

Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2018
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 6:33 pm

Present: Leah D. Basbanes, chair, Ronald J. Mikol, vice chair, James E. Tully, member; James W. Dow, Chief of Police; Brian Rich, Fire Chief; 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 Vote to Authorize a Use of 511 Main Street, an Update on the Request from the Town Clerk for Temporary Help, a Final Vote on the Police Chief's Contract, the Latest on the Transition Plan from Interim to New Town Administrator, an Update on the FY20 Budget & Process, and an Executive Session.

Vote to Authorize a Use of 511 Main Street for a Water System Contingency Plan Required by DEP

Mr. Voelker started off by updating the Board on the Water Commissions latest meeting. DEP is requiring an updated Water System Contingency Plan be submitted to them by December 13th. As part of that plan, the Water Commission had to determine an appropriate location for equipment from Dalton Water to tie into the system should the worst happen and the hydropneumatic tanks fail. There were three sites that were determined suitable by Dalton Water and Dunstable's water operator SWSS. Of the three sites, the one deemed best by SWSS was the Town Hall. There is a hydrant right in front of the Town Hall building, and it was felt that water tankers could park right in front of the building and tie in there. The Water Commission agreed with SWSS that this would be the best place for this and have approved on their end. Since this involves the use of a town building under the Board's authority, it was deemed prudent that the Board officially approve this use. The Board noted that this plan would only come into motion in the circumstance of an emergency failure. Given that fact the Board saw no reason not to approve.

A motion was made by Mr. Tully to approve the designation of the Town Hall, located at 511 Main Street, for the purposes outlined in the Water System Contingency Plan required by DEP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mikol and passed without objection.

Update on Request from Town Clerk for Temporary Help

Mr. Voelker reported that the Town Clerk has requested temporary support, approximately 40 hours paid at \$14.00 per hour, with a total cost not to exceed \$600. This would be to help her with the completion of the Annual Street Listing and for the annual Dog Licensing. The only concern with this request has been the funding source. The source that the Town Clerk would like to use may not be usable in this instance. The Town Accountant has put out several calls to DOR and the State Auditor's Office to determine if this funding source may be used this way. The Town Clerk is confident that it may, but if for some reason the Commonwealth determines otherwise, these funds could come out of the Reserve Fund assuming Advisory Board approves a request. The Board was okay with it and determined a formal motion of support be made.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to support the request of the Town Clerk for this funding request for temporary support. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

Approved and adopted on 12/18/18

Transition Plan from Interim to New Town Administrator

Mr. Haddad started off by reporting on the background check, which has been completed and already sent to the Board. His last day will be December 14th. The new Town Administrator should start soon, at the latest by the start of January 2019. Mr. Haddad praised Mr. Voelker for his work these past few months in assisting him throughout the process. Mr. Haddad also expressed the intent to spend a couple hours with the new Town Administrator on his first day to make sure he is up to date on all the issues. Mr. Haddad stated that this experience has been a pleasure for him and he was pleased to have served the town. He felt confident in the transition with his only area of concern being the budget. He didn't have the time to really get deeper into it, so the new Town Administrator will have to work hard on to get it balanced. So, the items of concern for the new Town Administrator include, but are not limited to, the completion of the initial draft FY20 budget and procurement related matters for Water and Affordable Housing.

Update on FY20 Budget & Process

Mr. Haddad began by noting his pleasure with the responsiveness of Department Heads and the departments in general regarding this expedited process. Mr. Haddad reported on his past hours of work this pay period noting the work he's done to figure out where the town financially. The main problems are those that are from FY19. The town has historically used a lot of Free Cash over the years and this is becoming a problem for the budget. In FY19 in particular, the town received a significant amount of Free Cash and the town used a lot of that money for operational budget needs. This resulted in less Free Cash for FY20. Mr. Haddad explained the ways he worked the draft budget to try and balance it. The department requests came in some \$700,000 over FY19's budget total. When you look at revenues for the upcoming year, the estimated revenues only increase by about \$400,000. This leaves the town short. He reduced the gap by lowering recommended requests significantly which has helped. Most of the percentage increases for departments after that are under 4 percent. The only outlier is the changes made to Town Administrator lines. He also put in for the time being a 2 percent COLA for employees. Even with reductions, the budget after everything is \$176,000 short from balancing. To further cut the budget by that amount, you're getting into core services and eliminating personnel. So, he's presenting options. Use additional funding out of Free Cash for this one time, or cut the amount out of departments. He then talked about the school districts needs in relation to this. They are moderate all things considered. But there are also issues with the Water Department. So, this may necessitate using nearly all of Free Cash.

Mr. Haddad warned that he's had to work some numbers in a way that is less conservative for new growth and increased revenues. Doing all of this meets the existing budget needs. Advisory Board will need to consider the budget carefully and how to address the challenges. Advisory Board and the Board will all receive copies of the draft budget. For the time being he's given it to the Town Accountant to check the numbers. He took a moment to emphasize the crucial role that the Town Accountant should play in this process. In the past she has been excluded from the process and this has been part of the problem. That said the biggest remaining challenge is the Water Department given DEP. As for other departments, Highway Department has asked for substantial increases, all of which at this point can be done only through an override. Police Department will also likely face similar challenges. Mr. Haddad stressed this is a preliminary budget, and had he had more time he would have gotten deeper into this budget. But what is done gives all parties a chance to work on this and get it done. The Board noted that the town has long struggled to stop using Free Cash for funding operations. The danger in using Free Cash too heavily for operations is all the one-time expenses that cannot be funded as they should be from Free Cash. There are a number of projects that need that, and this will mean the town can't do them. The town has always at the very least strived to keep a minimum of \$150,000 unspent in Free Cash. But that may not be possible this year.

Mr. Haddad stated that while this isn't a rosy picture, there is transparency this year and Advisory Board will have to work on this problem. The Board suggested consideration of the use of stabilization. Mr. Haddad stated the town may have no choice but to use stabilization. Especially for the Water Department. The only major concern there is the fact that the town doesn't have a lot of funds in stabilization. Something DOR has urged the town to change. Mr. Haddad noted that part of the problem for alternatives, like budget cuts, is that

departments are not frivolous. They are already tight. There is no fat. Departments have really done a lot to control their budgets. The only long-term solution might be an override. Mr. Simmons expressed some concerns about stormwater and the MS4 permit. Mr. Haddad responded that the town has an article approved sum that is still carrying forward which is funding ongoing work. Further, the Stormwater Consultant feels confident that the remaining funds will continue to fund the effort for the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Simmons was pleased to hear it. The Board then thanked Mr. Haddad for helping the town out in its time of need and for the excellent work that he's done in the time he was here. His work has truly helped improve relationships and tie things back together again.

Street Lights

The Board noted that there have been some requests from citizens regarding street lights. There are some concerns about the current lights, some of which should be updated or fixed. There is a concern that there are about 20 lights that don't work. Chief Dow agreed to work with his night shift to check up on the lights to help determine how many may need to be fixed. The Board thanked him noting that the town pays for these lights and they should be operational. There was some discussion of what National Grid would do. Mr. Simmons elaborated on past practices and how the town has handled this. Some of the lights are public and some were and likely still are private. Chief Dow said he would follow up as the department has a National Grid contact and they can look into it.

Town Hall Heating Issues

The Board discussed the issues with the Town Hall's heating. The boiler has been replaced, but there are issues with the heating elements. There may be a chemical that needs to be used on the system to resolve some of the issues. There is also an issue in the Ladies Room where temperatures are dropping too low.

Town Hall Roof & Façade

The Board, thanks to Jeremy Rothman, was able to get drone footage of the Town Hall. This will help determine what needs to be done to the slate roof. The Board discussed various options, including whether an RFP should be done. It really depends on the total cost. Some quotes will need to be procured to help get a handle on the costs. Thankfully given the buildings historical status, CPA funding will be available. The Board than discussed the façade. That area would be its own project including some new siding and painting. There was discussion of whether it should be broken down further to separate painting from siding work or not. The Board finished with the determination to continue working on the matter.

Appointments

The Board started off by noting two appointments for the Zoning Board of Appeals. The ZBA is requesting that Brad Walmsley and Dawn Theberge be appointed as Associate Members. This would provide the ZBA will a full compliment of full members and associate members. In recent years the ZBA has struggled some to fill all of its positions and is pleased to be at this high-water mark. The Board agreed, noting the challenges that ZBA has had in not only finding willing members but also members that would stay. Being pleased with ZBA's current position the Board saw no reason not to approve the requested appointments.

Brad Walmsley is appointed as an associate member of the Zoning Board Appeals Expires June 30th, 2019
Motion by Mr. Mikol, seconded by Mr. Tully, passed unanimously

Dawn Theberge is appointed as an associate member of the Zoning Board Appeals Expires June 30th, 2020
Motion by Mr. Mikol, seconded by Mr. Tully, passed unanimously

Minutes

The Board considered its minutes from several prior meetings held on November 20th, 27th, and 28th, 2018. Seeing no reason not to approve the minutes, the Board determined to do so. OR seeing several changes the Board determined to approve the minutes pending modification.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to approve the minutes of November 20th, 2018 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 November 27th, 2018 pending modification. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed without objection.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to approve the minutes of November 28th, 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.

Final Vote on Police Chief Contract

Mr. Haddad provided the Board with a copy of the updated contract which reflects the Board's requested changes. He asked the Board if they were comfortable with approving the contract or if it should be discussed further as part of the Board's subsequently scheduled Executive Session. The Board determined to move other topics out of order, then to go into Executive Session. After returning from Executive Session the Board voted on approval of the contract.

A motion was made by Mr. Mikol to approve the contract for the Police Chief for the period of time detailed in the contract to expire June 30th, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tully and passed unanimously.

Executive Session

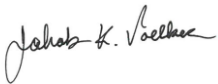
Ronald J. Mikol made a motion to enter Executive Session for the purposes of conducting strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A §21(a)2, and with the intention not to return to ordinary session afterwards. The motion was seconded by James E. Tully. 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 7:10 pm

The Board returned to Regular Session at 7:33 pm

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Tully at 7:36 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mikol and passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Voelker, Assistant Town Administrator

Approved and adopted on 12/18/18