

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

Convened: 7:01 pm

Present: Kenneth J. Leva, chair, Walter F. Alterisio, Daniel F. Devlin, members; Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator; Beverly Woods, NMCOG

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Vendor & Payroll Warrants
- Police Interceptor Titles signed over to Chicago Motors

Open Forum

Mr. Leva spoke briefly about the purpose of the open forum. Seeing no members of the public in appearance for the open forum the Board dispensed with the open forum.

Boiler Bid Opening

Ms. Hutton started off by asking if the Board wanted her to open the bids or if the chairman wished to do so. The Board encouraged Ms. Hutton to open them. Ms. Hutton announced that there were two bids: Davison Company and Veterans. Ms. Hutton reported that Davison came in at \$47,000 and Veterans at \$57,000. The Board determined it would need to consult with the Advisory Board about how to determine which candidate is most qualified and appropriate based on these bids. As such, the bids will not be accepted until consultation with the Advisory Board has occurred.

NMCOG Regional Dispatch Presentation

Ms. Woods passed out a handout to the Board. She started by reminding the Board that this has been a work in progress since 2009. The project was started at the request of the town administrators and managers of the NMCOG communities. The initial funding was found through a grant application which helped make the study feasible for all nine communities involved. At the end of the study NMCOG concluded that regionalization would not only be economically possible, but physically possible as well. The financial savings would be about \$2 million per year if this consolidation and regionalization were to be done. The study looked at various areas including personnel staffing, where the proposed facility be located and how it would operate. Two of the NMCOG communities, Westford and Billerica, ultimately choose not to join the proposed regionalization which left just seven communities involved. Funding was applied for under a development grant to help prepare an implementation plan.

NMCOG looked at various sites, nine in total, for this project. They also put a draft agreement together to cover how the program would be governed and how it would be paid for. They are now wrapping an update of the plan and looking at some of the new requirements coming from the Commonwealth and the Federal Government. Currently wireless 9/11 calls are answered by a center in Essex instead of the dispatchers at the Groton dispatch. If the communities were to take this on, the call volume would be greatly increased. Ms. Woods noted that wireless calls in particular are increasing exponentially. Relating to the idea of regionalization, Ms. Woods elaborated that several of NMCOGs smaller communities would like to see more consolidation and regionalization. Plans for this consolidation and regionalization will likely not mean as big a change for Dunstable since Dunstable is already regionalized with Groton.

There are some FCC requirements that are also being dealt with. Now dispatch centers need to be able to receive video, data, and text messages as well as wireless and landline calls. Because Dunstable is part of Groton, our costs are relatively low compared to those of Pepperell and Tyngsborough. One idea would be to join the Nashoba Valley center, which currently serves Devens, Lancaster, Harvard, and Lunenburg. This *Approved and adopted on 10/14/15*

center is managed by an administrative board made up by various officials from each of those communities and has nine full time dispatchers. However, in terms of Dunstable, from a financial perspective what Dunstable has now with Groton is the most cost effective solution. Joining Nashoba would be \$94,000 more expensive per year. But there are some technical advantages to joining Nashoba. The Groton regional emergency communications center has the capacity to have regionalization with Pepperell and Tyngsborough, i.e. joining Groton and Dunstable's existing regionalized area. The Board noted this means that Dunstable might be ahead of the curve on this. Ms. Woods responded that the town really is.

Another advantage of regionalization, Ms. Woods noted, is the possibility for funding for communications equipment that effectively aids in communication with the dispatch center. This includes hand held radios, cruiser based communications, and other similar equipment. The Board inquired into whether we are already eligible for some of these funds? Ms. Hutton responded that we are. Apparently town was misinformed in the past but this has now been rectified and paperwork has been done thorough Groton to bring these funds into reach for the town. The Board noted that the agreement for regionalization brings eligibility for a communications center to be recognized and help tap into incentives from the Commonwealth. Both towns therefore gain. Groton has to be the lead applicant according to Ms. Woods is because they host the center. She also noted that the Commonwealth intends to reward regionalization. The Board thanked NMCOG for its help on this front as well as many others. The Board expressed the opinion that the communications situation is in a crisis because less than 50 percent of the town is covered. This is a recent occurrence that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible to ensure public safety.

There was some discussion of what Nashoba offers including the new equipment. The technology they have is state of the art and tremendously impressive. Ms. Woods noted that Groton could achieve similar results if it takes advantage of the Commonwealth's funding opportunities going forward. There are a lot of things the Commonwealth will pay for at this point and the communities should seek them out. The Board discussed the existing regionalization and how Dunstable needs to be more involved in oversight. This means participating in the region more and having some conversations with Groton.

Appointments

Ms. Hutton informed the Board of the appointments that need to be made, including appointment of her as Personnel Administrator, two appointments requested by the Town Clerk and an official appointment of Ms. Stein as the stormwater management consultant.

Tracey Hutton is appointed as the Personnel Administrator Term Expires: June 30th, 2016
Motion by Mr. Alterisio, seconded by Mr. Devlin, passed without objection

Michelle Stein is appointed as the Stormwater Management Consultant Term Expires: June 30th, 2016
Motion by Mr. Alterisio, seconded by Mr. Devlin, passed without objection

Raphael Glob is appointed to the Board of Registrars Term Expires: March 31st, 2018
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed without objection

Alexandra Wright is appointed as an Election Officer Term Expires: June 30th, 2016
Motion by Mr. Devlin, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, passed without objection

Town Hall Use Requests

The Board reviewed and approved applications for use of the Town Hall from the Grange and DYAA.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to approve the application of DYAA to use the Town Hall on October 13th, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to approve both applications by the Grange for use of the Town Hall on April 10th, 2016. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed unanimously.

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A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to approve the application by the Grange for use of the Town Hall on March 19th, 2016. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

Administrators Report

Ms. Hutton started off by informing the Board that she verified with Town Counsel that the Board could make the appointment of Ms. Stein as the Stormwater Consultant. She further confirmed a fee schedule from Ms. Stein for her work for the town. Previously Ms. Stein was hired through Cuoco & Cormier, but since the firm has gone out of business she needed to be formally appointed. Before any new appointments or re-appointments are made next year Ms. Hutton reported she will seek full fee schedules. There should be more done procurement wise to this end, but for this fiscal year we have to deal with this on a case-by-case basis. There was some question as to whether we know the hourly fee for Ms. Stein is appropriate. Ms. Hutton stated that she doesn't know enough to fully be informed on that, but she does not think Ms. Stein's fee is inappropriate.

Ms. Hutton then discussed with the Board her latest meeting with Mr. Rider and Ms. Stein. There are some things that were presented to the town at the annual town meeting that they can start to implement now. Some of the mapping can be done early on before the permit is issued and some equipment can be borrowed from NMCOG. Ms. Hutton recommends purchasing a GIS software license that can then be used by the town to save some costs. She noted that she can use that equipment and do some mapping herself. There is also a lot of public education and outreach that can be done now as well, and it won't be that expensive. Most of the stormwater meetings currently are public information, so Ms. Hutton will attend. If the agenda shows technical information, then Ms. Stein will attend. The Board inquired as to how involved Roads will be. She finished by explaining that the Roads chair is being kept informed and will attend some of the meetings with her.

Community Compact

Ms. Hutton started off by presenting materials to the Board in regards to this matter. The program is sponsored by the Lt. Governor's office and presents best practices. This will be a compact between Dunstable and the Commonwealth. There are a host of things relating to this including safe pathways, schools, and other similar topics. Ms. Hutton recommends putting this on the agenda for November 4th. Planning and transportation are likely the best focuses for the town right now. The long range planning takes into account capital planning, schools, and transportation. The Board will need to pick three priorities under this compact and the town will then work with the Commonwealth on what this will entail.

Special Town Meeting Warrant

Ms. Hutton reported that the town has not yet received Free Cash Certification from the DOR. As a result the Advisory Board requests since they must hold a public hearing before the special town meeting that the Board agree to move the special town meeting from October 27th to November 3rd. This would mean the public hearing could be held on October 26th instead of October 14th. The Town Accountant feels confident that DOR will have the certification done by then. The Board agreed to move the date back to November 3rd. There was some discussion of the articles for unpaid bills and snow removal. The snow removal article will come off the warrant Ms. Hutton stated. The Commonwealth will allow the town to amortize over three years. As for the renewable PILOT, the town will receive taxes in lieu but won't receive any power from it. We don't know what the payment will be. Currently the offer from Citizens is \$8,000 per year and some forgiveness of the back taxes owed on the property. This article seeks to authorize the Board of Assessors to negotiate this PILOT. The Assessors would like to seek a higher payment amount and less forgiveness on the owed back taxes.

For the boiler article, the biggest question is where the money will be coming from. Because Free Cash hasn't been certified, the Advisory Board hasn't been able to form a recommendation on where to find the funding for this. The article concerning the radio issue has been modified to say equipment instead of tower since the solution may not actually require the installation of a tower. The Board noted that due to this situation, we have become aware of opportunities from the Commonwealth and we need to pursue these possibilities. The solution this article will permit will help lead to a permanent solution, but will help as a stopgap in the interim.

Approved and adopted on 10/14/15

What is being proposed here will only enhance what we will get from grants later. The proposed sight is under the Water Commissions auspice and they have already granted permission for the erection of a tower or other equipment for communication for emergency communications. Ms. Hutton told the Board that she feels the Fire Chief will be prepared for the special town meeting.

The Board advised on a few other adjustments to article language. In order to put a system in place to deal with failure for the water system, the town will need to take some funds out of operations, and the article on point will be to make operations whole again. It will cost about \$50,000. Advisory intends to ultimately take the \$50,000 from stabilization, which has just over \$340,000. Under this plan, there would be no water in place and the \$50,000 will represent a years' worth of rent on the necessary tank. This represents not a solution to the town's water system problem, but an attempt to demonstrate to DEP that the town has tried to do something. It will need to be explained to the public that this is a temporary patch and not the ultimate solution. The public needs to understand what failure will cost the town. Ms. Hutton noted that there would be more information regarding the numbers on this from the Water Commission at the special town meeting.

Additionally, there will be an article addressing the issues with the libraries egresses and ingresses to improve the ice situation. It appears the design will cost \$10,000. Construction cannot be done this fall so it will need to go forward in the spring. In the meantime the Fire Chief will be investigating solutions for this winter according to Ms. Hutton. Ms. Hutton will be in communication with Capital Planning about who to use as an architect and what the cost will be ultimately for construction. There was some discussion of the open space article, but ultimately that is a formality of MGL. And finally there was discussion of plow rigging that needs to be bought for the new truck for highway. The new truck was purchased with Chapter 90 funds, but those funds could not pay for the rigging, so that has to be purchased by the town. Roads Commission intends to use the trade in of the old truck to help pay for this. Town Counsel is fine with the figures in the special town meeting warrant currently for this.

Regional School District Agreement Amendment Committee Update

This group will become a subcommittee of the School Committee. A chair and co-chair will be appointed and from there moving forward the meetings will be posted and public in nature. The meeting schedule has centered on Tuesdays and the next meeting is tentatively set for October 20th at the High School Library. Several issues will be discussed, one of which will be the issue of affordability. The related Tri-Board meeting will also be on the 20th.

Budget Burn Rates

The burn rate is about 20 percent so far for the accounts that the Board reviews. There was a question about the COA's salary, which is burning at 36 percent. The Town Accountant has agreed to look into this and to ensure that the line item doesn't extinguish too early in the financial year. Otherwise things look healthy at this point.

Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to approve the minutes for September 2nd. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed without objection.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to accept the minutes for September 10th. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed without objection.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to accept the minutes for September 23rd. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

Warrants & Mail

The Board reviewed and signed the warrants. They also looked at some of their mail. Ms. Hutton proposed drafting a response to an inquiry involving the Commonwealth and Mr. Leva signed the titles for the two cruisers that were sold to Chicago Motors.


Approved and adopted on 10/14/15

Next Meeting

Ms. Hutton informed the Board that if it chooses to hold a meeting on the 21st, she will not be able to be present. If they wait until she is there, it won't be until November 4th. The Board will also need to hold a short meeting to authorize the warrant. The warrant will need to be authorized next week, so a meeting on the 14th will be necessary. The Board decided to hold a meeting on that date at 6:00 pm. The Board will also address some of the permit matters at that meeting as well.

Mr. Devlin moved to adjourn at 8:35pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted by



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