted that really, we should be consistent with Lowell. Mr. Larkin suggests the Board support a 4 year term. The Board noted yet again, that this is a complicated issue when you look at the agreement in total. There was some expression that the whole agreement may need to be re-written. So this is still a work in process and the Board determined they will not take action this evening. Mr. Larkin simply asked for authority from the Board to have the authority to advocate the four year term.

➤ *Water Commissioners*

Ms. McKenzie informed the Board that the Water Commission met with the Advisory Board. After that meeting they scheduled their next meeting and have asked that a representative of the Board be present. The Commission plans on discussion how best to fund the project, what type of bond they should chose, and whether it should be funded by users or all citizens of the town. The Board noted that in many other communities, the community has stepped up to the plate and paid for usage by the town at totality considering town buildings and town use of the system by the public. The Board noted that this improvement will help with not only fire considerations, but also help the schools.

The Board discussed how to determine what the town will use and how it will be affected by this improvement on a municipal government level. From that point the Board moved to the issue of price, principally that the cost is estimated to be roughly \$3.5 million. There was discussion on where these funds will come from and how that will be explained to the public moving forward. The Board also

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discussed the cost of laying pipe per mile which can be as much as \$1 million per mile. Finally, the Board considered the scope of the project and how far the line will go, what corrections need to be made, and modernization to the system as a whole. Following this discussion it was determined that Mr. Alterisio will attend the Commissions meeting.

➤ *Police Goals & Objectives*

Mr. Alterisio reported that he has met with the Police Dept. to setup a time and date to look at their goals and objectives on a department wide basis. He's asked them to pick a date and time. He spoke with the Lt. (the Chief is out on surgery) and spoke with Drinkwine, Papageorgiou, and Bernadette Georges.

Minutes

The minutes under consideration for the Board are those from their February 11th meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Leva to approve the minutes as drafted, which was seconded by Mr. Alterisio, and passed without debate.

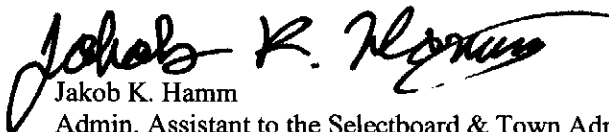
Mail Action

The Lake Massapoag Rod & Gun Club submitted an application to hold their annual meeting in the Grange Room on September 16, 2015. A motion to approve the application was made by Mr. Leva, seconded by Mr. Devlin, and passed unanimously.

Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance Letter – No action taken

A motion to adjourn at 8:29 pm was made by Mr. Leva, and seconded by Mr. Devlin. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by



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

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