

HALIFAX BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2015 – 7:30 P.M.
SELECTMEN MEETING ROOM

Meeting came to order at 7:30 p.m. with Selectmen Michael J. Schleiff, Kim R. Roy and Troy E. Garron present.

The following business was discussed:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board as well as those attending tonight's meeting stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

The Agenda for Tuesday, January 13th, was unanimously approved without revision.

Seelig added that the Police Chief Broderick will be discussing possible hires and also other matters.

MINUTES

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously approved the following Selectmen Minutes:

- Regular Session – July 8, 2014
- Regular Session – July 14, 2014
- Regular Session – August 12, 2014
- Regular Session – September 2, 2014
- Regular Session – September 9, 2014
- Regular Session – September 23, 2014
- Regular Session – October 14, 2014
- Regular Session – November 10, 2014

AFFIRMED WARRANTS AND COMMITMENTS

Moved by Garron and approved by Roy, the Board unanimously affirmed the following warrants and commitments with the exception of Schleiff abstaining from the Police Department payroll in warrant #47 and in warrant #51:

Payroll Warrant	#47	\$ 339,592.11
Vendor Warrant	#48	\$ 27,472.12
Withholding Warrant	#49	\$ 125,687.82
Vendor Warrant	#50	\$ 188,946.27
Payroll Warrant	#51	\$ 342,970.81
Vendor Warrant	#52	\$ 134,840.76
Withholding Warrant	#53	\$ 117,515.66
Vendor Warrant	#54	\$ 60,139.18
School Warrant	#55	\$ 295,989.31
Ambulance Commitment	#11C	\$ 14,168.44
Ambulance Commitment	#12A	\$ 14,906.44

Moved by Garron and approved by Roy, the Board unanimously affirmed the following Selectmen bills:

Express Newspapers (ad/earth removal/Turkey Swamp).....	\$	35.00
Ellis Auto Body & Service (claim/2010 Ford Explorer).....	\$	5,541.56
Carver Halifax Comm. Access Media (access fees/Comcast)..	\$	100,000.00

APPROVED WARRANTS / COMMITMENTS / BILLS

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously approved payment of the following commitments and warrants with the exception of Schleiff abstaining from the Police Department payroll in warrant #56:

Payroll Warrant	#56	\$ 325,000.23
Vendor Warrant	#57	\$ 51,393.06
Withholding Warrant	#58	\$ 121,319.07
Ambulance Commitment	#12B	\$ 12,591.56
Mobile Home Park Fee	#01	\$ 5,160.00

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously approved payment of the following Selectmen bills dated January 13, 2015:

Attorney Lawrence Mayo (legal services/Jan.).....	\$	1,212.50
Epstein & August, LLP (legal services/Jan.).....	\$	2,865.00
National Grid (Town Hall)	\$	1,154.81
National Grid (Concession Stand)	\$	25.71
Beth Israel Deaconess Plymouth (employee physicals)	\$	1,182.00
Charles Seelig (mileage reimbursement)	\$	68.30

The Board acknowledged payment of the Selectmen Office Payroll for the periods ending:

December 13, 2014	FOR	\$ 6,185.84
December 27, 2014	FOR	\$ 6,185.84
January 10, 2015	FOR	\$ 6,435.84

The Board acknowledged payment to the Treasurer for the following turnovers:

<u>TURNOVER</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
2015-52	\$ 35.00
2015-53	\$ 125.00
2015-54	\$1,715.00
2015-55	\$ 200.00
2015-56	\$ 200.00
2015-57	\$1,218.34

GENERAL MAIL / DISCUSSIONS

Recycling Abatements and Late Fee

Seelig stated that the Board had previously denied abatements for three residents who use ABC Disposal as there was not sufficient evidence stating that they recycle. Seelig contacted ABC asking for additional information and they have sent letter, which Seelig read, and asked the Board if they thought the letter was sufficient to grant the abatements.

Garron thought that was enough information for him and he had no problem reversing the denial as they did not state it before that they participate but have now included that in the letter.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously voted to abate Bill #2580, #1885 and #1969.

Seelig asked that if the Board abates the bills are they abating any late fees also.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously voted to abate any late fees that were incurred.

Abatement Bill #723

The owner of the property has been renting her house to tenants from 2012-2014. They were to pay the recycling fee to use the service and 2012 was paid but in 2013 no one used the service as the tenants used another source. Since then she has not received any notification for nonpayment and stated that she never received any bills from the town, from the post office or from her tenants (all bills are sent to her Halifax address). The resident intends to pay 2015 as she now lives there.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted not to grant an abatement for Bill #723.

Schleiff added that the resident receives water bills and Seelig said that she stated she never received from the post office or tenants.

Campaign Finance Report

The Board signed the Campaign finance Report Municipal Form.

Ambulance Abatement

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously voted to abate the following amount from the Ambulance Account:

November 2014	FOR	\$ 9,444.545
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Chapter 90

With the change in governors, Governor Patrick's decision to withhold \$100 million in Chapter 90 aid approved by the state Legislature has been reversed by Governor Baker. The amount for FY2015 has been increased from \$270,938 to \$406,407. This additional amount will need to be approved at the special town meeting in May. This will be separate from any article for FY2016 at the Annual Town Meeting. No action is from Board of Selectmen, just needs to be put in Special Town Meeting folder.

Beautification Committee/Town Hall Green Space

The Committee will be meeting with the Selectmen on January 27th about proposed plans for the section of the green between the two wings of the Town Hall.

Seelig stated that they have worked with Highway to remove the trees and Schleiff stated that he did not know why they are approving this seeing as they started. Seelig said that he can discuss that with them when they come in on the 27th.

Plympton Dog at Halifax Childcare

The owners of The Winnetuxet Children's Place wrote a letter to the Plympton Board of Selectmen about a dog from Plympton bothering employees, children and parents at the Children's Place. The childcare center is located on the town line. There is no action that the Board can take unless the Board wants to write to the Plympton Board of Selectmen asking them to investigate the matter. Garron would like to send a letter to Plympton to see if there was a follow-up.

Chief Broderick added that this has been an on-going issue for a while. The dog lives in Plympton and he is pretty sure that the Plympton ACO is working with owner and he thinks follow-up letter is a good idea. The concern is with kids coming and going. This is a tough situation as Plympton does not have a leash law but are trying.

Schleiff thought that a "leash law" was a state law and Seelig said that he is not aware there is a state law but there are State statutes.

A couple of question Garron would like to ask in the letter; (1) is the dog up to date on its shots and (2) what has been done about it.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously voted to send a letter to the Plympton Board of Selectmen to see if there was a follow up to this matter and in the letter ask the questions Garron suggested above.

Plymouth County Gas/Diesel Bids

Every year Plymouth C sends a letter asking if the Town is interested. The Highway Department successfully goes out to bid every three years.

Recycling Grants

Schleiff asked if the is this to purchase roll-off container and if so is there a need for it a Seelig answered yes to both questions. He also asked if this is replacing an existing one a Seelig said he can ask.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously voted to allow the Chair, Michael J. Schleiff, sign the grant for a roll-off container in the amount of \$6,500 and the grant for \$1,000 for education.

Lakeville Animal Shelter Agreement

The Police Chief and town counsel had some reservations about the agreement at various times (a Halifax dog is always the responsibility of Halifax even under the control of Lakeville). Lakeville declined to make any changes and the Police Chief feels that the contract should be signed.

Chief Broderick said is comfortable with signing it and there are other options and if town counsel and Seelig are okay with it, he is too. He stated that we still have Schatten Berg, which gives us a second option. Schatten Berg will take "grumpy" dogs, but this one dog was very aggressive. Roy asked if other towns have signed on with Lakeville and the chief said yes.

Schleiff then asked how long is the agreement for and Seelig it is indefinite and we are responsible for the dog if at Lakeville as it is still our dog. Roy pointed out that we are not obligated to bring the dog there and Garron said if we have a contract, the likelihood of them turning us down is small.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to sign the agreement between Town of Halifax and Lakeville Animal Shelter.

Permanent Full-Time Officers

Chief Broderick began by saying that he previously sent a letter to the Board stating that he would be pulling up two of his permanent intermittent officers, Ryan Simpson and Patrick DeRoo as to permanent full time Officers. Garron asked how long have they been observing and Chief Broderick said that they have been in training almost four months and he has two open slots which they will be able to move into. They will be going to the academy in March.

Roy said that this benefits the town as we have PIs available to move up and added that the chief did a great job setting himself up to having a pool of permanent intermittent officers to pick from. Chief Broderick stated that this will fill the 11th spot.

Schleiff asked if the he had to go through Civil Service for an emergency and he said he will get them a waiver so that they can work before going to the academy.

Schleiff was in agreement to appoint Ryan E. Simpson and Patrick R. DeRoo as permanent full time officers.

Seelig asked if we are doing any by-passes and the chief said no and that he will be back in a few weeks to ask for another two permanent intermittent officers so that he will have another pool of four candidates if and when a full time position opens up.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Ryan E. Simpson as a Permanent Full-Time Officer after successful completion of the Police Academy.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Patrick DeRoo as a Permanent Full-Time Officer after successful completion of the Police Academy.

Halifax Gold and Coin Shop

On December 10th items were stolen from a resident here in Halifax. An individual “pawned” several of these items at Halifax Gold and Coin Shop. These items were not on the shop’s list of items that it had purchased as the owner said that this person was a regular customer. Sergeant Sterling told Matthew Chiamonte that he was in violation of the Town’s by-laws for failure to record these items.

According to the Police Chief, nothing else has transpired concerning the Gold and Coin Shop and the Board could do any of the following:

- do nothing.
- send Mr. Chiamonte a notice indicating that he had violated the Town’s by laws and fine him (the Board could fine him on a per item basis or one fine for all the items)
- hold a disciplinary hearing concerning the license with possible penalties including the suspension and/or termination of the license.
- given the police report, investigate whether Mr. Chiamonte is running a pawn shop without a license and decide, if it determines that it is, what action to take.
- more than one of the above

The resident has requested to be informed of the Board's decision and if the Board holds any type of disciplinary or investigative hearing she wants to be notified of the same.

Sergeant Sterling told me that the person who brought the stuff to the Shop has been charged with receiving stolen goods, two others have been charged for offenses ranging from B & E to witness intimidation. He also said that the owner provided the person with \$120 for \$5,000 worth of goods, which appears to be a bit inequitable under normal circumstances.

Garron was disappointed that he was not charged for receiving stolen goods. and Chief Broderick said the standards for the pawn shop for taking in property is that a valid Mass id is needed and explained that when he took in the items they were valid circumstances so it is tough to go after him after the fact but it still is an open case and being worked on at this time. Garron stated that we did not give a license for a pawn shop and Seelig said there are no pawn shop licenses in Halifax and he has a Junk Dealers License.

Garron stated they should have a hearing on this because this is not the first time they have had problems with Mr. Chiaramonte following the rules since giving him his license. He would like to have him come in.

Roy said when she first heard about this she wanted to have a hearing on it four weeks ago because he hasn't been the most cooperative business owner we have had and is looking forward to talking with him about the proper way to run his business.

The chief said that does not want to call Mr. Chiaramonte difficult but needs to be reminded that he has to adhere to procedures. It is not the same thing every time but different things and he thinks having a hearing would be appropriate.

Garron stated he should adhere to the bylaws of the Town pertaining to the license that he was issued and continued to say he knows that on two occasions he has not and this incident is the latest one. His feeling is to have a hearing.

Schleiff said he hates to jump the gun and the process is for Mr. Chiaramonte is to have a fair hearing. We can invite the chief and the officer involved to come in.

Chief stated that Sgt. Sterling is doing the criminal investigation, which is under investigation; therefore you might have limited information from him. Officer McDonnell is assigned to make sure he is doing what he should at the shop so information from him will be available to the Board.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to set a hearing on this matter for January 26th at 8:45 p.m.

A letter of the hearing will be sent to Mr. Chiaramonte by certified mail.

Adoption Policy for Dogs

The Board has already had established a policy (turning dogs over to the MSPCA). Broderick and Seelig have talked about the policy and both are okay with it.

Elementary School/Window Security Film

Elementary School Committee member Derek Bennett asked that Seelig provide the BOS with information he had obtained about the costs and benefits for putting up security film (material to make windows more difficult to get through even if broken) as a precaution against intruders at the school. He also provided this information to the Police Chief and Fire Chief. Unless the Board has a particular interest, Seelig would leave this matter with the School Committee because it is their building.

Chief Broderick said that they are nice and effective but are expensive (\$40,000+) and money could be spent in other areas.

Chief Viveiros looked at the impact when fighting a fire and he said they will be able to deal with it.

Roy said Mr. Bennett's intention is great but he did not follow procedure as it has not been brought to School Committee Meeting or Capital Planning, and with the shortfall we may have, this is not something to be looked at this time. In her opinion she said to start with School Committee.

USA Fitness/Junk Collector-Dealer Operations

The owner of USA Fitness (with branches in Carver, Cohasset and Halifax) used a USA Fitness flyer to advertise his interest in buying second-hand goods.

Chief Broderick stated that the flyer says USA Fitness buys second-hand items. And he did speak with the owner and he did say that he does barter – someone brings in something and may do an exchange for gym time; he sells the items on Ebay; has a store front at one of his locations. Chief does not know if there is a bylaw issue.

Seelig recommends sending a letter stating that without a junk dealer's license, he cannot buy or sell items here in Halifax. Garron did not think it was a major issue as long as he has a license.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously voted to send a letter to the owner of US Fitness and accompany the letter with Town's by-laws.

On another note, Schleiff stated that the coin shop runs businesses in other towns and asked if we could get input from them. Seelig said he will do some work on his end and asked Broderick if he could to do some on his end.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board voted as follows to enter into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining with Fire Chief Viveiros:

Michael J. Schleiff	-	Yes
Kim R. Roy	-	Yes
Troy E. Garron	-	Yes

Schleiff announced that the Board will reconvene in open session.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board voted as follows to come out of Executive Session at 9:20 p.m. and reconvene into open session:

Michael J. Schleiff	-	Yes
Kim R. Roy	-	Yes
Troy E. Garron	-	Yes

GENERAL MAIL / DISCUSSIONS (CONTINUED)

Northland Properties

The Town received a copy of a letter from the Department of Environmental Protection about the transfer of the land to the Town. DEP had no concerns. Seelig has heard back from the State during the past week that there is a fair chance that the deed for the transfer will be registered either this week or next.

Halifax Country Club

Seelig has not heard anything from DEP about the status of this case. The Conservation Committee was cc'ed on a letter from the engineer from one of the abutters providing observations of the area and their thoughts and hopes on this matter.

Dispatcher - Vacation Carryover - Designation of Approval

The contract with the dispatchers includes language allowing for a carryover of 40 hours with the approval of the Board of Selectmen or its designee. Communications Center Director Matthew Tucker has asked that the Board vote on the record that he has been designated to make that decision. Seelig is recommending that the Board designate him.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to appoint Communications Center Director, Matthew R. Tucker, as the designee in matters concerning the approval of vacation carryover request from dispatch personnel.

Two River Farm

This subdivision includes Bourne and Danson Drives. The developer has failed to complete the work on the roads and infrastructure but unlike other subdivisions, the Town does have a cash deposit on hand and the Planning Board is working with Town Counsel to gain control of the deposit so that the work can be done. This may require one or two articles at Town Meeting because of the money involved (over \$100K). No action is needed by the Board, Seelig just wanted the Board to know about this.

Verizon Overcharges

The AG's office has determined that Verizon overcharged certain entities including the Town of Halifax for business listings (\$61.50) and possibly for inside the area code calls. The Police Department is checking the phone bills to see if the Town is eligible for any paybacks for the latter. A form will have to be sent to Verizon by February 18, 2015, to obtain the paybacks.

Group (Health) Insurance Commission/Rates/Subsidy

The Group Insurance Commission's (GIC) health insurance program which covers state employees along with employees in a number of municipalities will probably require \$120 million from the State to be self-sufficient this year. The reason for this is it is not charging itself, the other entities and the employee's sufficient money to cover the costs. If the State subsidizes the program instead of requiring increases in premiums, that would be unfair for other shared health insurance programs such as the Mayflower Municipal Health Group which are not eligible for a similar subsidy from the state. Seelig is recommending that the Board write its legislators indicating that the GIC should raise rates (and build a reserve for years like this) instead of relying on the state for funding.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to send a letter to the legislators supporting the rate increase.

Chapter 40B - Blackedge Farm

MassHousing approved the site for the Blackledge development. The next step is for the developer to file an application with the Zoning Board of Appeals for a comprehensive permit for the site. The ZBA will then hold hearings and make a decision. No action for the Board to take.

MIIA - Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee for MIIA has sent out nomination forms for candidates other than those it is recommending (Kim Roy has been recommended). No action by the Board is needed unless the Board wishes to nominate someone else.

320 Monponsett Street - Back Taxes

The Selectmen's Office received notification that persons working with the former owners of 320 Monponsett Street whom owe the Town tax title back taxes are seeking to make payments for back taxes owed for 309 South Street. Seelig guesses that this is a step in the process of selling that property. He has suggested to the Treasurer-Collector that she ask Town Counsel to begin civil proceedings to attempt to obtain the tax title money as if the owners sell the 309 South Street property, the Town will have that much less leverage to obtain the back taxes on the Monponsett Street property. As far as Seelig knows the Treasurer-Collector has not done so. The Board may wish to encourage her to do so.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to have the Treasurer/Collector work with Town Counsel to begin civil proceedings to attempt to obtain tax title money.

Council on Aging/Ballroom Dancing

COA Director, Barbara Brenton is asking if it was okay to have ballroom dancing classes on Fridays from 11 am until noon starting on February 20th. The building is closed during that time, but if there is not a problem, Seelig plans on leaving the door unlocked during the period (employees would be notified and would be free to close their doors). Of course, non-ballroom dance students would also gain entrance to the building and perhaps be frustrated (even with signage) that some offices were not open. The alternative would be to have a class representative at the door dealing with attendees (and everyone else in the building trying to get in). A sign will be made stating ballroom dancing.

OPEB Trust

Several years ago, the Town voted to establish an “Other Post-Employment Benefits” (OPEB) Trust and has started making contributions into the fund. The fund is set up so that the Town will have sufficient money to pay all OPEB (generally, the Town’s share of the cost of health insurance for retirees). Having set up the Trust, we now need a Trust agreement and Investment Policy Statement. Town Counsel has reviewed first drafts of both and provided comments to the Assistant Treasurer and Town Accountant. Seelig expects that final drafts will be brought to the Board for review later this winter.

49 Elm Street

This was a mixed-use property that suffered a catastrophic fire a number of months ago. The estate that owns it will probably sell it at some point, but there had been a concern that it was becoming an “attractive nuisance.” The Fire Chief and Building Inspector visited the property and determined no action was needed to make the building more secure but signage will go up stating that firefighters are not to enter the building.

Water Tower - Safety Antennas

The Fire and Police Chiefs will be working with the Water Superintendent to come up with a plan to move the public safety antennas during the painting process.

OCPC - DLTA Funding

Another DLTA funding round is coming up and Seelig has contacted OCPC about two possible projects:

- Helping small businesses (marketing, especially, but it could be other topics) as most businesses in Halifax are not members of any of the regional business associations such as Plymouth, Brockton, or Cranberry. Perhaps business owners would attend one or more workshops about issues they are facing if they were organized by the Town.
- Bringing in better internet into Halifax as the lack of competition and the level of service currently provided are common complaints from residents.

Seelig waiting to hear back from OCPC about these possibilities and is happy to provide them with others. Plympton is interested in both of the above. He will bring back to the BOS in two weeks with the feedback he gets.

Chapter 90 - FY2016

The Highway Surveyor submitted his annual article to approve the Chapter 90 funds from the State. He also asked that the Town contribute money to its “Chapter 90 share.”

Local Aid Reductions

State Representative Calter wrote to say that he did not expect any vote by the legislature to reduce local aid this year (Governor Patrick had made the request).

Fire Department & LEPC grants

The Fire Chief wrote the Board about the following grants:

- Fire - Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) for \$4,423
- Fire - Senior S.A.F.E. for \$2,795
- LEPC - Hazardous Materials Training for \$1,425

The Board should formally approve the grant acceptance documents that Selectman Schleiff has already signed.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to approve the above mentioned grants for the Fire Department.

The Chief thanked Capt. Cunningham, Firefighter Jones and Patty for putting the grant together.

Conservation Commission - Associate Members

The Commission has voted to remove Joseph Danubio and Sheila Hart as Associate Members and to appoint Chris Hadorn of 74 Walnut Street as an Associate Member. No action by the Selectmen is necessary. It was asked why were they removed and Seelig said he can check on it.

15 Ocean Avenue/Junk Vehicle

The Selectmen's Office has received an anonymous complaint concerning vehicles, including at least one junk/demolition derby vehicle being parked at 15 Ocean Avenue. The property last changed hands back in the 1950s or 1960s and anyone living there has since passed away. Tax bills are being sent to that address and bounce back and there is no record as to who would be the owner of the property.

Seelig visited the site and has confirmed that one or more vehicles, including the demolition derby vehicle are on the property. He left a note on the vehicle indicating that, as far as the Town knew, permission had not been granted to park vehicles on the property and that leaving the vehicles there might result in fines. The office then received a phone call from Dean Anderson of 65 Ocean Avenue in Hanson who declined to confirm that he had permission from the owner of the property to park the vehicles there and then refused to answer any questions and requested to meet with the Board on January 27th about the matter. He asked for confirmation of the appointment in writing and said that he would pick it up. Confirmation was written up and he has yet to pick it up.

Normally the Town would fine the owner but no owner can be found. Seelig may wish to check with Town Counsel about any action that could be taken against a person other than the owner for "dumping" (leaving materials or objects on another person's property without the permission of that person).

Fieldstone Farms

Scott Clawson sent the dates for his 2015 events to the Board. Seelig has notified the ZBA, the Building Inspector, BOH and the Fire and Police Chiefs. He reminded him that all necessary food and alcohol permits will have to be obtained.

Monponsett Pond/Jurisdiction

While DEP and DPH will continue to work on Monponsett Pond matters, both agencies agree that jurisdiction supplied by the 1964 legislation is now with DEP.

Mayflower Municipal Health Group/Business Associate Agreement

Counsel is fine with the Business Associate Agreement and two copies are ready for the Board to approve and the Chair to sign.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to have the Chair, Michael J. Schleiff, sign the Mayflower Municipal Health Group Agreement.

Solar Farm at Capped Landfill – Hemlock Lane

The M&SBC recommends that the Board pursue this idea and appoint a committee for the project. Mellissa down at Highway indicated that there was an interest in using the site for a ground cremation wall/area.

Roy thought that it was wonderful that they took the initiative to start the committee. Schleiff agrees that it should be looked at right away.

Consolidating Buildings

Schleiff asked if there were any buildings that we can decrease. He thinks that the Recycling Center could be combined with Highway and the town could then sell the Center as an industrial building.

Fire Department Years of Service

Pins will be given on January 27th to fire department personnel.

Franklin and Hayward Streets Chapter 61A property

Department reactions for the possibility of buying the property were:

Highway/Cemetery – new cemetery (running out of room w/ current one
future school
athletic fields.

Planning Board – No particular interest.

Council on Aging (Joy Marble) – senior center

Seelig stated that there was a time-frame to purchase this and if the Board wanted to purchase how do they want to go about it. Garron said he spoke with Calter and Cutter and a there was a town that has received money for a COA building but just can't remember the town but will check on it.

Schleiff said that there is no way to get Pope's Tavern up to speed and that it would be cheaper to get a new lot to start with. He has preference to a senior center but given last few meetings, what can they put together? He then asked if there was other property that can be used for cemetery and if not, then we need to look at this property for cemetery. Roy said they need to get M&SBC comments on this.

FY2016 Selectmen's Budgets

Seelig made of the line item budgets that he normally submits. If the Board has any questions he would be happy to answer them or if they wish to revise the budget proposals he'll send in amended versions.

Selectmen - Salary	no change
Town Admin - Salary	up \$250 due to change in longevity stipend
Selectmen - Clerical	up \$2,842 due to step increases
Selectmen - Expense	dropped meetings by \$50; increased dues and postage by \$25 each
Law	Increased general counsel by \$1,200; land use up \$1,000; labor down \$2,000; subscriptions down \$200
Town Hall Electric	up \$2,100 because of rate increase
Town Reports	up \$100 for printing (waiting for quote for FY15)
Office Machines	down \$200 for office supplies (mostly paper)
Recruitment	became "Recruitment, Employment and Training" upped budget from \$6,000 to \$9,000 to cover additional physicals and to begin a set-aside for training
Patriotic Celebrations	decreased from \$500 to \$400 (nothing has been spent)

Free Cash Certified by State

The following has been certified by the State.

General Fund	\$ 446,333
Water	\$ 943,514
Solid Waste	\$ 288,634

Pope's Tavern

John Campbell called Seelig last week about several issues including the status of Pope's Tavern.

There is the possibility, especially if All Seasons is not sold in the near future, that the proposal to purchase it for a senior center will come back for a visit this year. In addition, there is a parcel of vacant land in the southern part of Halifax that is available for the Town to purchase which interest has been shown by both the Cemetery Department and at least one member of the Council on Aging.

Seelig hopes that the Town through the Building Committee would come up with a proposal for renovations for Pope's Tavern which will bring it into the 21st century. Not so much to provide a more-or-less permanent home for the COA, but as a building that the Town will continue to use for decades. The renovations might or might not include an elevator but would include work on heating, electrical, plumbing, windows, lighting, appliances, better handicapped accessibility, etc.

Campbell said that because the Building Committee had not been asked to come up with a proposal no one has worked on one. Seelig told him that he would contact the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen about this possible project.

Garron said the building is not going away and there are some offices here that can use the building.

Wetlands - Fieldstone Farms

Waiting for update. Nothing has happened for several weeks.

Traffic Lights

Waiting for more information.

Randall/Hilliard Property/Conservation Restriction

Town Counsel and Wildlands Trust are working on this.

Cell phone policy

A policy needs to be set.

LarrY Avenue

The sign has been replaced. The Highway Department was not responsible for the change.

Opening Town Hall on Fridays

While this subject has come up before, a survey conducted by one of Seelig's SE Mass colleagues indicated that of 22 communities surveyed, three, including Halifax, were completely closed on Fridays. However, two of the three were open Tuesdays 8:00 am to 7:30 pm.

Seelig's feeling is that the rest of the world, including most Town Halls, is open on Friday and that Halifax Town Hall should be also be opened. He realizes that some offices might require more money for additional hours for personnel in order to be open half a day or a full day on Friday. He is in support of bringing this possibility to the residents at the Annual Town Meeting and letting them decide whether it is important enough to spend additional money to do so versus not spending the money and having residents (and others) frustrated that a specific office was not open.

If this does happen a large sign in the lobby will indicate that while the building is open some offices may be closed. Seelig will try to ensure that there are as many alternate ways of providing transactions (paying bills, checking records, getting copies of documents) as possible. A disadvantage would be that the staff in the offices that were open would have visitors complaining about the offices that were closed but he rather have that than the dissatisfaction that ensues when someone is greeted by a locked entrance door.

Roy said that she understands why Charlie is putting this forward and suggested opening at 8:00 a.m. and stay open on Friday. Garron thinks it should be open on Fridays. Seelig stated that there are ways to increase accessibility for those offices that are not open and that the offices were not objecting to it.

Cover of Town Report

Seelig suggested the following ideas for the cover of the town report:

- Run an elementary school contest like last year
- Ask the public to submit photographs

The Board can make a decision at a future meeting as to which drawing or photograph to use.

Roy thought it was a great idea of the cover being a picture of a community event or just a photograph and that they should change it up from last year's contest. Schleiff also liked the idea and suggested a photo on the front and one on the back maybe by a local artist. Garron also thought this was a great idea.

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to ask the public to submit a current photo of a community event for the calendar year 2014 for the cover of the Town Report.

FY 2016 Budget - Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has asked if the Board of Selectmen could attend their Committee's meeting on January 26th to discuss the status of the FY 2016, especially given the large increase in the out-of-district special education program expenses.

Last week, the Halifax Elementary School Committee released a preliminary budget for FY 2016 that included a \$450,000 increase in expenses for out-of-district special education programs. This figure does not include any other part of the Halifax Elementary (step increases, across-the-board increases, electricity, etc.)

That increase, plus the increases in health insurance, retirement assessment, electricity and contractual (or W&P) step increases will likely use up any available revenues including the unused levy capacity. Using the entire tax levy will increase taxes roughly by 4.5% and there will be no money available for across-the-board wage increases, additional hours or positions, or new programs. Increases in one area would have to be matched with decreases in other areas. Seelig does not expect an increase in state aid as state revenues have not matched their benchmarks for FY 2015.

Roy stated that Special Ed is an obligation that we have to pay and we as Selectmen need to figure out if we want to protect the services so that FinCom has an idea what to budget. Staffing and services really cannot be cut at Fire and Police or here at Town Hall. We are looking at a \$225 increase in taxes for the residents and will be using the money that we have been saving over the last two years.

Silver Lake FY 2015 Budget

The budget was revised by the SL Committee last week with increases in expenditures for capital expenditures using the "E & D" (Excess/Deficiency) Account (equivalent of free cash). The Board will hear from Silver Lake about this change and the Town will have the right to hold a Special Town Meeting to approve or disapprove the changes (not having a town meeting approves the changes).

The concern is that to replenish the E & D account SL may try to use money that had been assessed from the three towns during the years to pay Pembroke as part of any settlement of the split. The settlement resulted in no payment to Pembroke but SL may try to keep the money and use it for the E & D (in essence, using the assessment for capital expenditures). Seelig feels that the money should be returned to the towns and then if SL would like the towns to approve a capital budget, the towns would have the opportunity to vote on that.

Garron stated that they want to use funds that were supposed to be used for one thing for something else. Seelig said we have the opportunity to say no which means we need to have a “Special Town Meeting.”

Roy said we had to put in money to pay the retirement for eight years now Pembroke has been told they had to pay back to the towns. Roy feels that whatever money each town paid they should be given back that amount as the money belongs to the taxpayers because they were taxed on it.

Garron stated that the towns paid money to Pembroke now the money came back and we have the right to re-direct the money to where we want to transfer it to. He asked if Seelig needed the BOS to make a decision about a Special Town Meeting and he said no that they have a little bit of time and will bring back to Board of Selectmen on January 27th. Roy said it would not make sense to have a Special Town Meeting if Plympton and Kingston do not, because a two thirds vote is needed.

Open Space & Cultural Council Surveys inserted in Town Meeting Warrant

Five years ago, the Board okayed including an open space survey and a cable TV survey in the Town Meeting Warrant. Seelig would like to include an updated open space survey and a survey from the Cultural Council in this year’s warrant. Surveys were available at Halifax in Lights, the Library and Town Hall but fewer than 10 were received. Seelig need to increase the number of surveys completed and returned. Copies of the open space survey from five years ago and last month’s Cultural Council survey have been given to the Board.

Green Communities

Moved by Roy and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously voted to have the Chair, Michael J. Schleiff, sign the Green Communities Grant application.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 p.m.

Troy E. Garron
Clerk

/pjm