



**Board of Selectmen  
Minutes  
Tuesday, October 7, 2014 at 7:00PM  
Town Hall Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair, Stu Sklar in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Ron Ricci, Lucy Wallace, and Leo Blair were all in attendance as well as the Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

### **MINUTES**

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 9/9, as presented.

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 9/17, as presented.

On a Wallace/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 9/23, as amended.

### **APPOINTMENT**

On a Ricci/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Theresa Hoggins as election official.

### **REVIEW OF CAPITAL REQUESTS**

#### **Department of Public Works**

DPW Director Rich Nota was present to review his requests.

#### Road Management Program

Nota said the plan has been in place for six years but requires modifications based on road conditions. He reviewed the different methods he uses to preserve the town roadways in the most economical way. He said most roads in town have been treated over the past seven years.

#### Roadside Tree Clearing

Nota explained during the department's roadside vegetation removal program they have encountered tree growth on some roadsides where the mower cannot do the job. He proposes hiring a tree crew to selectively cut areas where larger trees and branches are encroaching on roadways. He pointed out this is a real problem behind guardrails on Ayer Road. He intends to consult with the Tree Warden.

#### Purchase of Heavy Duty Dump Truck & Plow

Nota is requesting the replacement of a twenty five year truck which is no longer able to perform in the winter season.

#### Fuel Depot Dispensing System

Nota said all town vehicles rely on the fuel depot to fuel their vehicles/equipment.

He described the fuel dispensing and inventory management system as fast approaching the end of its useful life. He is requesting replacement of this component of the system before we have an extended breakdown.

### Building Addition

Nota explained why the building addition is important and reminded the board it has been on his plan for five years. He described the areas in need as his office and the mechanics bay. He said there are many safety and operational issues.

### Asset Management Program

Nota is interested in developing an inventory and catalogue for all signs and guardrails in town. This will allow for better evaluation related to compliance and uniformity with federal and state regulations. He would hire a firm to build the inventory.

### Town Center Reconstruction

Nota reported this item has been on his plan for three to four years. He would seek input from all boards/committees and the public.

### Water Dept. Scada System Upgrades

Nota said the system should be updated to add a number of features recommended by MassDEP.

### Well Field Development

Nota is interested in creating another water source which he plans to discuss with the Water Commission.

### Cemetery Roadways

Nota is submitting a request to replace about 1500lf of roadway over a two year period on behalf of the Cemetery Commissioners. He explained several roads have failed and are in dire need of replacement.

## **Police Department**

Police Chief Ed Denmark reviewed the two changes to his plan.

### Police Cruiser

He explained the current vehicle (crown Victoria) to be replaced is no longer under warranty for any major repairs. He said is seeking replacement with an all-wheel drive vehicle.

### Portable Radio Replacement

Denmark explained the department began experiencing trouble with the current radios this past summer. He said their radio technician has recommended replacement which should result in more reliable communications with added features such as GPS and texting capabilities.

## **Council on Aging**

Co-Chairs Connie Larrabee and Susan Guswa along with committee members Suzanne Roberts and Bruce Dolimount were present to review their request for the Hildreth House building project.

Larrabee explained the rationale for the project is based on two critical requirements for a town senior center: safe, level parking and full access to and use of the building for people with limited mobility. She said the purpose for all of this is to provide adequate space for programs and activities to enrich the lives of Harvard's growing senior population which in 2014 comprises one quarter of the total population. Larrabee said they are also working with Planner Bill Scanlan to determine if any of the project could be funded through Community Block Grant Funds. Larrabee also reported private fundraising efforts are underway to assist in funding the second phase of the project.

## **Fire Department**

Fire Chief Rick Sicard gave an update on the Oxbow Wildlife Refuge. He said cutting has begun to define the fire breaks and they continue to work on a fire management plan.

He then reviewed his capital requests for 2016.

### Repair Fire Ponds

Sicard is removing this from his requests. It will be dealt with through the DPW department.

### Study on Central Fire Station

Sicard said the ultimate goal is to have all the Fire Department assets under one roof instead of in three different locations like they are now.

### Replacement of Tanker Truck

Sicard said the current truck is twenty six years old and is the main truck the town relies on. He said the truck is a standard and only five members of the Fire Department can drive it. He will continue to seek grant funding to assist in the purchase.

The Selectmen discussed the next steps in this process. Ron Ricci remembered holding a meeting with all boards/committees to vet the requests. Stu Sklar said he has met with the Chairs of the Finance Committee and Capital Planning and Investment Committee and they discussed meeting sometime in November. Leo Blair suggested waiting until we have a debt level number from the Finance Committee. He said this way we will have a better understanding of what we have to work with. Lucy Wallace said the Selectmen need to decide which capital items they will advocate for. This will be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

Bragan reported FY16 budgets are due the beginning of November. He asked the board members to inform him of anything they would like to include in the budget or as a small warrant article.

Bragan reported Rick Maiore, John Guswa, Laura Andrews, Al Combs, Richard Blinn and Bill Barton have all submitted volunteer forms to serve on the Town Hall Construction Committee. He is suggesting the board considered voting to amend their charge to be a six member board and to act on the appointments at their next meeting.

Bragan distributed a letter received from Building Commissioner Gabe Vellante expressing his concern over the condition of the town hall building. His main concern is for the southeast corner and the potential for a major failure at that location given the right conditions. He stopped short of condemning the building but does believe that it warrants an emergency repair. Board members Blair, Sklar and Wallace were in agreement there is no question now the employees must be moved from the building however Ricci did not feel the same way. He said we should authorize an emergency repair and schedule it as soon as possible. Blair suggested the board vote tonight to instruct the Town Administrator to finalize negotiations on the lease space, set a date to move town offices and authorize the Town Administrator to take the steps necessary to make the emergency repair and in the interim understanding the building will be vacated in early November. Bragan said he is close to finalizing the lease and is working on a schedule to move the employees out of the building. Blair said at this point it is an easy decision to make.

Bragan said he understands some of the board members have concerns over the terms of the lease but he reminded them the town has already voted to allow leasing of office space for up to eighteen months during the renovation. He said any timeframe longer than that will require another vote at the Annual Town Meeting. Bragan said the situation we are in allows us time to determine what the best functionality of the building will be. Blair reiterated now is the time for the building to be vacated. He added we will have until April 2016 to commit to a long term lease or move from the lease location. Ricci was not in favor of rushing to move before further discussion with the voters at the Special Town Meeting. Blair tried to convince Ricci this is the right time to take this next step especially since the Building Commissioner is close to condemning the building. Ricci was adamant in his belief the town must be on board with spending money to move out of the building fully understanding there is a good chance we may not return. After further debate and discussion the following motion was made:

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize Leo and Tim to finalize lease, Town Administrator to proceed with looking to relocate offices to the lease premise at earliest time possible, try to adhere to proposed schedule discussed with LLB and ask the Building Inspector if building is vacated can there be a temporary exterior fix until construction can begin, and ask for a vote at the special town meeting to authorize a lease with a 18 month opt out. The board decided they need to change the wording of Article 4 on the Special Town Meeting Warrant to accommodate for their discussion.

#### **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT CONTINUED**

Bragan announced year end reports have been submitted with a Free Cash surplus of \$616,817.

Bragan informed the board as a matter of housecleaning the board needs to vote to waive the rollback taxes on the Lawton property. He said the board should have done this when they voted to assign the property to the Harvard Conservation Trust. On a Blair/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to waive rollback taxes on the Lawton property in the amount of \$23,681.19.

#### **CABLE LICENSE TRANSFER**

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted to approve the proposed assignment and change of control of the Cable Television License held by Charter Communications Entertainment I, LLC, based on the conclusion that Comcast Corporation has the: (a) management experience, (b) technical expertise, (c) financial capacity, and (d) legal ability to operate a cable system under the existing license, with the written decision/Issuing Authority Report to be voted by the Board at its meeting of October 21, 2014.

#### **STATE ELECTION & SPECIAL TOWN ELECTION**

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the State and Special Town Elections to be held on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### **AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 498**

Blair offered the idea of amending Chapter 498 to eliminate the need for Super Town Meetings. He explained this would allow all three towns to have meetings within ninety days of each other even allowing action during the regular town meeting cycles. He believes this could bring more power to the towns instead of MassDevelopment always controlling the process. Lucy Wallace

expressed concern with opening up Chapter 498 to changes. Will we be able to limit what it is opened for? Blair decided to withdraw the topic from consideration and action.

The Board of Selectmen Policies and Procedures require the board to take a vote on extending their meeting after 10:00pm to discuss any new items. On a Ricci/Blair motion, the board voted to extend the meeting past 10:00pm to discuss the Special Town Meeting Warrant and then to adjourn.

### **SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT**

The board members changed Article 4 based on their earlier conversation in the meeting.

*The town will hear the report of the Board of Selectmen regarding an update on the Town Hall building project and authorize the Board of Selectmen to proceed with the project and to lease space for relocating the town offices during construction.*

On a Wallace/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the warrant as amended with article 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20pm.

Documents referenced:

CPIC requests – DPW dated 9.23.2014, Police dated 6.16.2014

COA dated 9.25.2014, Fire dated 9.22.2014