

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 23, 2015**  
**Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

**Convened:** 6:04 pm

**Present:** Walter F. Alterisio, Daniel F. Devlin, members; Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator; John Callahan, Safe Pathways; Margery Kimpton, Council on Aging; Beverly Woods, NMCOG

**Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:**

- Vendor & Payroll Warrants
- Certificates for Council on Aging

**Open Forum**

Mr. Devlin acted as chair in Mr. Leva's absence. He started off the meeting by explaining the public forum and its function. Seeing no members of the public present for the open forum, Mr. Devlin dispensed with the form and briefly noted the agenda. He then asked that those present use the microphone provided so that viewers at home are able to hear them.

**Cruiser Bids**

The Board opened the bids for the purchase of two retired police cruisers a 2008 Ford Police Interceptor and 2010 Ford Police Interceptor. Ms. Hutton noted that only two bids were received. The Board inquired about how timely the bids were received. Ms. Hutton stated they were received on time as required by the terms of the bid. The first bid was by Chicago Motors in the amounts of \$307 for the 2008, and \$1,707 for the 2010. The second bid was only for the 2010 and was in the amount of \$1,300.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to close the bid process. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

A subsequent motion was made by Mr. Devlin to accept the offer of Chicago Motors, the high bidder, and to sell and relinquish ownership of the police cruisers aforementioned. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

**Council on Aging Request**

Margery Kimpton introduced herself to the Board and explained the Council on Aging's request. In the past, the town has recognized citizens on their 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Sadly, at some point in time this recognition ceased. The Council on Aging wishes to restore this recognition. There are five citizens in Dunstable who are turning 90 this year and five others who have already turned 90 but who were not previously recognized. Ms. Kimpton requests on behalf of the Council on Aging that the Board affix its signatures to the certificates. These certificates will be presented to the citizens with other certificates from Dunstable's Senator in General Court and Representative in General Court. The Board declared that it would be their pleasure to sign. The Board then took the opportunity, while signing, to inquire about the Boston Post Cane usually granted to the oldest citizen in town. Ms. Kimpton responded that the current recipient prefers to remain anonymous and has declined to use the cane. It is the intent of the Council on Aging to have the cane put in a display case with an accompanying plaque or other form of representation from the citizen honored.

**Safe Pathways**

Mr. Callahan started off by discussing how Safe Pathways spent the \$7,600 which was appropriated for their use at the Special Town Meeting held October 20, 2014. The committee commissioned plans for a safe  
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pathway from the town center to the public library. That plan has been completed and Mr. Callahan presented it to the Board for review. The committee intends to keep these plans at the Town Hall for public view and safe keeping. Safe Pathways considers this stage to be phase I, which is now completed. They are now moving on to phase II. This phase involves the Main Street Reconstruction Project. Safe Pathways would like to see a pathway incorporated in that project or one that would align with that project. Unfortunately, it appears that during the design work, the town made a decision to not include a pathway as part of that projects design. Mr. Callahan explained that Safe Pathways would like to rectify this. Further, Mr. Callahan noted that if the Water Project does ever move forward in some incarnation or another, there may well be an opportunity for designing and including a pathway.

Mr. Callahan then presented the Board with more topographical information regarding the work the committee would like to see. He further discussed the idea of a safe pathway modeled on the Carlisle's. While the committee has reached its charge, they would like to continue. They believe that there is interest with some residents to have these pathways and they would also like to move forward in seeking funding options. The Board noted that Ms. Hutton may be able to help the committee seek funding for their work. The Board asked whether the current plan reflects a side walk or gravel path. Mr. Callahan responded that it could be both. Currently, the committee is looking at the possibility of a sidewalk for part of the way with a gravel path for the rest of the way. This path would be approximately 1,000 feet. They believe that there is enough room by the side of the road (Main Street) to establish the pathway. The Board noted that there may be some resistance to sidewalk, but there were no comments concerning taking necessary land for this. The main issue, the Board noted, was what to do in winter. Mr. Callahan replied that Carlisle does not remove snow from their pathway and it is used seasonally. There is no proposal to require snow removal either by residents or by the town.

The Board returned to the idea of tying a safe pathway into the Main Street Reconstruction Project. The Board noted that the existing design would allow for incorporation of a safe pathway. Ms. Hutton stated that the reason for not explicitly including side walk with the Main Street project was space issues. She explained that it was the informal consensus that the project would move forward without sidewalk as a result. She noted that the decisions concerning that could still be revisited. Looking at the way the road would be moved, it shouldn't be an overwhelming problem to include a safe pathway. The Board did note some financial constraints regarding the Main Street project. The Commonwealth is pushing for walkways and when roads and bridges are reconstructed, the Commonwealth has been incorporating sidewalk and pathways. The Board agreed that they would explore the option of potentially incorporating a pathway into the Main Street project. The Board also noted that there are other parts of the town that should explore safe pathways. There are, the Board added, people who are often found walking on the shoulder of the road, which can be dangerous.

The Board believes that exploring some of these options would be the next place for the Safe Pathways Committee to explore as a phase III. The Board noted a few challenging areas and suggested the committee focus on some of the other spaces. The Board also encouraged the committee to seek grants and further funding. Ms. Hutton noted that she is already talking to various entities on the Commonwealth and Federal level to see if there are funds for the furtherance of this goal and she noted that in her report later this meeting, she will be discussing the Commonwealth's desire to see some safe pathway matters for schools addressed that are pertinent thanks to Swallow Union. Ms. Hutton also stated that she will inform the Roads and Conservation Secretaries to keep Safe Pathways informed to progress regarding the Main Street project. The Board reiterated their support of the committee's mission and requested that the committee participate in the Master Plan process. Creative ideas like pathways should be considered in that process.

### **NMCOG Hazard Mitigation Plan**

Ms. Wood started off the discussion by noting that since 2011, NMCOG has been working towards a hazard mitigation plan. After 2000, every community is required to have a plan in place to receive certain funding, and the plan must be updated every five years. NMCOG put together a planning team from numerous communities and held an extensive public meeting process with meetings in various towns. They have also reached out to non-profits and businesses. The plan looks at vulnerabilities to hazards including natural disasters and focuses on all kinds of hazards including wild fire, earth quakes, winter storms and similar. They looked at infrastructure also considered what communities are currently doing. They also looked at flood concerns and how towns deal with these situations. Ms. Wood noted that another component that has to be

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demonstrated is that each community has made progress in plan implementation. The towns will not be expected to implement everything; these are goals to work towards. They also looked at feasibility from funding and political viewpoints. The town will need to outline how some emergency services will respond in hazard situations.

NMCOG also considered property protection and one thing that came to the surface was looking at municipal buildings and structural integrity. That includes snow removal to prevent roof failure. FEMA requires that a public education program be implemented and NMCOG recommends having an insert to put in with tax bills for this purpose. Once the plan is adopted NMCOG will review with towns yearly over the five year process to see how progress is made. What NMCOG is asking for tonight is for the Board to formally adopt the plan. Once adopted it will be sent to FEMA who will issue a formal letter recognizing the plan and this will give the town access to federal funds. Depending on damage, the towns may receive some funds. A lot of communities have used funds to improve culverts and flood proof municipal structures. The Board noted that this is a process and they are aware of some work being done on creating evacuation plans for the Swallow Union school and there are other efforts to implement plans for disaster situations. Ms. Wood advised that existing plans for various situations, which already exist, should be incorporated. She suggested dusting off some of these plans to help towards implementation. Ms. Hutton noted some typos in the final document and assured Ms. Wood she would have a corrected document presented to the Board for their formal signatures.

Mr. Alterisio moved to accept the terms of the plan as submitted, Mr. Devlin seconded and the motion passed without objection.

### **Discussion Regarding Emergency Services Equipment**

Ms. Wood started discussion on this topic by informing the Board that any equipment for communication for emergency services may be covered through state programs for regionalized emergency response. She further assured that any upgrades to have full communication with Groton should be eligible for the program. She noted that Groton would have to be the applicant since they manage the system. Ms. Hutton stated she was under the impression that this would not be covered, but would investigate further. The Board noted that to find funding through a program like this would be very helpful. It was also noted that the Commonwealth will be rolling out new technology in the near future for communications. Ms. Hutton expounded that we need something now and the town cannot wait. Ms. Wood encouraged the Board to contact the Commonwealth because there are a lot of opportunities to get mobile equipment that can serve as a band aid while the town grapples with how to solve the problem. Currently the town has very low coverage between 15 and 30 percent, which puts the town at high risk.

### **Renumbering Maple Street**

Maple Street was numbered just prior to the Boards adoption of a numbering policy. There are only three structures on Maple Street. The Board inquired into whether these are residential structures or not. Ms. Hutton was not sure, but she noted that this renumbering is a recommendation from the Fire Chief and Board of Assessors.

Mr. Alterisio moved to accept the recommendation of the Fire Chief and Assessors to renumber Maple Street. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed without objection.

### **Town Hall Use Requests**

Two requests were submitted to the Board. The first was for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mass Regiment to use the Town Hall and second was a request by the local PTA to use the Town Common for a school picnic. There was some discussion about the picnic having an admission charge but Mr. Devlin explained the charge is minimal and is to pay for the costs of the evening.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to accept and approve the applications. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

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## **Inspection Permit Fees**

Ms. Hutton started off by informing the Board of the proposed changes. She noted that the Plumbing, Gas, and Building Inspectors are in agreement with her on the increase in their fees, which will cover the costs of the new software being implemented. She presented the new fee structure to the Board for their consideration. The Board noted that they have revised the fee structure in recent years and inquired again about the Point Software fee. Ms. Hutton explained that the fee is \$10 per permit. Essentially the town buys the hardware and leases the software. She noted that she has provided the Board a comparison of fee structures in the surrounding towns such as Pepperell and Tyngsborough. She also gave the Board a proposal by the Electrical Inspector concerning his fee structures. Ms. Hutton elaborated on how the fees are set. The inspectors set the fees, but the Board has to approve them. There is no guidance from the Commonwealth on what the fees should be. All of these permits as proposed are comparable to what the towns in the area charge. The Board inquired as to how the other towns pay their inspectors.

Ms. Hutton responded that they are usually part time employees who are unbenefited and they are paid part of their inspection fee. The she compared Dunstable were Pepperell, Groton, Harvard and Littleton. Ms. Hutton informed the Board that she spoke with her counterparts in each of these towns in order to flesh out how they do this. She noted that she also checked with Town Counsel to ensure that the Board can legally change the fees. So far the only concern is how the community might react to the fee increase. Ms. Hutton noted that she has received some complaints about the Electrical inspection fees and they appear to be high for the area. The Board responded that these fees are not about profit but about what is reasonable for covering the costs for the necessary inspection. The Board stated they would be interested in understanding how the Electrical Inspectors desired increases as well as his existing fees are supported. Adding the \$10 on all inspections would be reasonable and necessary.

Ms. Hutton noted that there is a time savings and service difference using the software that results because a lot of this process can be managed from home for the applicant and on site for the inspector. There will be a learning curve, but there should be an increase in efficiency. The Board noted that there is a concern about parity with the other communities and avoiding the issue of complaints and the issues they might cause. It was suggested that perhaps this matter should be held in abeyance until the Electrical Inspector can come in and speak with the Board. Ms. Hutton noted he was informed of this meeting. She further noted that having been an inspector herself at one point, she understands where the inspector is coming from. However, she does not understand why inspections are more expensive in Dunstable then comparable towns like Pepperell. Ms. Hutton further reported that the Electrical Inspector would like to see some permits set by the inspector on site. She divulged that she has already checked with Town Counsel and fees like that must be set on a schedule of fees and cannot be set on the fly. The Board decided to hold these proposed fees in abeyance for further consideration and discussed holding a special meeting for this topic during the day.

The Board determined this would allow them to discuss this with the inspector more in depth and then bring the fee structures up again for approval at a normal meeting. There was also talk about some situations where the Electrical Inspector has to sign off for situations where for example, National Grid has to replace a pole in an emergency situation. The Board would like to see a fee for the inspector from the town for this since at this time he receives no fee. Ms. Hutton inquired where the funds for this would come from, noting that this may require discussion with the Advisory Board during the budget season. There has to be an appropriation somewhere she stated. The Board noted that they can support at this time, a \$10 increase on all the fees to simply offset the software charge per permit. There were again questions regarding how the permits will be pulled. Ms. Hutton explained how that process would be done via the software. Ms. Hutton also explained the fee and permit structures. It was also noted that 20 percent of the fee goes to the town and 80 percent to the inspector. Ms. Hutton finished by agreeing to set up a meeting between the Board and the Electrical Inspector.

## **Minutes**

The Board decided to abstain on adopting the minutes in favor of waiting until Mr. Leva is present. It was noted that on the September 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes, Mr. Alterisio was incorrectly not listed as present. It was decided that the minutes should be adjusted accordingly to reflect that Mr. Alterisio was in fact present.

## **Warrants & Mail**

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There was a considerable amount of mail in the Boards packet which Ms. Hutton highlighted. The Board reviewed its mail and signed the payroll and vender warrants. Ms. Hutton noted in particular the Police General Orders which the Police Chief requested the Board review.

### **Administrators Report**

Ms. Hutton started off with the Town Hall boiler. She noted that the boiler was running last night and should not have been. She has turned it off for the time being. In terms of the bid, nobody came to the pre-bid which was mandatory. The AG's office has told her the pre-bid may be waived, and she would like to do this because several late companies have shown interest in putting in bids. The AG's office is comfortable with the waiver. If no bids come in, there is the possibility of further waivers from the bidding process. But for now Ms. Hutton would like to waive the pre-bid and move forward. She noted that it will take 3 days for the system to be done which will be down that entire time. She then moved to the fire communications issue. She noted that there is the possibility to put a very tall telephone pole on private property that could help resolve this issue. The property owners are still considering the idea, but it could be a solution.

She then moved on to the regional school district agreement noting that a compact has not been done yet. What has stuck out to her is the Master Plan and how that needs to be updated. So she wants the Board to consider having more in depth discussion as to a community compact. There are some budgetary reasons to do this. She also wants to work on some mapping for the Master Plan. Ms. Hutton reported that she will put the community compact on the next agenda, noting it is a Governor's Office priority. She also updated the Board on the Town Engineers work concerning Alexander Estates. She was unable to talk to him today, but he has spoken to the Planning Board. She will be meeting with the Town Engineer and the MS4 consultant on Friday. Finally, she discussed the special town meetings warrant. She's providing the Board with draft articles for illustrative purposes. These articles are the ones that the Board has been talking about, and include various topics such as the boiler, the fire communications, and issues that the library has with its egresses. There is nothing earth shattering. Ms. Hutton also reported she will be out of the office between now and October 5<sup>th</sup> due to training.

### **School Budget Discussion**

The Board asked Ms. Hutton to speak with Jared Stanton at GDRSD about the schools budget process. The Board would like to see the town become more aware of and adjusted to the school districts budgetary process so that if any budget shortfalls occur the town will be able to see them coming. This includes understanding as the process moves forward what kind of items will be on the budget and what programs are being included and why costs are increasing. Transparency needs to be improved as to this process. Thankfully the school district performed as they promised, but it appears that the district may have some costs to grapple with moving forward. The Board wants to avoid another override situation.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Devlin at 7:49 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed.

Respectfully submitted by



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

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