

Office of the
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
272 Main Street
Townsend, Massachusetts 01469

Nicholas Thalheimer, *Chairman*

Sue Lisio, *Vice-Chairman*

Robert Plamondon, *Clerk*

Andrew J. Sheehan,
Town Administrator

Office (978) 597-1700
Fax (978) 597-1719

SELECTMEN'S MEETING AGENDA
FEBRUARY 26, 2013 - 7:00 P.M.
SELECTMEN'S MEETING CHAMBERS

I PRELIMINARIES

- 1.1 Call the meeting to order and roll call
- 1.2 Notice that the meeting is being tape recorded
- 1.3 Chairman's Additions or Deletions:
- 1.4 Review/Approve Meeting Minutes: February 12, 2013. Votes may be taken.

II APPOINTMENTS /HEARINGS

- 2.1 7:15 **Executive Session:** under G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(2) to conduct contract negotiations with Lieutenant David Profit and Town Administrator Andrew Sheehan. Votes may be taken.

III MEETING BUSINESS

- 3.1 Vote to accept grants from the Greater Lowell Community Foundation in the amount of \$3,739 and the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts in the amount of \$3,710 to fund the Townsend Alliance Against Drugs. Votes may be taken.
- 3.2 Discussion of Charter amendments including recommendations in the Dept. of Revenue Financial Management Review. Votes may be taken.
- 3.3 Review bylaw amendment for street opening permits. Votes may be taken.
- 3.4 Approve one day liquor license for Colin McNabb of the Knights of Columbus #14842 for the St. Joseph's Feast to be held on March 23, 2013 from 5-9:30PM. Votes may be taken.
- 3.5 Discussion of FY14 operating budget. Votes may be taken.

IV APPOINTMENTS OF PERSONNEL/OFFICIALS

- 4.1 Police Chief Erving Marshall requests the appointment of David Mazza as Telecommunications Supervisor. Votes may be taken.
- 4.2 Police Chief Erving Marshall requests the appointment of Reserve Officers Daniel Schultz and Brent Davis. Votes may be taken.

V WORK SESSION

- 5.1 Board of Selectmen Updates/Reports
- 5.2 Town Administrator Updates/Reports
- 5.3 Review/Sign Payroll Warrant
- 5.4 Review/Sign Bills Payable Warrant



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1.4

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Robert Plamondon, *Clerk*
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SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 12, 2013 - 7:00 P.M.
SELECTMEN'S MEETING CHAMBERS

I PRELIMINARIES

- 1.1 The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and roll call showed Chairman, Nicholas Thalheimer (NT); Vice-Chairman, Sue Lisio (SL); and Clerk, Robert Plamondon (RP) in attendance.
- 1.2 NT gave notice that the meeting is being tape recorded.
- 1.3 The Chairman noted the board will take no action on 3.5 and add a new item 3.6.
- 1.4 Review/Approve Meeting Minutes: January 29, 2013. Motion was made by RP to approve meeting minutes of January 29, 2013. NT seconded. Unanimous. SL abstained.
- 1.5 Review/Approve Executive Session Minutes from December 18, 2012; January 8, 2013; January 15, 2013; and January 29, 2013. Motion was made by RP to approve and hold executive session minutes from December 18, 2012. SL seconded. Unanimous. Motion was made by RP to approve and hold executive session minutes from January 8, 2013. SL seconded. Unanimous. Motion was made by RP to approve and hold executive session minutes from January 15, 2013. SL seconded. Unanimous. Motion was made by RP to approve and hold executive session minutes from January 29, 2013. NT seconded. Unanimous. SL abstained.

II APPOINTMENTS /HEARINGS

- 2.1 7:05 Susan Funaiole, Town Clerk; Present winner of #1 dog tag: Sammy the Shih Tzu brought his family in to receive the honors and the blanket and gift certificates from Townsend Veterinary Hospital and Country Flair. Everybody is reminded that the \$5 late fee starts March 1st.
- 3.3 Approve change of Town Election schedule: Sue Funaiole, Town Clerk, requested the BOS approve combining the State Special Primary and local elections. Instead of the local election being held on April 22, 2103, it would be held April 30, 2013. It could save the town approximately \$1,200-\$1,500. Mr. Sheehan pointed out that many communities are taking advantage of this option. The last date to take out papers would be moved to March 8, 2013 and they would not need to be returned until March 12, 2013. There are still a few positions people have not taken out nomination papers for including Assessors, Cemetery and Parks, Planning Board, Recreation Commission, Housing Authority and 3 positions on the Trust Fund. Clarification was made of some aspects of the voting process. RP moved that the Board vote, pursuant to Section 2 of chapter 2 of the Acts of 2013, to change the date of the annual Town election of April 22, 2013 to coincide with the date of the Special State Primary on April 30, 2013. Further, the remainder of the election calendar shall be set

- as required by statute and will be posted on the Town Website and in the Town Clerk's Office. SL seconded. Unanimous.
- 3.2 Vote to increase Snow & Ice deficit spending authorization: In light of the recent storm, Mr. Sheehan recommends the Board increase the Snow & Ice budget an additional \$50,000 bringing the total to \$125,000. Motion made by RP to increase the Snow & Ice deficit \$50,000. SL seconded. Unanimous.
- 3.6 Vote on request of Beneficial Massachusetts for the Board of Selectmen to waive its right to notice of foreclosure under c. 61A: Mr. Sheehan explained that property at 114 Old Meeting House Road under the tax advantage statute, Chapter 61A, was foreclosed on without the lender giving notice to the town. This oversight is holding up the sale of the property to the buyer. On behalf of Beneficial Massachusetts, Inc. attorney Brian Shea requested the BOS waive the notice and the right of first refusal for the aforementioned property. Mr. Sheehan has discussed the matter with Town Counsel. RP moved to waive the Town's right to notice of sale and its right of first refusal. SL seconded. Unanimous.
- 2.2 7:15 FY14 North Middlesex Regional School District budget: Joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee: Joan Landers (JL) and Susan Robbins (SR) present for the North Middlesex Regional School District. Colin McNabb (CM) and Andrea Wood (AW) present for the Finance Committee (no quorum). The Superintendent has worked diligently on the budget since early November. They began with a 2.5% increase, reduced it to a 1-1.5% increase and she has been requested by the Finance Sub-Committee to further reduce that to a .5% increase – \$350,000-\$372,000. The Governor's budget shows a \$127,053 decrease to Townsend. There was also a decrease in Ashby of \$92,000 and there was a significant increase in Pepperell of \$472,000. Based on a 1% budget and the Governor's proposed budget, above the minimum local contribution would be \$20,553. There would be a decrease to the operating budget of \$106,500. Chapter 71 transportation aid came in \$69,306 lower. So the change to Townsend would be an increase of \$12,515. So the total local revenue for Townsend would be -\$93,984 based on a 1% budget using \$200,000 of the excess and deficiency (E&D) account. RP asked why the decreased numbers for Townsend. JL said there has been a slight decrease in enrollment. Mr. Sheehan noted our minimum local contribution is going down. Discussion was had on how local contributions are defined and shifts in enrollment. Superintendent Landers will be presenting the proposed .5% increase budget to the full School Committee this coming Thursday evening, February 14, 2013. So far this budget season, they have worked out 8 budget scenarios. The public hearing is scheduled for February 25, 2013. Andrea Wood asked for clarification of the differences between target share and minimum contribution and how the figures are arrived at. The School Committee has to certify their budget by March.
- 2.3 7:30 Fire Chief Don Klein: requesting permission to apply for SAFER Grant and request to fill a second Deputy Chief position: Chief Klein would like to apply for 2 separate SAFER grants; one for on-call firefighters and a second for full-time personnel. There has been a dramatic decrease in on-call firefighters. It costs \$3,500 each to hire, train and equip. He has lost one full-time employee and is about to lose the second. Discussion was had on the benefits and detriments of being awarded this grant. RP moved to grant permission to Fire Chief Don Klein to apply for SAFER grants. SL seconded. Unanimous.

With regard to filling a second Deputy Chief position, Chief Klein would like to promote the most senior captain within the department, who has been there for about 28 years. Currently he is a Grade 3 level 8 (\$18.75/hr.). He would be raised to Grade 4 level 6 (\$19.09/hr.). Chief Klein has room in his budget to cover this. Mr. Sheehan said the position has to be posted. Motion made by RP to allow the chief to post the position for a second Deputy Chief position. SL seconded. Unanimous.

III MEETING BUSINESS

- 3.1 Sign employment contract with Fire-EMS Chief, Don Klein: Mr. Sheehan gave an update on contract negotiations. The new contract will be in place until March 31, 2014. Chief Klein will receive a 2 ½% increase to \$81,328. RP moved to sign the employment contract with Fire-EMS Chief, Don Klein. SL seconded. Unanimous.
- 3.4 Personnel Policies manual: discussion of revisions to manual. Mr. Sheehan gave details of the review of the current manual. Instead of repeating federal and state laws and policies it should make reference to them. The current policies were adopted in 2004 and have never been amended. This is our opportunity to bring the policies up to current standards and puts in place a process that allows them to be amended as needed over time. Motion made by RP to put the draft bylaw amendment on the Town Meeting warrant subject to revision and review by town counsel. SL seconded. Unanimous.

V WORK SESSION

- 5.1 Board of Selectmen Updates/Reports: RP reported on the passing of Shirley Kao. SL requested clarification of the Charter Review Committee report and the substantive changes that would require further investigation, one of those being appointed vs. elected positions. She requests deliberation on this subject at the next meeting.
- 5.2 Town Administrator Updates/Reports: Mr. Sheehan said he has asked the Capital Planning Committee to support the purchase of an integrated financial software package for the Assessor, Accountant and Treasurer/Tax Collector. The current systems are not compatible. The request to Capital Planning is for \$60,000 for the purchase and set up. There would also be an annual hosting/license fee which are the same or less than what we currently spend. Capital Planning will come before the Board with their recommendations in March. Mr. Sheehan also reminded all that warrant articles are due March 1 a 5:00PM. He complimented the staff of Highway, Police, Fire-EMS, Cemetery & Parks, contractors and all those who worked so hard through the storm. Special thanks to the Highway Department. Townsend's roads were better maintained than many other communities.
- 5.3 Review/Sign Payroll Warrant: RP moved to sign warrants out of session. SL seconded. Unanimous.
- 5.4 Review/Sign Bills Payable Warrant: RP moved to sign warrants out of session. SL seconded. Unanimous.

Executive Session: RP moved at 8:37PM to enter into executive session under G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(2) to conduct contract negotiations with Lieutenant David Profit and Town Administrator Andrew Sheehan and to adjourn directly from executive session. SL seconded. SL aye, RP aye, NT eye. The board entered into executive session at 8:38PM.



3.1

February 8, 2013

Mr. Gregory Barnes
Town of Townsend
272 Main St
Townsend, MA 01469-1510

Dear Mr. Barnes:

Congratulations!

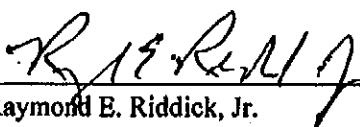
On behalf of the Nashoba Valley Community Healthcare Fund Advisory Committee, the Greater Lowell Community Foundation (GLCF) and the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts (CFNCM) are delighted to inform you that your organization has been selected to receive an award of \$7,449 from the Fall 2012 grant cycle for your "Townsend Alliance Against Drugs" Program.

Please see the accompanying agreement form (in triplicate) and sign, date and return two originals to the Greater Lowell Community Foundation by March 1, 2013. The award checks (one from each community foundation) will be sent to you within ten (10) days of receipt of your signed agreement, as follows:


\$3,739 from GLCF
\$3,710 from CFNCM

We wish you every success as you implement this project.

Sincerely,



Raymond E. Riddick, Jr.
Executive Director
Greater Lowell Community Foundation



Philip M. Grzewinski
President
Community Foundation of North Central MA

Cc: Mr. Erving M. Marshall, Jr.

Report Recommendations

We encourage the selectmen and others, when formulating overall strategies for improving the town's financial management, to consider the observations, analyses and recommendations contained in this report. These following items are recommendations only and can be implemented, at the town's option, provided there is sufficient cooperation among the various boards, committees and officials.

Improve Budgeting, Financial Coordination and Government Structure

1. Complete the Required Charter Review
2. Give the Town Administrator Appointing Authority
3. Appoint the Collector and Formally Combine with Treasurer
4. Improve Coordination of Financial Functions
5. Provide for Succession Planning
6. Request a Management Letter with an Independent Audits
7. Move Water Department Billing to Collector's Office
8. Clarify the Reporting Responsibility of the Administrative Assistant

Implement New Policies and Procedures

9. Conduct Employee Performance Reviews
10. Investigate Costs and Benefits of a Lockbox Service
11. Record Deputy Collector Payment on Vendor Warrant
12. Apply Partial Payments to Interest First
13. Establish a Drop-Box at Town Hall
14. Require All Grants and Contracts
15. Require Evidence of Departmental Reconciliations
16. Issue Sales Questionnaires

Make Better Use of Technology in Government

17. Explore Financial Software Options
18. Promote On-line Property Tax Data
19. Expand the Use of GIS

Improve Budgeting, Financial Coordination and Government Structure

Recommendation 1: Complete the Required Charter Review

We recommend the town move expeditiously to conduct the 10-year review of its charter, as required. The Townsend charter, first adopted in May 1999, clearly defines the government structure under which the town operates and includes a provision calling for a comprehensive review of the charter at least every 10 years. It is complemented by a series of bylaws that fill in the details and are more easily revised as circumstances warrant. We understand that the nine-member charter review committee is awaiting the appointment of the last several members and intends to make a report for consideration at the May 2012 town meeting. We saw much to admire in the Townsend charter, particularly the enumeration of the powers and duties of the town administrator and the clear outline of the annual budget process. However, we did note some areas where the charter could be improved and offer several recommendations for the charter review commission to consider, namely Recommendations 2, 3 and 4.

A charter has become the preferred means, over bylaws and policies, to achieve long-term continuity and stability as officials, board members and personnel change. As such, one outcome is that charters can strengthen public confidence in government if its provisions are adhered to. We encourage Townsend officials to follow through on the charter review. When they do, we hope they will consider the following three recommendations, whose adoption require charter changes.

Recommendation 2: Give the Town Administrator Appointing Authority

We recommend that the town empower the town administrator's position with appointing authority. It is the clear intention of the charter that the town administrator is to be the chief executive officer of the town and that the Board of Selectmen shall act only through the adoption of broad policy guidelines that are to be implemented by the town administrator and the other officers and employees serving under it. It is explicitly stated that in no case are the selectmen to be involved in the day-to-day administration of any town agency. At the same time, we observe the need for a stronger management presence.

The town administrator's authority could be greatly enhanced if the Board of Selectmen were to delegate some of their appointing authority so that department managers are appointed by and report to the town administrator.⁴ The charter could also direct the town administrator to

⁴ In Townsend the Board of Selectmen appoint the Town Administrator, Town Accountant and an assistant, Constables, Town Counsel, Building Commissioner, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Historic Districts Commission, Personnel Board, Board of Registrars and other Election Officers, Police Chief and Police Department, Keeper of the Lockup, Crossing Guards, Fire Chief and Fire Department, Hazardous Waste Coordinator, Parking Clerk, Tree Warden, Ambulance Department, Communication Department, Highway Superintendent and Highway Department, Nashoba Valley Technical High School Committee, Animal Inspector, Cultural Council, American Flag Committee, Abram S. French Fund, Band Concert Committee, Computer Committee, Council on Aging, Animal Control Officer, Assistant Animal Control Officer(s), Gas Inspector and Alternate, Town Forest Committee, Industrial Development Committee,

complete regular performance evaluations of all department heads and require all department heads to routinely evaluate their staff (see *Recommendation 8*).

Recommendation 3: Appoint the Collector and Formally Combine with Treasurer

We recommend the town consider changing the collector from an elected to an appointed position in the long term and formally converting the position to one of collector/treasurer. This recommendation reflects our longstanding conviction that these two positions require specific skill sets and are therefore better appointed rather than elected. It speaks to a prevailing theory of government practice that policy makers should be elected, but operational positions, where a certain skill set is required, such as the treasurer, collector, accountant, assistant assessor, etc., should be appointed. In addition the parallel and overlapping responsibilities of the two offices support combining them into a single position.

Looking ahead to when the present collector/treasurer leaves town service, a small community like Townsend may find it difficult to find a townsperson who is both qualified to serve and willing to run for elective office. Advertising to fill an appointed position would extend beyond town boundaries. By requiring potential candidates to go through a background check and an extensive interview process, the town improves its chances of attracting a person with the strongest credentials and/or most relevant professional experience. In addition, an appointed collector/treasurer would be placed on equal footing with other finance officers and department managers who have similar level responsibilities. As such, the collector/treasurer should be accountable to and report to the town administrator, and be subject to annual performance reviews.

In any event, the town may want to consider officially combining these two offices. In the case of Townsend where the bylaws allow the selectmen to appoint the elected collector to simultaneously serve as town treasurer, the change would be little more than cosmetic as the two positions are already held by the same individual.

We recommend the town consider converting other offices from elected to appointed. A clear trend has emerged among Massachusetts communities in favor of appointed positions for a number of compelling reasons. Most relate to ensuring that office holders possess the experience and qualifications for the position and to expanding the pool of potential candidates for the job. Another problem arises when qualified candidates fail to materialize. In Townsend, with 14

Cable Television Committee, Veterans Agent, West Townsend Reading Room Committee, Wire Inspector and alternate, Plumbing Inspector and alternate, Land Use Coordinator, Janitor, Chief Procurement Officer and Town Properties Committee.

elected positions and boards, the charter review commission might consider converting some of these from elected to appointed positions.⁵

Recommendation 4: Improve Coordination of Financial Functions

We recommend that Townsend establish a financial management team. Financial team meetings are a useful forum for reviewing responsibilities and deadlines related to town meetings, the annual budget, the Schedule A, the Tax Recapitulation Sheet, and Free Cash certification. They are an occasion to analyze financial problems, spur creative thinking as well as develop and incubate new ideas. Meetings present opportunities to identify critical junctures for the town and to formulate strategies to avert potential fiscal problems. The group can be a sounding board for proposed procedures or policies.

In addition, meetings enhance lines of communication to ensure that all involved receive the same message or new information at the same time. They provide a forum to raise and resolve interdepartmental issues. The financial management team is not intended, however, to function as a policy making body, nor as one that would encroach on the duties or decision-making responsibilities of the board of selectmen, finance committee or a town administrator.

In Townsend, we would expect a financial management team to comprise the town administrator, an assessor, the accountant, the collector/treasurer and the MIS Director. The town administrator would chair the group which might meet quarterly and more frequently if circumstances so warranted.

Recommendation 5: Provide for Succession Planning

We recommend the town develop a plan to fill anticipated vacancies. Although Townsend has longevity in town hall, at least one departure may be imminent. A plan for filling vacancies can provide for smooth and thoughtful transitions. A plan also presents an opportunity to rethink individual roles and office functions with an eye toward creating greater efficiencies and possible cost savings. It should be simple and easy to implement.

As an initial step, when town officials become aware of an impending vacancy, they should establish a target date when the position will be filled. They should allow time to gather information about core functions and legal responsibilities of the office and/or the position. Included would be any job description, position classification and grade, hours assigned and

⁵ The offices to be filled by ballot are the Board of Selectmen, Town Moderator, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Planning Board, Board of Water Commissioners, Board of Library Trustees, North Middlesex Regional School Committee Representatives, Cemetery and Parks Commissioners, Recreation Commissioners, Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials, Amanda Dwight Entertainment Fund and Townsend Housing Authority.

benefits package, if any. Applicable provisions of the personnel policies or bylaws should be identified.

Before advertising the position, a salary survey of neighboring towns should be completed to determine whether the town is sufficiently competitive to attract qualified job candidates. Through interviews with the departing employee, remaining staff and others, discussion of whether changes in the job duties or office functions are warranted should take place. The skill sets, experience and qualifications necessary to fulfill the resulting job responsibilities should be defined and incorporated into an updated job description.

A vacancy also presents an opportunity to explore whether options exist to merge positions internally or to share costs with other towns. Contracting out for a particular service might also be an efficient alternative.

Recommendation 6: Request a Management Letter with Independent Audits

We recommend the town request a management letter whenever it contracts for an independent audit of its financial statements. The management letter is the independent auditor's written communication to town officials, separate from the audit report. It identifies areas of deficiency, if any, and presents recommendations for improvements in accounting procedures, internal controls and other matters. To be most effective, the town should require the audit firm's managers to appear before the board of selectmen to answer questions regarding their findings. This approach presents an opportune forum to assess the town's financial position and hold financial team members accountable for their performance.

As a routine practice, we also comment on the number of years that a municipality might contract with or rely on the same auditor. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that communities enter into multi-year agreements with auditors, or a series of one-year contracts, for a term of at least five years. A multi-year agreement allows for greater continuity and enables a new auditor to spread initial start-up costs over multiple years, potentially reducing costs in the initial years. However, after this term, GFOA recommends a full competitive selection process and a rotation of auditors after each multi-year agreement. Contracting with a new audit firm can not only bring a fresh perspective, but reflects good practice. In general, communities are encouraged to re-advertise for auditing services every five to eight years. GFOA also acknowledges circumstances or locations where there is a lack of competition among fully qualified auditors. In such cases, the continued participation of the then current auditor is acceptable, assuming their past performance has been satisfactory and has conformed to industry standards.

Recommendation 7: Move Water Department Billing to Collector's Office

We recommend the town shift the responsibility for collecting water fees to the collector's office. Currently the office clerks in the Water Department are responsible for assigning charges to 1,940 water users. They print, mail and collect water bills. Then they receive and post payments to the computer system, and turn over collections to the treasurer. As a result, an important check and balance is missing when the same department both commits charges and collects payments.

Instead, the water bills should be committed by the water department to the collector who would receive and post payments. Bills can still be issued by the water department, including printing, stuffing and mailing. Shifting the collection functions into the collector/treasurer's office will restore an important check and balance.

Adoption of this recommendation will increase the workload of the collector's office and decrease the workload of the water department so some reallocation of staff may be required especially in July 2011 when the town intends to move from semi-annual to quarterly billing of water accounts. One way to address this issue is to consider the use of a lockbox.

Recommendation 8: Clarify the Reporting Responsibility of the Administrative Assistant

We recommend that the administrative assistant report solely to the town administrator. The administrative assistant in Townsend currently reports to the board of selectmen and the town administrator. Her primary responsibilities include clerical and administrative support for the board as well as responsibility for personnel administration and procurement. Moving forward, we recommend that the administrative assistant work at the direction of the town administrator. Under this arrangement, she would still be expected to complete board related responsibilities, such as the agenda, minutes and correspondence, but would ultimately report to the town administrator who is in a better position to direct her day-to-day activities. The administrative assistant would also benefit by having a single set of priorities. As is common in most towns, the board of selectmen's primary access to municipal government would be through the town administrator. In this way, a management hierarchy is clear. The town administrator will be aware of selectmen's concerns and questions and can determine how to be most responsive.

Implement New Policies and Procedures

Recommendation 9: Conduct Employee Performance Reviews

We recommend that annual performance reviews be conducted for all employees. Increasingly, government is placing greater attention on written job descriptions with goals, performance expectations, and provisions for annual employee evaluations. Based on each employee's duties and responsibilities and the evaluation standards established by the personnel committee, a department head or supervisor would develop benchmarks by which each employee's job performance may be measured. Annual evaluations are typically used to reward employees with a step increase for a job well done and/or given suggestions if performance improvement is warranted. In Townsend, annual performance reviews were routine until FY2009 when there was no appropriation to provide for salary adjustments; today only a handful of employees are evaluated.

We believe an evaluation program works best when it is recognized as a two-way process. Employee performance is an obvious focus, but employee opinion and comment during the process can provide valuable insight to management. Ultimately, the evaluation process can evolve into a collaborative effort leading to improvements in job performance, the operation of government and in work place conditions. For these reasons, performance evaluations should be revived even if no salary adjustments are forthcoming.

Recommendation 10: Investigate Costs and Benefits of a Lockbox Service

We recommend that the collector/treasurer's office identify the costs and benefits associated with a lockbox. A lockbox, managed by an outside financial institution, receives tax and/or other payments, deposits checks and returns daily receipt reports to the town during a given billing period. To post payments, collector/treasurer staff can usually upload data gathered by the financial institution directly to its accounts receivable software. This will not be the case in Townsend, which uses an older version of Point software. Instead the town may be forced to pay the Point developer to convert the lockbox file to the necessary format or upgrade its version of the software (see *Recommendation 16*). Even so, when aggressively promoted, a lockbox reduces over-the-counter and mail transactions and accelerates deposits. The additional interest earned and efficiencies gained can help offset the service costs. With a greater percentage of bills collected via the lockbox, the collector/treasurer's staff should save time, allowing them to pursue other activities. This option becomes especially attractive if the collector begins to receive water payments.

Recommendation 11: Record Deputy Collector Payment on Vendor Warrant

We recommend that the collector pay the deputy collector through the standard vendor warrant process. Like most collectors, Townsend uses the services of a deputy collector to generate motor vehicle excise tax bills and to collect delinquent motor vehicle excise and personal property tax bills. The deputy collector, Kelly & Ryan, makes a periodic turnover of delinquent payments to the collector, but net of his fees. Financial controls are stronger when the deputy collector turns over all the fees paid, submits a detailed bill of his fees to the collector, which is paid through the standard vendor warrant process with the appropriate checks by the town accountant.

Recommendation 12: Apply Partial Payments to Interest First

We recommend that the water department apply partial payments from delinquent ratepayers to interest and collection costs before the underlying water obligation. As a result of G.L. c. 60 §3E, which was added in 2003, the taxpayer can no longer direct that any payment tendered for a particular obligation be applied to principal first; the payment will be applied to accrued interest, collection costs, and then the obligation. During the course of our interviews we discovered that the water department clerks were routinely applying partial payments to the principal amount first.

As a general rule, most automated collection systems are set up so that partial payments tendered for an annual tax bill would be applied in the following order: interest, collection costs, liens/charges/betterments (in order of smallest or oldest) and real estate tax. The application of partial payments for water bills should follow the same order. The water department should contact its water utility software provider, EasyBill Software, to determine if the software can be modified in this manner. If it cannot, the clerks will have to assign payments manually to comply with state law.

Recommendation 13: Establish a Drop-Box at Town Hall

We recommend that the collector place a secure drop-box at town hall. The drop-box outside town hall can be used to receive on time, as well as delinquent, payments for real estate and motor vehicle excise taxes. As a taxpayer convenience, many towns have installed a secure mail box so that payments can be delivered to town hall even when it is closed to the public.

Recommendation 14: Require All Grants and Contracts

We recommend that the accountant receive copies of all grants and contracts. We recommend that all departments, boards and commissions submit copies of all grants and

contracts to the accountant's office in compliance with MGL Chapter 41 §57. The accountant must be able to substantiate all revenue sources against which vendor payments are charged, and verify that the terms of the contract are met when reviewing payment requests. Therefore, whether a department reports to the selectmen or to an independently elected or appointed board such as the board of water commissioners, it must submit contracts and grants to the accountant's office. If a bill is submitted for payment and the contract that contains information to payment terms is not on file, the accountant should not process the payment until said contract is presented. We understand that most departments are in compliance with this provision with the exception of the water department. We would remind the water department that the fact that it operates as an enterprise fund does not exempt it from this requirement.

Recommendation 15: Require Evidence of Departmental Reconciliations

We recommend the town accountant require signed acknowledgement from department heads that they agree with the balances of monthly revenue and expenditure reports she distributes. The town accountant distributes monthly revenue and expenditure reports to every town board and department as required by law. As an additional step, we suggest that town boards and department heads email the town accountant to communicate their agreement or disagreement with her figures each month. Early identification of differences or errors will allow for earlier resolution, provide a more accurate picture of the town's financial condition and simplify year-end procedures.

Recommendation 16: Issue Sales Questionnaires

We recommend that the assessors regularly send out sale verification questionnaires. Assessors must gather and analyze sales data in order to conduct a mass appraisal program that fairly values the community's property at full and fair market value. Sale details of comparable properties are the primary indicators of property values in a community. The validity of the sales analysis depends in large part on the selection of arms-length sales. While the office does conduct inspections of sale properties, sale questionnaires are another method to determine whether a sale is arms-length or whether there are special circumstances. With 114 sales in FY2010, sale questionnaires would have contributed another information source to ensure that property records are accurate and up-to-date.

Make Better Use of Technology in Government

Recommendation 17: Explore Financial Software Options

We recommend the town explore upgrades to its financial management software. The financial offices use stand alone software packages that are not integrated or compatible with each other or other technology in use. With a single software package or compatible applications, departments can more easily share data, reduce data entry errors and eliminate duplicative data entry. The accountant's LBA Fund Accounting software does not interface with the collector/treasurer's software so both must hand key all town receipts each month. The Townsend assessor and collector continue to use the same version of Point Software that was originally installed in the town in 1996; it requires the collector's staff to hand key each of the approximate 11,000 motor vehicle excise tax payments. The software upgrades may necessitate an increased cost but this should be evaluated against the value of time savings of the accountant and assistant collector/treasurer.

A software evaluation committee chaired by the town administrator, and consisting of the accountant, principal assessor, assistant collector/treasurer and MIS Director should be formed to explore options. The Water Department should be included if the town intends to adopt **Recommendation 6** to shift water department collections to the Collector. At the very minimum, Townsend should purchase an upgrade to its Point software for both the assessor and the collector.

Recommendation 18: Promote On-Line Property Tax Data

We recommend that the town promote the use of on-line property records. In order to reduce foot traffic and free up staff time, a growing number of assessing offices make property records available to the public on-line. In this way, residents, appraisers and others can independently and conveniently search property records and print field card type information without creating office disruptions. In addition to minimizing office traffic, it offers convenience and flexibility to taxpayers. It also sends a message to taxpayers about progressive customer service and the use of technology. The Townsend property records were put on-line in January 2011 but the assessor's staff has not yet noticed any decline in office activity. The town may consider putting an insert into the next tax bill mailing notifying taxpayers of the service.

Recommendation 19: Expand the Use of GIS

We recommend that the town expand the use of its Geographical Information System (GIS). Currently, the town's GIS system data base only includes resident property information originating from the assessors' office. However, at full utilization, a GIS system typically incorporates overlay information of value to the water operation, the highway department, the

conservation commission and any other town office that works with real property, infrastructure or natural characteristics of the town. Therefore, we recommend the town explore expanding its utilization of GIS. One course of action is to meet with counterparts in other communities to learn of potential benefits and costs.

Article _____: To see if the Town will vote to amend the General bylaws, Chapter 112 Streets and Sidewalks, section 112-13 Permit required to excavate or occupy street by deleting the existing language which reads:

S. 112-13. Permit required to excavate or occupy street.

Except in case of emergency, no Town way, or other way, which the Town of Townsend is, by law, obligated to maintain and keep in repair shall be dug up, no opening made therein for any purpose, nor shall any material be dumped or placed thereon, or removed therefrom, or changed, without the written permit from a majority of the Board of Selectmen and then only in accordance with the Board's regulations, and the work shall be done under supervision of the Superintendent of Highways, and the entire expense of replacing and resurfacing the highway at the same level and in as good condition as before, with materials equal in specifications to those removed, shall be paid by the person or persons to whom the permit was given, or by whom the work was done. The Board of Selectmen may require a bond to guarantee the faithful and satisfactory performance of the work and payment for any damage to any such way caused by or resulting from the operations authorized by such permit. The amount of the bond shall be determined by the Selectmen, not to exceed the estimated cost of the work and any possible damage.

and inserting the following:

S. 112-13. Permit required to excavate or obstruct a street.

- A. No person or other entity shall excavate or obstruct any portion of any way which the Town is obliged to keep in repair without first obtaining a permit, in writing, from the Board of Selectmen or its designee, except in the case of an emergency as determined by the Highway Superintendent. This article does not apply to the placing or replacing of utility poles.
- B. The Board of Selectmen shall establish and may, from time to time, amend the fee to be paid to the Town for a permit issued hereunder and shall adopt rules and regulations for the implementation of this article.

3.6

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN of TOWNSEND
APPLICATION FOR LICENSE
(GENERAL)

No. _____

2/22 20 13

TO THE LICENSING AUTHORITIES:

The undersigned hereby applies for a License in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes relating thereto:

Knights of Columbus 14842
Colin McNamee
(Full name of person, firm or corporation making application)

STATE CLEARLY PURPOSE FOR WHICH LICENSE IS REQUESTED To St Josephs Feast

3/23/13 5-9:30 PM
GIVE LOCATION BY STREET AND NUMBER At 1 School St

in said Town of TOWNSEND
in accordance with the rules and regulation made under authority of said statutes.

I certify under the penalties of perjury that I, to my best knowledge and belief, have filed all state tax returns and paid all state taxes required under law.

Colin McNamee
*Signature of Individual
or Corporate Name (Mandatory)

By: Corporate Officer
(Mandatory, if Applicable)

**Social Security # (Voluntary)
or Federal Identification Number

* This license will not be issued unless this certification clause is signed by the applicant.

** Your social security number will be furnished to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue to determine whether you have met tax filing or tax payment obligations. Licensees who fail to correct their non-filing or delinquency will be subject to license suspension or revocation. This request is made under the authority of Mass. G.L.c. 62Cs.49A.

Received _____ 20 ____
Applicant
Hour A.M. _____ P.M. _____

Signature of

Address

Approved _____ 20 ____

License Granted _____ 20 ____



Townsend Communications Department
P. O. Box 137
70 Brookline Road
Townsend, Massachusetts 01469

4.1

Erving M. Marshall, Jr.
Director of Communication

978-597-2242
978-597-6214

Date: February 22, 2013

To: Board of Selectmen

From: Erving M. Marshall, Jr., Director of Communications

Re: David Mazza
Communications Supervisor
March 18, 2013-June 30, 2013

After some delays, I would request at this time that the Board appoint David Mazza to the position of Communications Supervisor for a period of March 18, 2013-June 30, 2013 with a nine-month probationary period and upon successful completion of psychological and physical examinations.

This action is being requested in line with the newly created position of Communications Supervisor and the needs of increased supervision and technology oversight as outlined and discussed in prior meetings and deliberations.

I have attached a copy of David's resume and posting for the position which was sent to the Town Clerk on May 10, 2012.

I have also attached a copy of an employment agreement (not a contract) between the Town and Mr. Mazza for your endorsement.

Respectfully


Erving M. Marshall, Jr.
Director of Communications

Cc: Mazza file
Appointment file



TOWNSEND POLICE DEPARTMENT
P. O. Box 137
70 Brookline Road
Townsend, Massachusetts 01469

4.2

Erving M. Marshall, Jr.
Chief of Police

978-597-2242
978-597-6214

Date: February 22, 2013

To: Board of Selectmen

From: Erving M. Marshall, Jr., Chief of Police

Re: Daniel Shultz
Brent Davis
Reserve Officer Appointments
March 1, 2013-June 30, 2013

I request that the Board appoint Brent Davis and Daniel Shultz to the position of Reserve Police Officer for the period of March 1, 2013 to June 30, 2013 with a nine-month probationary period and upon successful completion of psychological and physical examinations.

This action is being requested with respect for the need of additional Reserve Police Officers to offset those who have resigned and regards to the posting of these positions with the Town Clerk on January 10, 2013 in which Daniel and Brent applied.

It should also be noted that Daniel and Brent were sponsored through the 242 hour Basic Reserve Intermittent Training Program at the Boylston Regional Police Academy which they successfully completed on May 16, 2012.

A copy of Daniel and Brent's resumes are attached for your review along with a copy of the job posting.

Respectfully submitted,


Erving M. Marshall, Jr.
Chief of Police

Cc: Davis file
Shultz file
Appointment file