

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
NOVEMBER 18, 2015
REGULAR SESSION

Members Present: David Parker, Nelson Almeida, David Andrade,
Michael Brady, David Viera

Town Administrator: Shawn E. Cadime

Chairman Parker opened the meeting at 7 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Brady offered a moment of silence to recognize our former allies who helped us in the Revolution and France which was attacked by a bunch of animals this past week.

Chairman Parker announced that, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A Section 20, anybody recording the meeting must notify the Chairman. The Board of Selectmen is recording audio and video.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE OPENINGS UPDATE

Mr. Brady announced that volunteers are needed on the Board of Health (2 Board of Selectmen appointments), Conservation Commission (3 BOS), Economic Development Committee (1 BOS), Energy Committee (1 BOS), Historical Commission (2 BOS), Property Tax Work-Off Committee (2 BOS), Zoning Board of Appeals (2 BOS), Permanent Building Committee (5 BOS), and Finance Committee (1 Moderator).

PRIORITY MATTERS

Consider Conditional Offer of Employment to Matthew Adams as a Third Class Firefighter/Paramedic

Chief Healy recommended the appointment of Matthew Adams to fill a recent resignation.

Mr. Cadime concurred with the appointment with the stipulations outlined by the chief.

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To extend a conditional offer of employment to Matthew Adams as firefighter/paramedic third class with the condition that he passes the CORI check, physical and psychological exams, and background check.

He has agreed to sign the Educational Reimbursement Article.

Consider the Appointment of Martha Barry to the Position of Senior Secretary to the Fire Chief

Chief Healy recommended the appointment of Martha Barry as senior secretary to the Fire Chief.

November 18, 2015

-2-

Mr. Cadime concurred with the recommendation.

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Martha Barry as senior secretary to the Fire Chief, effective immediately.

Consider the Appointment of Tim Cabral to the Position of Electrical Inspector

Mr. Cadime advised there is a need to hire additional electrical inspectors to assist with the backlog. It is a part time, per inspection position.

Mr. Cadime recommended the appointment.

Mr. Cabral was in attendance.

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Tim Cabral as electrical inspector.

Consider the Appointment of Peter Bleau to the Position of Electrical Inspector

Mr. Cadime recommended the appointment.

Mr. Bleau was in attendance.

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Peter Bleau as electrical inspector.

Consider the Appointment of Tom Nerney to the Position of On-Call Alternate Building Inspector

Mr. Cadime recommended the appointment on a part time basis.

Mr. Nerney was in attendance. He understood he would be doing field inspections.

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Tom Nerney as On-Call Alternate Building Inspector.

Mr. Brady disclosed that Mr. Nerney had done work for his sister.

Consider, with regret, the Acceptance of Robert Costa, Jr.'s Letter of Resignation from the Board of Health

Mr. Cadime advised Mr. Costa had decided to resign until the Town considers Mass. General Laws Chapter 111, Section 26G.

A motion was made by Mr. Almeida, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept, with regret, the resignation of Robert Costa, Jr.
from the Board of Health.

NEW BUSINESS

Sign Read Street Conservation Restriction

Mr. Cadime advised that Town Meeting had approved the purchase of this land. Article 17 on the June 9, 2014 warrant appropriated \$532,000 from Community Preservation.

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Andrade, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve and sign the Read Street Conservation Restriction.

Public Safety Update/Presentation

Fire Chief Michael Healy went through the staffing for the Fire Department. They man the Public Safety Complex with a two-man engine company and two-man rescue and the Banna Fire Station on Pine Street with two men. Once training is completed with the new hires, staffing will increase to eight per group. That number will change with vacation, comp. time etc. It is crucial to maintain staffing at six per group. Overtime costs are a little high right now. He is using overtime to stay at the six per group. A firefighter is on extended administrative leave. He has a resignation from another firefighter. A firefighter is graduating from the academy this week.

There were 2,628 runs in calendar year 2013 and 2,678 in calendar year 2014. Thus far in 2015, there have been 2,718 runs and currently 350 incidents ahead of the same time last year. EMS revenue is about \$26,000 more than last year in ambulance receipts. There is a huge demand on fire prevention because of all the new construction. Staffing at two stations increases run coverage and reduces the need for mutual aid. They have been able to pick up mutual aid calls.

He will be looking into a full time fire prevention person. They will be able to charge for inspections. He wants to work on a comprehensive plan to get the department up to the national standards and address apparatus replacement, district relocation, and response areas. The plan would be used as a guideline to move the department forward in a fiscally responsible way and ensure the safety of the men and women who protect this community.

November 18, 2015

-4-

Police Chief Craig Mace reported the department is budgeted for 36 people but operating with 33 people on the payroll right now due to retirements and unexpected resignations. He has budgeted for 38 staff as of January 1, 2016. One student officer should go to the academy in January. They are running two unfilled supervisor positions right now. He is presently interviewing people for lateral transfers so they do not have to go to the academy. He provided an organizational chart for the 38 people. He would like to add two night detectives, one more sergeant and another K9 officer.

He would like to see 40 officers over the next few years. He provided a number of options for that.

Chief Mace talked about a Community Resource Officer or Accreditation Officer. The current School/Community Resource Officer is also covering Human Services.

The Police Department had 13,481 calls in calendar year 2013 and 13,241 in 2014. As of October 21, 2015, there were 14,281. There has been an increase in citations issued and break-in in cars as well as a slight increase in domestic violence. Capt. John instituted a program where officers and the SRO are in the schools every day. Officers are also in the school zones during arrival and dismissal times.

Director Campbell has helped with tracking and documenting activities.

Chief Mace outlined the six major pillars covered by President Obama's task force.

As far as the budget, he loaded supervisors on the 4 to 12 p.m. and midnight to 8 a.m. shifts. Days are operating with just one patrol supervisor. The detectives' line item is over because of investigations.

Director of Communications Chris Campbell said they have eight full time dispatchers. One dispatcher on the midnight to 8 a.m. shift and two dispatchers on the 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 12 a.m. shifts. Due to staffing issues, and to be fiscal responsible and to prevent burn out, he scaled down to one dispatcher on the midnight shift. Interviews are being held and, once an additional dispatcher is hired, there will be two dispatchers on 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Call volumes are up. Currently for 2015, 17,264 calls logged into the system. That represents police and fire and is a 17% increase over 2014, 15% increase over 2013, and 19% over 2012.

Since the beginning of the year, high volume times for police are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. for fire. Thus far in 2015, 911 calls are at 3,805 compared to 4,114 in 2014, and 4,215 in 2013.

Once the 9th position is filled, he is comfortable with staffing levels. They will be able to serve

November 18, 2015

-5-

citizens and agencies with two dispatchers per shift. He might consider a supervisor position on the evening shift in the future.

They are in the process of talking with consultants about the radio systems. It will be a major undertaking. They also have to look at addressing radio coverage throughout the town. They are now using old technology that is becoming more and more difficult to deal with and repair through Verizon. They also have to look at restrictions on radio frequency. Next Generation 911 is replacing the 911 system in the State. It is an insurmountable undertaking.

Mr. Almeida thanked them for the presentation which is informative for residents. He thanked these three department heads for making Seekonk a safe community.

Mr. Viera agreed that they are doing an excellent job. He felt the presentation provided an opportunity to understand more about what is going on when it comes to budget time.

Mr. Brady pointed out to the many years of experience between these public safety officials. He said the citizens are in capable hands. As a police officer, he knows the challenges coming in the next ten years will be diverse and complicated.

Chairman Parker echoed those thoughts. He assured the citizens of Seekonk that they are in good hands from these three people. The Town has the right people in place to meet the challenges.

Consider, with regret, the Acceptance of Bernadette DeBlander's Letter of Resignation as Conservation Agent

Mr. Cadime advised that Ms. DeBlander has accepted a position with the DEP. He said it will be difficult to find an individual as suitable and competent and well-rounded on all levels dealing with constituents and all the different topics, concerns and issues dealing with conservation. It is important to find that balance again.

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Andrade, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept, with regret, the resignation of Bernadette DeBlander as Conservation Agent.

Mr. Viera said she will be missed and tough to replace and it is questionable whether she can be replaced.

Chairman Parker agreed with Mr. Viera. The Town was very fortunate to have Ms. DeBlander. She was recognized by the State of Massachusetts and offered what she was truly worth. She will be missed.

Consider Posting Vacancy of Conservation Agent Position

Board members agreed to post the position of Conservation Agent.

Consider, with regret, the Acceptance of Darlene Christensen's Letter of Resignation as Assistant Animal Control Officer

Mr. Viera made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was

VOTED: 4 Ayes; To accept, with regret, the resignation of Darlene Christensen as Assistant Animal Control Officer.

The vote: Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Brady – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Parker – Aye. Mr. Almeida was not in the room at the time of the vote.

Tax Title Presentation Update

Mr. Cadime had documentation from Treasurer/Collector Christine DeFontes. There were parcels taken in foreclosure. He wanted to have a discussion in February about what to do with these parcels – auction or keep some of them. Some are wetlands and would be difficult to sell.

Mrs. DeFontes explained there is a summary on how tax titles are handled on the website. Real estate bills go out. If unpaid, warning letters are sent out and then advertised in the newspaper and a lien is put on the property. The Collector's Office works with taxpayers who have extenuating circumstances. They are given at least a year to pay.

She said foreclosure expenditures are \$515 for filing in the land court, \$76 recording fee, and \$120 attorney fee just to get the case going. Those fees go up from there. Attorney fees are added to the parcel and recouped when the taxes are paid.

In the last five years, they only placed liens on half percent of the bills sent out. Eighty six parcels are outstanding at \$559,000 total principal.

The last auction was in 1998. At that time, there were four parcels the Board of Selectmen did not want to auction.

Mr. Cadime said the interest is 14%. Once in tax title, it is 16% . He urged people who owe back taxes to talk to Mrs. DeFontes. There is a payment plan that does not accrue at 16%. There are options acceptable under Mass. General Laws.

Mr. Almeida asked what happens if a person on a payment plan does not pay.

Mrs. DeFontes said it depends on circumstances and where they are in the budget process.

November 18, 2015

-7-

Taxpayers can't be more than a year behind. If they are two years behind, a lien is placed on the property.

She noted there are some properties the Town does not want to own, such as 36 Maple Avenue.

Mr. Cadime said that when a property is taken in foreclosure, the Town is exempt from liability if it is contaminated. He suggested holding off on Maple Avenue. The Town cannot apply for grants. It might be possible to find someone who could develop a plan to apply for those grants. Some requirements have changed. They have got to hold off until the Board makes a determination on what is going to happen.

Chairman Parker noted that several people in town have told him they had tax problems and that Mrs. DeFontes and her staff are exceptionally professional. He congratulated her on her leadership.

Mr. Almeida added his appreciation.

Discussion on Pond Street Bridge Improvements

Interim Supt. of the Department of Public Works David Cabral advised that he met with the GPI bridge engineer and they reviewed the bridge rating report. GPI did a good job locating the concerns.

Pond Street Bridge is at a point that will need maintenance work. It would cost \$2M for replacement. It does not need replacement at this time.

GPI read the report from Mass. DOT and determined that the bridge is structurally efficient to handle the loading of vehicles. The guardrails over the bridge should be replaced and the concrete curbing is deteriorating. There is nothing backing up that guardrail preventing a vehicle from going into the river below. The cost for design and construction work is \$400,000.

Mr. Andrade clarified that the price of a new bridge is \$2M compared to repairs at around \$400,000.

Mr. Cabral said a new bridge now would cost \$2M and would last 30 years. If maintenance is done now, the bridge might not need to be replaced in ten years. It would cost a lot more to replace the bridge in 25 years.

His recommendation would be to do preventative maintenance and budget for the \$400,000 over the next three years. He noted that the structure of bridges is beyond his expertise.

Mr. Almeida asked about the impact on traffic during repairs.

November 18, 2015

-8-

Mr. Cabral said could possibly maintain traffic in two lanes. He would have to talk to the engineer. The work could be close to a year.

Mr. Brady would not be in favor of putting sidewalks there. The area is 90% commercial. He would be in favor of repairs to the structure and guardrails.

Chairman Parker suggested it should go to the Capital Improvement Committee for the Spring Town Meeting.

Mr. Cadime wants to meet with Mr. Cabral and GPI representatives.

Mr. Andrade said the attention is to look at guardrails for public safety and the undermining of foundations. It is not eminent. That cost is \$750,000.

Mr. Cabral has reached out to GPI. He recommended an engineer meet with the Board to answer questions.

On another matter, Mr. Almeida thanked Mr. Cadime and Mr. Cabral for addressing his concerns regarding sidewalks on Olney Street.

A motion was made by Mr. Brady, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To move the order of business to Continue Discussions on Potential Cemetery Locations under Old Business.

OLD BUSINESS

Continue Discussions on Potential Cemetery Locations

Mr. Cabral had follow up information to the work session on October 14. He looked at Town Hall property, Holy Cross Cemetery on Dexter Avenue, and land at Pleasant Street School.

The three sites at Town Hall are behind Town Hall, behind the animal shelter and between the animal shelter road and property line. An area is under power line so that is off limits. He had a copy of records from the Board of Health. Testing was done in 2000. There was an indication of mottling. That means a high ground water level. It varies throughout the year. Mottling is a discoloration of the soil. Estimated high ground water is 50 inches. In 2008, a test was done behind Town Hall. The estimated high ground water level was 60-70 inches. In 2013, it was 60 inches. Most of the land at Town Hall has high ground water.

The Pleasant Street School location was tested today. They went down five feet and didn't hit any water but got clear coloration. They went down seven feet and got ground water. The high water level is about five feet. There is also a raised septic system behind the school.

November 18, 2015

-9-

The water level at the current cemetery is six feet.

Mr. Brady noted the cemetery is old and back then they probably did not do mottling.

Mr. Cadime said he contacted legal and there are technical requirements to be met. The Board of Health would have to conduct a public hearing.

Mr. Cabral spoke to the groundskeeper at Holy Cross cemetery who put him in touch with a parishioner. They have a parish committee. It might be possible to merge with them. They own vacant land there. He is waiting to hear from the pastor to schedule a meeting. There is room for 400 graves in the existing cemetery and the vacant land which could mean about 1,034 graves.

Mr. Andrade said they need to find out from the Board of Health what regulations are as far as the water table.

Chairman Parker asked about the land at Fall River Avenue.

Mr. Almeida said it wasn't one of the top three.

Mr. Andrade said they were trying to find town-owned land that would have minimal impact on residential areas and that is where these three parcels came from

Chairman Parker noted that the Holy Cross Cemetery is not town land.

Mr. Andrade said the Board directed Mr. Cabral to look at the three parcels of land and consider the property on Dexter Street as a temporary fix.

Mr. Brady said it was selected because it already is a cemetery. There was an indication the parish was having financial problems and would allow the Town to utilize the land and maintain it.

Chairman Parker felt the Board should have known six months ago there are state regulations.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider the Approval of Regular Session Minutes of October 21, 2015

A motion was made by Mr. Brady, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the Regular Session minutes of October 21, 2015.

OLD BUSINESS

Assign Warrant Articles to Board Members

Article 1 - Chairman Parker, Article 2 – Mr. Viera, Article 3 – Mr. Brady, Article 4 –Mr. Almeida, Article 5 - Mr. Andrade, Article 6 – Mr. Andrade, Article 7 - Mr. Almeida, Article 8 – Mr. Viera, Article 9 – Mr. Brady, Article 10 – Mr. Andrade, Article 11 – Mr. Brady, Article 12 – Mr. Viera.

Mr. Brady said if Article 3 (Charter amendment) doesn't pass he will make sure he gets the 10 signatures to put it on the ballot so that all department heads will get life appointments. It isn't fair that some have to be reappointed every three years.

If Article 9 passes, the Board will have to work with the Steelworkers Union to reclassify the director as Council on Aging Director.

The Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 30th at 7 p.m.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS

Mr. Antonio Goulart of 20 Carters Way talked about the on-going problem re: Lynch Corp. He spoke to Seekonk police at 2 a.m. outside his house. Seekonk police went on property and caught a truck in there at about 5:45 A.M. He sent an e-mail out to the Board. He only has Mr. Andrade's cell phone number so he sent him a video and asked him to forward it to the rest of the Board.

Mr. Cadime said he could ask to meet with representatives from Lynch again. Ninety-nine percent of the property is in East Providence and Seekonk has no jurisdiction.

Mr. Andrade felt the biggest complaint is the glaring lights and gates slamming.

Mr. Goulart complained about the mounds of dirt behind his house and what would happen when it's windy.

Mr. Cadime noted they could potentially run into a similar situation with Federal Express because it will be located in an industrial park and residents in the neighboring community (Swansea) are already complaining about the noise level.

Mr. Goulart, who works for Fed Ex, said it's a big difference having a tractor trailer go by every now and then.

Mr. Viera felt Lynch should have come before the Board for authorization to store materials.

Mr. Cadime said the bylaw addresses earth not construction debris.

November 18, 2015

-11-

Mr. Cadime said he wants to solve this situation. He has no mechanism to do that. At the end of the day that material is going back to the grinding process. He noted that the bylaw review committee has put in a recommendation to include construction debris.

Mr. Almeida suggested that representatives from Lynch attend the Board meeting in two weeks.

Mr. Brady asked that representatives from the DEP come to check it out.

Mr. Donald Kinniburgh said the material has to be recycled.

He complained that the Veterans Day observation was not held on Veterans Day.

Chairman Parker felt those comments were uncalled for.

Mr. Cadime said that veterans are recognized. He noted that the Memorial Day parade is not held on Memorial Day.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discuss Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chairman 48 Hours Before the Meeting

None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cadime advised the granite for the Veterans Memorial Park was rebid and will close on December 9. It will be on the agenda for December 16.

Groundbreaking for the senior center was well attended. It provided an opportunity for residents to see the site.

Interviews for dispatcher are done. Candidates are being interviewed for the Police Department.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Almeida advised that Parks and Recreation will run the "Something to do Saturdays" at the Hurley Middle School beginning on November 21, 2015, to January 9, 2016 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The cost is \$3 per child.

He said approximately 150 people attended the pasta night last Friday to support the Veterans Memorial Park project.

November 18, 2015

-12-

Mr. Viera said it was sponsored by the Friends of the Seekonk Veterans Memorial Park. Young's Caterers donated the food. People donated items for the raffle. They raised \$4,000.

He asked about an RFP to get on the towing list.

Mr. Cadime will check.

Mr. Brady said he is waiting to hear who the representative is from the School Department for discussions on consolidation.

He asked Mr. Cadime to set up a meeting in December with the three groups involved to discuss the Veterans Memorial Park.

Chairman Parker advised he had received an e-mail regarding the Community Electricity Aggregation.

He said the cost will be 9.4 cents per KW hours. Residents currently on National Grid will automatically be in and would have to opt out if not interested. Residents who previously went with another company would have to request to go into the program.

Mr. Andrade said National Grid customers are paying 13.1 cents per KW hours. In the new program, services will not be interrupted and payment will still be made to National Grid. The only change is that the electric bill will be less.

Mr. Brady said that National Grid is still responsible for the lines and poles.

Mr. Andrade said anyone who has a contract with another supplier can still opt in to National Grid at any time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:55 p.m. Mr. Brady motioned, seconded by Mr. Viera, to go into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions with respect to negotiations with the AFSCME Dispatch Unit per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(3), to conduct strategy sessions with respect to negotiations with the Clerical Unit per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(3), and to consider the approval of Executive Session minutes of October 21, 2015; not to return to Open Session.

The vote: Mr. Brady – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Almeida – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Parker – Aye. He will not participate in negotiations.

November 18, 2015

-13-

Respectfully submitted,

David Andrade, Clerk

Patricia Gamer, Secretary