

## **SELECT BOARD MINUTES January 27, 2010**

Present: Ted Murray (TM), Chair, David DeHerdt (DD), Tom Ulrich (TU)

Approximately 30 residents

The meeting is called to order at 8:02 pm.

### **Presentation**

Web Site Review Committee members (Juliet Jackson, Charlie Heath, and David Kulp) presented information about the new town website being developed (preliminary design and staging the site).

Each town department would have a page of its own that would include such information as contacts, board member terms, and pertinent links. Material is still being gathered from town organizations/groups for this project. *About Ashfield* page would include town history, community groups (voluntary basis), calendar, etc. Another service of the calendar includes a mailing list feature. People could sign-up to receive notification via email of events, hearings, and any other information the town posts. It was asked how committees would post their own information or would it be funneled to a web master? The Web Site Review Committee responded that that process is still being developed, but one thought is that an elected group could be formed to manage the site.

### **Minutes**

Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of January 13, 2010. Vote in favor was unanimous. Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of January 13, 2010 executive session. Vote in favor was unanimous. Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of January 20, 2010. Vote in favor was unanimous. Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of January 20, 2010 executive session. Vote in favor was unanimous.

### **Old Business**

TM reports that he sent letter to District Attorney's office pertaining to the letter the Board received on Dec. 29, 2009 regarding violation of open meeting law. The Board has complied with all their concerns and has not received any follow-up communication.

TM has contacted Linda Dunlavy regarding shared police services. A letter has been received from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments asking towns to submit their priority lists for technical assistance and cost-sharing projects. The form is due on Feb. 10, 2010. The Board will continue this discussion at the next meeting.

Consulting services regarding the hiring of a new police chief were discussed. The Board has received a number of names from Wayne Sampson for interim chief. Many of those individuals would prefer initial screening in executive sessions. Town counsel has confirmed that this is an appropriate method.

Technical Support Services- After research on this topic, the Board contacted Virginia Wiswell who expressed interested in providing technical support to the town. The Board has learned that laws have changed and it does not need to go through the formal process of receiving multiple bids for contracts under \$5,000. The Town budgeted technical services expenses at \$2,500 for the year and currently has a balance of less than \$2,000 remaining. It was moved and seconded to hire Ms. Wiswell, subject to a CORI check, for a four- month probationary period at \$35.00 per hour. The vote in favor was unanimous.

8/10/2010

The Board reviewed a memo it received on January 13, 2010 from the Planning Board regarding revisiting the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Michael Fitzgerald, Chair of the Planning Board, speaks on behalf of the CPA and encourages the Select Board to meet with Wendy Sweetser, Director of the Highland Communities Initiative. He also points out that attached to the memo was a listing of all the towns that have benefited from having a CPA and the consequential projects that have occurred. The Board plans to contact W. Sweetser for more information about his topic.

The Board reviewed the memo and chart sent from Massachusetts Office on Disability detailing modifications that need to be made to Town Hall to make it fully handicap accessible. The Board seeks the color-coded copy of the chart to help them determine what needs alteration and the cost for all potential sites (Town Hall, Sanderson Academy, and Fire Department). They will speak with M. Cranston about this.

Waste Water Treatment Plant Oil contract terms were discussed. More oil will need to be ordered soon. The town is negotiating with Sandri to obtain the Springfield rack rate of \$2.40 per gallon, as this additional oil is not in the contracted \$2.12 per gallon.

### **Mail**

The Select Board has been notified by Franklin Regional Retirement System that a meeting on Feb. 23, 2010 will be held for the express purpose of voting for a 3% cost of living allowance for eligible citizens. The Board discussed whether to vote on this increase or wait for a better economic climate. The Board also discusses the need to have exact figures for Ashfield's contribution and whether 3% may be unwarranted in times of shortage. A suggestion of %1 is mentioned.

The Board reviewed documents from the Franklin Regional Transit Authority. TU will further examine notice.

### **New Business**

A draft warrant for a Special Town Meeting on Feb. 24, 2010 was reviewed and discussed.

- Article 1: Vote to appropriate or transfer \$45,600 to fund the Technical School expenses (balance of what the town owes);
- Article 2: Appropriate or transfer \$5,000 for legal expenses;
- Article 3: Appropriate or transfer up to \$7,000 for interim police chief salary for 17 weeks;
- Article 4: Appropriate or transfer up to \$4,500 for consulting services fee for police department
- Article 5: Appropriate or transfer \$1,700 to pay for employee retirement deductions

Also discussed was the possibility of recommending at annual town meeting a debt exclusion to pay off the remaining un-reimbursed costs of approximately \$33,000 from the 2008 storm damage.

The Board discussed whether to use sealed bids or auction process for the 3 properties in tax title (combined assessed value of all three properties \$166,000). Currently, the Board has moved \$7,000 in line for tax title, but has learned from a tax title attorney that in the sealed bid process, cost is considerably less - \$1,000 per property for a total of \$3,000. Hawley has only used the sealed bid approach and it has been successful. The Board discusses that by using the sealed bid approach the dynamic bidding process that exists in an auction is lost. It is pointed out that in the sealed bid process the town can reject a bid if it is too low. The Board decided to research this matter further and possibly contact Phil Pless.

8/10/2010

The Board has received a memo from Town Counsel regarding official email correspondence.  
The Board decided to place this topic on the agenda for the next meeting.

**Executive Session**

The Board voted unanimously to convene in executive session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and to not reconvene in open meeting. A roll call vote was held: Tom, yes; Dave, yes; Ted, yes.  
The meeting ended at 10:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Barb Sussbauer

8/10/2010