

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 29, 2015**

PRESENT: Mr. Dario F. Nardi, Chairman, Mr. Robert E. Lavash, Sr., Vice-Chairman and Mr. James A. Gagner, Clerk
ATTENDEES: Beverly & Stan Soltys, Bill Scanlan, Jim Barry, Tom Boudreau, Phil Hernandez and Colleen Montague

Chairman Nardi called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance at this time. Mr. Nardi announced that this evening's meeting was being both video and audio taped. Ms. Montague from the Quaboag Current is also audio taping.

MINUTES

Motion to accept and approve the Minutes of November 23, 2015, December 8, 2015 and December 12, 2015 as written made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.

OLD BUSINESS

ANIMAL SHELTERING - Mr. Nardi advised all that the Town of Hardwick opted to not be included in the Inter-Municipal Agreement for animal sheltering; therefore an amended IMA was before the Board for consideration. The participating towns are Palmer, Ware, Monson and Warren. With no further discussion, the following motion was made: Motion to approve and allow the Chairman to sign made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

FIRE DEPARTMENT-ON CALL ROSTER – Chief Lavoie was not able to be present this evening due to illness therefore this matter has been tabled to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Mrs. Soltys questioned the posted meeting on December 12, 2015. Two items under old business were discussed then the Board members along with Mrs. Acerra proceeded to do on-site inspections of the Class I, II & III License holders. The original meeting was to do the inspection, however the two items were added in the proper amount of time to post in accordance with the law. Minutes are reflective of the discussion.

Mrs. Soltys also questioned if emails are considered a “correspondence” item and how they are all acknowledged. Mr. Nardi stated that many items that come into the office are handled at that moment. He went on to say that correspondence items are vetted between Mrs. Acerra and Mrs. Prokop. With that being said, both Mrs. Acerra and Mrs. Prokop also bring correspondence items before him for consideration.

Mr. Soltys questioned the status of the OML violation. Mr. Nardi acknowledged that the Attorney General’s Office did find that both he and Mr. Gagner did violate OML regulations. This complaint was brought before the AG’s Office by a resident which pertained to a phone call in September of 2015 and the subsequent decision that was ultimately made by Mr. Nardi and Mr. Gagner. The phone call centered on concerns over inspection stickers on the Highway Department vehicles. Mr. Soltys followed up with a question as to if and when the State Police came out and performed safety inspections. Mr. Boudreau was in attendance this evening and addressed the matter further.

Mr. Boudreau stated that he made several attempts to contact the DOT Division of the MSP, however was unsuccessful. Once he did make contact with them, they (MSP) stated that they are understaffed and that any inspection that they would do is not as comprehensive as a regular DOT state inspection. Mr. Nardi confirmed with Mr. Boudreau that as of this evening all highway vehicles have valid inspection stickers to which Mr. Boudreau stated is correct.

Mr. Soltys also reminded the Board that during the meeting regarding the possibility of securing a K-9 unit for the town, he presented the Board of Selectmen with a list of questions to which he requested that they provide a written response to each of them. Mr. Lavash stated that he felt that Chief Spiewakowski answered all the questions in full

the night he was present. Mr. Soltys once again stated that he would like a written response from the BOS. Mr. Lavash stated that he had his copy with notes in the other office and would be glad to provide it to him after the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

- The office received the November 2015 monthly report of the Fire Chief. - **Noted**
- The office received notification that James McKeon recently completed the Crowd Manager Training Program on December 13, 2015. -**Noted**
- The office received notification from PVPC that the CDBG has announced that they are seeking proposals from organizations that are in need of funding assistance for Public Social Service Programs. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Chris Dunphy, Principal Planner at PVPC. His contact information can be obtained by contacting the Selectmen's Office. - **Noted**

GREEN COMMUNITIES ACT

Mr. Jim Barry, Western Regional Coordinator with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) was in attendance this evening to discuss the steps necessary in order for Warren to become a Green Community. Mr. Barry acts as a liaison between municipalities and Boston. Mr. Barry provided a handout for the board members and discussed each of the 5 steps briefly. The five qualifying criteria are:

1. Adopt as-of-right zoning
2. Adopt expedited application/permitting process
3. Establish and energy baseline with a plan to reduce energy by 20% over 5 years
4. Purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles and
5. Adopt the Stretch Code under 780 CMR 115

In essence, by gaining "green community status", the town would be eligible for monies thru the state to make energy efficient changes. Again, after a brief discussion with those in attendance, Mr. Nardi along with the other Selectboard members expressed interest in looking further into this program. They feel that perhaps a committee should be formed sooner than later seeing that zoning is a key step and would need to be vote on by the voters at the ATM in May in order to make the next round of funding. October of 2016 is the next deadline. The Planning Board would take an active role in this endeavor. Mr. Nardi requested to be placed on one of their upcoming agenda's to discuss further and work with them to set a direction to go in. Once formed, the committee will meet with Mr. Barry to discuss further.

MASSWORKS GRANT-SPRING STREET CULVERT PROJECT

Due to permitting requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the work cannot begin until July of 2016 and in order to assure that funding will remain in place, the town has requested that an extension of time be granted. With no further discussion, the following motion was made: Motion to allow the Chairman to sign the Amendment on the MassWorks Grant for the Spring Street Culvert Replacement Project as presented made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

COMMONWEALTH COMMUNITY COMPACT

Mr. Scanlan was in attendance this evening to discuss the Community Compact. The Community Compact is a voluntary, mutual agreement entered into between the Baker-Polito Administration and individual cities and towns. In a Community Compact, a community will agree to implement at least one best practice that they select from across a variety of areas. Communities self-identify the best practice(s) from the list on the Community Compact website. Once approved, the community will, over a two-year period, implement the best practice(s) they selected when entering into the Compact. Resources for technical assistance are available from the Commonwealth. Mr. Nardi expressed interest in looking further into this program. Both Mr. Lavash and Mr. Gagner requested to review the information that was provided this evening and discuss further at another meeting. Mr. Nardi felt that this topic could be discussed with the Planning Board also.

APPOINTMENTS – ELECTION MEMBERS/VETERAN'S COUNCIL

Motion to appoint Election Officers for Polling Place A & B as referenced in Attachment A which is affixed hereto made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.

Motion to appoint Rebecca Acerra to the Veteran's Council made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.

ANNUAL EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS

In an attempt to stay within the guideline as set forth in the Personnel Bylaws, Mr. Nardi encouraged all departments to administer employee evaluations. The Selectmen's Office has a number of evaluations. He did speak with labor council, Tim Zessin on the matter. Atty. Zessin stated that typically what happens in smaller towns is that the Board appoints one member to administer the evaluation. This avoids any chance of violating Open Meeting Law while affording the employee a confidential discussion regarding their performance. Comments would be compiled from all members and administered by one. With no further discussion, the following motion was made: Motion to appoint Mr. Nardi to administer employee evaluations as the AHJ made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

MOB GYMNASIUM USE

Mr. Phil Hernandez was in attendance this evening to request use of the Shepard Municipal Building gym on Fridays for Youth Basketball. Currently the building is closed on Fridays which includes use of the gym. The youth rec league caters to both kids from Warren and West Brookfield. According to Mr. Hernandez, there are no available times at West Brookfield. Mr. Lavash stated that his understanding was that they were no longer allowed, to which no reason was given. Mr. Gagner feels that it is a town building and should be open to the children. Mr. Lavash disagrees altogether on the matter citing a matter of cost savings. In addition, he stated that individuals prior to Mr. Hernandez have requested time on Fridays and were turned away. Should the Board change the policy, Mr. Lavash wanted to know if those individuals would get first pick. Mr. Nardi understands both sides of the argument. Mr. Gagner is willing to reach out to the Chief of Police in order to ensure that if used on Fridays, a key would need to be signed in/out at dispatch and the police would do a building check to make sure that the doors are secure. This will be discussed at the next meeting. Mrs. Acerra will advise of a specific time on the agenda for Mr. Hernandez.

HIGHWAY MATERIAL BID CONTRACTS FOR HIRED EQUIPMENT

Motion to approve and sign the FY16 contract by and between the Town of Warren and Fountain and Sons Fuel Co., Inc for Hired Equipment made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

TREASURY WARRANTS AND DRAW DOWNS

- Motion to approve and sign warrant number 81 and 83 dated December 14, 2015 in the amounts of \$42,116.35 and \$181,553.87 respectively made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.
- Motion to approve and sign warrant number 82 dated December 14, 2015 in the amount of \$360.79 made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Gagner – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention – Mr. Lavash
- Motion to approve and sign warrant number 84 dated December 14, 2015 in the amount of \$1,150.00 made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Lavash – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention – Mr. Gagner
- Motion to approve and sign warrant number 85 and 87 dated December 21, 2015 in the amounts of \$34,564.44 and \$51,102.54 made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous
- Motion to approve and sign warrant number 86 dated December 21, 2015 in the amount of \$285.43 made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Gagner – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention – Mr. Lavash
- Motion to approve and sign warrant number 88 and 90 dated December 28, 2015 in the amounts of \$35,874.02 and \$105,334.32 respectively made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.
- Motion to approve and sign warrant number 89 dated December 28, 2015 in the amount of \$210.97 made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Gagner – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention – Mr. Lavash
- Motion to approve and sign Invoice No. 12 for FY14 for Community Assistance Program through October 2015 in the amount of \$9,803.03 made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.
- Motion to approve and sign Invoice No. 1439-05-032 for FY13 for Property Assessment & Re-Use Planning to Community Opportunities Group, Inc. in the amount of \$500.00 made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.
- Motion to approve and sign Invoice No. 1439-04-079 for FY13 for Property Assessment & Re-Use Planning to Community Opportunities Group, Inc. in the amount of \$4,750.00 made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to re-appoint Rebecca Acerra as Environmental Certifying Officer made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

Motion to approve and sign Contract Amendment #2 between the Towns of Warren & Hardwick & Community Opportunities Group for FY13 CDBG – PARP project for an additional \$1,000.00 made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.

Senior Citizen Tax Abatement Program – Applications will be accepted until January 21, 2016 for the Senior Citizen Tax Abatement Program. Seniors are eligible to earn a \$500.00 abatement on real estate taxes payable in FY17 after performing 62.5 hours of volunteer work for the town. Additional information and applications can be obtained in the Selectmen’s Office.

Mr. Gagner wished to congratulate Chief Spiewakowski on his recent appointment as President of the Western Mass. Chief of Police Association and to Zuzu Demetrius on her recent Olympic qualifying event for marksmanship. Congratulations to both!

Mr. Nardi wanted to express to all that he recently attended a budget hearing for QRMHS for the FY17 Budget. Although the numbers are preliminary, their current request is \$658,000.00 above minimum. If passed thru taxation for that number, it would equate to an approximate \$1.70 increase in the tax rate. People need to be engaged in order to make informed decisions. He will keep all up to date as more information and numbers come in.

Next Meeting Date: January 5, 2016 at 7:00PM.

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Lavash second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous at 8:03PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra
Selectmen’s Assistant

James A. Gagner, Jr. , Clerk