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SELECT BOARD MEETING
September 7, 2011

Present: Select Board: Norm Russell, Doug Field, Paullette Leukhardt
Interim Executive Administrator: Mary Fitz-Gibbon

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm.

Minutes: None available

Special Town Meeting: Present: Finance Committee members: Tom Carter, Janet Rogers, Ted Murray, Ricki Carroll, Tom Schreiber

The finance committee was present to review the articles proposed for a Special Town Meeting scheduled for September 29th.

The Finance committee was in agreement of the first article which is to approve Ashfield's share of the cost to repairs at Mohawk (windows and roof).

Mr. Russell explained the plan to use funds in the Unemployment benefits account to cover the costs for a veteran currently living in Ashfield.

A third article having to do with correcting a mistake with Assessor's funds was withdrawn from the warrant after Mr. Carter explained that the Finance Committee could resolve the situation using Reserve Funds.

The next article discussed at length was to fund a one-call notification system for the Town. Mr. Field, as Emergency manager, has been researching this for some time. He said the system, used effectively in Conway, would cost in the neighborhood of \$3,000 per year. Mr. Carter said the Finance Committee was stalled on this item; he asked if it was a want or a need? Alternatives such as a telephone tree were discussed. Some times when it could have saved the Town money, in terms of man hours and postage (such as when a change of voting place) were mentioned.

There was discussion of the proposed bylaws: photovoltaic solar installations and the stretch building code. These are not financial issues, per say, but explanations provided by Mary Quigley were helpful in understanding the importance of having something in place to guide solar projects. She was also to provide some understanding of what the "stretch code" is about. It essentially, affects new construction, encouraging the use of materials that would meet energy star standards and is part of the process of becoming a green community.

Another topic was the spending of money to make emergency repairs. Mr. Field reported that Tom Poissant has estimated the cost to be \$700,000. Mr. Field expects FEMA will cover 75%, leaving MEMA and the Town to foot the balance. Mr. Russell quoted the Emergency Borrowing chapter (MGL 44/8(9)). A Disaster Recovery Center has been established at Mohawk. Persons with storm damage are urged to go there and report their damages.

Personnel Board: Present: Chair, Dave DeHerd

The Board made preparing a job description for the general office clerk a priority. This position is one of providing support to all of the staff and interacting with the public for most basic needs. It is expected to be a 19 hour position, basically, the hours when Town Hall is open to the public. Mr. DeHerdt said a salary range is being offered. There was discussion of what the title of the position should be. Most thought it ought to include the word "municipal." There was discussion about whether this position would include transcribing of the Select Board minutes. After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Leukhardt, seconded by Mr. Field, and voted, to accept the description as presented with the addition of being bondable and having transcription skills. The position will be called Assistant Municipal Clerk. Notice of the position will be posted on the website and printed in two local papers. Applications should be submitted by e-mail.

Initial interviews will be conducted by the Personnel Board plus a member of the department seeking the employee, with the Select Board making the final decision.

Status of Emergency Declaration : Mr. Field made a motion to confirm the Declaration of Emergency status, which he read, and which was delivered at an emergency public meeting at 7:10 am on August 28th. (See Aug. 31, 2011 minutes). The motion was seconded by Ms. Leukhardt, and unanimously voted.

Financing the repairs: Mr. Russell referring to a memorandum, reported that the Town will be allowed to deficit spend in order to make repairs resulting from the storm. The Treasurer has requested approval from the Board for deficit spending and short term borrowing, if needed, which is allowed in situations where a state of emergency has been declared. This raised a number of questions which the Treasurer and Accountant can explain.

As of this time an estimate of \$700,000 has been made of the cost, including fire and police, as well as highway departments. The Accountant has set up a special account to keep an accurate accounting of all expenses related to the storm. Someone from FEMA is expected to be on hand to help in determining what qualifies for reimbursement, etc. Mr. Russell will make himself available to assist in this process.

Board of Health : The Board had planned to attend a BOH meeting to discuss the health agent issue on September 20^h. Since some thought that was too long to wait, the BOH will be invited to attend the SB Sept. 14th meeting.

Liaison Reports

Fire Department: Trucks - One firetruck is out of service due to issues with the carburetor. A second truck lost part of its exhaust system. Mr. Field will check with Tom Poissant and Curt Pichette about getting some of Curt's time to deal with these issues.

Grants - The Fire Chief is working on a grant for a firetruck. If successful, the Town would be asked to contribute \$5,000. A second grant out of Greenfield is for \$2,500 to be used for rain gear.

Accident - Report was made of an accident on RT 116, where firefighters had to direct traffic while the injured party was being loaded into an ambulance. The disturbing thing was the swearing at the firefighters by Ashfield residents and by other people in vehicles with out of state plates, who were delayed while this was taking place. The Board wishes to remind people, especially Ashfield people, that this is unacceptable behavior.

Detour - With most of RT 2 through Charlemont impassible, and likely to remain so for some time, the Mass DOT has rerouted traffic to RT 116. Mr. Field reported that this is not the best way, especially for big trucks. [Although Rt 116 is a state highway, by an earlier agreement, it is maintained by Ashfield.] Mr. Field has a suggestion which involves sending traffic out RT 112 to RT 9, which is a better route to Pittsfield. A letter will be drafted and sent to District #1 in Lenox with this suggestion.

Police Department: Chief Droney has determined that the vehicle at UMASS discussed last week, is not a good option. Mr. Field said he thinks Droney is asking the Board to provide some guidance on what to do next. Discussion turned to the matter of replacing the engine in the Explorer. Since, other than the engine problem, the vehicle is fine, the recommendation is to move forward with replacing the engine.

Highway Department: The new highway truck is currently back at GMS with emission problems due to the latest emission requirements imposed on diesel trucks by DEP. Mr. Field explained what the new requirements are, noting that they do not work.

Mail:

A response to Mr. Russell's letter requesting release of the Grant Program Income money has been received. Mr. Russell said the Housing Authority suggested in its letter that it could help the Town decide how to spend the \$46,000+.

Copies of a letter from the Executive Director of FRCOG, expressing support for the quality of work and in support of one of its employees were distributed to Board members.

A motion was made, seconded, and voted to adjourn at 9:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Priscilla Phelps