

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
June 19, 2018
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 8:30 am

Present: Leah D. Basbanes, chair, Ronald J. Mikol, vice chair, James E. Tully, member; James Dow, Chief of Police; Susan Psaledakis, Community Preservation Committee; David Tully, Highway Supervisor; Mike Martin, Roads Commission; Adam Bertrand, Dan Mattus, White Water

Discussion with White Water

Mr. Bertrand and Mr. Mattus started off by introducing themselves to the Board. Both gentlemen work for the town's licensed water operator, White Water, and have been providing management and operation services for the town's public water system. They informed the Board that they have encountered a problem with the KOH pump and the Main Street well. The pump is down and is not injecting the chemical due to a failed quill. This has been going on for several days, and after 5 days there is a potential for corrosion in the pipes. This needs to be fixed immediately. They expressed concern about doing this repair down in the well because of safety issues and they were not sure if the gate valve was functional. David Tully was asked to come in briefly and speak with them about the best way to address this issue. David Tully answered several questions and explained what he felt was the best approach to fix this. There was then a question of the size of the pipe in the area. David Tully stated it is a 12-inch pipe. Unfortunately, there are no shut offs near the problem pump. Mr. Mattus noted that they had wanted to test the system more, but the Town Administrator had kept holding out on testing out of concern for failure. Mr. Bertrand then outlined various issues discovered. One example being what would usually take a week to flush took twice as long. The Board noted that the town will be contracting with the Town of Pepperell for water system management. This prompted some discussion about the handling of some of the concerns about the system and how the system should be transitioned. The Board noted it doesn't want to be left out of the loop and expressed the consensus that there needs to be communication with all relevant parties. Mr. Mattus then elaborated on the plan to transition the system to Pepperell. This included scheduling a walk through to review the system and would include every problem area.

Mr. Mattus then volunteered to provide a list of the most pressing issues for the next few months with priorities indicated. For the record, it does not appear that Water Commission has discussed most of these system problems. Mr. Mattus noted that White Water had been reporting to the Town Administrator who reported to the Water Commission. It was noted that if the Commission knows about it, they haven't clearly discussed it directly. This does not necessarily mean that individual Commissioners are unaware. In the meantime, Mr. Bertrand turned back to the KOH and how to prevent the issue from arising again. There were then some questions about how to handle shut off and conduct a repair. This prompted discussion of what parts of the connections are owned by the town and what is the responsibility of the homeowner. The town always owns up to the curb-stop. David Tully explained that the rules have changed within his service to the town. Water Commission has rules and regulations that would need to be consulted. Mr. Mattus suggested that there be a backup plan for every issue the town is aware of. David Tully added to the discussion by noting a few problem areas that White Water may be unaware of. He also had some ideas for handling the KOH and how to address any need to shut down the system temporarily. David Tully demonstrated deep knowledge of the system from his many years as Water Supervisor. Mr. Mattus and Mr. Bertrand both had some concerns, but David Tully felt confident there are workable solutions.

It was then suggested the safest way is to isolate and shut off the system temporarily when and where an issue is to be fixed. David Tully asked how long the KOH has been off line. Mr. Mattus responded it's been off for close to a week. It was suggested that any work on the KOH be done as soon as possible. White Water said they would do it on off peak water usage hours and would notify Mr. Tully. It was determined this would be fixed at 7 pm that evening. There was then some discussion of an issue at 14 Hillcrest. It was suggested that the issue be addressed once Pepperell takes over on July 1st, 2018. The Board concluded that this shouldn't be the owner of 14 Hillcrest's problem to fix given the issue with the KOH. Mr. Tully agreed to explain the situation to the homeowner. The Board determined that they should meet with the White Water, Pepperell, and

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the Water Commission as soon as possible. David Tully reminded White Water that each one of the town's wells has a different pH which will have to be taken into consideration. The Board noted that one member would need to take the lead on this. Mr. Tully volunteered. There was then discussion about the signing of the inter-municipal agreement between Dunstable and Pepperell. It was agreed that the agreement should be signed in conjunction with Water Commission and officials from Pepperell.

Discussion then shifted to the Administrative Consent Order with DEP. DEP wants the town to get 20 sample sites for some testing; the normal minimum would be 10 sites. Mr. Mattus suggested that a list needs to be produced of residents willing to allow themselves to be sample points. The Board clarified as to the protocol involved. Mr. Mattus elaborated on how the DEP would approve the sites to be used. It was agreed that a series of necessary meetings would be setup. It was further agreed that White Water representative would attend any such meetings. It was also suggested that if possible someone from DEP should be present as well. DEP's biggest concern is ensuring the system operates properly and safely. Being up front with them about concerns and issues being worked on keeps them in the loop and they will, in White Water's experience, work with the community to address any concerns. This prompted some discussion of the work that DEP wants done as part of the Administrative Consent Order and any concerns of what other repairs will do. Mr. Bertrand noted that they were always willing to be available to report to the Board and Water Commission, but the Town Administrator had preferred to act as liaison between them and all town parties. The Board was concerned that this occurred as it appears to have limited what elected officials were aware of. There was some side discussion of the VFD that was replaced. Mr. Mattus elaborated that the Water Commission had the VFD replaced at Well No. 1 and what the basis was for doing so. The Board then went over what was reported to the Town Administrator and when. There was a feeling that information was not fully shared as it should have been with elected officials. Discussion on this topic ended there.

Discussion Regarding an Interim Town Administrator

The Board started off by discussing what it has done so far on the subject. MMA will be posting a notice for the town for an Interim. MMA isn't certain what the Board will get interest wise. An important skill for an Interim is triage. It was also felt that the job description needs to be fully prescribed. The Interim should help the Board figure out how to define the job properly. Finding a knowledgeable person is paramount. One of the issues MMA has noted is that retired Town Administrators are usually several years into retirement and can have trouble re-engaging. The Board noted that the former system was an Executive Secretary when Ms. Palumbo worked for the Board. This was changed in 2014 to Town Administrator by Annual Town Meeting on the recommendation of DOR. The next step up would be a Town Manager. The Board then discussed the Town of Groton's offer of administrative services, primarily being the assistance of Mr. Haddad for 10 to 15 hours a week. It was felt that it may make sense to hammer out an agreement with Groton. That said if Mr. Haddad is to help Dunstable, he'll need a specific charge from the Board. And any hours for Dunstable should be defined clearly. It was determined that further information should be gathered so that the Board can figure out how to deal with this situation in the long term.

In the meantime, there are funds in the salary line for paying a Town Administrator. Those can be utilized to pay for an Interim. But the Board will need to be careful to ensure that there are funds for any permanent hire made later in the fiscal year. The Board felt that the position may be filled part time rather than full time, but that call can't be made yet. There needs to be more data. It was agreed that an Interim could assist in understanding that. There was then discussion about the Special Town Meeting being considered for the fall. That was followed by the Board noting that a term of time should be set for the Interim. Six months to a year would make sense. This prompted discussion as to the process that should be used. Ms. Psaledakis suggested that the Board contact NMCOG. She noted they are impartial and in her experience give good advice. The Board agreed that NMCOG should likely be consulted. The Board then returned to the issue of the Interim, noting that they should be present both to help run the town in the immediate and to be a consultant on how to tailor the job and hire an appropriate permanent Town Administrator. It was also felt that the Interim needs to work with all the Boards to try and get better real time communication. It was then determined that Mr. Mikol would work on the numbers and continue to talk to MMA. Mr. Tully agreed to follow up with Groton and reach out to NMCOG. It was also agreed that a defined term for an Interim be determined for certain. Mr. Tully will also follow up on the water.

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Police Department Update

Chief Dow noted that Groton has hired long time Groton resident Michael Luth as its new Police Chief. Chief Dow will be meeting with Chief Luth soon to discuss all the ways the departments work together. The two hardest involve dispatch and lockup.

School Committee Subcommittee on Building

The School Committee has formed a subcommittee on the issue of building management and maintenance and is asking for a representative. It was determined that Mr. Mikol would fill that position.

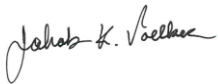
A motion was made by Mr. Tully to designate Mr. Mikol as the representative to the School Committee Subcommittee on Buildings. The motion was seconded by Ms. Basbanes and passed without objection.

Chairs & Sound System for Grand Hall

The Board would like to change out the chairs for the Grand Hall meeting space. Many of them are uncomfortable or broken. There was also some discussion about the sound system. The Board would like to improve the system and ensure people are able to hear when meetings are broadcast. The equipment needs to be looked at. The Board would like greater capability such as the ability to readily record and rebroadcast meetings. Discussion ended shortly thereafter.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Mikol at 10:18 am. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted by



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

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