

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard  
Meeting Minutes  
March 25, 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; Michael Martin, Roads Commission; Alan Chaney, Conservation Commission; Brian Rich, Fire Chief; Joseph Dean, Memorial Committee

**Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:**

- Payroll & Vendor Warrants

**Open Forum**

Mr. Alterisio started off the meeting by explaining the forum, its purpose, and asking whether there were any questions or members of the public expressing interest. Following this standard announcement, Mr. Alterisio led the Board in noting the passing of longtime resident and active public servant, Gerald Simmons. The Board agreed with Ms. McKenzie's suggestion of placing a dedication page in the upcoming Annual Town Report in Mr. Simmons honor.

Mr. Dean also spoke during the forum to discuss the Memorial Day Parade. He asked the Selectmen that during the parade, they entertain being willing to procure and give out a plaque to Peter Georges the retiring Veterans Agent. Mr. Dean finished by reminding the Board that the parade will be on the Sunday prior to the observance of the holiday (roughly the 24th of May).

**Fiscal Year 16 Budget**

The Board started out by noting that there was a joint meeting earlier this week with the Advisory Board. Coming out of that meeting the Board is aware that after all the input from each department the initial bottom line is that the town is roughly about \$200,000 out from the hoped for budget. There is also the issue of the snow budget. Currently the town is in the vicinity of \$100,000 over budget for the cost of snow and ice removal this year. There is hope that FEMA and MEMA will pay for most of this. The Board expressed thanks to the Roads Commission and Highway Dept. for keeping the cost as low as they have, noting that Lowell is considerably more over its budget. Mr. Martin noted that the FEMA and MEMA paperwork is in.

Ms. McKenzie informed the Board that one way to deal with this deficit is to carry some of it into the next year. She explained that it could result in half paid this year, and the rest carried into the next year. Hopefully by that point FEMA and MEMA funds will be available. From there the Board moved on to discussion of how to explain the debt exclusion for the water infrastructure project. The Board wants to provide information to the public by holding public meetings. The Board noted that it is important that the public understand not only the cost but the benefits of this project. Ms. McKenzie informed the Board that the Water Commission has voted to take action to produce a leaflet for residents making their case. She further noted that this information must be informational only, the town cannot directly ask for support.

The Board agreed and pivoted to discussion concerning the accounts it monitors directly. There are only a few "tweaks" and movement or transfer of funds from some accounts to another as light and heavy use accounts are tracked. With respect to the amount appropriated at Annual Town Meeting, the Board noted, things are going well for not only the Board but all departments. The Board then discussed the GDRSD budget, noting that it has come in with a budget that is less than originally proposed. The budget has been submitted and each of the towns have 30 days to disapprove. Ms. McKenzie advised that the Board may

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want to make a formal motion to just state that they are not opposed. The Board clarified that action is only necessary in the event that they disapprove. Ms. McKenzie asked the Board if they have any changes they would like to make to the budget. She reminded them that the Advisory Board is expecting to hear next week whether the Board supports the budget and/or has any changes.

The Board notes that there are many ways to address any issues with the budget including the use of Free Cash and monies coming in from the Commonwealth. What is proposed is what the Board is in favor of, unless the Advisory Board returns with a request to make changes. The major departments that the Board monitors are doing well under the appropriations from last year's Annual Town Meeting, and what is being suggested for this year should maintain this. Ms. McKenzie noted that the ice and snow removal issue remains and she noted that the Veterans need about \$5,000. She further pointed out that the town has Free Cash of about \$400,000 so these costs could eat up much of those funds. The Board noted that there are things that can be addressed, including two cruisers for the Police and similar expenditures. The Board affirmed that last year they asked the departments for a realistic budget, and received one.

The Board further expressed support for the Town Administrators budget, but noted that it looks to the Advisory Board to articulate any concerns with it. The Advisory Board did at the past joint meeting express that they are willing to work with the Board on this budget and make any cuts and trimming that needs to be done if necessary. There was some discussion of the possibility of an override vote, but the Board did not express an interest in seeing that noting that this would be speculative. The Board also discussed the debt exclusion items, and other proposals.

Chief Rich reported to the Board that what he's heard for the funds on ice and snow removal is that the Governors Administration has fired off a letter to FEMA over the matter of funds. There is, as a reminded, no guarantee of these funds. Chief Rich asked the Board if a pay raise is possible, he would like \$5,000 but would be ok with \$2,500 as he has received in the past. He noted that it looks like he has extra money this year, but he noted that he will have expenses at end of year that cannot be avoided and must be done every year. These already total \$13,000 out of his budget.

### **FY 16 Warrant Articles**

Ms. McKenzie started out by providing the Board with her draft articles. She noted some minor adjustments that will need to be made. From there she briefly discussed the wage classification chart, and then moved on to the annual appointments. This included a note that some appointments are directed by the Annual Town Meeting, but after this one should be added to regular June annual appointments. After that she moved on to transfers and a brief discussion on prior fiscal bills noting that these should have been taken care of at the Special Town Meeting.

She also discussed the salaries of elected officials, the operating budget, chapter 90, the River Street Land survey funds, veteran's benefits, and town hall furnace repairs. She also noted the MS4 Consultant, fiscal year 16 transfer to stabilization, and the water storage and the facility with pump project. Ms. McKenzie also discussed with the Board the debt exclusion, the issue of revolving funds, and community preservation recommendations. There was also the matter of a conservation restriction, and an issue of road acceptance for Skytop Lane.

Ms. McKenzie further reported progress on the by-laws including personnel, the dog by-law, and the zoning by-laws. The Board inquired whether counsel has seen these proposed changes yet. Ms. McKenzie noted that he had not but she would be providing copies to him soon for his comment. The Board then looked at the debt exclusion question. Ms. McKenzie suggested that materials be handed out at the town meeting that explains the difference between an override and a debt exclusion so as to avoid confusion from the public. Ms. McKenzie also requested the Board approve this question.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to accept the proposed question concerning debt exclusion for the Annual Town Meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leva, and passed unanimously.

Ms. McKenzie inquired with the Board about whether they want to ask the Annual Town Meeting if they want to put forth a Master Plan Committee in concept (the town voting on approving a master plan review and implementation committee to report back to the town meeting). The Board expressed that it was not entirely enamored by this concept. The Board felt that this would not be necessary as the information will still be provided to the Annual Town Committee without the committee that is eventually charged to be formally committed to do so.

Ms. McKenzie informed the Board that the Water Commission inquired with her about whether the Board would consider the transfer of the section of MUD that the water project would be situated on to the Commissions control. The Board noted that this would potentially complicate the situation. Ms. McKenzie noted that this request is not unusual. The Board expressed interest in knowing how this would affect the MUD. Mr. Chaney told the Board that this request is indeed standard, and is for the ability to landscape and allow for painting of the building or equipment on site. The Board then inquired with Ms. McKenzie about if they should wait till the town meeting to ensure public support for the project prior to transfer of control. Ms. McKenzie clarified the procedure and how the town meeting will be involved.

### **Appointments & Resignations**

Wes Goss contacted the Board to formally request the Boards consideration of appointing him to fill the vacancy left by Dana Kinne through till the May election. Mr. Martin noted that Roads is in favor. Ms. McKenzie suggests waiting until the next Board meeting before making such an appointment. She noted that the requirement for this, because it's an elected commission, is that the commission come forward to a meeting with the Board and put forth an appointment. Ms. McKenzie did further elaborate, however, that the Board could vote tonight in the affirmative while putting a contingent clause in that the appointment would only take affect once the Roads Commission was able to have a proper public meeting to agree to the appointment.

In that light, the Board decided to appoint Wes Goss to sit on the Roads Commission as an interim Commissioner until the May Election.

Wes Goss appointed as a Roads Commissioner to commence April 1<sup>st</sup> Term Expires: May 18<sup>th</sup> 2015  
*Motion by Mr. Alterisio, seconded by Mr. Leva, passed unanimously*

### **Consultant's / Administrator's Report**

Ms. McKenzie started off by discussing the projects for the Town Hall, in particular the furnace. She also noted that by becoming a Roads Commissioner, Mr. Goss will not be able to sit on the Capital Planning Committee anymore and therefore she will have a vacancy. She further elaborated, while on the subject, that the Capital Planning Committee will be coming to the Board soon with a report on what they have assessed needs to be addressed by the town. She expects this could be as early as the Boards next meeting. It was noted that the next meeting will be held on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Board needs, she noted, to have weekly meetings for a term of time as we head into the end of the budget season and the Annual Town Meeting.

### **Old Business**

#### **➤ 2<sup>nd</sup> Joint Meeting with Advisory Board**

Ms. McKenzie inquired who would be attending the Advisory Board meeting; both Mr. Leva and Mr. Alterisio confirmed they would attend. This meeting will be on the 30th.

*Approved and adopted 4/15/15*

➤ *Greater Lowell Tech Consent Decree*

Ms. McKenzie noted that the decree for the Grater Lowell is not ready according to Town Counsel. The Board then turned to discussion about the issue and the reason for the consent decree. There was also some discussion about the matter of a potential appointment to fill a temporary vacancy on the school board for the tech school until the next election. The Board elaborated that the appointment could occur and how it would include action by the school committee members for GDRSD if it did. It was also noted that Counsel has indicated that the Board can adopt the decree without a vote by the townspeople. There was discussion about how towns usually work differently, but the injunctive order of the Federal District Court would, trump. The Board elaborated that a report on this situation will be made at the Annual Town Meeting. That many of the elements of the agreement within the school district will remain intact, but there are a few items that will be addressed as to how this will be implemented.

**Minutes**

The minutes under consideration for the Board are those from their February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to approve the minutes as drafted, which was seconded by Mr. Leva, and passed unanimously without debate.

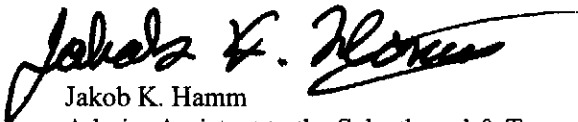
**Warrants/Mail**

The Grange submitted an application requesting to use the Town Hall (retroactively approving use last Saturday) and for future on Sunday, April 19th. A motion was made by Mr. Leva and seconded by Mr. Devlin. The motion passed without objection.

The Board then signed the warrants.

A motion to adjourn at 8pm 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

*Approved and adopted 4/15/15*