

MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN MEETING FINAL  
March 3, 2009  
Medway Public Library 7:00pm

***Present:*** Chairman Glenn Trindade, Selectmen Andrew Espinosa, Richard Dunne, John Foresto and Dennis Crowley, Town Administrator, Suzanne Kennedy and Board Secretary, Wendy Harrington was present.

***Absent:***

**The Selectmen were present with various Library Board of Trustees from Medway (Wendy Rowe, Bill Roberts, Mary Ann Cabibbo, Chuck Rockwood and Meena Jain) and Franklin and the Acting Library Director to discuss possible regionalization with the Town of Franklin Library. Franklin Town Administrator Nutting and Library Director, Felicia Oti was also present.**

This Selectmen's meeting was posted to take place at the Medway Senior Center. On Monday March 2, 2009 during a Selectmen's meeting, it was determined that the Selectmen would attend the Library Trustees meeting on Tuesday March 3, 2009. On Tuesday evening, Allison Potter, Assistant to the Town Administrator posted a meeting location change notice on the door of the Senior Center advising residents of the location change.

The Selectmen's reporting secretary was not present until 7:50pm. The meeting was recorded with the secretary's personal recording device.

Administrator Nutting began by explaining that Franklin is experiencing difficult financial times and it might be of interest to share Library Director's/services, as Medway does not currently have a paid Director. Some library services, including hours and staff are likely to be cut due to budget restraints and regionalizing with Medway may be a win/win for both Medway and Franklin. This meeting is to discuss some of the options, including sharing a director in the near future and other services going forward.

Regionalization is a whole new world and hard to jump right in, so discussing is the way to begin. Medway will be regionalizing recreation services with Franklin in the next few weeks. Franklin would like to consider trying an arrangement for a year while sharing hours/days so that both communities can get the same services and share the network, and extending if the arrangement works out. This would be accomplished with an inter-municipal agreement, with a TBD length of time.

Franklin may need to obtain a waiver for certification, because they won't be open the required number of hours. A waiver may be needed if neither town is certified and the regionalization wants to be certified. Administrator Nutting has discussed the waiver situation with the Governor and he is in agreement. They are interested in sharing expenses and having Medway pay a portion of the Franklin Library Director's salary.

Franklin is planning to be open 4 days a week or 32 hours and both the Franklin Director and Medway's acting director have discussed Medway being open 16 hours, but that would depend on the number of hours Medway is willing to pay for the Franklin Director's services.

Ms Cabibbo, Library Trustee, offered that she doesn't think it makes sense to pay more salary for a Director when an entry level director could be hired for Medway at a lower pay scale, somewhere around \$27.00 an hour.

Selectman Crowley offered that it may make sense to have two facilities open a total of 60 hours shared, while Selectman Dunne offered that the hours shouldn't overlap, having each library open something like 32 hours each. It was mentioned that the Library Trustees may want some overlap in hours for a combined total of 64 hours.

Ms. Rowe believes that Medway is on the right path for certification in November and believes that the Trustees would consider opening when Franklin is closed, to help Franklin out, if the regionalization does not go forward.

Administrator Kennedy explained that as time goes on, this is just the beginning in these economic hard times. Issues that are arising are how sustainable is our town's government and one way of looking at this may not be as beneficial and as time goes on resources may not be available, the future is the issue, not just next year.

Administrator Nutting sees the future as regionalized library boards for multiple towns, and this form of government won't last as we go forward, as towns can't keep increasing property taxes, we need to be more like other parts of the country.

Selectman Foresto explained that we need to manage change, start doing a better job now for the future. Answer these questions: what are the advantages for this process, what opportunities do you see for the people of our town.

Ms. Cabibbo wondered if it made sense to regionalize but Medway hire their own director, Medway would be spending less money and explained she's not seeing the benefit to Medway.

Selectman Espinosa suggested that the group look at the synergy, is there synergy? Is there the ability to look at things that are not available that could be available? If no, then it doesn't make sense. If satisfied with 6 days with fewer hours, or more hours, and access to other technology, if things can build on as a group vs. maintaining the level of service now not knowing whether can sustain that. Those are the questions that need to be asked. How do we build a future using regionalization?

Ms. Cabibbo explained that we're still talking about two separate buildings that have to be maintained. Technology, can't tie everything in together. All sounds very good if all can be coordinated, but she doesn't want to stay the way we are because it's lacking and she believes everything proposed is going to cost money, more money.

Selectman Espinosa believes there is a viable solution, with maximum service for the money and hopefully we're able to come up with a solution to do that. The Selectmen are more apt to move to that direction instead of status quo.

Selectman Dunne offered this regionalization is going to cost less money. Medway may put in \$250k to get where we want to go, at present vs. if really want to get where we should be it's going to be at \$500K. We're going to get at least 64 hours that Medway residents will get to use a library vs. 32 hours.

Selectman's recording secretary arrived at 7:50pm.

Chairman Trindade offered: unlike Franklin depending on what happens with Stimulus \$ for Ch70 we could be in a very different situation, could have a surplus instead of a shortfall. What do we do with that money? Do we hire a lot of staff, and fully fund the library? The problem is getting the stimulus money as part of a formula that ends next after year and no guarantee what happens with that money and formula next year. Now we have to manage those cuts, how responsible is it to hire people that you may have to cut next year?

Medway has Free Cash, but do you use it for operating? If you talk to the DOR and The Association of Fincom members, they say that it's crazy to do that, that's in our history and we don't want to repeat history. How do we move to a library that is open and has programs for residents, not seeing how to do it on our own? We have had this discussion with state legislature and talked about Millis. They have money that the state appropriated for their library. What's the chance of getting a debt exclusion or an over ride to pay to build a new library? The state is holding up the money. There are libraries that are open that the state won't put money into. The state isn't going to be that dumb forever.

Do we want to drive it, Chairman Trindade firmly believes that communities like ours that take leadership are going to be rewarded by the state in the form of grants, and we'll be at top of the list.

We need to look at the future, what this could be, what would the advantage be for our kids. The library isn't just about books; it's a community center, its meeting rooms and tutoring rooms too.

How do we make this work?

Selectman Crowley suggested a cost benefit analysis be prepared.

Ms. Rowe offered: In the first year it's going to cost more. Medway can't hire a director for more than 19 hours because we are not going to pay benefits. Must hire part time before July 1 or will not become certified.

Selectman Crowley asked if a 19 hr part time director is hired by 7/1 is it 100% guaranteed that Medway will become recertified. Ms. Rowe explained that nothing is guaranteed.

Selectman Espinosa explained that it is hard to understand hiring a 19 hour part time person, at an entry level vs. helping to support a full time director. He thinks we should always be looking for the highest level person we can find. Ms. Rowe explained that it may be possible to find someone that already works as a PT library director in another town who may be looking to add more hours or another position.

Administrator Nutting explained that Library Director Felicia Oti has a PhD. Franklin is still paying at the bottom of the barrel, most directors are making \$90-95K, and Franklin is paying \$78K. He also explained he has been in this business for 30 years and it's changing. It's not going back to the way it was. Three years from now you could be sitting here having the same discussion. Mr. Nutting's vision is having 1 director with a few libraries under them, splitting the cost of the expertise. At the end you have a better product, it may cost more, but not that much difference incrementally. Regionalization doesn't work in this part of the country because towns look at the initial isn't a win/win. The world is changing. Franklin is looking to do more with different communities. No one wants to dance.

Selectman Espinosa explained that Medway is open to the ability to be open more hours and a shared director ship and hire an assistant director, we should try to move forward, not trying to just maintain the status quo to try to improve.

How can we do this so that it makes sense fiscally? It's the library board of trustees that need to make this decision. This is something that you grow into.

If a regionalized program Medway/Franklin residents, if marketed correctly both communities would be more willing to share the programs, if both certified, both tend to keep to themselves, with a river between them. One building could be the center for one age group, the other, another age group. How to merge over time to move the facilities together can be answered down the road. There is a possibility of merging maintenance and custodial services for the two facilities as well.

How to best serve the mission and the people of the communities should be top priority. How to make sense of sharing the staff, and how to make it work should be the overall goal. Showing leadership in this endeavor could make us a model for other communities in the state.

Ms. Cabibbo questioned what if Medway can't pay their share of the deal and still doesn't think there is any difference in being regionalized vs. being recertified. If not enough money to sustain what we have now, how are we going to pay Franklin if we get less money in 2011 and 2012?

Chairman Trindade is concerned that Minuteman isn't going to continue forever and that there will be changes.

Libraries are not the only regionalization area that incentives are available for throughout the community.

A question was raised regarding funding. The library will require more funding in the first year and how will that funding be sustained for level service over the next three years as the economy

is not likely to improve in that time period. Chapter 70 money may change in formula resulting in less aid to towns. The key is how to sustain what we have now over the next few years.

The Selectmen are scheduled to meet with the Finance Committee on March 11, 2009 a \$1 Million shortfall, a wage freeze, and to work through how much Free Cash can be spent to maintain core services.

There is hope for Chapter 70 money coming to Medway, as Medway is in a better situation with Chapter 70 monies than most area communities.

Felicia Oti, Library Director, Town of Franklin asked that the Town and the Library Trustees to ask themselves if this transaction makes sense. Look to the future. Franklin Library has other Medias that Medway does not have available, a very strong collection of books, games, music and a music data base. She asks the Trustees to think about grants. Currently Medway is looking to hire an employee to write grants. Franklin has a staff person already that writes at least one grant annually.

Felicia explained that the Trustees may not see the benefits immediately, but she wants to work together and she believes that if these two libraries take the leadership on this endeavor all will be proud of the outcome in the future.

Selectman Espinosa had to leave the meeting at 8:00pm.

Franklin has a lot of technical expertise available to their town in their IT department, as well as a hiring manager, which services both the town and schools.

Medway has an IT Director who is responsible for all Town Departments including: police, fire, library, senior center, school and town.

Ms. Rowe explained that the Mr. Boucher, the IT Director for the Town of Medway, has not, to date, been in touch with the library.

Chairman Trindade would like the Library Trustees to consider what could be and hopes they would like to pursue this endeavor.

Selectman Crowley asked for some direction over the next few weeks as to how the library would like to proceed.

Ms.Cabibbo explained that more money is needed for a library director and a must if Medway wants to receive certification.

Chairman Trindade wanted to ensure it is worth having these discussions as the Selectmen believe it's a good idea and advised the trustees if they are interested, Medway will move forward to negotiate.

Selectman Crowley offered that he is more inclined to fund the regionalization than he is inclined to fund a director. This he offered as his own opinion, not the opinion of the Board.

Selectman Foresto asked how to make this happen; it's an opportunity, with a lot of potential that should be considered.

The Selectman left the Library Trustees meeting that was still in progress at 8:10pm.

***At 8:15 Chairman Trindade moved that the board adjourn the meeting for the evening, Selectman Crowley seconded; no discussion; all ayes 4-0(Selectman Espinosa had left earlier)***

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Harrington  
Executive Assistant

\*Approved 4/21/09