

SELECT BOARD MINUTES- April 14, 2011

Approved
4/27/11
3-0-0

Present: Select Board members – Dave DeHerdt, Doug Field, Norm Russell
Executive Administrator - Mary Fitz-Gibbon

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair DeHerdt.

Minutes: Minutes of the April 6th meeting were accepted as written in a motion made by Field, seconded by Russell, and unanimously voted.

Select Board Assistant: Fitz-Gibbon said as the title currently is used some people will not accept her position, as it appears that she is an assistant to an Administrator. The position has been called Administrative Assistant, and Assistant Administrator. To end the confusion and to more clearly (?) indicate the role the Board decided to give the position a new name: Executive Administrator.

Budget: Fitz-Gibbon presented an updated budget worksheet reflecting the most recent reviews of both the Select Board and Finance Committee. It appears that the two boards are in agreement on most items. The proposed budget falls within the allowable levy limit.

Warrant: Attention was turned to the format and wording of articles to appear on the posted warrant. Fitz-Gibbon presented several formats. DeHerdt said it is his understanding that the warrant is intended to provide notice to the voters of the items to be considered and voted upon. The motion made at the meeting can be quite different as its purpose is to detail what will happen. For monetary articles, the Board wanted to present line items in such a manner that monies within a particular department could be somewhat flexible, thus avoiding the need for Special Town meetings. One budget discussed, Office Supplies/Expenses could, for example, include postage. The Town Clerk Expenses could include such items as: Elections, Street Lists, and Town Reports, which all fall under the Town Clerk umbrella of responsibilities.

Once complete, the warrant will be reviewed by Town Council. The Board will then review it and the proposed motions with the Moderator. Deadline for posting of the warrant is April 29th.

School Committee meeting: Field reported on the School Committee meeting held the previous evening at Sanderson. He said it was the first time he had been at a School Committee meeting and he didn't know what some of the items discussed were about. He did report that the matter of repairing the roofs at Mohawk and Shelburne-Buckland was discussed. There has been some money received from the school's insurer. Other monies have been received from anonymous donations. The district is working feverishly to get the required information in to MSBA with the goal of receiving a grant that could pay up to 63.25% of the cost for the project. Acceptance of the project is not expected to be known until late June or July.

He said there was discussion about bullying on school busses. There is a plan being developed to have training sessions involving teachers, students, and bus drivers.

Proposed Dispatch system: DeHerdt attended a meeting held at the Greenfield Firestation to learn more about a proposed change to a different dispatching system that would remove fire and police departments from the systems currently in use by county towns. He said the proposal was still in the

feasibility stage. He felt that this would be a further regionalization of services which was supported by the FRCOG.

Shelburne Control, the dispatching service used by Ashfield, operated by State Police, is free, the proposed system would not be. He said there are some inefficiencies involving the 911 system which reportedly has many more call centers than necessary.

Swearing in of Chief: On Saturday, April 9th a swearing in ceremony was held for Patrick Droney, the Town's new Police Chief. It was well attended with many of Chief Droney's friends and professional associates, as well as his family, and Ashfield residents. Police Chiefs from Plainfield and Goshen were in attendance to meet the Chief.

Notice from Chief Droney: In a letter to the Board, Chief Droney made note of a change in state laws that require sidewalks to be cleared of snow. He suggests the Town create a bylaw regarding this. There was some discussion about promises by previous Selectmen not to make property owners responsible for clearing sidewalks. [This was a hot topic when sidewalks were planned.] Field noted that Conway has a small snow remover which the highway crew used to clear sidewalks in the center of town.

Droney also noted there is no firelane bylaw. He wrote of an incident at Sanderson that brought this to his attention.

One of the reasons the Town has few bylaws is that it has no way of enforcing them. This is a matter for further discussion.

Town Hall Building Committee: Russell reported on the plan for remodeling office space. He said he attended a meeting with FCRHA (Franklin County Regional Housing & Development Association). There he learned of the existence of \$80,000 in "recycled" money. This is money that was granted to low income homeowners in Ashfield, as zero interest loans to make home improvements. There are two pots of money. Prior to 1994 when these properties changed hands, the monies were returned to FCRHA to be reused for the same purpose. There is \$33,000 in this fund. Russell said this money will be released. A check should be coming to the Town and will be added to the Grant Program Income account.

After 1994, another round of funding for housing rehabilitation was issued with the same provisions, except when these monies were returned, the FCRH&D returned the money to the Town. This is the source of the Grant Program Income account, which the Select Board has control of. There is currently \$47,000, being held by FCRH&D, available to add to that fund. Russell proposes that this could be used to fund the external accessibility issues at Town Hall. He feels this would be an appropriate use as it would benefit those people for whom the original funding was intended. Russell would like to pursue this further after town meeting.

Transfer Station: To buy trash bags or not to buy trash bags was the question. A motion was made by Field, seconded by Russell, and voted to purchase the heavy duty 41 gallon bags.

MIIA (town's insurer): The Town's insurer has performed an inspection of the town's buildings and submitted a report of items that should be attended to. Fitz-Gibbon has notified the appropriate persons, requesting a response on resolving some of the safety issues noted in the report.

In another action, a motion was made by Russell, seconded by Field, and voted, to renew the Town's insurance with MIIA for another year.

Short-term borrowing: In response to a request from the Town's Treasurer, a motion was made by Field, seconded by Russell and unanimously voted to allow the Treasurer to borrow \$100,000 from the Stabilization fund for cash flow purposes. The intent is to use the Town's own money to ease cash flow pressures, while awaiting reimbursement from Chapter 90 projects.

Several additional items remained before the Board; however given the lateness of the hour they will be saved for the next meeting. (Sewer easement on Buckland Rd., town hall use protocol, letter from HRMC)

Meeting adjourned at 10{10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Priscilla Phelps