



Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, March 15, 2016 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 and Stu Sklar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

Minutes

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board accepted the minutes of 2/23, as presented.

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board accepted the minutes of 3/1, as presented.

Finance Committee appointment

In the Moderator's absence, Finance Committee Chair Alice Von Loesecke introduced Dick Fellows as the new associate member. Von Loesecke has known Fellows for quite some time and felt he would be a great fit for the Finance Committee. The board welcomed him aboard and thanked him for volunteering.

Water System Study Committee report

Committee members Kyle Hedrick, Duane Barber, Carrie Fraser and Ted Morine were present. Hedrick began by thanking all those who helped the committee with the report especially Jack Guswa. The committee was tasked with finding ways to supplement water assets in town to take care of future needs. Their investigation included the state of the current supply and protection initiatives. Morine went into great detail on the current water assets. He explained the two wells (#2 & #5) come from the same source. He said with the increasing amount of road salt used on Mass Ave. the flows are blended to alleviate any concerns. He mentioned the DPW has been able to reduce the salt they use but getting cooperation from the state is a different story. To mitigate runoff issues no parking signs have been posted on Pond Road. They have also initiated a request for town meeting to fund a Pond Road runoff diversion project. Furthermore, the committee recommends a survey of well #3 (Bolton Road) to possibly allow for more substantial use instead of emergency only. Hedrick explained the diversion project will split the dependence therefore taking stress off of the wells making them almost independent. This is an important first step. Next, they want to investigate the structural status of well #3 and test its water quality. This can be done within the DPW budget for \$3,500. Fraser said there is no current health risks to the public. The committee does recommend more frequent water testing. Currently it is done only once a month. Ricci outlined the next steps to be first, \$69,000 approval at the ATM for the diversion project, then use of DPW funds to check status of well #3 and also ask the Water Commission to consider increasing the frequency of sodium chloride testing. He commented on this being a well-defined plan to adequately protect the safety of the town's water supply. Hedrick said the committee is willing to continue this work. He suggested a meeting with the Water Commission to go over their report.

Electric aggregation

The town's energy advisor John Shortsleeve explained aggregation is a form of group purchasing in which a town buys electricity on behalf of its residents and businesses. The statute was passed in 1997 giving communities the opportunity to buy for their municipal buildings this has now been opened up to residences and businesses. Some key features he pointed out are customers can opt out at any time, aggregation covers only electricity supply and this applies to only basic service. Shortsleeve said communities decide to aggregate to provide price stability, it is likely to be less expensive and greener options are also available. The board will have to decide if they wish to consider this. Sklar suggested

they share this information with the Energy Advisory Committee. Aggregation will need to be approved at an annual town meeting.

Super town meeting

Senior Vice President at Devens Thatcher Kezer was present to request the setting of a Super Town Meeting on May 9th. Ricci did express concern with the tight timeline to hold the required hearings. Wallace reiterated the requirements for zoning changes under Section 10 of Chapter 498. Kezer said hearing dates are confirmed to be March 31st in Devens and April 13th in Harvard, with the goal of delivering final bylaw language (if hearings suggest changes) to the Selectmen on April 14th. This would leave a couple of weeks until the proposed May 9th Super Town Meeting. Wallace asked if another biopharmaceutical facility was considering the site and, if so, when would the test of the visual impact be conducted. Kezer replied it was still being scheduled, but would be the same as proposed before: hanging a banner between two extension ladders (on fire trucks or comparable equipment). He said their overall goal is have sufficient acreage to attract a biopharmaceutical. If the zoning is approved this will be one of only two sites in all of Massachusetts. Wallace asked for clarity on the buffer zone. Blair suggested part of the discussion as it develops should include revenue sharing with Ayer, Shirley and Harvard considering the large amount of tax revenue a development like this will generate. There was also some added discussion on Council on Aging services for Devens residents and how best to address them. Kezer said they have begun to track the demand. Issues with the condition of our MART van also came up. Kezer is working on a financial model of regionalizing transportation services which could benefit Devens as well as surrounding communities. Sklar and Wallace are interested in feedback from the Planning Board on the proposed amendment before making any decisions regarding the setting of a Super Town Meeting. No action was taken.

Town administrator report

Bragan reported the fiber optic install was completed last week. This is why there was some traffic disruption in the center of town.

Bragan informed the board Sorrento's Pizzeria requested permission to allow BYOB (bring your own wine & beer). This is an administrative approval and is permissible in conjunction with their common victualler license.

Bragan informed the board Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) will be doing their seasonal traffic counts. This will include Pinnacle Road, Oak Hill Road, Littleton County, and Ayer Road north of Still River. They will also be doing traffic counts north of Route 2 on Ayer Road and will include turning counts near Dunkin Donuts. He asked if the board had any other areas to add. They did not.

Bragan asked if any of the board members were interested in serving on the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). He said their core function is transportation improvement.

Bragan reported nine resumes have been received for the Finance Director position. He expects to have three candidates for the next meeting.

Recognize resignations

Elizabeth McGrath from Park & Recreation, Steve Matson from the Energy Committee and Evelyn Neuberger from the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust submitted letters of resignation.

On a Blair/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to recognize resignations and send letters thanking them for their participation.

Policies

Security Camera Policy

Bragan reported this policy is similar to what the school department has adopted. Police Chief Ed Denmark assisted with the draft. Bragan said there will be exterior cameras at each entry way and six interior cameras. The cameras are for security only. Ricci had one minor change. The board will act on this policy at their next meeting.

Use of upper town hall

The board was given a draft policy from the Town of Wolfeboro, NH. They have completed a similar renovation project and have a great hall on the second floor. Wallace and Swanton volunteered to work with Bragan and Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro on this.

A policy will be drafted for consideration at an upcoming meeting.

COA request to use old library during construction project

An official request has come to the board for use of the library by the Council on Aging during their renovation. They will serve lunches at St. Theresa's Church.

On a Swanton/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to approve their request. As an add on to the discussion, Bragan informed the board the move back to Town Hall will begin on May 17th. The Town Hall will reopen for business on May 26th.

Letter to Planning Board regarding senior housing on the Hildreth House land

Ricci drafted a letter with respect to helping facilitate this potential project. A couple of minor revisions were made. On a Swanton/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve as amended.

Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) appointment

Wallace said she knew of someone else who may be interested. She wanted to announce the vacancy first and allow some time for other volunteers to come forward. Swanton again expressed his interest in serving on the trust. On a Blair/Ricci motion, the board voted to appoint Swanton to the trust.

(3-2, Wallace & Sklar – Nay)

Letter from Ayer Department of Public Works

A letter was received from the Ayer DPW informing Harvard they have been approached by a developer regarding supplying water and sewer to the property located at 356 Ayer Road. They were asking if Harvard has any issue with Ayer providing this service and if we would consider entering into an inter-municipal agreement. The board will defer action on this request until they have details on the project.

Capital Planning & Investment Committee (CPIC) debt schedule

As a CPIC member, Swanton took a few minutes to review the debt schedule. He pointed out the town's debt will increase quite a bit in seven years if all the projects listed happen. Blair recommended the school department consider utilizing some of the funds received from Devens for capital projects. Wallace questioned why Phase 2 of the Hildreth House project did not show up on the 5-year capital projects while the debt service did. Swanton believed it was an oversight.

Town meeting warrant review

The board reviewed the warrant articles and expressed their support for all articles submitted by them. They also handled article assignments.

Selectmen reports

Blair took a moment to thank everyone he has served with. He said the town is blessed to have so many great volunteers.

Wallace reminded the board of the hearing being held on the Master Plan on March 24th.

Wallace reported the Council on Aging has been discussing pursuing a contractual arrangement with MassDevelopment to provide services to senior residents on Devens.

Sklar reported the School Committee adopted the Suburban Coalition resolution. He said fifty towns and eighty boards have voted to support it. This will go to Beacon Hill sometime in May.

**** On a Swanton motion, the Board voted unanimously by a roll call vote:

Blair – Aye, Swanton – Aye, Ricci – Aye, Sklar – Aye, Wallace - Aye) to enter into executive session at 9:45pm, as authorized by Chapter 30A, Section 21.1 of the Massachusetts General Laws, at a meeting for which 48-hours' notice has been given, to discuss reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an employee, staff member or individual. Following the executive session, the Board will reconvene into open session only to adjourn. ****

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50pm.

Documents referenced:

Fin Com appointment – Fellows vol form dated 2.17.2016

Water System Study report – dated 3.8.2016

Electric aggregation presentation – dated 3.15.2016

Super Town Meeting request – letter dated, draft article and maps dated 3.10.2016

Resignations – McGrath dated 2.29.2016, Neuberger dated 2.29.2016, Matson dated 3.8.2016

Polices – security camera dated & upper town hall dated 3.10.2016

MAHT appointment – Swanton vol form dated 11.3.2015

Letter from Ayer DPW – dated 3.2.2016