

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2017
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 6:33 pm

Present: Daniel F. Devlin, chair, Walter F. Alterisio, Leah D. Basbanes, member(s); Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator; James Dow, Chief of Police; Mike Martin, Peter Gove, Roads Commission; Mat Morton, resident

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Vendor & Payroll Warrants

Open Forum

Mr. Devlin briefly explained the purpose of the public forum and went over the Boards agenda which included an appointment of a Roads Commissioner, a nomination of a representative to the Superintendents Search Committee, use of Town Property Requests, Complete Streets, and a Budget Update.

Superintendent Search Committee

Ms. Hutton started off by informing the Board of a request from the GDRSD School Committee for the nomination of a representative from Dunstable to serve on the screening committee which will review permanent superintendent candidates and forward finalists to the School Committee for final interviews and selection. Ideally the School Committee would like the nominee to be a member of one of the elected or appointed boards or committees in the town. The School Committee has set the first two meetings for February 10th and February 15th, both at 5:30 pm. So far out of the candidates put forward, Mr. Mikol would best fit the school committee's desire for the person to be an elected or appointed member of a board or committee in the town. There was some ensuing discussion of whether the Board should choose one of its own members for this nomination. It was then determined that Ms. Basbanes would be selected by the Board.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to select Ms. Basbanes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Devlin and passed by majority vote with Ms. Basbanes in abstention.

Board of Road Commissioners

Commissioner Goss has submitted a resignation to the Town Clerk from his position on the Board of Road Commissioners. The Board will need to appoint an interim to fill the position until the next election scheduled for May 15th, 2017. The Road Commissioners recommend Matt Morton to fill the position. The Board asked Mr. Morton to introduce himself. He elaborated on his biography. He has lived in town for about 3 years and is familiar with the Highway Department having plowed for the town in past years. He has worked at Lawrence Academy in Groton. The Board inquired with Mr. Morton as to whether he is still plowing for the town. Mr. Morton responded in the negative. The Board then noted some steps Mr. Morton will need to take in regards to ethics and any conflicts that might arise. This means he may attend and participate in meetings, but should always keep an eye out for any instances where he cannot vote or sign off on expenditures made by the department. This resolved the Board saw no reason to delay the appointment.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to formally accept Mr. Goss's resignation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Basbanes and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to accept the Board of Road Commissioners to appoint Mr. Morton until May 15th, 2017. The motion was seconded by Ms. Basbanes and passed without objection.

Approved and adopted on 2/22/17

Complete Streets Tier 3 Projects

Ms. Hutton updated the Board on the presentation of the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. The plan is mostly finished and was recently presented to the community on January 30th. Ms. Hutton noted that it will be important for the community to determine what projects it would like to pursue for funding in FY18. The project funding must be applied for by May and should be shovel ready. The projects will not have to be done in any specific order, but it should be noted that the funding cannot pay for design fees. Therefore, since they don't have to be done in any specific order Ms. Hutton recommends the town focus on projects that do not require design be handled first. This would include such examples as benches, bike racks, and some road crossings. The Board inquired as to whether this strategy is to create placeholders. Ms. Hutton responded in the negative noting that there is no reason to waste this year's funding opportunity and there are projects the town can do that do not require design such as her prior examples.

She then elaborated on how the application process works, noting in particular that applications are done every year and spending must be done in the year the funding is granted. Several possible projects were then discussed, including specifically, several possible crosswalk improvements or placements. Ms. Hutton stressed that these projects would be completely funded by DOT through the Complete Streets program. One of the crosswalk proposals would include a raised crosswalk. The Board inquired as to what impact this would have on the traffic flow of the road in question (Groton Street) and noted several concerns. Chief Dow responded to the Board's concerns suggesting that with appropriate forewarning and signage it would likely be okay. This prompted discussion concerning the problem of "visual pollution" and public concern about having all of the lighted signs and other indicators that other communities have. Ms. Hutton suggested in light of these concerns that it might be better to focus on bike racks, benches, and other similarly related projects.

Appointments & Resignations

The Board accepted Mr. Goss's resignation from the Board of Road Commissioners and determined to appoint Mathew Morton to fill his term until the next annual election scheduled for May.

Mathew Morton is appointed to the Board of Road Commissioners Term Expires: May 15th, 2017
Motion by Mr. Alterisio, seconded by Ms. Basbanes, passed without objection

The appointment of Mathew Morton was formally made after discussion with the Board of Road Commissioners and may also be found under that heading. Ms. Basbanes is not included here because she was nominated by the Board rather than appointed since that appointment is formally made by the School Committee.

FY18 Budget Update

Ms. Hutton started off by discussing preliminary articles for the Annual Town Meeting warrant. This included her recommendations for which items should be paid for from Free Cash and which items should be financed. The Board inquired as to the amount of Free Cash. Ms. Hutton responded that Free Cash was certified by DOR at \$284,617. Ms. Hutton also reported on the town's health insurance increase for town employees. The increase came in considerably lower than originally thought. This was nearly \$14,000 less than was originally budgeted. Ms. Hutton then reported on the GDRSD line item which has been updated to reflect the shift in student population. That shift was about a ½ a percentage point (Dunstable has 13 new students while Groton has 8 less). While the shift is minor percentage wise, it has a substantial financial impact. The current assessment is approximately \$304,000 more than last year, with approximately \$158,000 of that from the student population shift. This represents about an \$80,000 increase from the originally proposed approximate assessment. Groton's additional assessment is less than the \$750,000 they put in their proposed budget, but this was the result of efforts made by the Interim Superintendent to lessen the impacts to Dunstable caused by the student population shift. Ms. Hutton reported how much work was done by the Interim Superintendent and the level of communication which occurred between his office and the town. There was some ensuing discussion surrounding how these figures were determined and some public confusion in regards to those figures as well as how to sustain necessary funding levels.

Ms. Hutton then turned to the GLTVHS (tech school) budget. The town hasn't yet received estimates from the tech school, but the budget currently contains a flat funded assessment and debt calculated from last year's
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spreadsheet. Final numbers from the tech school are expected next week. The Essex Aggie has turned over its numbers which show an increase. Discussion then turned to the Police budget. The Police budget is about \$50,000 lower as a result of the work done by Ms. Hutton and Chief Dow. The most notable changes are the reduction of the Lieutenant position and the addition of the two Sergeant positions as well as a reduction in the overtime line. Ms. Hutton then reported on the Inspections Department. The inspector's stipends have now been fully adjusted to take into account what was spent in the first 2 quarters of FY17. Discussion turned briefly to the Veterans Agent's salary line. Ms. Hutton noted she is recommending a 2 percent increase, which is in line with the COLA proposed for other town employees. Ms. Hutton then reported on the budget items that have been combined this year. There was then some ensuing discussion about last year's articles and some mathematical errors. This situation has thankfully not left the town in any financial hardship.

Administrators Report

Ms. Hutton reported on the current situation with the CR documents being requested from the town's former counsel. The documents constitute Attorney-Client work product. The town is facing several hard deadlines and must get these documents. A certified letter has been sent to former counsel. Ms. Hutton then turned to reporting on Stormwater and the current cost of the town's consultant. The cost of the consultant and for stormwater in general has been steadily going down. She then turned to the issue of the town becoming a Green Community. There are steps that would have to be taken, including permitting changes, and the establishment of a Green Committee. Although the town is missing out on some grant funding opportunities, this doesn't appear to be something the town can implement at this time. The Board noted that the town is in the process of updating its Master Plan and suggested that this be addressed as part of that process. There was some brief discussion of exactly how much funds are being missed out on. Ms. Hutton then reported that National Grid, along with a contractor, has done an audit of the town's buildings to see what savings the town can achieve. As a result she will be meeting with various department heads to talk about improvements to town buildings.

In the meantime, there are several projects that could be done regarding the Town Hall. The two projects that Ms. Hutton purposes looking at first include lighting improvements and weatherizing. As for other buildings the next steps still need to be considered. Especially in regards to Police and Fire. Since the proposed public safety complex would hopefully be built within the next decade, the economics of sinking funds into the Police Station and Fire Station have to be looked at very carefully. This prompted some discussion surrounding the proposed public safety complex and how to build confidence and support among the general public for this project. Ms. Hutton noted that the town's excluded debt will be completely eliminated by 2021, so it will be easier for the town to finance this kind of project in the next few years. Discussion then finished on the joint meeting with Groton and the School Committee scheduled for February 9th, 2017. Due to inclement weather it appears that the meeting will be cancelled and rescheduled. There was some confusion as to the Executive Session scheduled as part of that meeting. Ms. Hutton explained that this is a joint Executive Session with the Groton Board of Selectmen and the School Committee to discuss union negotiations.

Use of Town Property

The Board reviewed an application by the Dunstable Democratic Town Committee to use the Town Hall on March 21st, 2017 for a committee caucus meeting. The Board also considered an application for use of the Town Hall by the 2nd Massachusetts Regiment on March 11th, 2017. Seeing no reason to deny either application the Board determined to approve.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to approve the application by the Dunstable Democratic Town Committee for use of the Town Hall on March 21st, 2017. The motion was seconded by Ms. Basbanes and passed without objection.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to approve the application by the 2nd Massachusetts Regiment to use the Town Hall on March 11th, 2017. The motion was seconded by Ms. Basbanes and passed without objection.

Approved and adopted on 2/22/17

Minutes

The Board considered executive session minutes for the meeting held on December 28th, 2016, and the regular meeting minutes from January 11th, 2017. The Board seeing no necessary changes or adjustments determined to approve the minutes as drafted.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to approve and release the Executive Session minutes for December 28th, 2016 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Ms. Basbanes and passed without objection.

A motion was made by Mr. Alterisio to approve the minutes for January 11th, 2016 as written. The motion was seconded by Ms. Basbanes and passed on majority vote with Mr. Devlin abstaining.

Warrants & Mail

The Board reviewed the vender and payroll warrants and went through their mail.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Basbanes at 7:43 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alterisio and passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted by



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