

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
December 30, 2015
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 6:30 pm

Present: Kenneth J. Leva, chair, Daniel F. Devlin, Walter F. Alterisio, members; Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator; James Dow, Police Lieutenant; Bob Kennedy, Rural Land Trust; Alan Chaney, Conservation Commission

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Warrants & Payroll

Open Forum

Mr. Leva briefly explained the purpose of the public forum and went over the Boards agenda which included Dunstable Police off duty details, donation bins on the McLoon property, and minor revisions to the building permit fee schedule.

Uncovered Well

Mr. Kennedy brought up a possible liability for the town concerning a well on public property that he feels constitutes an attractive nuisance. Mr. Kennedy stated that this matter has been brought to the attention of the town in the past. Ms. Hutton noted that this is an issue the town has on its radar and it was her intention to bring it to the Boards in due course. The Board determined that the matter ought to be investigated further.

New Stop Signs & Speed Limit Painting

Mr. Kennedy noted that the town has put several new stop signs up, including one on Thorndike Street. While signs have been placed, no lines have been painted. He requests that this be done. Ms. Hutton noted that there are some restrictions on what can be painted. She's spoken to the Road Commissioners in regards to this, but will speak with them again about this matter. Lt. Dow suggested that while a line may bring more attention to the stop, part of the issue is simply time. People need to get used to the stop sign being located there. Mr. Kennedy would also like to see the speed limits painted on High Street. Ms. Hutton stated that the Roads Commission feels that the town lacks the authority to do this but assured Mr. Kennedy that she would investigate the matter further.

Donation Bins from McLoon Property

Mr. Kennedy then addressed the Board concerning the donation bins on the McLoon property which since Mr. McLoon's passing is now under the Rural Land Trust. The bins will need to be removed from the property because they are not consistent with Mrs. McLoon's will, which happens to govern in this situation. Mr. Kennedy acknowledged that the bins are used, and do support a good cause. But in their current location they are an eyesore and the Rural Land Trust asks the Board to consider allowing them to be moved. One suggested new location was near the Post Office. Mr. Chaney noted that this is not a non-for profit and the bins being located on the McLoon property certainly were never consistent with Mrs. McLoon's wishes. Mr. Kennedy stated that the company involved does pay rent, if the town is willing to consider allowing them to be relocated to public property. Ms. Hutton asked for their contact information and Mr. Kennedy agreed to provide it.

Dunstable Police Details in Other Communities

Ms. Hutton started the discussion off by explaining the policy being proposed by Chief Downes and noting that this sort of policy is rather standard in most communities. There is no cost to the community, and the risks of liability are generally low since the only expense to the town would be if there was an injury while on duty
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since it would be the responsibility for the town under workman's compensation. Lt. Dow explained that officers do details out of town and this policy would simply allow the town to bill for the detail and then pay the officer. Most of the time these details involve companies like Verizon. The Board noted that the only reason they haven't adopted a policy like this in the past is because the town hasn't had many out of town details. Lt. Dow responded that this policy is now being put forward because many of the towns around us have changed to this new system and not adopting this kind of policy prevents officers from working in towns that have adopted such a system. The Board noted that the policy as presented in draft form is pretty basic and appears reasonable. Lt. Dow finished by explaining the process a bit more and what the thinking was behind it. The Board determined there was no issue with the policy as drafted so far and determined the Police Chief could move forward.

Preliminary Budget

Ms. Hutton started by explaining that she is putting together the preliminary budget that will be submitted to the Advisory Board. She doesn't expect many large changes, but did note a few that she expects to see. The Board generally agreed with those she highlighted for elimination. Ms. Hutton also assured the Board she would have more information for them at their next meeting. She also reported that at this stage she has most departments' preliminary budgets, and she intends to use VADAR more extensively this year. The town is paying for this system, and she would like to see it utilized. Last year there were mathematical errors with the budget and she is trying to avoid data entry errors along with other unforced errors.

Designer Selection Procedures & Alternate Voting Place

Ms. Hutton began this topic to the Board by explaining that the Board made decisions regarding these matters but failed to make the proper motions. She now asks the Board to approve. The Board agreed to do so, but clarified for the record that in regards to the alternate designation of the Town Hall for voting (for the March 1st Primary) is only in case of a situation where the normal voting location is unusable.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to approve the Designer Selection Procedures as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

A motion was made by Mr. Devlin to approve the Town Hall as an alternate voting place. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed unanimously.

Main Street Project

Ms. Hutton reported to the Board that DOT wants to extend the range of the Main Street Project to bring the project all the way to the Town Hall. This would affect any sidewalk placement, which might tie into Safe Pathways path to the Library. This would require more survey work. The town can wait until spring or can reallocate some funds from another phase of the project to the additional survey work. Ms. Hutton has spoken to the Roads Commission about this since this project falls under them. The Roads Commission would prefer not to extend the project, but Ms. Hutton expressed concern that DOT would not approve the project if the town doesn't agree to extend it. DOT feels that the town can get a waiver for one side of the road for a sidewalk, but not the other.

Ms. Hutton noted that when DOT makes a recommendation during the engineering phase, it is usually good to take the recommendation. She further noted that NMCOG was present, and they appear to be in agreement with DOT. There was some discussion of what Safe Pathways has proposed in contrast with DOT's recommendations. Mr. Chaney stated that it was agreed upon in the past that there would be room on the cemetery side of the road for a bike pathway that might also include pedestrian traffic. Ms. Hutton responded that DOT is aware of this idea but does not feel it would be approved. The current gubernatorial administration is not interested in granting waivers. It appears more likely that they would grant a waiver, if at all, for only one side of the road. Mr. Chaney asked whether this would ultimately make passage passed the cemetery safer. Ms. Hutton stated that it would. The Board determined that they had no problem with accepting DOT's recommendations and acting accordingly.

Minor Revisions to the Building Permit Fee Schedule

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Ms. Hutton noted a few mistakes and omissions in the policy recently adopted by the Board. She then presented the Board with a new version of the policy and requests they adopt it. The Board agreed to do so. She also updated the Board on the new online permitting process. The new system will come online on Monday, January 4th. This system will also include a kiosk here at the Town Hall, so if an applicant doesn't have a computer or access to the Internet they can still come to the Town Hall.

Mr. Alterisio moved to adopt the policy with the minor revisions with the effective date as 12/30/15. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed unanimously.

McLoon Status

The Board inquired over some issues that might remain in regards to the McLoon property. These mostly concerned a lot that was given to Mr. McLoon in fee simple. The property in question was given to Mr. McLoon to prevent further litigation and to settle his contestation of his mother Mrs. McLoon's will. Mr. Chaney elaborated on this explaining that the town was listed as a designee to receive the property should the Rural Land Trust decline or fail to take it. The piece of land given to Mr. McLoon in fee simple has now been broken up into 3 lots and is a done deal. A developer has already purchased it. The Board had some concern about the town's interest in this property. Mr. Chaney noted that if the property was affected by Mr. McLoon's death, it would revert to his estate not to the rest of the property, which is governed by Mrs. McLoon's will granting it to the Rural Land Trust. The Board clarified that this interest is more in what will be developed on the property. Mr. Chaney responded that the developer appears to be inclined to build houses. The Board moved on to other business.

Administrators Report

Ms. Hutton started her report by informing the Board that the repeater is now up on Forest Hill. In the meantime the Fire Chief is still looking for a location for the bigger project in regards to this matter. From there she reported that there is a fire truck grant application due in February and the town needs to replace an engine. The grant in question requires a 5 percent match, but 20 percent would garner more points in the grant process. A 20 percent match would be about \$75,000. This is both an Advisory and Board decision. Procuring this truck would be in line with recommendations from Capital Planning. The Board expressed support for Ms. Hutton to proceed with the grant application. From there Ms. Hutton reminded the Board of its meetings next week with various other boards and committees. This includes one with the Planning Board on Monday and another with School Committee and Advisory Board on Wednesday. The School Committee is mostly interested in better understanding the town's finances prior to the request for the district's budget.

She further reported that the Personnel Board would be meeting next week to discuss the wage classification chart again, the personnel policy, and her job description. She noted that her position must have a job description for her procurement certification to go through. The Board responded by noting that a lot of discussion has occurred around the wage and compensation topic. This included information that was provided to the town concerning underlying assumptions in the Personnel Board's data. Ms. Hutton noted that some of the data was outdated, but that was due to the time frame from when the data was compiled. She further stated that while there were some errors and mistakes, these are being addressed. This chart is a starting point, and a draft at that. Not only will longevity be considered, but also further merit will be taken into consideration. But the current focus is to get the personnel policy in place and to finish the wage classification chart. There is no way to please everybody.

To the extent that employees are being considered is to what extent the employee is paid. The process remains "employee neutral" otherwise. Ms. Hutton then explained how the Personnel By-Law has changed the process, and elaborated on her work with the town's Labor Counsel. The old personnel policy only applied to Board appointed employees. Due to the Personnel By-Law, the new policy will apply to all town employees who are not bound under a collective bargaining agreement. Ultimately this process will lead the town in the right direction of having a clear and fair process for compensation. There was some discussion of employee compensation as compared to the area and market. This isn't whether they are underpaid or overpaid, but

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rather what the market value of the position is. Discussion then revolved around and concluded on this process and any fallout that may occur. This included, in particular, the adoption of the new personnel policy.

Building Use Application

The Dunstable Rural Land Trust requested use of the Town Hall Grange Room for January 13th from 6pm until 8pm. The Board had no objections.

Mr. Devlin made a motion to approve the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leva and passed unanimously.

Minutes

Ms. Hutton requested the Board approve the minutes as submitted for Nov. 17th, Nov. 18th, Dec. 2nd, and Dec. 16th. The Board agreed noting no necessary revisions or changes needing to be made.

Mr. Alterisio made a motion to accept the minutes for Nov. 17th, 18th, and December 2nd. Mr. Devlin seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection.

Mr. Alterisio made a motion to accept the minutes for Dec. 2nd. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leva and passed without objection.

Mr. Devlin made a motion to accept the minutes for Dec. 16th. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

Warrants & Mail

The Board reviewed and signed the payroll and vender warrants and looked through its mail.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Devlin at 7:35 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by



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

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