

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
November 27, 2018
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 6:30 pm

Present: Leah D. Basbanes, chair, Ronald J. Mikol, vice chair, James E. Tully, member; James W. Dow, Chief of Police; Vicki Tidman, Assistant Assessor; Robert Ricardelli, Board of Assessors; Harold Simmons, Advisory Board

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 Tax Classification Hearing, Next Steps for Town Administrator Search, an update on the FY20 Budget & Process, Latest Update on Restoration of Town Hall Façade & Roof.

Tax Classification Hearing

Ms. Tidman started off by explaining how the tax breakdown works. 97 percent of the town's base is residential with 3 percent being commercial. The town has the option to split the rate or to leave it at one rate. Ms. Tidman advised the Board that the rate should be left at one. Mr. Ricardelli agreed noting that the town doesn't have enough commercial or industrial to justify a split rate. He said that there was a time when communities really used to hit commercial rates, but that was back in the 1970's. The rate would be set after everything is processed with DOR, but the likely rate after a factor of 1 is adopted would be \$17.54 per thousand. The Board asked how the process works. Ms. Tidman elaborated on how it works, including new growth projections, and the role that DOR plays. The Board then asked what determines the rate. Ms. Tidman went into some detail explaining how the tax rate responds to the town's budget and new growth. There is a levy ceiling that has to be considered as part of the formula, so rates are adjusted in light of it. The Board asked what the primary factor that drives rates is. Mr. Ricardelli explained that the budget is part of that, but the market is ultimately what changes things. These include things like house values and the impact of new growth. He noted that the Commonwealth is ultimately the decider as to how house values are determined. There was then some discussion of excess levy left on the table after the setting of the tax rate. Ms. Tidman reported the town hasn't been able to leave much in recent years. Having no other questions, the Board determined to proceed with adoption of a factor of 1.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to establish a residential factor of 1. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed unanimously.

Next Steps for Town Administrator Search

The Board reported that they have gone through one round of finalist interviews. After that the Board decided to bring back the candidates for additional interviews. Mr. Voelker reported that both finalist candidates have confirmed that they will be in attendance for a second finalist round of interviews planned for November 28th, 2018. Chief Dow reported he has been reaching out to fellow Department Heads to urge them to attend.

Update on FY20 Budget & Process

Mr. Voelker reported that Mr. Haddad has been working closely with Department Heads to get the expedited budget completed by December 14th, 2018. There have been a lot of questions as departments adjust to the new style that Mr. Haddad has adopted for budgeting, which is based on the system used by Groton. So far the process is moving forward. The Town Accountant has already made some recommendations regarding some

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general accounts that should be level funded as well as others that should likely be changed and Mr. Voelker reported that he will be meeting with Mr. Haddad soon to discuss accounts relating to the Town Hall.

Latest on Restoration of Town Hall Façade & Roof

At the prior request of the Board the Community Preservation Committee has been working on this topic. The quotes they have received to date are \$19,900 for work to the façade itself, and \$6,500 for work to the slate roof. The façade work would include repairs to the trim and paneling. Because the Town Hall is designated as a historical building, the Community Preservation Committee can use CPA funding designated for historical preservation to fund the work. Some members of the Community Preservation Committee feel the number is high for the façade, so more quotes will be sought; not only for cost, but also for compliance with MGL Chap. 30B. As for the slate roof, since that cost is under \$10,000 it may be worth simply pursuing that matter. The Board had some reservations as to the costs, considering the repairs. A boom lift is likely required for the work. The wood work on the façade really should be replaced. There was a question about setting up a scope of work. The slate quote is low, and the Board wondered if some repairs are being considered as part of that. One area of particular concern with the roof is the overhang off the rear of the building. That has lost a lot of slate in recent years. There was also a question about power washing. The Board felt that there may be ways to reduce costs as well. It was also suggested that the town may want to pursue having someone with a drone look over the roof to see if there are any further trouble spots. From there it was determined that the matter should be pursued further with the Community Preservation Committee and further quotes be obtained.

Police Cruisers

The Board asked Chief Dow about the status of the towns cruisers. Chief Dow elaborated on the status of the current fleet and reported on some former vehicles that have since been disposed of.

Town Building Lawn Care

Mr. Voelker reported that the town has been approached by Mr. Cover, who formerly used to mow for the town. Mr. Cover feels that he can provide a cheaper and better service to the town than the town's current provider. He has also expressed the feeling that the bidding process that was instituted by the towns former Town Administrator two years ago, which he declined to participate in, was unfair. Mr. Voelker then elaborated on why the towns choose to go through that process in the first place. With Mr. Cover there was no contract and the town was billed each time he mowed. Mr. Covers bills were unpredictable as there was no set work. It was decided that if the town went out looking for a contract for multiple properties, at a set yearly amount which would be paid out in monthly increments, this would be cheaper for the town. The company that the town ultimately contracted with was Greenscapes, which already provided services to the Parks Commission and Recreation Commission for Larter Field and the Town Common. Further, Greenscapes was able to provide the town with services that Mr. Cover could not relating to the proper winterizing and care of sprinkler systems like the Town Halls. That said Mr. Voelker noted that the contract signed with Greenscapes covered the 2017 and 2018 seasons. Further the Board of Health needs to have some maintenance mowing done to the closed Transfer Station for monitoring wells covering the capped landfill. As such, he recommended that the town start the bid process again in the spring, with the work for Board of Health included, open to all interested parties. This would allow both Greenscapes and Mr. Cover an opportunity to bid again. The town could also add any other properties that should be covered by the contract as well. The Board agreed suggesting bidding be done sooner than the spring, and noted that Board of Health should give some thought to the status of the closed Transfer Station including how to prevent it from developing into an eyesore. The Board would like to see the property used for some other purpose and suggested it could be returned back to a natural state with pavement, fencing, and structures removed. Mr. Voelker agreed to follow up with the Board of Health.

Appointments

The Board started off by noting a number of appointments. The first two concerning the Zoning Board of Appeals which has asked for a Bruce Ebersman to be appointed as a full member, and a Dana Kinne to be appointed as an associate member. The third appointment request comes from Chief Dow who has asked the

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Board to appoint a Joseph Gennaro as a new Part Time Police Officer. This appointment would fill an existing position vacated by the departure of Officer Matthew Sech. The Board wished Mr. Sech well in his career and thanked him for his service. Seeing no reason not to make the requested appointments the Board determined to proceed.

Joseph Gennaro is appointed as a Police Reserve Officer Expires June 30th, 2019
Motion by Mr. Mikol, seconded by Mr. Tully, passed unanimously.

Bruce Ebersman is appointed as a full member of the Zoning Board of Appeals Expires June 30th, 2021
Motion by Mr. Mikol, seconded by Mr. Tully, passed unanimously.

Dana Kinne is appointed as an associate member of the Zoning Board Appeals Expires June 30th, 2021
Motion by Mr. Mikol, seconded by Mr. Tully, passed unanimously

Minutes

The Board considered its minutes from its meeting held on November 14th, 2018. Seeing no reason not to approve the minutes, the Board determined to do so.

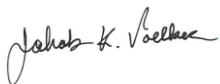
A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to approve the minutes of November 14th, 2018 as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

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. Tully at 7:00 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mikol and passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Voelker, Assistant Town Administrator