

**BOARD OF
SELECTMEN
MEETING
MINUTES**

December 4, 2012

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

1 The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm. Chairman Picard opened the meeting and after the
2 pledge of allegiance he reviewed the agenda.

3
4 **MINUTES**

5 *The minutes were passed over.*

6
7 **INVITED GUESTS**

8
9 Chairman Picard invited the Board of Health members, Al Holman and Richard Desjardins to
10 discuss their on-going communications with residents' concerns about noise and idling trains at
11 the Grafton & Upton Railroad. The Board updated the Selectmen on what has been done, and
12 the next steps they plan to take on this issue.

13
14 Since February Mr. Desjardins has been monitoring the pellet plant's ambient noise levels to
15 determine if the railroad was in violation. The last reading was the first time the BOH measured
16 an ambient level that had dropped which resulted in the noise level over the acceptable level.
17 The BOH said this may be due to the fact that the railroad crossing near the location was recently
18 repaired reducing the background noise level.

19
20 The BOH will invite Mr. Delli Priscoli to attend a future meeting to discuss the noise situation as
21 well as complaints of citizen's regarding railroad car's idling time. Mr. Holman stated that noise
22 levels of a railroad are not preempted by Federal regulations and according to railroad
23 regulations cars are not allowed to unnecessarily idle more than thirty minutes. The Selectmen
24 agreed to find out exactly what the regulations are. Ms. Robinson said it was the Town's goal not
25 to cite the railroad but to work with them to understand what is or is not idling.

26
27 **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

28
29 The tax rate was approved by the Department of Revenue Ms. Robinson told the Selectmen.
30 Kathy Reed, the Town's staff person from DOR came out to Town Hall to meet with all involved
31 with the recap sheet. Some minor adjustments were made to local revenue. The final rate is what
32 was anticipated by the Assessor's last week - \$16.72/thousand. There is no definite date for
33 when tax bills are going out, but it is in process. The Assessor's will also be putting information
34 up on the website that helps people understand what contributes to the rate change.

35
36 The process to begin formulating the budget for next fiscal year has begun. Ms. Robinson
37 handed out budget packages to her department heads since the tax rate is set. Again this year
38 the format for submissions that was used last year will be used and staff from other boards have
39 also received copies and are welcomed to use it for their budgets as well.

40
41 The process to begin transferring 911 calls for the Town of Hopedale is well underway. The
42 State has begun its work to install the required equipment, and Hopedale is in the process of

43 hiring its dispatching staff. Training is scheduled in about two weeks on this new equipment,
44 and Upton expects to be up and running for January 1st as planned.

45
46 The Town Hall project will be a primary focus over the next six months. The ongoing design and
47 planning process will lead to a Town Meeting warrant article on the project in May. The design
48 development drawings will be completed on December 19th, after which we will be obtaining a
49 detailed cost estimate from an outside firm specializing in this work. Ms. Robinson outlined
50 some of the significant developments to the Selectmen. Changes have been made to the ground
51 floor in the rear to reduce the amount of underpinning required of the foundation in rooms that
52 are not occupied by staff; many changes have been made to the building code since the building
53 was built and additional structural work will be needed address those issues, it is believed that
54 these costs were already considered in the original estimate, but the 2nd one will clarify that; the
55 architect and OPM will prepare an office layout for our temporary Town Hall at Memorial
56 School and we'll start work on the various details that need to be coordinated to make the move
57 successfully in June; the Committee will be meeting with the CPC next week to review funding
58 scenarios for the project; a meeting is being scheduled with United Parish to discuss the parking
59 lot in further detail and to begin a discussion of a long-term lease agreement between them and
60 the Town.

61
62 Ms. Robinson met with the owners of the gravel pit on South Street to discuss the on-going
63 concerns about truck traffic and the amount of material being removed from the pit with regard
64 to the license. The owners will provide the Town Manager with a list of haulers they regularly
65 use to ease confusion as to which trucks on South Street are actually doing business at the pit.
66 The owners also confirm that there is reduction in work at the pit this time of year and will make
67 sure no materials are brought in. They will also need to address the school bus schedules and
68 truck traffic when renewing their permit in July and will work together with the Town to ensure
69 resident safety.

70
71 Ms. Robinson informed the Selectmen that recently a number of trees had been cut down at the
72 cemetery and it has raised concerns over the management of the cemetery and the actions of the
73 Cemetery Commissioners. The Selectmen asked the Town Manager and Director of Public
74 Works to meet with the Commissioners to discuss their role.

75
76 **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

77
78 Review Progress on the FY 10/11 Auditor's Management Letter Recommendations
79 The Town Manager reviewed with the Selectmen an updated spreadsheet with the changes that
80 have happened since last fall. The auditors will start the June 30, 2012 audit in the next two
81 weeks.

82
83 Motion to Ratify Settlement with the Police Union (#162) regarding Communication Officers
84 The Town Manager discussed the settlement agreement she reached with the union as a result of
85 negotiating the impact over taking on regional dispatch for the Town of Hopedale. This was
86 discussed in the last executive session and now voted on in an open session.

87

88 **Motion #1:** Motion made by Selectman Fleming to authorize the Town Manager to ratify the
89 Tentative Agreement regarding the Communications Officers dated November 14, 2012.

90
91 Second: Selectman Brochu, Unanimous: Chairman Picard.

92
93 Review and Execute Liquor Licenses
94 The Selectmen reviewed the Liquor licenses renewals that expire December 31. All license
95 holders have signed the renewal forms indicating their desire to have a license for 2013. The
96 Selectmen have agreed to approve the renewal applications which will then be forwarded to the
97 ABCC after all required documentation and fees are collected.

98
99 **Motion #2:** Motion made by Selectman Fleming to approve with conditions that the Town is in
100 possession the certificate required by Chapter 304 of the Acts of 2004, signed by the building
101 inspector and the head of the fire department and the certificate of the liquor liability insurance.

102
103 Second: Selectman Brochu, Unanimous: Chairman Picard.

104
105 Review Budget Calendar
106 The Town Manager prepared a calendar that outlines the various steps involved in reaching
107 Town Meeting scheduled for May 9, 2013 that she reviewed with the Selectmen. She asked for
108 the Selectmen's feedback, looking for ways that might improve this process. Ms. Robinson also
109 discussed the goals for this year's budget so the department heads are aware of them as when
110 budget submissions are planned. The Selectmen stated that since the DPW, Fire and Police
111 departments generate the most capital budget projects and expenses the department heads be
112 invited to the January 22nd BOS meeting to review their 5- year plan.

113
114 Review Request from Tri Valley Front Runners – Annual 15K Road Race at Nipmuc High School
115 The Tri Valley Front Runners sought approval to hold their 33rd annual race that starts from
116 Nipmuc High School in March. This request was approved by Chief Bradley. He has no
117 concerns about the race course, and will work with the group to ensure public safety is addressed
118 on that day.

119
120 **Motion #3:** Motion made by Selectman Brochu to approve the request from Tri Valley Front
121 Runners to hold its Annual 15K Road Race at Nipmuc High School.

122
123 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous: Chairman Picard.

124
125 Discuss Town Manager's Performance Evaluation
126 The Selectmen gave high praise to this past year's performance of the Town Manager. Selectmen
127 Fleming read the general comments made by the board aloud. In part he stated that "Blythe
128 models behavior of a leader. She takes personal responsibility in the delivery of on time
129 excellence. She communicates her vision of how things could be and clearly paints this picture
130 for all to see and comprehend. She accepts her responsibility and does not side step it, but gives
131 the credit of the success to the team.

132

133 In any relationship, personal or professional, the essence of trust and dependability is critical.
134 Blythe fosters a trusting culture with Town employees, elected officials and the community. It is
135 generally perceived that Blythe will do whatever it takes to solve problems for the betterment of
136 the Town and this improvement will not be at the liability of Town employees and/or the
137 community. Blythe's ability to professionally and respectfully deal with sensitive situations
138 within the town, like the activation of the G&U railroad, proposed creation of recreational fields,
139 or any other project makes it extremely rewarding to be a member of this board. Blythe is a true
140 asset to the town and this department.

141
142 Blythe constantly challenges the process of Town government for short and long term
143 improvements. She actively listens to her staff rather than telling them what needs to be done.
144 Blythe has created a climate that recognizes good ideas, supports those ideas, and a willingness
145 to challenge the status quo to get new processes, services and systems adopted.

146
147 Ms. Robinson thanked the Board for the opportunity to be Upton's Town Manager and for their
148 support, involvement and leadership.

149
150

151 **BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S ACTION PLAN REVIEW**

152
153 *Board of Selectmen Mission Statement Review policy*

154
155 **Motion #4:** Motion made by Selectman Brochu to approve as submitted the Board of Selectmen
156 Mission Statement Review policy.

157
158 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous: Chairman Picard.

159
160 *Discuss 360 Communications Policy*

161
162 **Motion #5:** Motion made by Selectman Brochu to approve as submitted 360 Communications
163 Policy.

164
165 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous: Chairman Picard.

166
167

168 **MEETING LOOK AHEAD TOPICS**

169
170 Review sample of a by-law regarding nuisance properties
171 Stormwater by-law
172 Conservation Commission – Forest Management Plan

173
174 **OTHER TOPICS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED**

175
176 Selectmen Brochu congratulated the BVT Football team for winning the Superbowl and the
177 support of the Police Department for the escort upon returning to Town.

178

179 **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

180

181 **Motion #6:** At 7:12pm Chairman Picard entered into Executive Session under MGL c.30A, S. 21
182 exceptions #2: to conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel (Town Manager,
183 Blythe Robinson). Upon completion of this executive session, the Board will reconvene only to
184 adjourn.

185

186 Ken Picard, aye, Jim Brochu, aye, Robert Fleming, aye.

187

188 **Motion #7:** At 7:40pm Chairman Picard motioned to reconvene the regular meeting.

189

190 Second: Selectman Brochu, Unanimous: Selectman Fleming.

191

192 **ADJOURN MEETING**

193

194 **Motion #8:** At 7:40pm Motion was made by Chairman Picard to adjourn the regular meeting.

195

196 Second: Selectman Brochu, Unanimous: Selectman Fleming.

197

198

199 Respectfully submitted,

200

201

202

203 Sandra Hakala, Department Coordinator

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