

**STAFFING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES – October 30, 2013**

1:00 p.m. – Selectmen’s Meeting Room, 63 Main Street, Northborough, MA

Members Present: Dawn Rand, Selectman
Bill Pantazis, Selectman
Elaine Kelly, Chair, Appropriations Committee
Richard Smith, Financial Planning Committee
Susan LaDue, Personnel Board – arrived at 1:20 pm
John Coderre, Town Administrator
Kimberly Foster, Assistant Town Administrator

Also Present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner
Daniel Nason, DPW Director

No press was present.

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Pantazis moved the Committee vote to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2013 meeting; Ms. Kelly seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Town Planner Kathy Joubert

Ms. Joubert reviewed the duties of the one full-time administrative assistant whose hours are split between the Planning, Engineering and Conservation Departments. With the addition of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) duties in 2006, the work load significantly increased. With a steady stream of applications each month, a minimum of 20 hours per week is spent on work involved with the present month’s meeting and the follow-up from the last month’s meeting. On average, 24 hours each month are spent on decision writing alone. In order to keep up with the workload, the Administrative Assistant usually works overtime hours each week, receiving 1½ hours of compensatory time for each hour of overtime worked. She has a sizable bank of compensation hours, which are difficult for her to use as the time out of the office puts her behind and leaves the office uncovered.

Ms. Joubert stated that she does much of the Planning Board administrative work herself. She currently serves as staff liaison to 7 or 8 boards, of which none have any administrative staff.

Following her presentation, Ms. Joubert requested an increase in the hours for the part-time Conservation Commission Secretary from 6 hours to 19 hours per week and to hire another part-time recording secretary to take the minutes at the Planning Board meetings.

Ms. Joubert assured the Committee that the issue is not one of time management, but that there are simply too many tasks for one person to accomplish in a 40-hour work week. She added that because of the level of effort that the Boards expect from staff, together with the amount of work needing to be accomplished on any given day, it is no longer feasible to get it all done with just one Administrative Assistant.

Mr. Coderre provided a brief review of the many committees that the Town Planner is staff liaison too. He also spoke briefly about the changes to the Planning and Engineering Offices relating to the Town Engineer position moving to the DPW Department and possible opportunities to restructure administrative staff to address some of the concerns raised by Ms. Joubert.

Dan Nason, DPW Director

DPW Director Dan Nason informed the Board that following a thorough evaluation of the DPW Department, there is a need for additional staff in all divisions (Water/Sewer, Highway, Parks, Cemetery and Trees) including administration and management.

Mr. Nason informed the Committee that his department is continuously facing unfunded State and Federal mandates, increased State and Federal permit requirements. With new development, we are adding infrastructure to the already aging infrastructure, which includes more than 70 miles of water mains and 25 miles of sewer mains. In addition to the increased service demands over the last decade, the department has seen a reduction in staffing levels totaling 6 full-time employees, which is comparable to the staffing levels it had 24 years ago.

Mr. Nason reviewed the seasonal and every-day service demands of the department. In addition, the DPW Department is responsible for the following:

- Staff management
- Technical review (plans, reports, calculations, site visits, etc.)
- Permitting (Water, Wastewater, Street Opening, Trench, etc.)
- Program enforcement
- Development and management of department-wide efficiency measures
- Divisional project assignments
- Capital Improvement Project inception, management, and administration
- Budget awareness and management

Following his presentation, Mr. Nason requested additional employees to be phased in as follows:

Additional Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund Positions in FY15

- One full-time Water/Sewer Superintendent.
- One part-time Administrative Assistant with the possibility of going full-time in subsequent years.

General Fund Positions

- 7 full-time Highway Division employees. Immediately returning two of the General Fund positions cut during the recession, then growing the department in a sustainable manner over the next 5-6 years.
- One full-time Assistant Public Works Director for future consideration.

Mr. Coderre reviewed the DPW Reorganization Report, which was approved at the April 2012 Annual Town Meeting. The goal in FY2015 will be to fill the Sewer Superintendent position out of the Enterprise Fund, then begin to focus on adding back the positions cut from the department during the recession. Mr. Coderre explained that the DPW was the department most severely reduced during the recession.

Other Business

None.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date will be Wednesday, November 13, 2013, at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Coderre informed the Committee that an Executive Session will be scheduled for the next meeting in order to discuss a matter that if discussed in an open meeting, may have a detrimental effect on the position of the Committee.

Adjournment

3:05 p.m. – Ms. Kelly moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. Pantazis seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Wackell
Executive Assistant

Documents used during meeting:

1. October 30, 2013 Meeting Agenda
2. October 23, 2013 Staffing Committee Meeting Minutes
3. Information packet – Town Planner Staffing Presentation
4. Information packet – DPW Director Staffing Presentation