

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
October 30, 2018
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 6:30 pm

Present: Leah D. Basbanes, chair, Ronald J. Mikol, vice chair, James E. Tully, member; Mark Haddad, Interim Town Administrator; James W. Dow, Chief of Police; Paul Dalida, Roads Commission

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Vendor & Payroll Warrants

Open Forum

Ms. Basbanes explained the purpose of the public forum and went over the Boards agenda which included a Joint Meeting with Personnel Board, Discussion of Grant Funding for the Beta Study, An Update on the Pepperell Landfill Proposal, and Approval of the Water Operator Request For Proposals.

- Mr. Dalida reported on a dialogue with engineers at BSC Group that have done presentations on MassWorks who may be willing to assist the town with the program. They also brought up a few other programs that might help the town. This included programs like a small bridge program that helps fund bridge repairs for spans that are less than 20 feet. Mr. Dalida would like the town to consider getting some funding together to help pursue grant opportunities like these. Mr. Dalida would like to see a few projects that could help rebuild parts of various streets in town. He felt it would be money well spent to hire assistance that could help with this. The town is less than 7,000 people, which opens a number of programs. A particular use for these kinds of opportunities would be the culverts that need to be rebuilt. He intends to go to Advisory Board to discuss the matter further. There would be upfront costs, but the grant opportunities would be worth it. Mr. Dalida expected the upfront cost to be around \$20,000. There are no guarantees, but the potential could be hundreds of thousands or more. Mr. Haddad recommended getting quotes so that the matter can proceed and be formally put on the agenda. He noted that MassWorks has paid out for Groton and is worth pursuing.
- Chief Dow reported on a candidate he has to fill his recent vacancy among his part time officers. He asks to be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

Joint Meeting with Personnel Board

The Board directed at its last meeting that a joint meeting be scheduled with the Personnel Board to discuss modifying the position of Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen & Town Administrator into the position of Assistant Town Administrator with an updated job description that would encompass expanded duties and responsibilities. Unfortunately, after initially agreeing to the joint meeting, the Personnel Board was unable to attend the meeting due to various scheduling conflicts of the individual members. Mr. Haddad noted that the new Town Administrator is envisioned as part time. As a result, it makes sense to change the position of Mr. Voelker. He proposes that the position be created, the new job description be adopted, and that the pay be increased. The wages are based on a survey of similar positions among the same towns used by the Personnel Board for wage comparisons. Mr. Haddad then went over how this would be paid for from the budget. Because the new Town Administrator would be part time, the wages for that position would be lower than the existing line item in the budget, and part of the wage savings from hiring the new Town Administrator at a lower rate would be used to pay for the wage increase for the new position. Mr. Haddad then went over how the matter would be handled within the current budget and the maneuvers that would need to be done at the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad then noted the work that Mr. Voelker has done since Ms. Hutton's departure and reported on the passion and dedication he has seen him put into the job. The Board was generally in support but had some concerns about the budget and the sustainability of wages. The Board would like to see the Advisory Board consulted over the funding. Advisory Board should be on board for any changes to wages. Meanwhile, the Personnel Board will need to have a meeting to discuss this as well. Mr. Haddad suggested that this be on the next evening meeting of the Board. There was then discussion of whether the

Approved and adopted on 11/14/18

meeting should be scheduled for November 13th or 14th. The Board is already scheduled for a joint meeting with Advisory Board on November 14th. It was decided to start the meeting at 6 pm on November 14th, 2018 and then go into the joint at 7 pm.

Beta Study Funding Grant Situation

Mr. Haddad reported to the Board on a situation that appeared to have emerged regarding the grant funding that had been obtained for the Beta Study that was commissioned by the Roads Commissioners. It was originally understood that Ms. Hutton had procured a grant from the town's insurer, MIIA, in the sum of \$5,000. This sum was intended to help cover the cost of the study which was \$13,000 in total. Upon initial research it appeared that this particular grant was a reimbursable grant meaning that the town would first pay for the work and then seek reimbursement by a particular deadline. That deadline was May 15th, 2018. Ms. Hutton was aware of this deadline, but did not communicate it to the Roads Commissioners. As a result, when the bill was tendered by Beta, it was past that submission date. Upon first blush it looked like the town had lost the grant funding and that after Highway had paid \$8,000 of the bill, there would be \$5,000 left over. Further, Roads had been led to believe they would only be responsible for \$3,000 and reimbursed for any difference by the Advisory Board. Thankfully, due to the work of Mr. Voelker and Ms. Atwood, the clerical support for Highway Department, it now appears that the town did not lose the grant. Mr. Dalida then reported further. He stated that Ms. Atwood was able to determine from Beta that they were paid the \$5,000 grant by MIIA and it was a billing error that resulted in the later invoice showing a remaining outstanding balance of \$13,000. This means that the bill is settled with Beta, but that Highway still needs to talk to Advisory Board about whether they will still be reimbursed for a portion of that \$8,000. They had been led to believe by Ms. Hutton that they would be. The Board was pleased to hear that the matter was settled, but asked Mr. Voelker to follow up with Ms. Atwood and the Town Accountant to ensure that the grant funding was in fact received and that Advisory Board is made aware of the matter.

Pepperell Industrial Landfill Proposal Update

Mr. Voelker reported on discussions he had with his counterpart in Pepperell. So far Pepperell reports that the matter still remains in front of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). DEP has not yet made any formal decisions relating to the project at this time. The Pepperell Board of Health and Zoning Board of Appeals are both continuing to work on the topic. The last update by the property owners to the public was held on August 20th, 2018. Nothing new has emerged from them to date. In the meantime, Pepperell's Board of Selectmen has hired a Special Town Counsel for the subject and he is assisting them in responding to public inquiries as well as to the owners of the property in question. Pepperell also reports that the latest information may always be found on the town's official website or by attending Pepperell Board of Selectmen meetings. It appears that zoning may not allow for the proposed use. So it appears that Pepperell is simply being very careful. Mr. Dalida responded that if the project does go forward the town should adopt a by-law that would aid in traffic control and safety measures. Such a by-law would empower the use of traffic calming tools such as stop signs and similar controls. It would not allow the town to place these kinds of controls everywhere, but it certainly would help with main arteries like Rt. 113.

Mr. Haddad asked if this by-law could wait until the Annual Town Meeting in May since no Special Town Meetings have been planned. Mr. Dalida responded that the matter is far from settled and there is still time. He then spoke about speed limits and how they are set in Massachusetts. Speed limit changes require a traffic study by MassDOT. Mr. Haddad noted that placing stop signs may require a public hearing by the Roads Commission so that should be factored in. There was then some discussion of how the logistics would work. Chief Dow elaborated on how enforcement would occur and how police would handle it. It was noted that it really shouldn't take much to encourage traffic to flow differently. Mr. Dalida noted that if the flow of traffic goes by highway, given the increased speeds and efficiency, it would only cost a few minutes of travel time, so increased safety for town roads is an achievable goal. If this project is approved, it would take 7 to 9 years and about 25,000 trucks loads a year. This could do a lot of damage to town roads. And travel would likely be at night. Mr. Haddad agreed to help determine what the appropriate course of action is in conjunction with Roads Commission to determine if a by-law is necessary or other action is preferable. Pepperell is clearly willing to fight this, so this isn't going to happen right away. But the town must be proactive in addressing public safety and traffic efficiency.

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Approval of Water Operator Requests For Proposals

Mr. Haddad reported that the Water Operator RFP is ready. Town Counsel has already reviewed and made suggested edits that have been taken into account. The Water Commission approved the RFP at their last meeting held on Monday, October 29th, 2018 and it is ready for advertisement. Assuming the Board is comfortable with it Mr. Haddad stated it is ready to go. The Board then had some questions pertaining to how the process would work. Mr. Haddad outlined the differences for a Request For Bids and a Request For Proposals explaining the differences in each and how the winning bid or proposal is selected. When a general bid is done, you used sealed bids and the town must use the lowest bidder. When you use a proposal, you still use sealed proposals, but the structure is different. It is two-step with a technical proposal and a price proposal. You take the technical proposals first and review for compliance with criteria for the RFP and rank them. Then you start with the highest ranking and open the price proposal. There is no requirement in the RFP process to take the lowest priced proposal; simply the one that meets the criteria best. Mr. Haddad then asked the Board to officially approve the RFP. The Board then asked some questions about where to post the RFP. Mr. Haddad noted it will go out in some papers in the area along with the required posting locations by the Commonwealth.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to accept the RFP as written and to proceed with the process. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

Transparency

The Board took a moment to note that many attempts are being made to increase transparency in town processes. This means more communication with the various boards, commissions, and committees. This principally is why the Board has sought out joint meetings and why members of the Board have individually attended meetings of other town bodies and why the Board is pleased to see many members of other boards, commissions, and committees responding by attending the meetings of the Board and of others. Unfortunately, it is true that on occasion people's communications are not always clear or fully articulated but this is not ordinarily an intentional problem and when it crops up it should not undermine the overall goal.

Use of Town Property Request

The Board considered an application from the Dunstable Congregational Church for use of the Town Common on Saturday, December 1st, 2018 for a theatrical presentation. The Board noted that this is an annual event, and seeing no reason not to approve it determined to do so.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to approve the application by the Dunstable Congregational Church to be held on December 1st, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

Minutes

The Board considered its minutes from its meetings held on October 16th and October 23rd, 2018. The October 16th minutes take the form of a joint meeting as well as the Board's ordinary meeting held subsequent. Seeing no reason not to approve the minutes the Board determined to do so.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to approve both sets of minutes for October 16th as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to approve the minutes of October 23rd as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

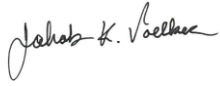
Warrants & Mail

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.

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A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Tully at 7:15 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mikol and passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted by

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

Jakob K. Voelker, Assistant Town Administrator