

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 16, 2015**  
**Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

**Convened:** 6:30 pm

**Present:** Daniel F. Devlin, acting chair, Walter F. Alterisio member; Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator; Brian Rich, Fire Chief; James Downes, Police Chief; James Dow, Police Lieutenant.; Madonna McKenzie, Consultant; Jean O'Brien, chair, Peter Georges, Patrick Murphy, Personnel Board; Carol Skerrett, Town Clerk; David Tully, Highway; Mike Martin, Roads Commission

**Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:**

- Warrants & Payroll
- City Elevator Contract/Re-Inspection Issue
- Speed Limit Designation for Kemp Street from DOT

**Open Forum**

Mr. Devlin, acting as chair in Mr. Leva's absence, briefly explained the purpose of the public forum and went over the Boards agenda for the evening which included appointments for CPC and Morgan Babcock, as well as discussion of the Personnel Board's Wage & Classification Chart and the Master Plan Revision.

With the Board's approval, Ms. Skerrett took the opportunity of the open forum to present the Board with new bound books of the towns various vital records. This project included community preservation funds, which have helped pay for the restoration of vital records. Ms. Skerrett explained the process and thanked those who helped make this possible, including Carol Bacon. The books were preserved both in electronic format and in book format. Ms. Skerrett explained the vender selection process, which included \$25,000 in seed money to make this happen. She also explained the research that she did on each vender and ultimately who was selected. These records include minutes from town meetings, birth records, and marriage records. The records stretch back into the 1700's, with most starting in 1790. These new bound books will preserve these early records not only as required, but also maintain them for future generations. Ms. Skerrett thanked the Community Preservation Committee for their assistance and for the funding to make this project possible. In May another \$25,000 will be spent to replicate this process with the next set of records. The Board thanked Ms. Skerrett on behalf of the town for her hard work.

**Designer Selection Procedures & Public Safety Building Feasibility RFQ**

Ms. Hutton started off by explaining that both the designer selection procedure and the RFQ were discussed at the Boards last meeting. The goal is to have these prepared for bidding in January. She acknowledged that there may still be some typos and other minor errors, but the documents should be ready as a whole for the Board to adopt. The designer selection procedures come from the Commonwealth and the language is what is recommended. The request for qualifications is based on another community. Ms. Hutton used this as a model for the document she presented. The Board responded by noting that they have no problem with the designer selection procedures as long as Ms. Hutton is confident and comfortable with the language. They expressed some concerns regarding the request for qualifications, mainly with some aspects of the document; most importantly that it stands scrutiny by Capital Planning and the Advisory Board. The big question is implementation. The Board noted that this whole process may take as much as 5 years. Ms. Hutton agreed to run it by the Advisory Board to ensure full buy in and stated she would run it by Capital Planning as well.

**Conflict of Interest Law**

The Board made an announcement as a reminder to all employees and those deemed by MGL to fall under the Conflict of Interest Law that they must complete the materials provided by the Town Clerk as required by law no later than by the end of this month.

*Approved and adopted on 12/30/15*

## **Appointments**

Brian O'Donnell is appointed as the designee for Affordable Housing to CPC Term Expires: June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
*Motion by Mr. Alterisio, seconded by Mr. Devlin, passed without objection*

Jeffery Hastings is appointed as the designee for Parks to CPC Term Expires: June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
*Motion by Mr. Alterisio, seconded by Mr. Devlin, passed without objection*

Morgan Babcock briefly updated the Board on their work and requested renewal of several trustees.

Daniel Devlin is appointed as a Trustee for Morgan Babcock Term Expires: June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
*Motion by Mr. Alterisio, seconded by Mr. Devlin, passed without objection*

David Wallace is appointed as a Trustee for Morgan Babcock Term Expires: June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
*Motion by Mr. Alterisio, seconded by Mr. Devlin, passed without objection*

## **Personnel Board Wage & Classification Chart**

Ms. O'Brien introduced herself and explained the Personnel Board's work. They started off by working on the Personnel Policy as well as determining their mission, purgatives, adopting a by-law and working on a compensation plan for employees. The town currently has no formal system for wages, and compensation has been inconsistent. They have worked hard with Madonna McKenzie, as well as with Ms. Hutton. They did research on what other similarly situated communities have done and how their compensation plans look. Ms. O'Brien presented the current plan to the Board stressing that this chart and accompanying materials are drafts and they are now seeking input from the Board. Ms. McKenzie then took over and explained the sources used for the chart and related materials. The income data came from multiple sources including MMPA, DOR, and from towns directly including HUD. The MMPA numbers are FY15, DOR were predominately FY11. They looked at various towns, determining which ones would fit Dunstable best. This included considering population, budget, and other factors. Ms. McKenzie also listed the towns that were ultimately chosen.

She then elaborated on how the cost of living was considered for the region as well as for the Commonwealth as a whole, and noted that they spent more than a year working on the chart. They determined to use the average of the min-maxes of the compared communities to establish a min-max for Dunstable. They then determined that a grade system should be implemented along with a step system. From there they broke out any raises into 3-year periods. The original numbers were based on FY14, but the Personnel Board later determined that the numbers should be updated to reflect FY15. They did this by applying a 2 percent COLA to the FY14 figures. They also considered the various hours that different employees worked and compared them with their salaries. This was used this to establish hourly rates. They later found out that some full time employees are 40 hours per week; previously it was thought that full time was just 36.5 hours. Hire dates were also used, but those dates were used for when the employee began a position rather than actual hire date. The final thing they did was considering the cost to the town and spread that cost out over a number of years. Originally they considered spreading the cost out over 5 years, but later determined that it should be 2 years.

As part of the process it was concluded that some job titles may not be accurate and it is recommend the town consider re-tooling some job titles. Not all employees were considered because some are Union or have pay based on fees collected. The numbers in this chart are not final are still subject to change. The Board thanked the Personnel Board for its work, and noted that this constitutes a blue print, but there is a lot of information to absorb. From there the Board made a few observations about the materials and noted that this process started in 2010 when DOR evaluated the town and considered the town's practices. DOR recommended this process be done so that the town would have a formal wage system. In the intervening years the Board has worked to implement DOR's recommendations believing that the key to having an affective and responsive government is investment made into its people. As part of this investment, the Board has sought to change management practices to make things better and end blind practices. This requires structure, not only a Personnel Board and by-law, but additionally the materials they have produced such as this wage and classification chart.

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The Board now seeks to provide a format and procedure for departments to determine pay and compensation. Development of the human resource is critical. Ms. McKenzie responded that the only way this process can work is if you use the same communities and charts for everyone. She noted that it has been brought to the town's attention in the past that some have expressed concern that healthier departments have paid employees more in the past than other departments are able to. The Board returned discussion to how this process would be funded, noting that the Town of Groton has developed revenue sources outside of real estate and excise. There was then a question of whether ranges were compared to actual wages. Ms. McKenzie replied that actual wages were used. Lt. Dow explained some thoughts and concerns regarding the process. He noted that some of the data used was erroneous. The Board noted that people must be patient with such matters and allow time for the data to be improved. The numbers used in the chart are more illustrative than concrete. The Board noted that the process is not as far along as some believe. Lt. Dow responded that more input from the departments and employees should be allowed for. The Board agreed that more information should be considered.

Chief Rich expressed some concerns including the fact that the salaries for some of the communities used are out of date. He would like to see more input from employees, emphasizing that what he does in Dunstable is not exactly the same work as what other fire chief's do. He stressed that it is important to ensure that the figures are correct. The Board agreed. There was a question as to any timeline for finishing. The Board stated that there is no concrete timeline. This may take as much as another year. The Board reminded those in attendance that this will have to be a give and take, and that the town will have to reach a point where both employees and the public are convinced this is the right direction. A balance must be reached between what the town can do financially and what is equitable. Chief Downes noted some concerns, including the fact that the chart appears, to indicate that he might be over compensated which he feels is based on discrepancies and erroneous data. He would hope that in the future employees like him might have the opportunity to provide information. The Board finished by reiterating that this is not the end of this process and thanked all parties involved for their work and dialogue.

### **Master Plan Revision**

Ms. Hutton has set a preliminary meeting time for talking about the Master Plan with the Planning Board. She has also secured \$20,000 from the Community Compact program, and another \$24,500 from the DLTA Program through NMCOG. NMCOG is proposing to do the revision, and the only gap in funding is \$5,000. Ms. Hutton informed the Board that she intends to seek that funding from CPA funds and has already submitted an application to CPC. She should have a DLTA answer by January 4th. This means that the cost of this process will be fully funded. The Board noted they want to discuss this with Planning Board and see a committee put together to deal with this.

### **Earth Removal Activity**

Alexander Estates continues to conduct activity that is not consistent with the permit issued by the Board. The Board has discussed the situation with Town Counsel. There is some concern by the Board in regards to this matter not only regarding the process but also the conduct of Alexander Estates. This situation will involve both the Board and the Planning Board. The Board has sought to address the inherent problem, the need to remove earth from this sight, through the existing permit process. Unfortunately, Alexander Estates has not been operating in full compliance with the conditions of the permit. This includes using restricted routes during restricted times, among other violations. On multiple occasions attempts have been made to deal with this situation to bring about compliance. Visits by the Town Engineer and Town Administrator have confirmed that the earth to be removed was gone, and additional earth beyond the original amount has been removed.

There was claim by Alexander Estates that some of the earth was removed from land owned by the town and therefore exempt. The Board notes that the town has not formally accepted this land and therefore that exemption would not apply. Further, the earth removed was material that affected the emergency exit route for the development. This was not to be done without further process with the Planning Board. The emergency access roads design has not been presented to the Planning Board as required. The Zoning Enforcement Officer has confirmed this. The Board continues to wait for additional thoughts from Town Counsel on how to proceed on this matter. The town has documented this situation. Ms. Hutton noted that when she did the inspection with the Town Engineer, the emergency access road was well on its way to completion. The Board noted that

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this is without approval and appropriate authorization from Planning Board as required. Ms. Hutton expressed the feeling that monitoring is not the problem, rather enforcement is. The Board was concerned with how to address this and how to prevent it from happening this way again.

### **Administrators Report**

Ms. Hutton started off by reporting on a request by GDRSD concerning renewal of the lease for the Union School building, which constitutes part of the Swallow Union School. She was unable to find a previous lease, but proposes a new lease be drafted since that previous lease would be expiring. The lease expiring was done in 1995. It was acknowledged in 1995 that the original lease was lost. The Board agreed and recommended she speak with Town Counsel. Ms. Hutton then turned to discussing a safety-training event that will be done in January for town employees. She then discussed some installation of radio repeaters for the Fire Dept. And from there she moved to discussion of the City Elevator contract and the situation regarding re-inspection of the town's elevators. She was able to reduce the cost of this and requests that the Board authorize Mr. Devlin as Acting Chair to sign the contract in Mr. Leva's absence. She then reported a request by the Town Clerk regarding the designation of a secondary polling place. The Board determined designated the Town Hall.

Ms. Hutton then turned to budgets. She has put out a request to Department Heads to begin this process and is working to get the ball rolling. She then discussed the ambulance issue, and noted that response times, and call numbers will be provided to the town. Trinity Ambulance is the current provider. The service with Trinity will be affected by Tyngsborough bringing its own ambulance service online. The Board requested that Trinity send a representative to the town. Ms. Hutton noted that she has worked on building a municipal ambulance service and would be willing to help provide information to Tyngsborough. Ms. Hutton moved on from the ambulance reporting to the Board that both she and the Administrative Assistant would be on vacation for the Boards meeting on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The Board determined they would postpone a decision on whether to cancel or reschedule the meeting until a later time. Ms. Hutton finished by providing several documents to the Board to authorize, including the speed limit designations from DOT.

### **Building Use Application**

Mr. Dean and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Massachusetts Regiment applied to use the Town Hall.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to approve the application for January 3<sup>rd</sup>. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed without objection.

### **Budget Burn Rate**

The Board noted that the departments are doing well. The town should be at 42 percent. All the accounts being monitored are at about 33 percent. There are a few accounts, which the Town Administrator is following up on, that need to be brought into line. Ms. Hutton noted that some of the concerns here have to do with special town meeting adjustments that the Town Accountant needs to make. These issues should shake out with the next report from the Town Accountant.

### **Minutes**

The Board tabled the minutes until such time as Mr. Leva is in attendance.


### **Warrants & Mail**

The Board reviewed their mail as well as the payroll and vender warrants which they reviewed and signed.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Devlin at 8:10 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

*Approved and adopted on 12/30/15*



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

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