

**BOARD OF  
SELECTMEN  
MEETING  
MINUTES**

**January 21, 2014**

Temporary Town Hall, 3 Milford Street

Fire & EMS Headquarters, 20 Church Street , Training Room

Chairman James Brochu; Selectman Robert J. Fleming; Selectman Kenneth Picard; Town Manager, Blythe C. Robinson; Executive Assistant, Sandra Hakala.

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2 The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm. Chairman Brochu opened the meeting and reviewed  
3 the agenda.

4  
5 **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

6 **Leadership Strategic Plan**

7 The Selectmen discussed and identified two strategic initiatives utilizing the Leadership Strategic  
8 Plan. The first, identified by the input received from the many boards and commissions focused  
9 on creating a general by-law to regulate the amount of monetary compensation part-time elected  
10 officials receive annually.

11  
12 The second strategic initiative which was originally identified for several years in the annual  
13 auditors report, recommends that the Town consider a town meeting vote and legislative action  
14 to amend the selection method of its Town Treasurer/Collector to an appointment by the Town  
15 Manager.

16  
17 Selectman Picard will draft warrant requests based on the discussion.

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19 **Motion #1:** At 5:40PM Chairman Brochu motioned to recess the regular meeting for 20 minutes  
20 and reconvene at Fire & EMS Headquarters, 20 Church Street.

21  
22 Poll taken: James Brochu, aye Robert Fleming aye, Kenneth Picard, aye.

23  
24 **MANAGER'S REPORT**

25  
26 The town has spent \$67,125 on snow removal to date from a budget of \$210,000 and that  
27 number continues to go up.

28  
29 The Town Hall Renovation project continues, this week focusing on the utility needs. Despite the  
30 cold weather the project continues on time and tradesmen are expected to start next week.

31  
32 The total committed in the change order log still stands at \$107,000 of the \$516,000 budgeted. A  
33 number of change items are currently under discussion and when totaled and added to the  
34 \$107,000 will be about \$250,000.

35  
36 This week the town's insurer (MIIA) provided their driver simulator for police department  
37 training. All officers will be going through a class and an emergency vehicle operation scenario  
38 in the simulator. MIIA staff also provided workplace violence prevention training for twenty-  
39 three participants today.

40

41 The Crown Victoria driven by the Town Manager needed repair which may require a budget  
42 transfer later in the year. While budgeted for regular maintenance something of this magnitude  
43 was not contemplated.

44 The Town Manager attended the Planning Board meeting this week hear an update by the  
45 developer for the Crosswinds subdivision on their plans to move forward with that project. The  
46 developer was not there but represented by counsel, who told the Board that they are making  
47 arrangements to put in all of the safety equipment at the new railroad crossing that the railroad  
48 will require, and will be completing the work on the sewer pump station that the Town has  
49 outlined. Ms. Robinson explained it might seem a little strange to people that a crossing to a  
50 development has lights and a gate when the other 8 in town do not. Ms. Robinson explained the  
51 rule book for new crossings is different from the rule book for existing crossings. The developer  
52 will also set up a fund to support the future maintenance of the crossing, the developer is  
53 responsible for the maintenance; the crossing is not the Town's responsibility. Once those  
54 components are in place the developer will be seeking lot releases for a portion of the 32 homes  
55 and begin construction. The Planning Board was asked to make sure that the developer in his  
56 final plan also addresses the grade change from the development to Station Street. It is too steep  
57 due to the need to meet the railroad crossing, and could cause issues in the future.

58  
59 The schedule for the Library renovation project has been set, bids will be due February 5th at 11  
60 AM, and it's expected the trustees will execute a contract shortly afterwards so that the actual  
61 work can be completed in March.

62  
63 **INVITED GUESTS**

64  
65 **Green Community Study Committee**

66 The Committee was invited by the Selectmen to present and submit their report and recommend  
67 whether or not the Town should pursue the designation of being a Green Community. William  
68 Taylor, the study committee chairman, spoke about the required criteria to become a "green  
69 community." One requirement, he said, was to provide as-of-right zoning for certain green  
70 facilities. They also spoke with the Planning Board, and they're interested in doing a solar bylaw,  
71 which would require a Town Meeting vote.

72  
73 Taylor said he believed the town already met another criterion: expedited permitting for  
74 environmentally friendly land uses. He said the town would have to set a baseline of its energy  
75 use, and reduce that by 20 percent over five years. Using a previous year would allow the town  
76 to include the improvements that are coming to the town hall he said.

77  
78 Another requirement means the town must use fuel-efficient vehicles for things like  
79 transportation but it prohibits transferring inefficient vehicles between departments citing the  
80 town manager's car as one example.

81  
82 Taylor said the program offers both tangible and intangible benefits to the town. He said the  
83 Town would receive an initial grant of about \$150,000, and would be eligible for additional  
84 competitive grants. It would also, he said, have the Town reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

85

86 Selectmen noted that the deadline for joining the program is in October, and will discuss this  
87 again at the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.  
88

89

90 **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

91 Town Manager's Performance Appraisal

92 In the performance appraisal process there is a personal action plan which the Selectmen  
93 addressed to be developed for the ensuing year. Ms. Robinson outlined the items included on the  
94 action plan:

95

96 Town Hall Renovation -Work with the THRBC to bring the project to completion in September  
97 2014;

98

99 Town's Strategic Plan - Assist the Board in implementing goals and objectives outlined in the  
100 plan;

101

102 Financial Policies - Continue to develop financial policies that will strengthen the Town's  
103 procedures;

104

105 Access to land for a future cemetery - Identify parcels of land for potential purchase;

106

107 ICMA Credentialed Manager Status - Obtain designation as a "credentialed Manager" from  
108 ICMA;

109

110 Safe walking opportunities in areas of Upton - Work with the DPW to identify opportunities to  
111 create sidewalks or other safe walking passages;

112

113 Foster a sense of team among all Town Departments - Continue to work with all town boards  
114 and departments to promote a team atmosphere;

115

116 Grant Applications - Research and apply for grants that will be beneficial to town operations;

117

118 Energy efficiencies.

119

120 Selectmen Picard had a few modifications; items he believed could be incorporated in to the  
121 Towns Strategic Plan; regionalization and energy efficiencies. He would like to change the  
122 wording under access to land to make it a little more attainable. Selectmen Fleming would like to  
123 develop a procurement plan over the next few years, working with other towns something that  
124 was touched upon at Multi board meetings. Ms. Robinson gave examples of how we have  
125 initiated that thinking in the ways we already buy salt and fuel, and following up on many other  
126 avenues.

127

128 The Board will complete the review at their next meeting.

129

130 Discuss Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cemetery responsibilities

131 As a result of the last Selectmen's meeting, the Board asked the Town Manager to obtain an  
132 opinion from Town Counsel as to whether or not it is appropriate for the elected Cemetery  
133 Commissioners to be paid to perform maintenance at the cemeteries. That legal opinion is that  
134 this practice should not continue. The Cemetery Commissioners were in attendance and stated  
135 that the legal opinion answered their questions. Chairman Brochu wanted to ensure that a smooth  
136 transition takes place on July 1<sup>st</sup> and welcomed any suggestions or unforeseen concerns that may  
137 occur ongoing.

138

139 Review Proposed Policy on Payment of Large Water & Sewer Bills

140 The water department has been in the process of installing new external meter reading devices on  
141 customers' homes over the past few months. These devices are used to speed the meter reading  
142 process and are designed to remotely reflect the reading from the actual water flow meter located  
143 inside a home. Unfortunately, given the age of the units in place, they have only read  
144 intermittently, causing some actual water flow to go unreported. As a result, some users have  
145 gotten significantly higher bills that include a large amount of unbilled water. The town realizes  
146 the burden that such a bill puts on the user, and as a result put forward a policy that gives the  
147 customer the opportunity to work out a payment plan over time without the impact of interest  
148 charges that would normally be added.

149

150 **Motion #2:** Selectman Picard motioned to approve the policy for Exceptional Water & Sewer  
151 Bills dated January 21, 2014.

152

153 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous: Chairman Brochu

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155 Discuss Permanent Closure of Warren Street between Main and Nelson Streets

156 When the renovation of Town Hall was begun, the Board voted to close "lower" Warren Street  
157 from just below Nelson Street to Main Street/Route 140. This was done to give the contractor an  
158 area next to the building to work and stage materials for the renovation project. In the six  
159 months since that happened many have noticed a vast improvement in the traffic flow at what  
160 was once a five way intersection and now is a four way intersection. The Police and Fire/EMS  
161 Chief's both recommend the closure. The architect has looked at this concept and believes it will  
162 increase the spaces. The Planning Board has weighed in and stated it was a smart thing to do.

163

164 A conceptual view and outreach to neighbors will be developed to be reviewed by the Selectmen  
165 at a later date.

166

167 FY 2014/2015 Budget Review

168 The draft budget has been delayed until the 28<sup>th</sup> so that all components of the budget can be  
169 analyzed. The full impact of compensation plan the consultant is working on will be reflected in  
170 the budget as well. Currently a 2.5% COLA is reflected in wages.

171

172 Vote to open a warrant for the May 8, 2014 Annual Town Meeting

173 In keeping with the budget schedule the Board voted to open a warrant for the annual town  
174 meeting.

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176 **Motion #3:** Selectman Fleming motioned to open the warrant February 1st for the Annual Town  
177 Meeting to be held on Thursday, May 8, 2014, and close the warrant on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

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179 Second: Selectman Picard, Unanimous: Chairman Brochu

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181

182 **RECOGNITION**

183 Selectman Picard reached out to the Cemetery Commissioners and thanked them for their  
184 cooperation and forward thinking on the recent changes.

185

186 **MEETING LOOK AHEAD TOPICS**

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188 Reach out to Select boards for potential opportunities to get together and discuss items of mutual  
189 interest.

190 Multi board on Thursday.

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192 **ADJOURN MEETING**

193

194 **Motion #3:** At 7:50pm motion was made by Selectman Fleming to adjourn the regular meeting.

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196 Second: Selectman Picard, Unanimous: Chairman Brochu.

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199

200 Respectfully submitted,

201

202 Sandra Hakala, Executive Assistant