

HALIFAX BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 9, 2016 – 6:30 P.M.
HALIFAX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM

Meeting came to order at 6:30 p.m. with Selectmen Kim R. Roy and Troy E. Garron, Thomas Millias and Chief Broderick present.

Chair announces that the meeting is being taped.

AGENDA

Roy wanted to add a discussion regarding Duxbury Dispatch and Monponsett Pond.

With the above addition, the agenda for Monday, May 9th, was unanimously approved.

The following business was discussed:

Halifax Fireworks Contract

Moved by Garron and seconded by Millias, the Board unanimously voted to authorize the Chair, Kim R. Roy, to sign the fireworks contract with American Thunder Fireworks on behalf of the Board.

Contracts

Seelig handed out packets of the contracts to the BOS.

Dispatchers

He said they are going to pass over the Dispatchers as they could not come up with an agreement and will be brought back at a later time.

Firefighters

Need to raise and appropriate \$56,000 for their contract. The board understood this was a very large figure but in the past there has been the issue of what we offer for pay to our employees compared to other towns, which is much less. Roy will explain to the residents that it is a fair contract and that we are trying to stay in lines with the other towns.

Monponsett Pond

It was said that the Brockton Mayor has agreed to meet with Halifax this coming Friday with the hope that we will make some progress.

Regional Dispatch Duxbury

Roy began by saying that there will be a meeting on Thursday with State 911. Chief Broderick and Viveiros, Roy, Seelig and Matt Tucker will be attending. She continued to say that they are in the early stages of this and money is a huge aspect. We have no doubt we will get a great service from Duxbury. She understands the concern that the station will be “dark” but at this time there is not always an officer in the station at night and the dispatchers cannot leave their station to go out to the lobby if someone was there.

So if someone was to come into the station the dispatcher would call an officer and that person will have to wait for an officer to come back to the station. We need to go at this in a proactive way and we do not want the State to dictate what they want us to do.

Garron thinks that they will be asked what we are going to do if a person was to come into the station. Chief Broderick said this this move is going to be inevitable and we are trying to get ahead of the curve. He continued to say that he has been working on this a while and there is technology out there so that the station is monitored 24/7. His goal is to make it work for his staff and the residents and to keep it a “safe haven”. He will work on the building aspect and have others work on the contract part.

Roy said that they asked Duxbury when the transition (no decision on anything has been made at this time) would be and they said October. She continued to say that all those involved are meeting this Thursday so we all can provide input and get answers.

Finance Committee joined the Board at 7:00 p.m.

Seelig informed FinCom that the Board has concluded all the on four of the five contracts. We have not been able to reach an agreement with Dispatch, which they will be passing over that article. The motions are ready to go with background information for the contracts ready to go. He apologized for not being able to sit down before today with FinCom but said negotiations went until last Friday.

Roy wanted to give FinCom some background on the Fire contract as it is a large amount. She explained that when they did their research and compared Halifax to *like towns* they found that we were substantially lower than those towns. In compared to Step 1 we were 20% lower than regular towns so we understand why we have a hard time finding decent firefighters to come to Halifax. We did not get to where we need to be but came a little bit closer.

Roy said with the uniform allowance we went up to \$1,000 and this will be rolled into the base rate. There will be a reduction this year as the chief will not spend \$7,200 in his expense account so that money not spent will offset the contract. Seelig said by doing this the town will avoid IRS prosecution. By incorporating the uniform allowance in the wage rate the town will be in compliance with the IRS.

Roy continued to say that we are not close with stipends but came a little closer. The goal is that we want to attract staff as well as keep the firefighters we have because it cost the town when they leave. Seelig said that if Town Meeting says no the next step would to go back to the table with them and if we cannot agree it may go to arbitration but the challenge will be that Town Meeting said no once and an arbitrator could say they want to award an amount equal or greater but still will have to go back to Town Meeting. He thinks any arbitrator will see what Town Meeting had already done and realize awarding a figure much higher will not happen. Roy could not emphasize enough how important it is to have seasoned staff at a fire or at complex medical call. She said that there are positives to having someone new as they are more motivated and more likely to come back for calls but it is also important the quality of service in this particular area.

Roy said we did the best we could and were mindful about the money the town has to offer. Seelig added that we will never be able to do anything with the health insurance and most of the towns we are doing the comparables with are doing 50/50 on health insurance but we cannot afford to, so the only place to make it up is on the wages.

Melvin Conroy, member of FinCom, asked if the BOS had any idea of what the wage opener will be for next year and Roy said we told them that we'll offer them what we can afford.

Gordon Andrews, Chair of FinCom, then asked if the fire details for the fireworks and was calculated in and Seelig said they have not calculated it yet and Roy said her personal opinion is that we should not be paying for it. She loves the fireworks but feels it is a nice to have but not a need to have. Andrews then asked about Holidays in Halifax and Roy said that the fireworks is so much more but for the holiday event we do not bring in the Sheriff's department and Seelig said that the details for the fireworks at Holidays in Halifax is paid for by the person who is paying for the fireworks.

Stuart Hall, member of FinCom, asked if overtime is calculated in and Seelig said yes and that the Town Accountant figured everything in.

Andrews asked if the stipend for the paramedic was figured in for over the course of the year or a one-time thing and Seelig said that it is figured into the base rate. Andrews thought that a stipend was a one-time pay and questioned the fact that it was in the base rate of pay and said if anything not call it a stipend. Seelig explained why they were doing it this way and said in the end it does not matter.

Hall asked if it was the union's preference to negotiate each individual point or would they prefer to see... Seelig said all the unions have been willing to put it into their base pay when it has been possible to do it. Roy said in this case they don't think they should do until they are at the point where they are hiring paramedics. Garron said he much rather give them more money in their paycheck instead of saying there is fifteen different ways we are giving someone an increase because in the end it is all about money.

Roy said she would like to get their feeling on this and asked FinCom if they would like to take a vote on it now instead of on Town Meeting floor and Gordon said he would like to read it over before taking a vote and also said that if Wage & Personnel recommendation of the 2% does not go through Seelig said that the Board of Selectmen is obligated to go to Town Meeting with the proposal that has been agreed to. Andrews expects if that if W&P 2% does not go through and it is a 1% he would expect to see this article voted down as well. Seelig said the Board of Selectmen is obligated to make the motions. Roy said that FinCom's recommendation should not be what Town Meeting will do and Andrews said their recommendation was 1%.

Conroy asked with the other contracts that have been negotiated how closes does it bring us to the levy and Seelig thinks the last number the Town Accountant had was about \$88,000. Roy stated that on the flip side in the long run it will cost the town in the quality of service we get and in the turnover in staffing. Hall said that we should not be held hostage and Roy understood what he was saying but said we need to provide the best possible service.

Seelig said that the voters will decide whether they can afford a certain level of service and if they say no then they will not get this level of service as we will get less experienced officers and firefighters with less knowledge. This is perfectly acceptable because it is their decision to make.

Conroy asked how close does this contract get us to be competitive in the market place and Seelig said that it puts us in a better place for bring people in. He said that people will still leave because we still are paying less than the average for the other communities and we are never going to catch up with the health insurance. He continued to say that people will stay because they want to work here in Halifax at the fire department and work with the people in it. Roy said that they are making the attempt to bring the wages closers to the other communities and be fair and said maybe we will lose people but we also have the chance that they will stay. Garron said that we have lost many firefighters to other towns because of money and insurance so we hope that by giving them fair pay we will be able to keep people for a longer period of time.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, moved by Millias and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted as follows to continue their meeting to the All Purpose Room to attend the Annual and Special Town Meetings at 7:30 p.m.:

Kim R. Roy	–	Yes
Troy E. Garron	–	Yes
Thomas Millias	–	Yes

Kim R. Roy
Clerk

/pjm