



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

Sue Lisio, *Chairman*
Andrew J. Sheehan,
Town Administrator

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SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2014, 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 Sue Lisio, Chairman (SL); and Colin McNabb, Clerk (CM) present.
- 1.2 SL announced that the meeting is being tape recorded.
- 1.3 Chairman's Additions or Deletions: Add 3.4 - Vote to accept gifts; 3.5 - Vote to proclaim January as Senior Appreciation Month; and 3.6 - Vote to increase the spending authorization from the Recreation Commission Revolving Account by \$15,000 above the \$52,000 authorized by Town Meeting.
- 1.4 Review and approve Meeting Minutes: January 7, 2014. CM moved to approve. SL seconded. Unanimous.

III MEETING BUSINESS

- 3.4 Vote to accept gifts from the following:
 - Donation of a Lexmark X264dn printer from John Cafarella to the MIS Department;
 - Donation of a Samsung SCX-4100 Printer from Melissa Hermann to the Veterans Agent.CM moved to accept the gifts as listed and to express the Board's appreciation to the donors. SL seconded. Unanimous.
- 3.5 Vote to proclaim January as Senior Appreciation Month: CM moved to proclaim. SL seconded. Unanimous.

II APPOINTMENTS AND HEARINGS

- 2.1 7:05 Joint meeting with Planning Board to appoint a member to fill a vacancy until the next annual election: There being a quorum of both Boards, the joint meeting was called to order. SL called for nominations. Jeff Peduzzi nominated Perry J. Tomasetti of 5 Gemini Lane, Townsend. Roll call: CM aye, SL aye, Christopher Jones aye, Jeff Peduzzi aye, Chris Nocella aye, Karen Coughlin aye. SL declared Perry J. Tomasetti as interim member until the next election. Joint meeting closed at 7:07PM.

III MEETING BUSINESS (continued)

- 3.6 Vote to increase the spending authorization from the Recreation Commission Revolving Account by \$15,000 above the \$52,000 authorized by Town Meeting: Mr. Sheehan explained that the revolving account for the Recreation Department is the largest revolving account we have. Fees are deposited into the account and support recreation programs. The spending limit set by Town Meeting is historically \$52,000. This year they are trending above that. This request can be approved with votes by the BOS and Finance Committee. He recommended that the operation be reviewed to determine

that the amount authorized is sufficient and whether they are living within their means. The summer recreation program gives them the majority of their receipts for the year. CM moved to increase the authorization by \$15,000. SL seconded. Unanimous.

IV APPOINTMENTS OF PERSONNEL/OFFICIALS

- 4.1 Appoint Interim Tax Collector to serve until a permanent Collector is named: Mr. Sheehan recommended Beth Ann Scheid, currently the Tax Collector in Ashby, to fill the position vacated by Kathy Rossbach. SL asked if she was aware that this is a temporary position. Mr. Sheehan assured the Board that she is. CM feels she is more than qualified and moved to appoint Beth Ann Scheid as Interim Tax Collector at a rate of \$25.73 per hour for up to 19 hours per week and to serve until a permanent Collector is named. SL seconded. Unanimous.

II APPOINTMENTS AND HEARINGS (continued)

- 2.2 7:15 Joint meeting with Housing Authority to appoint a member to fill a vacancy until the next annual election: There being a quorum of both Boards, the joint meeting was called to order. SL called for nominations. Laura Shifrin nominated Heather Araujo of 24 Canal Street, West Townsend. Roll call: CM aye, SL aye, Laura Shifrin aye, Kevin Smith aye. SL declared Heather Araujo as interim member until the next election. Ms. Shifrin pointed out that they still need a member and an alternate. Discussion took place on who appoints those members and what benefits are available through the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission. SL suggested a meeting with the Housing Authority and Planning Board. SL moved to adjourn the joint meeting. Ms. Shifrin seconded. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:24PM.
- 2.3 7:20 Rename bridges on Wheeler Road and Turnpike Road:
- Wheeler Road Bridge: to be renamed Amadon Family Memorial Bridge
 - Turnpike Road Bridge: to be renamed Rossbach Bridge
- Mr. Sheehan gave a brief history of how this came about. The townspeople have always used these names to refer to these bridges so this formalizes the tradition. CM cannot think of two families more deserving. CM moved to name. SL seconded. Unanimous.
- 2.4 7:30 Fire Station Building Committee: Meeting with the Committee to discuss next steps in developing a new headquarters station: Mr. Sheehan stated that a decision should be made to go forward with either the plan of record or a lease option. CM suggested moving forward with an RFP for a lease option. SL disagreed. A long discussion ensued. It was agreed to put the plan as previously proposed before the town and look at the lease option if that plan should fail.

III MEETING BUSINESS

- 3.1 Discuss the process of responding to requests by those seeking assistance from various “poor” and “worthy” funds, including the Abram S. French Worthy Fund, Amanda Dwight Worthy Fund, Susan Wilson Worthy Fund, and Albert J. Atwood Worthy Fund: Mr. Sheehan recommended a three-person working group: one member of the Board of Selectmen, one member of the Abram S. French Fund, and the Town Administrator or his designee. Such a group will not be governed by the open meeting law, so it will allow for more expeditious review of requests. Requests under \$500 would remain at the discretion of the French Fund, per previous practices. CM moved to approve the new process outlined in the memo and as discussed and that the process is put in the form of a policy. SL seconded. Unanimous.
- 3.2 Discuss the Capital Planning Committee’s request that the Board of Selectmen advise if road improvements are a capital or operating expense: CM explained that every year for at least the last 4 years the Highway Department has requested \$150,000 from the Capital Planning Committee for road repair. As long as he has been a member, it has never been approved. He feels it should be considered an operating expense rather than a capital expense. Discussion included the relevancy of reviewing the bylaw as to what defines a capital project, splitting the expenses into consumables (ongoing) vs. non-consumables (long-term), and whether to fund in the capital budget, in the operating budget, or through a warrant article appropriation. CM moved to direct the Capital

Planning Committee to refrain from reviewing road improvements for the capital plan. SL seconded. Unanimous.

AS also suggested that in the future the Capital Planning Committee not be given a definite number. He said they get distracted by the amount and it detracts from their charge. He suggested that they rank the requests according to need without having a number hanging over their heads.

- 3.3 Update and discussion of lease of the Hart Free Library: Mr. Sheehan said the RFP was updated in October and he reached out to Town Properties for input through Karen Chapman. To date the Committee has not met so there has been no input. He is asking the Board for their advice on how to move forward. AS will talk to the Building Commissioner about the cost of rehab estimates.

V WORK SESSION

5.1 Board of Selectmen updates and reports:

- SL gave an update on the NMRSD building committee. The committee met with MSBA last week and the budgeted amount has been reduced from \$89.5 million to \$89 million. This includes the feasibility study and reimbursement for that. They hope to come before the town in March for a vote.
- CM requested an update from Comcast and Unitil about the telephone poles.
- The following positions are seeking candidates for the April 28 2014 election:

Amanda Dwight Entertainment Committee	Board of Selectmen
Board of Assessors	Board of Health
Cemetery & Parks Commission	Library Trustees
North Middlesex Regional School District (3)	Planning Board (3)
Recreation Commission	Town Clerk
Housing Authority (2)	Trust Fund Commission (2)
Trustees of Soldiers Memorials (1 veteran, 1 non-veteran)	Water Commission (2)

5.2 Town Administrator updates and reports:

- Mr. Sheehan said the date of special town meetings for the schools is still being decided at this time.
- He explained how property taxes are calculated and why rates are going up and why bills seem to be going up. Two elements determine the bill: the assessed value of the property and the rate per \$1,000 of valuation. Over the past 5-6 years values have been dropping. We generally still collect the same amount plus the 2.5% , so as values drop the rate increases to get to the same total. As the economy gets better values will increase and the rate will drop. SL – this is how much money the town needs to operate for the year, the bill needs to be divided up amongst everyone who pays taxes in the town. If there are a number of homes that go into foreclosure the bank should still be paying taxes, but the value of those homes is going way down but the reality is there are x number of dollars needed for the town. 5 year comparison on the average assessed value 2010- \$246 K, now \$212 K in the 5 year period. This year didn't drop quite as much as the prior year. SL the rate will still be based on what the town budget is. Things like repossessions bring down the values around it on average, but not necessarily your bill. AS In effect our rate is set when town meeting adopts the budget in May. This is the time of year when the tax bills go out and we get a lot of feedback. SL people realize that big projects will affect the tax rate but they don't think about the small yearly increases.

5.3 Review and sign payroll and bills payable warrants: CM moved to review and sign payroll and bills payable warrants out of session. SL seconded. Unanimous.

CM moved to adjourn at 8:52 P.M. SL seconded. Unanimous.