

MINUTES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

October 7, 2013

Meeting called to order at 6:15 P.M.

Present Selectmen Elizabeth Gorski, Joseph D'Amore and Chairman Donald Greaney.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

Approve Warrants

Moved D'Amore, seconded Greaney, and it was

VOTED: To approve weekly Payroll Warrant #14-14. 2-0

D'AMORE, GREANEY – "AYE"; GORSKI – "ABSTAIN"

Moved D'Amore, seconded Gorski, and it was

VOTED: To approve Deduction Warrant #14-12A. 3-0

Moved D'Amore, seconded Greaney, and it was

VOTED: To approve Bill Warrant #14-13. 3-0

Accept Minutes

Moved Gorski, seconded D'Amore, and it was

VOTED: To accept the Minutes of September 9, 2013, September 16, 2013
and September 23, 2013, as presented. 3-0

Council on Aging – Formula Grant

Following review of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Standard Contract for the COA's 2014 Formula Grant, moved Gorski, seconded D'Amore, and it was

VOTED: To authorize Chairman Greaney signing the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts Standard Contract for the Council on Agings 2014
Formula Grant in the amount of \$10,848.00. 3-0

6:15 p.m. - Interview – Michael Kastrinelis – Fire Chief position

Chairman Greaney welcomed Michael Kastrinelis to the interview and thanked him for the time given to the earlier phone interview. Greaney told Mike that two interviews were conducted last week; that they will ask him the same questions the others had been asked. Chairman Greaney asked Selectman Gorski to ask Kastrinelis her first question.

Selectman Gorski informed Kastrinelis that one issue the Board has heard about is that there is allegedly some dissension between the two stations and asked Kastrinelis how he would resolve this. Kastrinelis responded that it is at the top of his list; that he has kept a low profile while keeping the operation running at the level back in June; that the problem between the

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stations has always been there at some level but after the last Town Meeting it became quite a divide and that looking for a new Chief has added to it. Kastrinelis told the Board that he has tried to keep things as calm as possible and has increased office hours by an hour before training for firefighters to express their concerns.

Kastrinelis told the Board that the department needs guidelines (SOGs); that having them will help solve a number of the problems they have now; that SOPs are his job now; that it's not easy to implement unless it has a local flavor; that the men have to believe in them. Mike told the board that the SOGs will help the men to know what their expectations are; that in the past they just told the men and women of the department what was expected of them; that today they need to be written. Kastrinelis suggested that when you get everyone on the same page there will be harmony on the department, and that he has the temperament and the skill sets to do that. Kastrinelis told the Board that he was a Central Station guy for eight years then went over to South Station; that he knows both sides of this town and can make it work. Selectman Gorski thanked Kastrinelis for his response.

Selectman D'Amore suggested that there is a history of division in the department and asked Kastrinelis to tell the board more about the meeting he mentioned. Kastrinelis responded that it was the last Town Meeting and D'Amore asked that the formulation of SOPs and SOGs will improve morale? Kastrinelis responded that the people need to know what the expectations are; that they have to be able to adapt to slight variations; that its more than just rules and regulations; that they are a volunteer work force and they need to be motivated and feel they are doing something here; that they need to bring people along because there will be a day when there won't be an officer at a call and you need to hope a private can fill in and do the job.

Kastrinelis continued that you need to lead by example; that you want your men to emulate you; that if you put that in place this department will flourish. Kastrinelis stated that he believes they have the skill sets to continue the department the way it's been and he believes the men respect the way he manages.

Selectman Gorski commented that the town is still a small town and doesn't see the need for a full time department; that she doesn't know how many of the firefighters feel that is needed. Kastrinelis responded that if the time comes the town needs a full time Chief, he has no interest in doing that; that maybe it might have to be looked at in five years, but even then may be too soon.

Kastrinelis told the Board that the former Chief had brought him along and that over the last four months of filling in as Acting Chief he found it to be a test for him; that it's one of the toughest jobs he has had to do and one of the most gratifying. Kastrinelis said that within a month and a half he knew the Bagnall School could be an issue; that he sat with the building committee members, Design Engineers; that he called the State Fire Marshall and asked that he inspect the school with him and that between two sets of doors the attitudes changed and it was put to bed

Chairman Greaney told Kastrinelis that per the job description the office hours will be Monday and Tuesday and asked Mike if he will be able to meet that requirement—do your hours allow you to be around Mondays & Tuesdays? He also asked if Kastrinelis understands the budget restraints.

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Kastrinelis responded that he is around a lot; that his type of schedule serves him well; that he protects Mondays for office hours for the public and told the board in the last four months he has had only 3 residents need his sign-off. Kastrinelis stated that he can be reached by cell phone email and would set up personal appointments when needed; that he also believes in going to the site and looking everything over and then signing off. Mike said he doesn't view Tuesdays as critical; that he doesn't think the men should be pulled from training.

Selectman Gorski commented that she saw Kastrinelis will be meeting with Jeff Pappas and the other members of Capital Improvement. She asked if Mike was part of last year's plans submitted to CIC. Kastrinelis responded that NEPA standards were changed for all personal protective gear and that they must comply by August 2014; that CIC had this scheduled for 2016. Mike stated that he is in the process of filing a grant application and will get it done right away, that the deadline is late October. Kastrinelis told the Board that if he is chosen as Chief he will maintain good communication with the Selectmen; that if he needs something he will come to a meeting and fight for it; that if he can't get them to go his way it's his fault and he will report that to his men. He also told the Board that when he goes before the CIC he will conduct himself professionally and that he feels they all have one goal and that's what is best for the community.

Selectman D'Amore remarked that we have a lot of houses with fire alarms, maybe one fire a year and mostly ambulance calls than fire calls. Kastrinelis agreed. D'Amore stated it's his understanding a lot of men don't show up and Kastrinelis responded that it depends; that during the day they are short men; that Central Station is lucky it rolls a truck during the day; that he has a strong relationship with Georgetown's Fire Chief and can count on Georgetown if needed. Joe asked if it would be a good idea to run with one station. Kastrinelis responded that they could do with one station but he didn't think it would go over well with the town; that insurance rates would probably be affected due to longer response times. Mike said he thinks forcing the men under one roof could be a morale negative and that the department would lose numbers and probably then be looking at a full-time department.

D'Amore asked Kastrinelis how he would delegate tasks to meet goals and be comfortable doing so. Kastrinelis responded that he would have SOGs in place and that you play to the strengths of your people; that fire prevention helps to know the right and wrongs of what to do. Mike stated he feels they can bring people along; that he would split the inspections up to both stations and do his best to encourage people.

Chairman Greaney commented that if there were going to be two inspectors, one from each station, that he wouldn't have the South do the inspecting in the south part of town and the Central doing them on this side of town; that he feels that would show division. Mike stated that if they have two inspectors he would split up the inspections, i.e., smokes, tanks, schools, etc. He told the board that Lt. Brian Greaney is helping him now with smoke inspections short term; that he thought the interim Chief position was going to be a month and a half or so. Chairman Greaney told Kastrinelis that Brian did an excellent job during this process; that he was impressed with him. Kastrinelis responded that Brian is an incredible asset to him and the department; that he encouraged him to apply for the position and would feel this way even if he ended up being his Deputy.

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Chairman Greaney remarked that the Captains were given control of their buildings under former Chief Clement when he (Greaney) served on the department; that they were doing Deputy work and when Clement knew he was leaving is when he made Deputy positions; that there were no white hats (boss) back then; that now we have a Chief, Deputy, Captains, Lieutenants and Privates.

The Board thanked Kastrinelis for interviewing. Mike thanked the board for putting their trust in him and making him Acting Chief for the last four months; that he hopes they will allow him to continue to do the job.

7:08 p.m. - Interview – Arthur Howe – Fire Chief position

Chairman Greaney began the interview by telling Howe that the board began with twelve applicants, one withdrew; that they did telephone interview screening and narrowed their search down to four for final interviews; that they held two interviews last week and one of the candidates later withdrew his application so the board is now down to three candidates.

Selectman Gorski began by informing Howe that the town has up to 40 call firefighters, two stations, Central and South; that in recent months there seems to be a division within the two groups and asked how he would deal with that if he was to become the town's new Fire Chief. Howe replied that he would reorient the group in accordance with their mission; that its one department, one set of values, one commitment. Howe told the Board the people join for a number of reasons; that they enjoy public service, looking for an affiliation and recognition. Howe said he believes two stations could and should work collaboratively; that he doesn't know what the mission statement is and asked if there are return values in conjunction with the statement. He told the board it is one organization, one mission, and he would treat them as one; that he brings no bias toward any one person or group.

Selectman D'Amore asked Howe what his experience is in managing confrontation. Howe responded that it's not done overnight; that you treat people equally, discipline equally across the board; that the officers need to be strong leaders within the organization; that it's a long term process. Howe stated that training is done jointly at times; that it might make sense to have training at one station one week, then together at the other the next week. He said it's important to have people that don't bring in animosity; and that it's the Chief's responsibility and position to bring in the right people, to discipline and hold the people accountable; that you don't want a soft Chief where the troops run the department because that breeds problems. Howe commented in regards to policies that he doesn't like them hard and fast; that he prefers guidelines and if there's a learning opportunity to use it.

Chairman Greaney told Howe he had served on the department for 21 years and retired as a Captain. Greaney noted that Mondays and Tuesdays are required nights for the Chief to be at the Station and mentioned the budget line items for the department. Greaney acknowledged that Howe has run a budget before. He told Howe that they would like the new Chief involved in the Tuesday evening trainings and asked if he has any questions of the board. Greaney told Howe that the emergency medical calls had gotten a little out of control a while back and the Board asked the Chief to keep the men active but not need another \$100,000 to do so. He asked Howe when he had some volunteers and some on-call, how was that and Howe told the board that running a combination is the most challenging and that Ipswich's department is probably the most challenging in the State. Howe stated that he treated all his men to the same

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standards with few exceptions due to flexibility; that it's very important to talk face to face with firefighters; that he communicated regularly with call firefighters and coached them during bi-weekly training. Chairman Greaney asked how would he control the mentality level of those thinking we need to be fulltime and Howe responded that he doesn't know how they operate now. Greaney explained that the dispatchers call out South Station during the day. Howe told the board that he is becoming a huge fan of regional cooperation, big believer in automatic aid not mutual but automatically it's dispatched to the next town. Selectman Gorski told Howe that there may not be enough people on during the day. Greaney commented that you don't want to abuse it and Howe responded that it gives you two to three more people the first few minutes; that they can turn around if you don't need them. He said he doesn't think it's done in the county but there are definitely daytime challenges. D'Amore commented that it could backfire on us if we are called into situations. Howe stated that the difficult time for on-call coverage is between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. He told the board that automatic aid is used across the State of New Hampshire but not widely used in Massachusetts.

Chairman Greaney asked if Ipswich has its own ambulance and Howe replied that they don't. He asked if Howe would back away from the medical calls and Howe responded he would need to learn the call history, look at the ambulance contract and get to know the players. Greaney suggested that if Groveland were going to work with other towns its budget would be eaten up. Howe stated he wouldn't see the department using the automatic aid for medical calls; that he has 35 years EMS experience in Connecticut; that out of 4,000 calls the firemen responded to 1,100 of them; that they don't go to the low priority calls; that he could bring some reasonable thoughts to the discussion of needing a fulltime department.

Selectman Gorski commented that Howe had spoken about standardized equipment during the phone interview and told him that the new Chief will be meeting with the town's Capital Improvement Committee and asked does our equipment fit our town's needs. Howe responded that the nuts and bolts of the machine doesn't matter; that ladder trucks are way over done, extremely expensive and don't get a lot of use. Howe stated that there should be on shared between the local towns; that a million dollars could be spent in better ways; that we fight fires from the inside mostly.

Selectman D'Amore asked Howe how he delegates important tasks to achieve goals and hold others accountable. Howe responded that you hopefully hire good people. He told the board that workers like to be thanked and have responsibility; that there are too many responsibilities that can't be done in 14 hours a week. He asked if families are brought into the process and is there any recognition of families for donating their time to the department; that recognition is so important and people thrive on it; that it needs to be done honestly and direct.

Chairman Greaney and D'Amore thanked Howe for interviewing with them and Selectman Gorski thanked him for the good information he shared with the board. Howe thanked everyone and told them if they have any questions not to hesitate to call him. Interview concluded at 7:55 p.m.

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Requested Appointments

Water Sewer Superintendent Tom Cusick submitted a written request that the Selectmen approve permanent status for Water/Sewer employee Ralph Renzulli, informing them that the Water/Sewer Commissioners have approved his request; that permanent status is effective as of September 1, 2013.

Moved Gorski, seconded D'Amore, and it was

VOTED: To approve permanent full-time status for Water/Sewer employee
Ralph Renzulli, said permanent status effective September 1, 2013. 3-0

Chief Robert Kirmelwicz requested in writing appointment of Patrolman Eric Ryan to the position of Sergeant, said appointment effective immediately through June 30, 2014.

Moved D'Amore, seconded Greaney, and it was

VOTED: To appoint Patrolman Eric Ryan as Sergeant, said appointment effective
immediately through June 30, 2014. 2-1

D'Amore, Greaney – “Aye”; Gorski – “Abstain”

There was a brief discussion about Groveland Baseball League's concerns with the condition of their fields and other matters and Chairman Greaney asked the Board's Assistant to email GBL board member Joe Sullivan and have him contact Finance Director Labrecque to discuss what the leagues needs are. This matter was not on this evening's agenda, and no further discussion took place.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, moved Gorski, seconded D'Amore, and it was

VOTED: To adjourn.

Adjourned at 8:29 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Lewandowski
Administrative Assistant