

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
July 24, 2018
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 6:30 pm

Present: Leah D. Basbanes, chair, Ronald J. Mikol, vice chair, James E. Tully, member; Karl Huber, Water Commission; Bob Nelson, Advisory Board; Jeff Haight, Conservation Commission; Joan Simmons, Community Preservation Committee; Jon Crandall, Emergency Management Director; Paul Dalida, Mike Martin, Roads Commission; Joe Vlcek, Planning Board; James Regan

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Vendor & Payroll Warrants
- September State Primary Warrant
- Asbestos Removal at 91 River Street

Open Forum

Ms. Basbanes explained the purpose of the public forum and went over the Boards agenda which included an Update on Electrical Service to the Town Common's Bandstand, Discussion Regarding Interim Town Administrator, an Update from Water, Discussion of the Flag Pole at Larter Field, Scheduling of an Employee Appreciation BBQ, and Town Meeting Items Going Forward.

- Mr. Haight spoke briefly to the Board about some concerns about some trees hanging down and blocking the view at the intersection between High Street and Main Street. He is asking that the town to consider taking action. Two of the trees are on the Town Hall's property. The Board suggested that Mr. Haight speak to the Tree Warden. There was a question of whether the trees would be taken down or pruned. Mr. Haight clarified that he is seeking a pruning. The Board felt that Mr. Martin, the Tree Warden, would be the appropriate official to speak to.
- Mr. Haight then took a moment to register some dissatisfaction with the closing of the Transfer Station and the manner by which the Board of Health went about doing it. The Board noted that the decision fell under the authority of the Board of Health and discussion regarding whether or not to close the station was made after a great deal of discussion and consideration. Enrollment at the Transfer Station has been on a steady decline with the numbers sliding from over 400 participating households down to 240. The Board recognizes some citizens' concerns, but noted that the Board of Health was focused on the costs and what they felt would be the best option for the public. The Board asked that the public go into this program with an open mind.
- Mr. Nelson inquired as to whether the town is still pursuing a solar project expressing the belief that the town should not lose out on the opportunity. He conceded that the town had planned to do such a project on the Dumont Property, and wondered if this could be done on other town property. The Board explained that no discussion for use of any other parcels has been had. At this stage the Board is unaware of the feasibility of other properties but would be willing to consider pursuing the matter if a suitable location were to be found.

Update on Electrical Service to Town Common Bandstand

The Board started off by noting that power to the Bandstand on the Town Common was lost a little over a month ago. The Summer Concert Series has been making due with silent generators as the town has grappled with fixing the problem. National Grid initially determined that the issue was not one that fell under its responsibility to fix and the Parks Commission, at the request of the Board, assisted in helping determine the cost of fixing the problem. Due to concerns about whether the issue would be resolved by August, the Grange had determined to cancel the Grange Fair. The Board was dismayed by this event and resolved to address the issue in time for the Grange Fair to proceed as originally scheduled and the Grange expressed willingness to still go forward with the annual fair assuming power is restored to the Town Common. Thankfully, things are moving forward. The utility pole was replaced in April and it appears the underground line was damaged either as a result of or subsequent to. The repair is simple and an Electrical Permit has been pulled. There were some issues around what address the Town Common has, with it being determined that the address is 510 Main Street. A further issue is that the power was installed in 1983 and it appears that due to obsolete meter technology, the meter hasn't been read in a number of years. Further the meter didn't have a seal on it, and the town does not appear to have received a bill for it in at least four years. All of this has forced the town to apply

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for service as a new service. As of today, the applications for new service are done, repairs have been completed and the Electrical Inspector has looked at the work. This means that everything is waiting for National Grid to tie things back in. National Grid had wanted the town to consider paying some arrears on the meter, but the town noted that since it appears quite possible that National Grid broke the connection back in April in the first place, and with the town having made the repair even though it was possibly National Grids responsibility, that this should be foregone. It is expected that it will be treated as a new service by National Grid and power restored to the Town Common with it ensured that a modern meter is present, regularly read, and normal monthly bills sent to the town. The Board then stated that thanks should be extended to Mr. Voelker and the Fire Chief and the Parks Commission for helping the Board get to the bottom of this and related questions, as well as special thanks to Mr. Mikol for all of his personal effort.

Interim Town Administrator

The Board announced that the town has obtained the services of Mark Haddad, the Town Manager in Groton, on a part-time basis to assist the Board in the evaluation of the position of Town Administrator and the hiring of a replacement to fill the current vacancy. Mr. Haddad will work roughly one day in Dunstable during the work week, as well as some hours in the evenings and possibly on weekends meeting with various officials as well as boards, committees, and commissions. The main objectives aside from finding a permanent replacement would be to assist the Water Department in concluding the inter-municipal agreement with Pepperell for water operator services and helping the Board schedule and draft up a warrant for a possible Special Town Meeting to occur in the fall. The Board then went over some preliminary work that Mr. Haddad has already done for the town, principally an organization chart. The Board noted that there will definitely need to be some discussion of how the town has been organized. Mr. Haddad will start on July 18th, 2018. The Board then discussed some recommendations made by DOR as to the establishment of a Town Administrator position and an organization chart. There was then discussion of Mr. Haddad's hourly rate and a letter of engagement. Specifically, for the letter of engagement the Board wants to be clear about what is expected, how pay will be done, and that this is not an inter-municipal agreement or aid situation. The hourly rate is \$68 per hour. The plan would be to have a reassessment of the situation on September 30th, 2018. The Board then discussed how many hours to fund and the fact that the town needs to ensure that there is sufficient funds left over for paying a permanent replacement out of what is allocated. The idea would be to cap at 10 hours per week with that reassessment in September. There was a question of whether an official email was set up for Mr. Haddad. Mr. Voelker reported that one has been setup and Mr. Haddad has already used it. Mr. Nelson had a few questions regarding what Mr. Haddad would do. The Board elaborated on the work that Mr. Haddad would do and what he has already scheduled. It will be important for Department Heads and committee, commission, and board chairs to express their concerns and any issues they are experiencing to Mr. Haddad.

Appointments

Mr. Voelker reminded the Board that a member still needs to be designated as the Board's designee to the Master Plan Committee which is a subcommittee of the Planning Board. Although the Board's last chair served as the designee to Master Plan, because Ms. Basbanes already serves as the Conservation Commissions designee, it was suggested one of the other members of the Board should be designated to represent the Board. It was agreed that Mr. Mikol would represent the Board on Master Plan.

A motion was made by Mr. Tully to designate Ronald J. Mikol as the Board's designee to the Master Plan Committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Basbanes and passed by majority vote.

Water Update

Mr. Huber gave the Board an update on where things stand since the last meeting. On July 19th, there was a two-hour meeting between DEP, Pepperell, the Water Commission, and White Water. They went through every single aspect of what is going on, what is needed now and what will be needed going forward. All stakeholders were present. DEP has proven willing to be supportive and willing to work with the town to achieve results. The most pressing urgent matter is getting the inter-municipal agreement in place. The agreement should be signed by the Boards of Selectmen in both towns. Mr. Huber then presented a draft version of the agreement to the Board with some thoughts on modifications. Edits will be sent over by Pepperell. Mr. Huber recommended considering Pepperell's edits and then adding Dunstable's in and then

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sending to counsel for review and final sign off. The month of July that was to be a transitional month from White Water to Pepperell is going by fast. So it is important to get this settled and signed. Mr. Huber then turned discussion of some of the fixes that need to be done to the system to stabilize it while the town continues to work towards the Water Infrastructure Project. Further fixes will be wrapped into that project. The goal is to maintain the system and reassure Pepperell as the water operator and DEP as the regulatory body. Mr. Huber then spoke about some issues that the town has had with compliance with reporting to DEP and what the Water Department is doing to address them. He also spoke about the test sites that DEP is requiring; noting that the Water Department has identified more sites than was required.

Mr. Huber then briefly updated on efforts to restore clerical support to the Water Department as well as the funding mechanisms being explored for the Water Infrastructure Project. Pepperell favors SRF funding for the project, but Wright Pierce has suggested USDA funding for a number of reasons. Mr. Huber then had some questions about the proposed Special Town Meeting for the fall, noting that Wright Pierce thinks that they could have the numbers by September. Further, DEP has made the commitment to provide public support to voters in favor of the project. The Board had some questions about moving forward and how things will look with Pepperell's help. Mr. Huber outlined how things would work and how the Water Departments budget can be utilized to help cover some fixes and repairs. Meanwhile Wright Pierce is still going forward on the Water Infrastructure Project. There was some discussion of a capital improvement plan and how that would work into things. Most of these things have been in the big picture and have needed to be done anyway. So what can be done within the infrastructure project should be done, and what can't feasibly be done through that vehicle should be done as separate smaller projects. In the meantime, Wright Pierce has consulted with the Highway Department about various needs and requirements for any work that has to do with streets. There was a question regarding Complete Streets. Mr. Huber noted that from what he has been able to determine it wouldn't apply here. DEP seems to agree since this is only the replacement of existing pipe. The Board noted that Roads Commission was going to dig into the matter further.

Mr. Huber suggested that a joint meeting could be scheduled between Water Commission and Roads Commission to discuss the matter. Discussion shifted back to whether the project will be ready for a fall Special Town Meeting. Mr. Huber expressed some confidence that the numbers would be ready, and noted that waiting until spring for the Annual Town Meeting might be waiting too long. If the numbers can be ready in time from the engineers, then it should be on the Special if there is a Special. Mr. Huber then inquired about what questions he can bring to Mr. Haddad. He would like to get some insight as to what Groton has done that could be illuminating. The Board saw no reason for Mr. Huber not to consult with him and suggested he should certainly do so. The Board then discussed some the constraints for a Special Town Meeting in the fall in light of the logistics of any ballot related matters and the State and Federal Elections already scheduled for November. The Town Clerk wants any ballot related votes like debt exclusions and the like to be scheduled for the same day as the election wherever possible so as to save time and costs. The Board suggested that Water discuss this with Advisory Board and game out some solutions if the preferred financing vehicle for the project fails. There was then a question of the costs for the transitional period and the Board's concern about containing them. The Board stated that the goal is just to ensure the funds are there for what needs to be done. Mr. Huber noted that all of this further supports the need for clerical assistance for Water and putting in place the inter-municipal agreement. Discussion finished with nailing down the logistics of getting the inter-municipal agreement signed and the funding vehicles for the infrastructure project. There shouldn't be anything drastic to change from the draft to the final document. The Board noted that a meeting will need to be setup for the Board to sign the document. The proposal was a morning meeting at 8:30 am for July 31st, 2018.

Flag Pole at Larter Field

There is a flag pole at Larter Field which the Board understands to have been dedicated to the Barrow Family after their young son was struck and killed by a motor vehicle a number of years ago. The flag has always had solar lights at the base and when necessary has been replaced with the assistance of retired Fire Chief Charlie Rich. Recently the Parks Commission appears to have determined not to replace the flag on the pole for the time being and the pole has remained empty for a period. Subsequently, Mr. Tully, acting as a private citizen purchased a flag and installed it along with new solar lighting. The Parks Commission has expressed some concern about this action in light of its formal determination. The Board had some concerns about the appropriateness of these efforts noting that it can be very hard to distinguish between private citizen and elected official in this kind of situation. That said the flag is part of a memorial that was put together as part of

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the efforts of the Fire Department. There was a question as to why Parks determined to discontinue the flag on the pole. This was unclear to the Board aside from some feeling that Parks might have had some concerns about manning the pole for things like raising or lowering the flag when appropriate. The Board noted that the flag is part of a memorial and to the Board's knowledge the family still lives in town. This problem is similar to one the Library had. The Board felt that flags are inexpensive, the solar lights are similar, and this issue can likely be resolved. The Board is not looking to step on Park's Commissions toes, but feels that this can be resolved readily. A memorial should be maintained if it is indeed a memorial. It was suggested that the town's firefighter association could take over care of the matter assuming Parks in congenial. Mr. Crandall noted that the sports field is right next to it and having a flag for sporting events seems appropriate to him.

Employee Appreciation BBQ

Mr. Voelker asked the Board to consider closing the Town Hall for part of the day on Wednesday, August 8th, 2018 to allow town employees to participate in an Employee Appreciation BBQ. While the event was held last year at the Town Hall, the Town Accountant has offered to host this year. Both in Mr. Voelker and in the Town Accountants opinion, employees could use the moral boost of such an event considering recent events in the last few weeks. The idea would be to allow employees to participate without foregoing pay in some form such as allowing employees to make up any missed time on another work day. Mr. Voelker suggested that the event could be scheduled for the afternoon, noting that most part-time employees work hours' end around 2 pm on Wednesdays. The Board was not opposed to the idea and was generally in favor. The Board felt that this would be a good team building opportunity and encouraged Mr. Voelker to pursue the matter as proposed agreeing that a closing time of 2 pm would be acceptable.

September Primary Warrant

The Board received a warrant from the Town Clerk. This warrant covers the Primaries for State and Federal Offices. The Board saw no reason not to sign the warrant and proceeded to do so.

Town Meeting Items – Going Forward

The Board started off by noting that it has previously determined a few priorities for a possible Special Town Meeting to be scheduled in the fall. These included two unpaid bills from prior fiscal years, requests from Roads for funding for wage increases and for paving, reconsideration and submission of a by-law for Memorials & Monuments, adoption of an adult entertainment related by-law, and liquor licensing. The Board also expressed some concerns from its last meeting about whether the budget will need to be re-opened. The only matter to add at this point would appear to be any requests from the Water Department in light of Mr. Huber's update earlier in the meeting.

91 River Street Asbestos

Article 11 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant authorized the Board to spend some funds on the removal and disposal of asbestos materials from 91 River Street. The Board has received some quotes and would like to proceed. The Board considered several different quotes and the scope of work on each. Visual inspection before and after, along with cleanup and disposal is included in both proposals. It was noted that due to the amount allocated and the cost quoted, the town won't be required to go out to bid. It was further noted that the work will have to conform to DEP requirements.

A motion to award to the lowest bid and sign the proposal was made by Mr. Tully and seconded by Mr. Mikol. The motion passed without objection.

Logging Activity Off Pleasant Street

The Board noted that there has been some logging activity in proximity to the Simmons Property donated for the proposed Public Safety Building and the MUD. The Board is unaware of any logging and expressed some concern. There are costs associated with logging, both in the actual logging and any sale of the proceeds thereof. It was suggested that perhaps Town Counsel should be consulted. Mr. Nelson recommended asking

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Mr. Simmons directly. There was then some brief discussion of the equipment being used and the effect on other residents in the area.

Minutes

The Board considered its minutes from its meetings held on July 9th and July 10th, 2018. Seeing no reason not to approve the minutes the Board determined to do so.

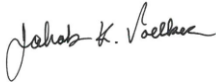
A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to approve the minutes of July 9th and July 10th, 2018 as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

Warrants & Mail

Ms. Basbanes reported on the warrants she has signed. This included highlighting the sums spent, including some of the larger payments made to vendors as well as brief discussion of the payroll. The Board then reviewed its mail.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Mikol at 8:08 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jakob K. Voelker".

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