



Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, December 1, 2015 at 7:00pm
Hapgood Meeting Room

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

Minutes

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 11/3 regular and executive session minutes, as presented.

Leo Blair made an addition to the 11/17 minutes to include his comment that increase in tax rate would raise the tax levy by approximately \$1 million.

On a Swanton/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously approve the 11/17 minutes, as amended.

Hildreth House exterior lighting

Ron Ricci followed up on the concern expressed at the last meeting from resident Jim Breslauer about the lack of lighting on the Hildreth House driveway. It was decided installing snow stakes with reflectors will help with the visibility issues.

State Mutual Aid Agreement

Fire Chief Rick Sicard informed the board the town has not officially opted-in to the statewide public safety mutual aid agreement. On a Wallace/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize the appropriate party to sign the mutual aid attachment c pertaining to public safety. Sicard is working with the DPW Director to opt-in on the public works agreement as well.

Policies & Procedures for Health Insurance under federal ACA

Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro explained as a large employer the Town of Harvard needs to implement policies and procedures in order to meet its obligations under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). We may be subject to an employer shared responsibility payment if one of our employees purchases health insurance through the Mass Health Connector and receives a tax credit. These procedures are designed to minimize the town's potential penalties. She gave a brief description of the look-back measurement method used. The policy and procedures have been reviewed by the Superintendent, Finance Director and the Treasurer/Tax Collector. She confirmed our payroll company will be able to generate the forms necessary. On a Sklar/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to adopt the policy as written. Blair offered to use his resources to take a look at the proposed policy.

Cable Committee budget reviews

Chair Bill Johnson was present to answer questions about the expense and personnel budgets submitted. Ricci requested that their expense budget separately show their operating expenses and equipment purchases as other departments do. Johnson indicated he would do so. Wallace asked if their expense budget could show the offsets from Charter. Swanton confirmed the CPIC supports their capital expenses for FY16 which includes the new system for the Town Hall.

Cable Committee appointment

Johnson introduced Richard Steele for appointment to the committee. Steele took a moment to describe his experience and interest in serving on the committee. On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Richard Steele to the Cable Committee.

Public communication

Jim Breslauer, 130 Poor Farm Road, was thankful the large rug in the meeting was removed and asked for an update on the Hildreth House nighttime visibility issue. Ricci told him the solution decided upon earlier in the meeting.

Mario Cardenas, 40 Oak Hill Road, asked if anything is being done to improve cell service at the bottom of Oak Hill Road. He described the service as very unreliable. He urged the BoS to make every effort to improve cell service in the town center.

Town Administrator report

Tim Bragan asked if the members had any comments or questions after their tour of the Town Hall last week. Blair expects the project will be close to complete in mid-April with exterior painting still left to do. He made a couple of suggestions which included having the window in the second floor conference entirely exposed and adding a box around the sub-panel. He was pleased with the location where the vapor barrier will be installed. He noted it should be easy to maintain. Sklar wants the existing bathroom floors replaced. Wallace was amazed at the work done. Everything looks great, very exciting.

Bragan reported eight companies responded to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Hildreth House project. Two submissions were received. They are finalizing a cost proposal and will have a recommendation for the board's next meeting. This project will begin in May and finish in October or November.

Bragan said the Finance Committee has begun their budget process. They will be deciding on a date to hold the All-Boards meeting shortly.

Bragan reminded the BoS annual license renewals are handled at the second meeting in December.

Bragan will close Town Hall at noon on Christmas Eve.

Maintaining town buildings

Bragan has investigated a few options and consulted with the Assistant Town Administrator and DPW Director. He is recommending the creation of a Municipal Building Coordinator position within the DPW department. This will be a dual purpose position which includes facility management. This individual will have carpentry/handyman skills and access to local contractors that have already gone through a pre-procurement process. The DPW Director will be the supervisor of this position. The truck/driver laborer position already exists but will be expanded to incorporate the new duties. Bragan noted he is negotiating with the union regarding change in pay associated with this position. The procurement piece of this would have the town contract on a time and materials basis with local contractors. Blair suggested maintenance be added to the job description. The BoS members were pleased with the proposal.

Civil War encampment

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to allow the civil war encampment June 3rd – 5th.

IT hardware & software report town hall offices

Bragan said some of the hardware infrastructure is 15 years old with most of the personal computers upgraded on an annual basis. Guardian Technologies was brought in over the summer and fixed our connectivity problems. They also set up a new wireless device that provided two wireless connections one secured and one open for public use. A managed firewall was also installed to further protect the town's documents and data. He estimated \$8,000 was paid to correct our problems and enhance security.

Bragan has been advised by Guardian to replace the two aging servers and recommission the third one as a back-up. He estimates the cost to for the servers, migration of data and initial set up to cost approximately \$30,000. He will include this request as a small warrant article at the Annual Town Meeting (ATM).

Bragan is also interested in updating the town website and increasing the number of email addresses the town can have. He estimates this to cost \$7,000. He will include this request as a small warrant article at the ATM.

In response to a question from Sklar, Bragan reported that he was initiating negotiations with Charter Communications regarding having them pay a portion of the new fiber that will connect the town hall and other town buildings, and that the fiber installation is now planned for March.

Municipal building maintenance account

Blair wants the town to make a commitment to taking care of it buildings by establishing an account for this. He drafted language to describe how the fund will work:

The Municipal Building Maintenance Fund (MBMF) shall be established for the routine maintenance and repair of municipal buildings within the Town of Harvard excluding buildings, in the custody and control of the School Department, Cemetery commissioners or Library Trustees. The fund shall be administered by the Board of Selectmen, who shall consult with the Harvard Historical Commission on alterations to the exterior portion of buildings designated as historical structures. He proposed initial funding be \$75,000 from a source to be determined the by the Finance Committee, and each year thereafter such lessor or greater amount as many be request by the Board of Selectmen and approved by a vote of the ATM.

On a Swanton/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve this and send it to Finance Committee for implementation and approval of the Municipal Buildings Maintenance Coordinator.

Devens Economic Commission nominations

Ricci told the board current commissioner Eric Stoltzfus is interested in serving as the associate member instead of serving as a commissioner due to time commitment issues. Current associate Duncan Chapman is willing to switch positions with Stoltzfus. Ricci said the BoS would need to formally vote to make these nominations and the Governor's office will handle the appointments. Wallace wanted to wait until next meeting to see if any other members of the public may be interested in serving. Blair asked for confirmation on their current term expirations.

Harvard Cultural Collaborative follow up on questions

Ron Ricci opened the discussion by asking his fellow board members if they had any additional questions. Wallace asked for clarity on budget changes. Swanton expressed his concern about their business plan with respect to building improvements and maintenance.

The collaborative is now asking the BoS to vote to approve their request to lease the building for five years to create a Center for Arts and Culture for the town and enter into lease negotiations.

Discussion ensued on their vision to make the town center vibrant for the entire community and concerns some of the BoS members have. Most of discussion revolved around accessibility issues with the building. How much will it cost to make necessary improvements and who will be responsible to pay for it? Collaborative members want to be part of the solution on how best to preserve the building.

Blair said absent feedback from the Architectural Access Board (AAB) and estimates on commercial lease of a similar space it is difficult to have a clear path forward. The collaborative offered to hire an architect to develop a plan which can be reviewed by the AAB.

They discussed the possibility of the school department moving their offices to the building however what happens with the Bromfield House. Blair is skeptical taxpayers will want to spend money repairing both buildings. Wallace noted that the School Committee had indicated that school administrative offices would not require all of the space and that sharing it with another organization would be problematic.

Collaborative members reiterated their commitment to the building as custodians and are hopeful the BoS will support them.

Blair asked if the collaborative would consider purchasing the building for \$1. Bragan said a lease or purchase will require a procurement process and vote at the ATM. Ricci suggested the collaborative take a couple of weeks to ponder this option. They will discuss again at the December 15th meeting.

Selectmen reports

Swanton requested the BoS vote on the DPW facility addition and phase 2 of the Hildreth House project. He agreed that this can be done at the next meeting.

Sklar distributed the MOU between the cable committee and the BoS. He asked members to review and provide feedback to him.

Ricci asked the BoS members to provide him with any feedback they may have related to the Town Manager/Town Administrator working group.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05pm.

Documents referenced:

Statewide mutual aid – dated 11.23.2015

Draft health insurance policies & procedures – dated 11.23.2015

Cable FY17 budgets – dated 11.23.2015