

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 14, 2018**  
**Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

**Convened:** 2:30 pm

**Present:** Leah D. Basbanes, chair, Ronald J. Mikol, vice chair, James E. Tully, member; James Dow, Chief of Police; Susan Psaledakis, Community Preservation Committee

**Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:**

- Town Administrator Severance Agreement

**Town Administrators Severance Agreement**

The Board considered the severance agreement, which was drafted by Town Labor Counsel and already signed by Ms. Hutton. There was some brief discussion about the agreement and the procedure for approving it. After determining to approve the signing of the document the Board did so.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to accept and act upon the severance agreement and release provided for former Town Administrator Tracey Hutton. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed unanimously.

**Interim Town Administrator**

The Board started off by discussion thoughts and a few approaches that could be taken. There are some Commonwealth provided resources as well as NMCOG. It was also noted that the Town of Groton has reached out to offer some help. There was then discussion of whether accepting Gorton's offer would be more or less an alternative to immediately pursuing the hiring of a part time Interim Town Administrator, preferably someone recently retired. Discussion also included where to seek guidance. There are entities like the Massachusetts Municipal Association that may be able to offer support. It was noted that the last time the Board spoke with the prior Interim Town Administrator, she was not interested in doing more than she did in the past. The Board then turned towards thoughts going forward. It appears that the position could be part time with greater responsibilities granted to some other staff. A part time position would help with the budget, and allow funds to be applied to other personnel that may accept responsibility. There was some apprehension to the idea of part time. Clearly the Town Administrator did a lot of work remotely, so that should be considered. It was noted that there are towns that have shared Town Administrators, and some of those towns are larger than Dunstable. Another option might be specifically seeking out a retired former Town Administrator looking for a permanent part time job. There was then discussion about the Board meeting weekly during the interim period to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks. The Board was concerned, especially with the end of fiscal year looming. In the meantime, discussions need to occur with Department Heads.

Some have already come forward to bring up possible issues, concerns, and other relevant items. One area of concern revolved around procurement. Most significantly being the possible purchase of a new firetruck should the ballot question pass on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The Board agreed that caution should be taken with such large purchases. It was agreed that such procurement should be kept on hold until after the start of the new fiscal year and the Special Election has passed. Discussion then shifted to DEP and the Administrative Consent Order as well as other Water Department issues. Currently the Board is communicating with the Town of Pepperell to ensure that the inter-municipal agreement between the towns for Water Department services is still moving forward. Other areas of concern during the transition include the Library and the Board of Health. Library as to some funds that need to be moved between accounts for the end of year. For Board of Health the ongoing efforts to close the Transfer Station and transition to public curbside. Discussion shifted back to the matter of DEP and Water Department. There should be further discussions with the towns contact with DEP. It was agreed that things should continue to move forward with Pepperell. The Board then asked Chief Dow about the RAVE notification system that Ms. Hutton had implemented. Chief Dow elaborated on the RAVE system, how it works, and how it complies with relevant MGL. The RAVE system is use friendly and has a

*Approved and adopted on 6/26/18*

great deal of functionality for the town. There was then some ensuing discussion of training on how to use the system.

It was agreed that the contact info for the company should be sent to Chief Dow and Chief Rich. There was some brief discussion about Next Door as a resource. It was agreed that this was not the best forum for public information posting as it is not as readily compliant with the requirements of MGL. Next Door is best as a community resource by the grassroots community for the grassroots community. Chief Dow then explained why the town chose RAVE over Blackboard or other similar entities. Most of them simply cost more than the town can afford. Additionally, RAVE is popular with the surrounding towns, most prominently the Town of Tyngsborough. The Board then turned its attention to the need for greater communication and cooperation with the Water Commissioners. This prompted Chief Dow to bring up the issue of a police detail that is needed for some engineering work that the Water Department is doing. He is trying to cover it within his budget, but asked the Board to determine if the Water Department or the engineering firm involved are otherwise responsible for paying details. Chief Dow agreed to speak with the Water Commission at their next meeting. The Board then turned to another related matter in the transition, stormwater management. The Town Engineer used to attend a series of meetings for stormwater which the Town Administrator took over attending. In the Administrator's absence he has agreed to start attending again. So far, the town is doing well on MS4 compliance according to the Town Engineer. The Board then turned to discussion about the Town Hall's server, use of the shared drive, and technological needs and security. The Board finished discussion by concluding the shared drive should be better utilized.

### **Complete Streets**

It was agreed that Roads Commission and the Water Commission should be brought together to ensure that any road projects, like the Rt. 113 Project, should be considered by both to ensure that Complete Streets is followed, no opportunities for funding are missed, and that the town bodies cooperate with each other.

### **Survey for 91 River Street**

The Board discussed the survey briefly, including how to handle the matter during the absence of a Town Administrator

### **General Procurement**

The Town Accountant has agreed to assist the Board with the procurement for the time being. She was previously the Chief Procurement Officer for the Town of Harvard during her tenure there as Accountant and Finance Director.

### **Ongoing NDA**

The Board is under the impression that things are halted on this front, but the Board would prefer to have closure. This includes fully understanding what happened, how it happened, and that this matter is fully closed. The Board is concerned about whether the NDA was ever properly signed or not. That may be water under the bridge at this point. It was the understanding of Town Counsel that the Water Commission had authorized the signing of the NDA as it related to Water Department controlled town property. The Board is still piecing together the total picture. The pretense was that the Water Commission was involved, so it must be confirmed with them as to what is happened. As a result the Board felt it necessary to have some discussions with the Water Commission directly.

### **Assessors Secretary**

The Assessors are moving forward with trying to fill their secretarial position since the current employee is retiring from the position at the end of June. A job posting will initially be placed in the proper trade publication for Assessors.

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## **New Town Website**

It was understood that the Town Administrator was looking into upgrading and improving the town's website. The matter was budgeted for in the FY19 budget. The Board would like to see more information on this topic including the cost, what has been budgeted, and how to improve the existing website to include more information.

## **Signing of Bills**

It was determined that the Chair should sign bills that would have otherwise been signed off on by the Town Administrator. This would fall under the Chair's designation in accordance with the Municipal Modernization Act, adopted by the Board on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, to sign off on warrants and bills.

## **Town Hall Building Maintenance**

There was some discussion about possible maintenance to the Town Hall itself. Including some cleaning of the brick and some repainting of parking lot lines. It was suggested that the town speak with the Sheriff's office about whether or not some of these services could be done through some of the programs that the Sheriff's office runs. Another source might include Greater Lowell Tech. It was suggested discussions be held with Patrick Murphy who used to be involved in the use of such programs in the past.

## **Next Meeting**

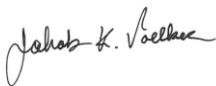
The Board's next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018. There was some discussion of whether another special meeting should be held during the day to deal with town business. It was agreed that such a meeting should be held. It was determined that a meeting would be held at 8:30 am on Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018. It was agreed that the Board would firm up its ideas on an Interim Town Administrator.

## **Minutes Going Forward**

Ms. Psaledakis suggested that the Board consider posting draft minutes to the town's website, which would then be replaced by approved minutes. It was noted that draft minutes may always be requested, but the crunch time for draft minutes being put into a formal edited form and then considered for approval, would be tight. The Board meets twice a month and attempts to approve minutes from prior meetings at the very next meeting whenever possible and regularly does so. Since the Board intends to meet more frequently in coming weeks, minutes will likely be approved even more rapidly. As a result felt it unnecessary to post draft minutes. This prompted discussion about use of social media by residents and how to ensure that correct information is provided. Ms. Psaledakis noted that sometimes there is a place for a statement of fact and it helps to have something official to point to. The Board elaborated on the difficulties of ensuring any social media use properly conforms to MGL and noted this is why the RAVE system and other similar systems are used by towns instead.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Mikol at 3:30 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Voelker, Admin. Assistant to the Selectboard & Town Administrator

*Approved and adopted on 6/26/18*