

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 4, 2018**  
**Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

**Convened:** 8:00 am

**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; Brian Rich, Fire Chief; Bob Nelson, Harold Simmons, Advisory Board; Mike Martin, Roads Commission

**Town Governance Committee**

Mr. Haddad started off by reminding the Board that it had previously approved the charge for this committee. He then reported that so far two Department Heads have agreed to be on the committee, those being the Chief of Police and the Town Accountant. Notices have been put out in the *Neighbor to Neighbor* and the *Groton Herald* for 3 at large members from the community. Unfortunately, no one has come forward to date and Mr. Haddad asked the Board if it could put forward any names for citizens who might be willing to serve. He then noted that in place of a Library Trustee it was previously determined that the Library Director would be asked to serve. It was also decided that Mr. McLane would be the Board's representative, and that Mr. Nelson would be Advisory Board's. The Board asked Mr. Martin if he would be willing to serve. He responded positively. Mr. Nelson asked if there have to be residents that aren't serving on any other committee, noting that there may be other members of the Advisory Board willing to serve. The Board inquired whether the new Town Administrator will be on the committee. Mr. Haddad responded that they would not be a member of the committee, but rather there to provide guidance and support. The Board asked if Mr. Haddad would be willing to serve, noting that since it is an appointed position, he would not have to be a resident to sit on the committee. Mr. Haddad suggested that he could serve in a voluntary capacity as a private citizen since he wouldn't be paid. At the very least he would see to organizing the first meetings.

A motion was made by Mr. Tully to formally appoint Lorraine Leonard, James W. Dow, Mary Beth Pallis, Ryan McLane, Bob Nelson, Mike Martin, and Leah Basbanes to serve on a Town Governance Committee for terms to expire June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mikol and passed by majority vote.

**Transition Plan from Interim to New Town Administrator**

Mr. Haddad then spoke about the transition plan. So far, he has contracted with Chief Warren Rider to start the background investigation. He has already started the process and is underway. Mr. Haddad has also drafted a contract for the new Town Administrator and requests the Board's comments on it. He wants to move quickly once the background investigation is completed. He's set the contract up to be at a salary of \$30,000 for the first six months than on renewal starting in July the salary for the whole fiscal year which would be \$60,000. The contract is also clear that it would be subject, for the renewal part, to Annual Town Meeting approval. So, the contract period would be six months with a renewal of three years if approved by town meeting. The Board noted some minor changes that they would like to see done and agreed to transmit exact changes to Mr. Haddad. The Board asked about engaging Labor Counsel's review. Mr. Haddad stated that once the draft is approved and agreed to, he would send it to Labor Counsel for review as to legal form. Mr. Haddad then went over various points noting the clarity and why he attempted to ensure it to avoid the problems of the past. From there he then turned to the transition. Budgets are due by December 7<sup>th</sup>. He intends to put the budget together in final form and present to the Advisory Board the week subsequent. A copy will then be left with Mr. Voelker for the new Town Administrator. This will provide the town with a starting point for FY20. This would have the draft budget completed far earlier than in the past, and will help the school district in its budgeting a great deal. Departments have been diligent in getting the necessary information together and Mr. Haddad thanked all of them. The Board then inquired as to the newness of the format. Mr. Haddad stated that Departments appear to be adjusting. Mr. Haddad then noted he's added 2 percent for wages across all

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departments. The Board asked about sustainability. Chief Dow interjected to say that past raises have been to get wages where they are supposed to be, so this would simply keep wages up.

Mr. Haddad assured the Board that he is trying to provide a balanced budget, but it will be Advisory Board's decision on where any cut backs need to be. In the meantime, Mr. Haddad has already gotten the most up to date numbers from Mr. Knight, GDRSD's Finance Director. The school district has provided excellent numbers in past years and their track record is good on projections on this front. Mr. Haddad then noted that Mr. Voelker is on top of most things in the office. So, for Mr. Palaia's first day, he expects to sit down and talk with him and go over what is outstanding. Mr. Haddad then reported on where things stand with the Water Operator RFP, the Housing RFP, and the water rate issue. The water rate issue is in process and the Board was concerned about it given the Town Accountants projections of budget shortfall for the Water Enterprise Fund. Water Commission must hold a rate hearing and address the issue. New rates won't save the system entirely, and the town may have to use Free Cash at the Annual Town Meeting to help out. But the rates must be adjusted now. The Board then turned to the Water Infrastructure Project and where things stand with the engineering. Mr. Haddad reported that the work is due from the engineers, Wright Pierce, by this month. He hasn't received anything yet, but did report that the design plans have to be sent to DEP for approval, and that could be where things stand right now as Wright Pierce would send them directly to DEP. Mr. Haddad then turned to some other issues, like a public safety building, a possible Solar RFP, the valuation of some property, and Highways needs for paving and road infrastructure. Mr. Haddad then finished with a review of where things otherwise and stated that in his opinion the transition should go smoothly.

### **Rt. 113 Project & Affordable Housing**

Mr. Nelson asked some questions as to where things stand. Mr. Martin responded that the project is moving forward as it has been submitted to MassDOT and likely won't see funding either 2020 or 2021. He reported on the process once MassDOT has approved. Mr. Martin noted that this has been going rather quickly considering the Commonwealth's track record. Mr. Nelson then asked some questions about where things stand with the project and whether it should be talked about at the next Annual Town Meeting. Applications for any grants to fund necessary work for the building of the roadway for the development, if the town is to build it or just for the work to be done to Pleasant Street, need to be put in as soon as possible. This prompted discussion whether a Special Town Meeting should be called. The Board noted there was discussion of a meeting in October, at this point the Annual Town Meeting isn't that far off and there are still things outstanding. Water Commission isn't ready yet. Mr. Haddad suggested if the plans are perhaps already under review with DEP, it may be possible to schedule a Special Town Meeting for February. But if Water isn't ready, it may not be wise. So, he advised the Board to wait to see. There was then discussion of how to work Highway's needs fit into this. If a Special Town Meeting is called that could be dealt with as well if Roads Commission is ready to go. Mr. Martin was not certain that they would be at this early a stage.

There was then discussion of where the Reserve Fund stands and whether it could pay for some of the necessary engineering and other work to get grant applications going for the work relating to Pleasant Street for Affordable Housing. The Board asked a few specific questions including CPA funds, and whether those could be used. Mr. Haddad responded that as with most solutions, you would need town meeting. Mr. Haddad then made a few observations on the budget and where the funds might be able to be located. Mr. Nelson noted the total funding would likely be \$20,000, with only the initial \$10,000 needed to get the application going. If the money is used from an existing budget, then that line would need reimbursement at town meeting. The town really doesn't have a lot of budgets with \$20,000 or more. Mr. Nelson suggested that if the engineering is done by this month a Special Town Meeting in February looks better. Especially with the ancillary topics. The Board determined it would contact Mr. Cray at Wright Pierce to see where the engineering stands. Discussion ended with Mr. Haddad stating it has been a pleasure to work for Dunstable and with all of the employees of the town. The Board thanked Mr. Haddad for his work the past few months and for his assistance on numerous fronts to achieve goals and objectives.

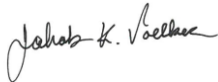
## **Executive Session**

James E. Tully made a motion to enter Executive Session for the purposes of conducting strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A §21(a)2, and with the intention not to return to ordinary session afterwards. The motion was seconded by Ronald J. Mikol. The motion was adopted by majority vote by Leah D. Basbanes, Ronald J. Mikol, and James E. Tully.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:32 am

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Tully at 9:05 am. 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

*Approved and adopted on 12/18/18*