

**BOARD OF  
SELECTMEN  
MEETING  
MINUTES**

**February 5, 2013**

Fire & EMS Headquarters, 20 Church Street , Training Room  
Chairman Kenneth Picard, Selectman James Brochu, Selectman Robert J.  
Fleming Town Manager, Blythe C. Robinson, Executive Assistant,  
Sandra Hakala

1 The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm. Chairman Picard opened the meeting and after the  
2 pledge of allegiance he reviewed the agenda.

3  
4 **MINUTES**

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6 **Motion #1:** Motion made by Selectman Brochu to approve the January 22, 2013 Regular Session  
7 Meeting Minutes.

8  
9 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous: Chairman Picard.

10  
11 **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

12  
13 The Town Manager addressed the Board and gave the weekly report. Ms. Robinson stated the  
14 DOR has released the Cherry Sheet for FY 2014 with the Governor's proposed budget. Upton  
15 would realize an additional \$27,815 in revenue if the budget were to pass as proposed. The  
16 charges for various items would increase by \$884. She will monitor this as it winds its way  
17 through the State legislature.

18  
19 Ms. Robinson took a tour this week with the DPW Director to West River Street to look at the  
20 progress on well field #3. She reported that all four of the well heads are in, and the pump  
21 station building has been constructed. National Grid was on site in force and completed  
22 installing the 3 phase power that is critical to this operation. Construction is on schedule and no  
23 change orders have been requested by the contractor for the work and she is pleased with the  
24 status. The Town is waiting for the pricing from the water main contractor to install the piping  
25 over the bridge on West River Street and expects that to be resolved soon.

26  
27 To follow up on the pre-disaster hazard mitigation plan the Board adopted at the first January  
28 meeting the Town Manager held a meeting with the EMD Director and the DPW Director to  
29 see if they could identify a project that would be eligible for a grant under the State's hazard  
30 mitigation grant program. They have determined that a repair to the Taft Mill Dam on South  
31 Street is the most likely candidate and is pursuing a detailed cost estimate and plan for the  
32 project. The grant application is due in March, and if awarded would cover 75% of the costs,  
33 leaving the balance for the Town to match.

34  
35 **INVITED GUESTS**

36  
37 Department heads from the COA, Police, Fire, and DPW were invited to review their budgets  
38 with the Selectmen.

39  
40 Jamie Gardner Director for the Council on Aging was first to address the Selectmen. Mr.  
41 Gardner Stated that the budget for the COA is has been reduced by 1.91%. With the exception  
42 of a \$500 increase in the programming line item to address the loss of revenue from the Friends

43 of the COA to cover the bingo program, this change is all due to reduced personnel costs. Mr.  
44 Gardner proposed several personnel changes, including splitting the custodian/transportation  
45 coordinator into separate positions, reducing the hours for the Social Services Coordinator by  
46 five per week, and increasing the hours for the Department Assistant by five hours/week. The  
47 Transportation position is budgeted at 19 hours/week to cover the dial a ride van. Due to the  
48 closing of Town Hall for a year, the maintenance will be performed by our custodian this year  
49 and in FY 14/15 when Town Hall is complete funds will be need to be added back to this budget  
50 to cover custodial services on a part-time basis.

51  
52 Chief Bradley was next to discuss the budget of the Police Department. The department's budget  
53 has increased just .24% for next fiscal year due in large part to the regional dispatch agreement  
54 with Hopedale that went into effect in January. The Town is realizing approximately \$50,000  
55 between state grant funds and payments from Hopedale which has helped offset the COLA  
56 increase agreed to by the union of 1.50%. The other changes include a reduction in the costs of  
57 utilities, a slight increases in the cost of a replacement cruiser because the models have changed  
58 and the Town cannot reuse as much equipment as done previously, and an increase fuel for the  
59 fleet based on experience. Also included is an increase in computer maintenance to replace two  
60 cruiser laptop computers (Toughbook's). These were acquired with a grant five years ago and  
61 have reached the end of their useful life. The Chief also requested a warrant article of \$160,000  
62 to pay for the repairs needed on the exterior of the police station.

63  
64 Chief Goodale submitted a combined Fire/EMS budget for the first time this year to reflect the  
65 joining of these divisions into one department. The Fire division's budget increased by 9.10%  
66 for several reasons; the primary driver is wages including an increase in the Chief's pay of 5%,  
67 union negotiated increases of 1.5%, and for the first time a more thorough accounting of the  
68 costs associated with the union positions that has heretofore part of the "hourly compensation"  
69 line item. Now there is a true cost of covering employees on vacation, out sick or holidays that  
70 has not been delineated in the past.

71  
72 The EMS budget has increased by 6.98%, primarily for an increase in the paramedic expense  
73 line item of \$10,000. A budget of \$30,000 was insufficient to cover the costs of callouts for ALS  
74 service needed by residents. This is more reflective based upon experience over the last few  
75 years. Some smaller changes were reflected in fuel costs, training expenses, and the annual  
76 support fee for the ImageTrend software program. Ambulance revenue is again budgeted at  
77 \$200,000.

78  
79 Jeff Thompson Director of Public works presented to the Selectmen the budgets for his  
80 Divisions. The Highway Division operating budget showed an increase of 4.67%. The main  
81 drivers to this are personnel costs related to the settlement of the Teamster's contract this past  
82 year, increases in consulting services, fuel expenses, and forestry expense.

83  
84 In the Consulting Services line item the estimated cost to develop a state mandated signage  
85 program was included. Survey and GIS work to create the required Plan, as well as digital  
86 mapping is also included. A new program being launched by CMRPC to perform some GIS  
87 mapping services for the Town at a fairly low cost is also being explored. The DPW Consultant  
88 used for the past several years has been phased out. Forestry expense has been increased to

89 reflect the actual cost of removing downed trees in the historical cemeteries that we do not have  
90 in house capability to tackle. In tracking fuel costs more closely over the past two years it is  
91 clear that usage outside of that directly attributable to snow storms (which are charged to  
92 snow/ice) has not been accurately budgeted in the past. This budget reflects 8,800 gallons of  
93 diesel and unleaded at \$3.50/gallon.

94  
95 Included in this budget is an increase of \$5,000 in parks lawn maintenance to manage the  
96 increasing costs of materials for our green spaces (fertilizer, pesticides), but additional materials  
97 to take care of Heritage Park. The DPW has been approached by those associated with the park  
98 to ask for assistance in mowing and maintaining the park which is different from what was  
99 originally proposed.

100  
101 The Water Enterprise Fund budget shows a significant increase this year (49.65%) due to three  
102 factors. The first is an increase in personnel due to the transfer in of ½ of a formerly wastewater  
103 operator position to be a shared water/wastewater operator, and contractually negotiated pay  
104 increases to reflect the number of licenses held by the operators. The expense budget has risen  
105 due to transferring the costs of health insurance, Medicare and IT costs from the general fund, as  
106 well as increasing costs of chemicals and electricity, some of which are attributable to the 3rd  
107 well field that will come on line this budget year. Debt expenses are higher due to the new well  
108 field, which are funded from debt exclusion. The rate of 15%, as well as an increase in the  
109 surcharge is projected. The Director is also proposing a small use of retained earnings to balance  
110 the fund for next year. Further analyzing of user revenue this year may change this figure.

111  
112 The Wastewater Fund budget is proposed to increase by 8.71% next year. The wages line has  
113 been decreased due to sharing the previous wastewater operator with the water fund. The biggest  
114 driver to the budget is in expenses due to transfer in of the health insurance, Medicare and IT  
115 costs from the general fund, as well as increasing costs of chemicals. The Director proposes to  
116 use the current year's retained earnings (\$46,955) for a wastewater master plan (\$20,000), and to  
117 mitigate an increase in rates for next year.

118  
119 The Town Manager reviewed with the Board the Selectmen's budget shows a decrease of 3.84%  
120 or \$63,000 due to changes to health insurance. Those changes include; a reduction of two  
121 positions eligible for insurance; the transfer of those employees charged to water and wastewater  
122 to the enterprise funds; and inclusion of a 10% increase in rates for next year that has yet to be  
123 confirmed. Due to the planned renovation of the Town Hall, several changes in the budget for  
124 next year have been reduced. The Town Building expense budget has been reduced by \$20,000  
125 as we will not incur utility costs to run the building while we are operating out of a temporary  
126 Town Hall.

127  
128 **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

129  
130 **Review Operating Budget Submissions**

131 The Town Manager then proceeded to review the other departmental budgets with the  
132 Selectmen.

133  
134

135 Accountant

136 The line items that are the responsibility of the accountant show an overall increase of 1.55%..  
137 This is due to the application of the personnel board's recommendation of a 1.75% COLA  
138 adjustment. No other changes are proposed this year.

139

140 Board of Selectmen

141 The line items for the Board of Selectmen include Selectmen, Bonding, Cable Advisory,  
142 Miscellaneous, Town Building and Town Counsel. The Selectmen's portion of the budget has  
143 been decreased by 4.87%. The largest driver of this decrease is health insurance. The Town  
144 Manager proposed moving the cost of coverage by those employees in the enterprise funds to  
145 those funds, as well as a reduction in the number of positions eligible for insurance by two  
146 (Library and COA position reduced to 19 hours/week). The highlights this year include; an  
147 increase in salaries of 5.86%; an increase of 1,000 in the cost for the annual audit per contract;  
148 reduction in telephone expense of \$500; increase in the general computer account of \$8,240;  
149 small increases in the Medicare (payroll taxes);and an increase in medical testing of \$500.

150

151 The Town Manager did not recommended an increase in Town Counsel Expense at this time, but  
152 since legal expenses related to the Grafton & Upton railroad and the Upton landfill have  
153 increased significantly this past year, and now that the landfill is almost done being capped it is  
154 anticipated that more legal work will be needed to resolve issues over the costs of closure.

155

156 Cemetery Commissioners

157 The Cemetery Commissioners have proposed a level funded budget \$42,500 this year. Ms.  
158 Robinson said she will be providing the Board with an analysis of three different ways to  
159 approach this work. The Commissioners have also indicated the need to replace two ride-on lawn  
160 mowers to replace equipment that is approximately 15 years old at a cost of \$5,800 which is on  
161 the list of warrant articles.

162

163 Code Enforcement

164 This budget has increased by 1.35% due only to wage increases for personnel. The Town  
165 Manager does not anticipate a change to the number of inspections for next year based upon the  
166 building activity seen through six months of the current year. Should the Crosswinds  
167 subdivision begin construction or there is a significant uptick in new housing permits the budget  
168 to pay inspectors will need to be increased. Conservatively we've also level funded anticipated  
169 revenue for FY 13/14.

170

171 Conservation Commission

172 The Conservation Commission budget is increasing by \$167. This is due solely to a COLA  
173 adjustment for the Department Assistant. There may be an increase in the contract with Ashland  
174 for Agent services, but due to a change in leadership in Ashland we have not determined that as  
175 this time. Conservation is again this year proposing a warrant article to supplement the  
176 conservation fund. They are proposing an increase of \$3,000 to a total of \$5,000.

177

178

179

180

181 Personnel Board

182 This budget is proposed to increase a modest amount due to a COLA increase for their clerk, and  
183 expected longevity bonuses for non-union employees reaching a fifth anniversary of  
184 employment.

185

186 Veteran's Agent

187 The budget for veteran's agent is increasing by 2.5%. The agent's wages have increased by the  
188 COLA recommended for next year, as well as the addition of 30 hours of time to allow her to  
189 attend two conferences specific to her position. She has also requested an increase in the  
190 expense line item so she may be reimbursed for the conference expenses. The welfare benefits  
191 line item is proposed to be level funded at \$27,000/year. A review of the current caseload leads  
192 the Town Manager to believe that this is manageable next year without an increase.

193

194 A revenue budget of \$20,500 is expected as the Town is eligible to receive back from the State  
195 75% of the eligible benefits paid out to veterans. This will be verified when the Cherry Sheet  
196 comes out and the State outlines what they propose to refund.

197

198 **INVITED GUESTS**

199

200 The Mendon Board of Selectmen were then invited by the Upton Board of Selectmen to discuss  
201 possible opportunities to share services as follow up to the multi board meetings that have been  
202 very active over the past year.

203

204 The Selectmen agreed look at opportunities that will provide better services to residents and  
205 would create an agenda how where they can work more efficiently. They agreed to open this  
206 door by initiating shared street sweeping services; concentrating on outsourcing storm water  
207 services; and inquiries with both Town's Veterans Services officers.

208

209 They also agreed to meet again in Mendon on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

210

211

212 **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

213

214 **Town Hall Renovation Update**

215 Kelly McElreath, Chair of the Town Hall Renovation Committee was invited by the Board to  
216 discuss the progress of the renovation project. The Committee is discussing telephone service,  
217 building security, door lock systems and audio/video for taping meetings. The Police Chief,  
218 Town Clerk and Town Manager attended the School Committee meeting to present our proposed  
219 plan to move into Memorial School. Several parents expressed concern with that plan therefore  
220 the Town Manager is also pursuing other avenues. Holy Angels Church initially rejected  
221 renting space to the town for a year, but recently agreed to talk and renting trailers is also being  
222 considered.

223

224 **Town Election Date**

225 Town Clerk Kelly McElreath informed the Selectmen that the state passed legislation allowing  
226 towns to move local elections to April 30, therefore she was requesting of them to make motion

227 to change the election date which would allow the Town to combine the town election with the  
228 April 30 state primary election.

229  
230 A special election would then be held on June 25, to replace U.S. Sen. John Kerry, who took  
231 over as Secretary of State for the Obama Administration.

232  
233 The Town Clerk explained that there will be three ballots at the April 30 election, a Republican  
234 ballot for the primary; Democratic ballot for the primary; and a ballot with local candidates.

235  
236 She also noted that nomination papers for candidates interested in running for election in Upton  
237 will be available in the town clerk's office starting February 11<sup>th</sup>, and must be returned with the  
238 signatures of at least 33 registered voters by March 2.

239  
240 **Motion #2:** Motion made by Selectman Fleming to approve to move the date of the local election  
241 to April 30<sup>th</sup> in compliance with the State regulations.

242  
243 Second: Selectman Brochu, Unanimous: Chairman Picard.

244  
245 Review Ambulance Write Offs and Funding

246 The Town Manager reviewed with the Board ambulance billings that the Town has been unable  
247 to collect. Ms. Robinson recommended that half of the accounts that the billing company has not  
248 been able to collect be written off, and the others sent to collection. The ones being written off  
249 are all for Upton residents who are not able to pay the bill or remaining balance. She suggested  
250 that the Selectmen consider the Risteen fund to cover their individual accounts. Selectman  
251 Fleming and Brochu had no problem appropriating the funds from Risteen and Chairman Picard  
252 was in a bit of disagreement and was in favor of having the department absorb it.

253  
254 **Motion #3:** Motion made by Selectman Fleming to approve an appropriation from the Risteen  
255 Fund to pay \$2687.35 in restitution to the department.

256  
257 Second: Selectman Brochu, Chairman Picard, nay, by majority.

258  
259 Motion to Approve BYOB Policy

260 The Board reviewed the drafted policy on "bring your own bottle" which outlines the Board's  
261 preference that BYOB not be allowed in Town until all existing liquor and wine/malt licenses  
262 have been purchased. There were two minor insertions and the policy will be presented at the  
263 next meeting review and approval.

264  
265 Discuss Mass. Gaming Commission Draft Regulations – Determination of Surrounding  
266 Communities

267 Ms. Robinson informed the Board that the Gaming Commission's deadline for submissions by  
268 developers interested in building casinos in Massachusetts has passed. One developer has  
269 proposed a casino in Milford. The Gaming Commission has drafted regulations for how  
270 surrounding communities are determined for which they are seeking input and the Town  
271 Manager asked the Selectmen their position on the Milford Casino plan since it is geographically  
272 very close to Upton. The Selectmen will address this at a future meeting after further review.

273 Motion to Approve – Town Manager’s Action Plan - 2013  
274 A final version of the action plan based upon the feedback provided at the last meeting was  
275 discussed. The Storm water management was removed from the action plan and it was approved.  
276

277 **Motion #4:** Motion made by Selectman Brochu to approve the Personal Action Plan presented  
278 and remove the Stormwater management section.

279  
280 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous: Chairman Picard

281  
282 **RECOGNITION**

283  
284 **MEETING LOOK AHEAD TOPICS**

285  
286 Review sample of a by-law regarding nuisance properties  
287 Storm water by-law regulations  
288 Cemetery Commission

289  
290 **ADJOURN MEETING**

291  
292 **Motion #14:** At 9:10pm Motion was made by Chairman Picard to adjourn the regular meeting.

293  
294 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous: Selectman Brochu.

295  
296  
297 Respectfully submitted,

298  
299 Sandra Hakala  
300 Executive Assistant