

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
July 1, 2015
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 6:05 pm

Present: Kenneth J. Leva, Daniel F. Devlin, Walter F. Alterisio, members; Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator; Brian Conant, Water Commission Chair

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Vendor & Payroll Warrants
- Will Sign new version of the Ballot Question on July 2nd

Open Forum

Mr. Leva started the meeting by explaining the public forum, its purpose, and by outlining the agenda for the evening which included discussion about the Water Project, introduction of the new Town Administrator, and discussion of the agenda moving forward. Mr. Leva then formally introduced Tracey Hutton and gave a brief explanation for her hiring as well as a formal welcome from the Board.

Regional School District Agreement

Mr. Devlin started off the discussion by informing his fellow members of the Board that an agreement was reached between Groton, Dunstable and GDRSD concerning the hiring of a consulting group that will lead the towns through revision of the agreement. The revision is intended to update the 1967 regional school agreement to reflect current law including recent Federal Court opinions. This update will modify several factors including the choosing of School Committee members and will also seek to reaffirm the need and basis for the regional school system between the two towns. From there the Board discussed the progress that has been made so far on this matter. The Board also determined that Mr. Alterisio should be the person representing the Board on this matter.

The Board reached consensus on the need to see more sustainable funding for the regional school district. The joint working group will include representatives from each Board of Selectmen, a representative from the School Committee, a representative from each of the towns Finance Committees, a representative at large from both Groton and Dunstable, the Town Manager of Gorton and the Town Administrator of Dunstable as well as the Superintendent. Finally, discussion turned to the matter of the consulting groups contract. Ms. Hutton informed the Board that Mr. Stanton the Director of Business & Finance at GDRSD, sent Ms. McKenzie the outgoing interim Town Administrator a signature page for the agreement, but not the rest of the document. She told the Board that she did not feel comfortable asking them to sign the agreement without seeing the full and final document. The Board agreed.

Budget & Fiscal Year

The Board noted that July 1st is the first day of the new Financial Year. After wishing all in attendance a happy new year, the Board turned to discussion concerning some of its priorities this year. Some of these priorities include necessary repairs to the Town Hall and safety work for the Library. The Board also brought Ms. Hutton up to date on the Capital Planning Committees recent report and recommendations and how this material has helped the Board determine its priorities this year. Some of the recommendations from Capital Planning include the need to have some engineering done for the Library to resolve its safety issue as well as needed repairs to the Town Hall including the elevator floor, the kitchen, and the lady's room. The Board also noted that they will have to work with the Advisory Board on these matters going forward, in particular for the Library's issue.

Approved and adopted on 8/12/15

Appointments

Jeffery Haight is appointed as a member of the Town Forest Committee Term Expires: June 30th, 2018
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

Margery E. Kimpton is appointed as a member of the Council on Aging* Term Expires: June 30th, 2018
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed unanimously

* This motion and appointment was made to adjust and correct the prior appointment of Margery Kimpton to the Council on Aging which was erroneous in its term length.

Recognition Meet & Greet

The Board would like to schedule a social event of this nature to have recognition of long serving good standing citizens in the town who are no seeking to continue with service to the town. Ms. Hutton agreed to help set something up.

Ballot Question & Postcard

The Board considered both the ballot question and the postcard expected to be sent out to every household in town. The Board specifically considered the language to ensure that it was clear and meet the standards and requirements of applicable law. The Board finalized the language for the ballot question and approved the appearance and language of the postcard. The Board concluded that the postcard should be fine since its purpose is to serve as an announcement to the public concerning the scheduling of a Special Election, including only that it is scheduled, the date it is scheduled for, where polls will be located, and what hours polls will be open.

A motion was made to approve the ballot question and postcard as both are written was made by Mr. Devlin and seconded by Mr. Alterisio. The motion carried without objection.

* It was noted that a drafting error needs to be fixed in the ballot question and the Board will sign the corrected draft tomorrow.

Water Project Discussion

The Board started off by discussing the scope of the water project and the need for more factual information to be provided to the public concerning why this project and why now. There was also some discussion of how this project will impact the Master Plan process and the MUD in particular. The Board then discussed the actual problems faced by the current water system, in particular noting that there needs to be greater awareness of the risk the town is exposed to and the need for technical resources to help contemplate ideas for what needs to be done to fix the system at this point. The consensus that emerged was that there is no real viable option but to fix the system either by replacement or with the proposed project.

The Board also expressed concern that there is a public disconnect with the public as to *why* this project is so urgently needed. Many in the public appear to feel that the project is too much or too expensive or simply doesn't make sense. The Board expressed some thoughts about how to help the public better understand what this project means. These included the impact of affordable senior housing on the Best Triangle and development of the MUD. Mr. Conant noted there were 27 different locations in the town that the Water Commission looked at. Most of the sites were too far away given that each mile of pipe is about \$1 million to build. One of the options would be to replace what we have with something similar and still costs millions and without improving the situation.

Mr. Conant then noted that the concrete tanks should last centuries in theory and the pumps likely decades. What has been chosen is the cheapest choice that satisfies all of the needs of the town moving forward. From there the discussion turned to the need to develop affordable housing, and expanded the tax base. This will never succeed without improving the water system. Not building affordable housing will have significant

Approved and adopted on 8/12/15

consequences including the possibility of the Commonwealth coming into the town and forcing the matter. The Board highlighted that interest rates for borrowing are at an all-time low.

Mr. Conant further noted that there were several more expensive concepts for this project and that for the type of project the \$3.5 million price tag really isn't that bad. The Board recalled that the biggest project in current memory for cost was the Town Hall renovation. This will, the Board concluded, be the second biggest project in recent memory. The discussion then turned back to why the pump station. Mr. Conant explained that the town could put a tower up, but gave several reasons for why this was not favorable. Some constraints included private land, access roads, and other location issues. One of the favorability's of the MUD location for this is the proximity to the existing infrastructure. The project will also enable a possible return on investment by allowing for expansion of the water system to new customers. This could include the regional school and people living along the route. All lines that will be replaced in the project are covered within the project's cost.

Discussion then turned to promulgating information, including any information to be placed on the website and what constraints are in place from an MGL standpoint. There are also legal questions as to whether some information may be put on the counter in the Town Hall and whether this can be put forth by the town itself. Mr. Conant returned things to the issue of Swallow-Union and sprinklers. He noted that DEP told the Water Commission that they should ask the MA Dept. of Ed. about whether these sprinklers are required. Currently there are no functioning sprinklers in the elementary school. Mr. Conant also noted that the informational session will be on July 28th. The event will be televised.

Mr. Conant finished by suggesting that for the information session the Board should discuss with the Water Commission the benefits of the system and the priorities of the town and explain why. This lead to some discussion as to how to explain the capacity requirements and what opportunities would initially follow the project once completed. This could help shape in people's minds why the project makes sense, and why the project is the scope it is. The Board also discussed its obligation to remain officially neutral on a ballot question and the need to consult with Town Counsel.

Town Administrators Contract

Ms. Hutton noted that she finds the contract acceptable, but the only matter she had left concerning the negotiations is the termination severance. From there the Board then discussed some concerns as to the window of time that would have to occur for this as well as the budgetary issues that could arise. In response the Board agreed that they would tighten up the provision. Ms. Hutton asked for the period to be 90 days. The Board originally wanted 30 days. Ms. Hutton pointed out that the midway point would be 60 days. The Board asked Ms. Hutton why 90 days. She noted that in many States 90 days is standard. The Board noted that this is a non-fault clause kind of situation and they want to better understand the standard here in the Commonwealth, whether it is 30 days or closer to 60 days. There was a procurement question, but this has been sorted out Ms. Hutton reported. The Board determined it would resolve this no later than its next ordinary meeting.

Administrators Report

Ms. Hutton updated the Board on her first day. Noting it was mostly a blur. The Board expressed a desire to move at an amicable pace for the moment so that everybody can get up to date. The Board also let Ms. Hutton know that they are ready and willing to help her get up to speed on things and to get to know the town better. Finally, the Board also touched on how it monitors accounts and why including what specific accounts it monitors closely.

Action Mail/Applications

Dunstable Grange applied for the use of the Town Hall on two occasions; a motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to approve the applications, which was seconded by Mr. Devlin. The motion passed unanimously.

Approved and adopted on 8/12/15

An application was received from the Anti Pipeline Coalition to use the Grange Room on July 20th. A motion to accept the application was made by Mr. Alterisio and seconded by Mr. Devlin. The motion passed without objection.

Warrant & Minutes

The Board signed the payroll and vender warrants then turned to the matter of approving the prior minutes for June 17th, 2015 and the accompanying Executive Session.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to accept the minutes for June 17th 2015 as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin, and passed without objection.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to accept and approve the Executive Session Minutes for June 17th, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio, and passed unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Devlin at 7:20pm and seconded by Mr. Alterisio. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by



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

Approved and adopted on 8/12/15