



Town of Medway  
**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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Meeting Minutes: October 12, 2011  
Town Hall – Sanford Hall

**Present:** Chairman Martin Dietrich, Vice Chairman Jeff O’Neill; Members: Christine Devine, Kevin Dickie, Neil Kennedy, Tony Pacholec, Frank Rossi and Jim Sheehan.

**Absent:** Clerk Christopher Lagan (flight to Boston delayed).

**Also Present:** Tom Holder, Director, Department of Public Services; Deb Trindade, School Committee

With a quorum present, Chairman Dietrich called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

**Discussion – DPS Update:**

Mr. Tom Holder, Director, Department of Public Services, briefly updated the committee on recent activities. Over 3,800 water meters were replaced in approximately ten months with a handful of holdouts of residents declining the new meters. The customer service benefits are tremendous as questions can be answered over the phone via computer as the usage data is now available. In time, resident online access may be available. Only one home had to be shut down, and it was reactivated three hours later. Mr. Holder theorized residents with just sewer service (private wells) seem to be many of the holdouts, but those residents will be assessed a fee each billing period for which they are without a new meter.

Regarding the Highland Street water tank, he stated the dedication will be on October 25, the anniversary of Medway being incorporated. Original tank was 100 years old, and it has been deconstructed and salvaged for metal. Mr. Holder clarified that the identifying plate was removed and saved, and will be offered to Historical Commission.

With respect to the roadway and sidewalk program, the DPS is using Chapter 90 money plus fiscal appropriation to fund projects. The department maintains a rolling street listing based on repair evaluation. Milford Street was recently done from the town line to Highland Street, and now Pond Street is being worked on. The Village Street Sidewalk is being designed, and will be going out to bid. He noted the redesign will correct the low spots that collect water.

Town Meeting action appropriated money to work on water mains, and the project will be going out to bid soon. Mr. Holder noted that water mains will be done whether or not the Route 109 Design Project

goes forward. He added that a bituminous cover is done for a year to allow settling, followed by a more permanent cover, and funds for this are included in the appropriation.

Mr. Holder stated the Route 109 project was accepted onto the TIP recently, and the \$400,000 necessary to complete design services was released. He briefly reviewed the proposed design, lighting changes, pocket parks, etc., clarifying that neither the Town (nor taxpayers) will be contributing to the construction costs. He stated he does not anticipate project happening for five years. Accident reports are helpful in determining that changes need to be made. The project has been submitted to the DOT, and its response may come back in the March-April timeframe. At that time, a public meeting will be held on the proposed design. He added that an experiment on redefining Highland Street as a one-way did not go well, mostly to its timing with the arrival of Hurricane Irene and related issues. Discussion followed.

Regarding the storm water project, he met with the Department of Environmental Protection recently. He will know by January if a loan is approved, a 2% loan payable over several years.

Mr. Holder stated the costs associated with the response to Hurricane Irene have been assessed. FEMA and MEMA split costs out by county, each county having to meet a cost threshold in response to the storm. Norfolk County was slow to respond, but preliminary totals revealed costs of \$91,000 for Medway police, fire and schools, successfully meeting the threshold. After reviewing costs sheets, the totals were actually \$115,000. The difference centered on the use of generators, based on the size of the generator and an associated hourly figure. Initially he did not realize that particular cost could be included in the expense totals.

The capital budget has been submitted, and presently under review. He stated the proposed DPS facility is big part of that, noting less than marvelous conditions and limited space. The conceptual design is estimated to cost \$14 million. The new facility can be beneficial to attract new business, vehicle replacement program, and radio system (\$150,000) as the department will have to convert from analog to digital signals soon. Additional water mains will be replaced through departmental master plan. Mr. Holder stated his job is to identify needs and then make people aware of those needs. Some projects will be funded, while others will have to wait.

From an operations perspective, the level of service has improved due to new positions added. The department and staff can offer a lot more now than ever before. Other projects in town are requiring manpower from DPS, such as Thayer House, and they don't have the staff to do minimal work in town as it is. Medway 300 is another example. Mr. Holder stated he wants to make better use of the funds available, perhaps bringing outside people at possible lower cost rather than paying people overtime.

larussi Way is proposed for acceptance at Fall Town Meeting. Trails go through the property as part of the Open Space provision, and those trails will need to be maintained. With the help of volunteers and the Open Space Committee, the department recently restored the old amphitheater. He noted the department just does not have the manpower to continually help out with these projects. Responding to a question from Mr. Pacholec, he stated fees collected from residents cover very specific things and maintenance is not usually one of them.

Responding to a question from the committee, Mr. Holder stated it is hard to compare to other towns as we do not know what services are offered. Medway DPS has 32 employees. Some communities have a water/sewer department, others do not. He offered to put together a comparison. Chairman Dietrich

commented that there is always property being purchased for various Town uses, but no one asks how it will be maintained. Regarding trails, Mr. Holder stated wooden walkways, bridges and parking lots need to be maintained, and plants need to be cut back three or four times a season. He clarified that maintenance by the Town is typically included as part of the Planning Board decision specific to the property. Discussion followed.

Ms. Deb Trindade, School Committee, stated that, in this particular development, part of the passageway extends from the high school, making this property unique. Mr. O'Neill emphasized that residents need to realize that there is a cost for this work.

Chairman Dietrich inquired about Warrant Articles 7, 8, and 12. On Article 7, Mr. Holder stated there was a surplus of funds left from the repair of the Town Hall roof, which can be repurposed for the fire station roof and some renovation within Town Hall. Similarly on Article 8, there was surplus and the funds just need to be moved to another use. Article 12 was submitted because they were not certain Norfolk County would meet the cost threshold for 75% reimbursement of Hurricane Irene costs incurred between August 28 and September 5, and it could possibly be just a placeholder article. Mr. Holder stated he is certain the Town will get something, we will not know for a while. Chairman Dietrich commented on how quickly Medway responded to issues, as roads were clear of debris within three days, and things were not so good over town lines into other communities. Mr. Holder stated use of Reverse 911 was crucial in keeping residents informed of detours and other situations.

**Impromptu Report from School Committee:**

Chairman Dietrich called upon Ms. Deb Trindade for an impromptu report from the School Committee. She stated she was attending tonight's meeting merely to be available if there were questions on any warrant articles related to the School Department; however, she agreed to provide a brief update.

Ms. Trindade stated the realigned budget should be complete by their meeting next week. It is extremely detailed and features numerous staffing changes. There may be a joint Board of Selectmen and School Committee meeting to review the updated budget. Other changes include a circuit breaker reimbursement of \$701,000, a sizable increase from the budgeted \$440,000.

Regarding Article 3 on the Fall Town Meeting Warrant, she stated this involves a potential lease for solar power, noting it is a move toward increased involvement as a "green" community. A favorable vote on the article would give the School Committee authorization to pursue and sign contracts related to solar power. Mr. O'Neill asked if she could provide any data on savings from use of solar panels. Ms. Trindade responded that TRANE was scheduled to be at the recent School Committee meeting, but was unable to attend so that report was postponed. She added that units of energy have not necessarily decreased, but the costs associated with usage have. If it doesn't level out over time, as TRANE has predicted, TRANE will be responsible for reimbursement of difference. Responding to question from Chairman Dietrich, Ms. Trindade stated she will try to get a report on the middle school.

Responding to question from Ms. Devine regarding the Middle School Repair Project, Ms. Trindade stated the project is on track. There will be another meeting October 19 with the Building Committee. Chairman Dietrich commented he has been inside the school and noted there is no visible sign that all this work is going on. The repairs are occurring without disrupting school activities, reflecting a cohesive team effort to work together.

There was brief discussion on professional development, need for a curriculum director, Response to Intervention (RTI), approaches to student learning and staffing changes, including a new Director of Student Services.

**Discussion – Fall Warrant Review:**

Chairman Dietrich stated he would like to see a final version of the Fall Town Meeting Warrant for the next meeting and will ask the Town Administrator about it. He would like the committee to vote its recommendations at the October 26 meeting.

There was informal discussion on warrant articles as follows:

Article 1 – The committee was not sure why this article was necessary.

Article 2 – Three quotes are required before work can be done.

Article 3 – The School Committee would be leasing the roof of the school (a Town building) in order to install and maintain the solar panels. There was concern that the article was a little vague, and the committee would like it to name a specific project. Ms. Trindade noted that the facilities study report did not include procurement of utilities. This language was initially proposed by the School Committee.

Article 4 – Council on Aging liaison Mr. Kennedy stated this topic did not come up at a recent meeting. Mr. O'Neill clarified that this is tethered to GATRA and is an annual adjustment.

Articles 5 & 6 – No comments.

Article 7 – Chairman Dietrich indicated he was not comfortable with these kinds of articles, preferring the money fall to free cash instead of repurposing. He will seek clarification from Ms. Kennedy, noting that his concern is one of methodology, not the redefined purpose. Discussion followed. Ms. Devine theorized that letting it fall to free cash might mean the project remains unfinished, until the funds are appropriated at another Town Meeting and costs will go up in the interim. Repurposing does allow expediency.

Article 8 – No major concerns, but there was a question regarding the cost of the guard rails.

Article 9 – No comments.

Article 10 – The committee would like to know more about this account and its purpose.

Article 11 – Basically an accounting housekeeping issue.

Article 12 – Suggested a range of dollars, or verbiage such as “an amount not to exceed \$\$\$” kind of thing.

Article 13 – The committee would like to know the dollar amounts.

Article 14 – It was noted this is to establish the fund for when we need it. Discussion followed.

Article 15 – Council on Aging liaison Mr. Kennedy stated the senior center did not want to be included as a site for the serving of alcoholic beverages as because they want all functions to be “safe” to attend by recovering alcoholics.

Article 16 – Additional information will be sought from Town Administrator, i.e., what does “maintenance” really mean, just mowing, or what happens if a fence blows over.

Chairman Dietrich asked Mr. Pacholec and Mr. Dickie to reach out to the Police and Fire Chiefs to learn what other projects are on their lists.

**Discussion – Medway Statement of Values:**

Mr. Tony Pacholec briefly reviewed the two statements, noting they represent two purposes, a holistic view of all the buildings, and a sense of their inherent value. He noted some values increased significantly from one year to the next, while some remained the same. The reason for this is unknown. He theorized that it could be a computer model process that determines value based on age and construction of building, square footage, etc., in lieu of an actual appraisal. Discussion followed. Chairman Dietrich asked Mr. Pacholec to contact the Town Administrator for information and ask her to attend the next meeting.

**Reports:**

Due to Mr. Lagan’s absence, there was no report from the Clerk.

**Liaison Reports:**

Board of Selectmen – Mr. O’Neill stated the Energy Committee had a good presentation. The Facilities Management Study, presented by Bob Parrella, met with some concern about funding and overall implementation. Further discussion will happen at a proposed joint meeting of the Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen and School Committee. He concluded by stating that Board of Selectmen Chairman Richard Dunne may possibly step down due to conflicts with his job, though no final decision has been made.

Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC) – Mr. Dickie stated the group plans to draft a set of operational guidelines and that the group will be at the October 17 Board of Selectmen meeting to provide an update. He stated he and Mr. Sheehan will revisit the action items with the police and fire chiefs.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) -- Mr. Frank Rossi reviewed his handouts, previously sent by email. He stated he attended meeting on October 4 regarding the Thayer project. The Thayer Development Group is requesting additional \$250,000 to complete the design services. The whole project is estimated at \$2.3 million, and the Thayer committee plans for the property to generate revenue eventually and become self sustaining. The Board of Selectmen wants additional information. Discussion followed. It was agreed to invite the Thayer group to the next meeting.

Regarding the Medway Community Farm, it was noted that Mr. Jeremy Barstow is merely the resident farmer, not really the supervisor for the property. The CPC and Board of Selectmen will meet with Bob Magee to revisit the existing arrangement as the CPC prefers there be a formal supervisor who would report to the CPC on a regular basis. Chairman Dietrich expressed concern that over half the budget has been used, and fears an Emergency Transfer Request will be coming up soon.

School Committee – Ms. Christine Devine stated the most of the discussion centered on financial matters.

Council on Aging (COA) – Mr. Neil Kennedy reported the Council on Aging plans to do a town wide needs assessment, noting there seems to be some tension between the senior center and the needs of the elderly at large. Chairman Dietrich suggested contacting the Town Administrator as there may be a Human Resources mechanism that could be used to contact folks. Mr. Kennedy noted some federal funding (possibly job training) was lost, leading him to believe the COA may be coming forward for additional funding.

**Chairman's Report:**

Chairman Dietrich asked the members to review the warrant articles, and forward any questions to him. He will compile a list and forward it to the Town Administrator.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

**Regarding the minutes of the September 14, 2011, Mr. Kennedy voted to accept the minutes as amended; Mr. Rossi seconded. No discussion. Vote: 8-0-0.**

**Next meeting:**

Next regular monthly meeting of the Finance Committee will be on Wednesday, October 26, 2011. The public hearing associated with Fall Town Meeting will be held on November 2, 2011. Both meetings will be held in Sanford Hall, Town Hall, at 7:00 PM.

**At 9:40 PM Mr. O'Neill moved to adjourn; Mr. Kennedy seconded. No discussion. Vote: 8-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Galliardt  
Night Board Secretary