

Approved
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6/2/11

SELECT BOARD MINUTED
May 26, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

Present: Select Board – Norm Russell, Doug Field, Paullett Leukhardt
Absent: Executive Administrator – Mary Fitz-Gibbon

Minutes of the May 18, 2011 meeting were approved as amended, in a motion made by Mr. Field, seconded by Ms. Leukhardt, and unanimously voted. Items amended included a Personnel Board item, an unemployment correction, voc students, and closing of Town hall for a week during the renovation project.

Appointments:

Police Department: Present- Police Chief, Pat Droney

Survey - Chief Droney reported on the results of the survey which the department conducted. He said 109 forms were returned, which he thought was good. Of those 87% were from property owners, 3% - renters, 2% - business owners, 8% - combination of both. 78% have lived in Ashfield longer than 10 years, 41% of respondents were male, 51% - female. 55% over the age of 60, 30% between 26 and 40, 38% rated the Department as good, 18% fair or poor, 38.5% weren't sure. 78% felt the community is pretty safe.

The issues on people's minds included: traffic enforcement, burglaries, community policing, and some other issues. There seemed to be some confusion about the difference between home invasion (entry while people are home) and burglaries. Over 90% said they would report suspicious activity and report a crime. Almost 90% said they would serve as a witness, and assist a person in need of assistance.

Types of programs people are looking for: Triad (run by Sheriff's Dept.), youth programs, SRO (School Resource Officer) program at Sanderson Academy, crime prevention and self defense.

In summary, the Chief found it helpful to know what programs people were interested in. He felt the high percentage of persons who had no opinion about the department is a reflection of past activities. Which tells him that there is work to do in the community. He found it interesting that some people thought we had too much traffic enforcement and others thought there was not enough. Some thought there were too many [police] cars and too many officers. He reported that he was recently flagged down by a resident who wanted to know what was going on, as a State officer had passed down Bellus Road just before him. It was unusual to see both state and local police on that road. Droney plans to discuss the results of the survey with his staff and brainstorm about ways to address some of the concerns.

Click-it or Ticket The Town was awarded \$900.00 for this program, which is in its second year. He has left ticketing up to the discretion of his officers. They are mostly issuing warnings, which he feels is fine.

Pedestrian Safety An application has been submitted for pedestrian crossing signs for crosswalks; he expects to hear about this soon. This program includes bike safety as well. Officer Wilder is working on a bike safety day.

State Farm Grant He's waiting to hear on the radar trailer, which he has advised the Board about previously.

MPAC (MA Police Accreditation Program) Droney attended a seminar on getting police departments accredited. He was active in this process in CT, and is a strong believer in the program. It's a self-initiated process where departments agree to maintain certain standards. Guidelines are provided by MPAC for departments to use or adopt as appropriate for the individual department. He gave as an example: warning shots. The guidelines do not say you have to use them; they just say you need a written policy regarding their use, in this case when to and when not to give a warning shot. Droney thought the standards required for certification were more than the Ashfield Department could meet at this time, but they were things to strive toward. It would be a matter of pride for the department to reach certification, but he didn't see that happening anytime soon.

Soliciting Mr. Field inquired about Church people (and others) who canvas town. He wanted to know if they were supposed to notify the Police that they're around. His concern was that one such individual threatened to sue a resident and the Town if his dog were to bite. In this case the dog was tied. The Chief said he didn't believe Church groups needed to report their activity. He said typically, groups such as environmental groups notified him that they'd be in town. (Masspirg is currently in Town)

Mr. Russell asked about some possible bylaw changes that the Chief wanted to recommend. Chief Droney said that he had been approached about a crosswalk between the hardware store and the library. Dave DeHerdt said that request had been made a couple of years ago, but the spot didn't meet state standards.

Equipment - Ms. Leukhardt wanted to clarify the list of basic items submitted by the Chief. The items on the list are needed, regardless of whether the department moves or not. Droney thought they might be purchased out of building funds rather than his budget since this move is part of a general reorganization of town hall office space.

Chief said as he has mentioned previously, at this time it is not possible to maintain a chain of command of custody for evidence. He went on to further explain how a chain of custody should work.. Mr. Russell said he didn't think the Town would respond positively to spending money on an evidence locker (\$3,700). He thought "they" would want some other solution. He suggested possibly finding something secondhand or building something in place. Droney thought time to do this would be an issue. Mr. Field said something was needed, as there have been times when evidence has been scattered all over the place. Mr. Russell said purchases would have to be approved by the Finance Committee and the Select Board. The total amount being discussed would be less than \$5,000.

A question was asked about having State Police take responsibility for the Ashfield department's evidence. The Chief said he could ask. Wayne Gardner asked about storage of guns that had to be removed because of a domestic situation. He knew State Police have stored guns in the past.

Discussion of how the storage room would be used included further explanation of how evidence would be handled. Mr. Deherdt asked what is special about an evidence locker. Once Droney explained the way the system worked to keep evidence secure and separated from other evidence, Mr. DeHerdt suggested that if the Townspeople understood the importance of a secure system for handling evidence he was sure there would be support. Mr. Russell thought if the request was presented as something important and required as part of the creation of a secure space for the Department, due to the move, it could be considered a building expense.

The issue of moisture in the basement room intended for storage of evidence and records was raised. Mr. Gardner was confident that could be managed.

Chief Droney said he didn't want anyone to think he was trying to spend a lot of money. In fact he had found several items he'd need downstairs, about \$700 worth for \$19. from state surplus. To a question about using a locking fireproofsafe/file for evidence should the need arise during transition, Droney thought it could work.

Explorer The Explorer is still at Franklin Tech. There are only three weeks of school left, which means the vehicle may not be finished. The vehicle can be transported wherever it needs to go to be finished. The Chief is hopeful there will be no need to pull the motor, as that would run into more money. There is money available in the fuel account that could be used, but Chief Droney has other plans for the funds. He plans to use some of it for badges, patches, and portable radios. Once he has his account balances at the end of May, he can make decisions about moving funds around.

Town Hall project: Present – Wayne Gardner, Town Hall Steward
Mr. Russell read a letter from Mr. Gardner requesting permission to spend \$210.00 to purchase sound equipment for the building. The items: a 40 watt amplifier, wire & jacks, and 1 wireless microphone with remote receiver to be purchased at Radio Shack. The amp. has 3 input jacks for microphone and 2 sets of speakers. The upper hall has speakers. One or two speakers can be added to the lower hall, as needed, thus providing adequate communication during events such as annual town meeting. Mr. Gardner wrote, he has speakers that will work downstairs. Cost of the amplifier is \$100., the wire and jacks - \$50., the wireless microphone \$60.00.

Mr. Field said he has checked with MEMA and these items could be purchased under Emergency Manager funding, as the equipment could be used in an emergency so people could hear what's going on. It could be used for Select Board and other meetings, too. Beverly Chow offered to provide the money for this expense if the board members, particularly the chairman, would use the microphone. A motion was made by Ms. Leukhardt, seconded by Mr. Field, and voted, to authorize the purchase of the equipment as specified, or comparable equipment, and to accept the charitable donation from Beverly Chow.

OLD Business:

Personnel Committee updates: Ms. Leukhardt went to the website where she located the bylaw that pertained to the Personnel Committee. She had prints for the other Board members to review. The committee consists of 5 members with equal voting rights: 1 from the Select Board, 1 from Finance Committee, and 3 members at large. The copy she presented was the 2003 version, which seems to have been updated in 2007. The Select Board member is an actual voting member, not just a liaison, as suggested last week.

Ricki Carrol is the Finance Committee representative. Dave DeHerdt is a volunteer interested in being on the committee. Kit Nysten was on and is willing to continue to serve. One more member is needed.

A motion was made by Ms. Leukhardt, seconded by Mr. Field, and voted, to appoint Dave DeHerdt to the Personnel Committee to fill the position held by a town employee, who cannot by bylaw be on the committee.

NEW Business:

Resignation: A motion was made by Mr. Russell, seconded by Mr. Field, to accept the resignation of Paullette Leukhardt from the website committee. The vote was 2 – in favor and 1 abstention.

Meetings: Next week Wednesday Ms. Leukhardt and Ms. Carrol and possibly Ms. Fitz-Gibbon will attend a meeting in Worcester sponsored by the DOR.

Mileage Increase: A request has been submitted to increase the mileage reimbursement for Town employees on Town business. Currently the rate is \$.32/mile; the request is for \$.51/mile – with supporting documentation of what surrounding towns are paying. **A motion was made by Ms. Leukhardt, seconded by Mr. Field, and unanimously voted, to increase the mileage reimbursement rate for travel on Town business from \$.32/ mile to \$.50/ mile, effective July 1st.**

Shredder: The Town Clerk submitted a request to make use of an industrial shredder to handle the shredding of items that can now be destroyed, as per the retention schedule. Shredding is a time consuming task that could be done quickly by ProShred. If paper to be shredded is collected in one place, and kept dry, beginning June 23rd, and every four weeks thereafter, ProShred will be in our area. ProShred will set up five 96 gallon bins, with 300 lbs paper capacity each, on site. It takes 15 minutes to shred 300 lbs of paper. Cost under state contract is \$150.00 for 5 bins.

During discussion Ricki Carroll said she had recently had a company do this at her office. She recommended that this be a one-time visit, rather than a monthly activity. A suggestion was made that the opportunity for townspeople to bring paper that needs to be shredded for a fee per box. It was thought people would like this. DeHerdt said the Franklin County Bar Association just did something like this. The shredding was done on site. Mr. Russell would like to know more about this program.

Pole Hearing: A date was set for a public hearing on the request of Albert Bissett, Esq., right-of-way manager, for installation of a utility pole on Ranney Corner Road. The date is June 8, 2011 at 6:45PM.

LIAISON Reports:

Highway Department: Mr. Field reported that the Highway Department may have found a grader. Tom Poissant and Curt Pichette are going out to Ft. Drum to look at one Tuesday or Wednesday. If it's found to be suitable, Pantermehl has agreed to haul it back to Town at a rate of \$100/hr. (It's a 5 hr trip each way) He said this grader doesn't look great, but it's reportedly in good running condition and can be used as a back-up for the one the department has. The Town's grader is expected to be put back together as soon as one seal, which is on order, arrives.

Opening the dump of Thursdays. Does the Board want to do the hiring, or should Poissant go ahead? He has someone in mind. The suggestion was made that the position be posted on the website so that people are aware. It will be posted at Town Hall, Post Office, and Library. The plan is for the dump to be open in the afternoon. Hours of operation were discussed (12- 4, or 1-5).

Notice in Recorder: Ms. Leukhardt reported on a notice that appeared in *The Recorder* on May 23rd that states that the use of the town beach by Ashfield residents and guests only will be enforced this season. Lifeguards will be checking for appropriate status. For the past several seasons this policy has not been enforced, resulting in overcrowding and unsafe conditions.

Ms. Leukhardt was concerned about adding this responsibility to lifeguards. Other comment was made about being able to identify residents. A pass system was suggested. It was something that was used

previously. The Park Commissioners will be invited to attend the next Board meeting to discuss this matter.

There has to be public access to the water, which is state controlled, but the park itself is town controlled. Public access to the water is the boat ramp area.

A motion was made, seconded, and voted in a role call vote to adjourn the open meeting and enter into executive session to meet with the police chief to discuss non-union personnel matters. The vote was Russell – y, Leukhardt-Y, Field – Y. Russell announced that the Board would not reconvene in open session. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully, submitted,
Priscilla Phelps