

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
JANUARY 28, 2013**

Chairman Belanger called the meeting together at 6:30pm. Members present were Douglas Belanger, Sandra Wilson, Thomas Buckley, Dianna Provencher and Matthew Dennison. Also present was Town Administrator Robert Reed.

FY'14 Budgets

Board of Health – Christopher Montiverdi was present to discuss request to level fund budgets and add a separate list of necessities that would be needed to make their department whole. He stated their budget is 97% personnel costs, so reducing budget any further will lead to assistant's office hours being reduced to 25hr/week. They are currently funded for 32hr/week along with 8hr/week for Conservation Commission work, that portion being paid through ConCom budget. Maintenance and supplies are limited. Members gave up their stipend to be able to afford office expenses. He stated that the BOH assistant is the first line of communication for those looking for services. Daily functions include food-related permitting, septic and well permitting, housing transfers and business license renewals. Years ago many complaints were raised because the office was not open enough hours. They have over the years built up a solid office presence to serve the public.

Mr. Buckley noted that he hears the office is often closed for inspections. Mr. Montiverdi stated that the assistant does not do inspections.

Ms. Wilson felt the hours worked by the assistant on behalf of ConCom allowed for that additional presence in the Board of Health, a position that was combined a few years ago.

Mr. Dennison asked if having help from senior work-off program could assist them with reduced hours. Mr. Montiverdi stated that he would not have a senior handle the office alone. He will simply have to advertise their office hours clearly if there are cuts made. Along with the 25hr/week position there was also a 10hr/week clerk in that office previously.

Ms. Wilson asked the Town Administrator if ConCom is in the same position. Mr. Reed stated no; that budget is funded through Notice of Intent fees. He will ask Conservation Chairman if more hours can be afforded to BOH from ConCom allocation.

Ms. Wilson asked what it costs us to fund the regional Board of Health director's position now; is it the same as we paid for a full-time Director. Mr. Montiverdi stated no, it costs us more than having our own director. She asked if we could renegotiate with the City to reduce the number of hours served in Leicester. He stated that they have hired personnel to support these regional services, so he would have to check with the City on that.

Ms. Wilson asked that we be provided a clear list of services that were provided previously through Leicester's BOH Director and those that we now receive from the regional BOH services.

Board of Assessors – John Prescott, Principal Assessor, was present and asked by the Board to give an overview of the senior tax work-off program. He stated that a \$7500 Overlay Reserve allows seniors over 60yr who live in their own home and therefore paying real estate taxes to receive minimum wage and a maximum tax credit of \$750 for hours worked for the Town on a volunteer basis. This allows for at least ten slots to be filled, while some have done less than a full slot. They would like to share this benefit with as many new seniors as possible this year. Mr. Belanger realized that some seniors have qualifiers, so having them return each year is a benefit to the departments. Mr. Prescott went on to say that this program is a lot of work for their office.

With regards to office needs, Mr. Prescott stated that in FY2000 his office was budgeted for 69.5 hours/week. Much was done to computerize records since that time, we lost a staff member and another retired. He now has reduced the assistant's hours in FY'13 from 37.5 to 34.5hr/week. This 3hr/week causes him to lose his work time out of the office. Other changes he has seen include:

- Senior work-off program administration
- Additional water and sewer benefits
- DOR requiring yearly revaluations to continue
- DOR's tri-annual revaluation audit continues
- Cedar Meadow Water District has new betterment to be added

He is pursuing GIS programming, about the only town without it now, therefore needing to increase his Purchased Services line item by about \$12,000. E911 funds pay for conversion basics but they must add all other information. CMRPC has quoted less than \$6800 for original conversion with a \$2000/year annual update cost. He has always budgeted for mapping costs so that will go by the wayside with GIS, and the Planning Board has talked about sharing costs of GIS implementation. Perhaps grant funds will become available as well.

Ms. Wilson stated that there was an agreement several years ago that allows for a fee system to be paid by districts for extra liens and new betterments. Mr. Prescott has never seen anything in this regard. If that is the case, he would suggest a revolving account be set up, if applicable.

Mr. Reed felt GIS programming to be a good example of a "necessity". He also noted that our evaluations are done by staff and not paid out to a consultant.

Public Hearing – Community Development Block Grant

MOTION: Ms. Wilson moved to open public hearing.
Mr. Buckley seconded. UNANIMOUS

Andrew Loew, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, was present to speak about the FY2013 grant application to Dept of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). A sign-up sheet and informational handout were distributed to those present.

He noted that the Town of Charlton is the co-applicant and thanked representatives from Charlton for attending tonight. This is a competitive grant program. There is a 2-year window for award; if awarded in this round, we cannot apply for 2014 round. We should hear from DHCD on results sometime in June or July. We began last summer to publicize new program and the CD Advisory Committee has met about once a month to select and develop projects for the application. A similar committee was formed in Charlton for the same purpose there. At the end of the hearing he will ask the Board of Selectmen to support the grant application and sign the Application Cover Sheet form under Community Development Fund II 2013 indicating total request of just under \$900,000.

Mr. Reed felt that PVPC has done great work and managed the FY'10 Program for us in an efficient and knowledgeable manner. This 2013 joint application gives us a stronger application and he is optimistic we will be funded in this next round. Included in this joint application is ADA improvements to Town Hall; the first phase was an ADA Transition Plan of our town facilities with full written report, the next is the design phase for an elevator and other access improvements (being applied for this year), and the last phase will handle the building of the elevator.

Mr. Loew described the four projects that had been developed for the application with input from the advisory committees and CD Strategy process. The two towns will share a Housing Rehabilitation program, which offers loan assistance to low-to-moderate-income homeowners or to investor owners whose tenants meet the income requirements. Assistance can be used to repair roofs, replace septic systems, replace windows and conduct a variety of other improvements. Assistance is generally capped at \$30,000 per home, or up to \$35,000 for historic homes or homes with lead paint. For many clients who stay in their homes long-term, the program does not require loan repayment. It's a bit more complicated

for investor owners who are asked to make a contribution to their projects. This program is restricted in the two towns' community development target areas that were identified as part of the CD Strategy process last fall, though emergency projects can be located outside these areas. In Leicester, the target area is Leicester Center, Cherry Valley, Rochdale and areas in between. In Charlton, the target area is Charlton Center, Charlton City, and an area near Sturbridge where the 2011 tornado hit. This is the same program that Leicester had during its FY 2010 grant, which helped more than 20 homeowners.

The two towns will also share a project to improve the Housing Authorities. In Charlton it will replace aging and deteriorated roofs at the Meadowview complex. In Leicester, it will install a replacement backup electrical generator at 1075 Main Street. Mr. Loew said that this was the construction phase of the project that the Board had approved under the FY2010 grant to complete engineering designs. This project is to replace the small generator at the HA that died during the October 2011 blizzard, causing problems for many of the seniors and disabled residents.

Each town will also have a project to make its Town Hall more accessible to disabled users. In Leicester, the project will include hiring an architect to design an elevator and related improvements to restrooms and entranceways. Mr. Loew said Charlton is at the next step and has completed architectural designs, so it will be applying for construction funds. The improvements in Charlton will include a new main entrance with an elevator, and a number of other barrier removals around the building. Mr. Loew asked if there were any questions about the grant or projects.

Selectman Wilson asked how long the Town Hall accessibility survey should be kept on the Town's website for processing. Mr. Loew stated that it should remain in effect until the end of next week.

Selectman Wilson asked if it would be possible to add to the "Proposed Projects" the installation of push-button apparatus to open doors at the Leicester Housing Authority, an issue that has been raised by many residents. If not, could we at least develop that design phase within this grant round application. Mr. Loew will review and follow-up with the Board further. He noted that if this is not possible for this year due to budgetary constraints, it would make a good project for the next round of applications.

Selectman Buckley asked, did he hear right that homeowners do not have to pay back the loan? Mr. Loew stated yes; it is a 15-year loan that depreciates over time. Recipients who are income qualified and do not transact their home within that period owe nothing. If, for example, a homeowner sells their home half-way through the 15 years, they would have to repay half their loan.

Selectman Belanger asked when the cut-off date would be for housing rehab applications. Mr. Loew explained that they are always accepting rehab applications. They try to maintain an active list of those in need, which supports grant application. They continue marketing campaign with surveys on accessibility available at Town Hall and other public facilities. They have received a number of responses to the survey. Mr. Loew explained further that residents can call PVPC at 413-781-6045 to speak with representatives regarding housing rehab particulars.

Charlton representative, Stefan Sage, declined comment. No other public comments were forthcoming.

MOTION: Mr. Dennison moved to support the grant application and authorize the Chairman to sign the Application Cover Sheet form under Community Development Fund II 2013 indicating total request of just under \$900,000. Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANOMOUS

MOTION: Ms. Wilson moved to close public hearing.
Mr. Buckley seconded. UNANIMOUS

Correspondence

1. Memo from Town Clerk requesting disposal of old ID machinery, which no longer functions.
MOTION: Mr. Dennison moved to authorize disposal of obsolete equipment as requested.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

2. Email memo from Advisory Board Chairman declaring vacancy for the term held by Norman Limoges due to him vacating his position. Mr. Belanger noted that Bylaw allows Chairman to take this action.

MOTION: Mr. Dennison moved to acknowledge vacancy on Advisory Board, per request.
Ms. Wilson seconded. UNANIMOUS

3. Memo from Advisory Board requesting BOS to approve an article on Annual Town Meeting Warrant for approval of Bylaw change to reduce composition of Advisory Board from nine (9) to seven (7) members.

Mr. Dennison asked that we also look into having two alternate positions on Advisory Board.

MOTION: Ms. Provencher moved to support Bylaw change related to Advisory Board.
Mr. Dennison seconded. UNANIMOUS

Late – Letter of resignation from Advisory Board member John Verick, due to health issues. The Board noted his many years of service to the Town in this capacity, and John will be missed.

MOTION: Ms. Wilson moved to accept with regret, with letter of thanks forwarded.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Mr. Belanger asked that we clarify issue regarding quorum on this 9-member Board with now only 5 members remaining. Is it a quorum of full board or quorum of sitting members.

Mr. Buckley asked that we offer an exit interview to Mr. Verick.

Late – Letter of retirement/resignation from Town Administrator Robert Reed effective 7/31/13, which Mr. Belanger read aloud. The Board thanked Mr. Reed for his years of service and the lead time within his retirement announcement. Mr. Reed thanked the Board for their openness during his tenure, and the helpful and communicative approach to our relationship.

MOTION: Ms. Wilson moved to accept Mr. Reed's resignation.
Mr. Dennison seconded. UNANIMOUS

Set Date – Regional Dispatching Public Forum

Mr. Belanger reported that a public forum will be held at 6:30pm on February 27th in the Town Hall to receive feedback and discuss proposed regional dispatching with the City of Worcester. Worcester representatives will be at this public forum.

The Board asked that we be certain to contact the press in this regard and ask that they publicize this important session. Also, to make certain sound equipment is available and functional. Ms. Provencher noted that the previous discussion on this subject was not audible for the residents listening to our meeting. Mr. Belanger asked those individuals with questions or concerns to forward them to our office; we will compile the concerns at hand and hopefully have answers for that evening.

Mr. Reed noted main concerns that he has heard thus far:

- what to do about lockup of prisoners
- public access to the Police Station

MGL Chapter 268A, Section 20(b) exemptions

Selectmen Buckley explained that in his efforts to sign-up to become a substitute teacher in Leicester he learned that there are restrictions involved because his main employment now is his role as Selectman. After speaking with the Ethics Commission and their legal advisors, this can be accomplished if he provides a "Disclosure by Municipal Employee" for approval by both the Board of Selectmen and School Superintendent.

Mr. Belanger stated that he has reviewed the law and sees this as mostly academic. He did caution Mr. Buckley that when discussions on school matters come up, he may want to abstain from input. Mr. Buckley felt he has shown to the community that he can be right down the line.

MOTION: Ms. Provencher moved to approve and authorize Chairman to sign Disclosure form.
Mr. Dennison seconded. 4-0, Mr. Buckley abstained.

Selectmen's Meetings

Mr. Belanger noted that we will continue with budget discussions and meet every Monday in February except for the holiday.

Dept of Revenue Report

Mr. Dennison asked if he could wait until our next meeting for this review and discussion. The Board agreed.

Town Administrator's Report

- Governor's Local Aid numbers were released at MMA Annual Meeting last weekend, which gives Leicester an additional \$90,000 in these early estimates.
- Our new School Superintendent, Judith Paolucci, began work here today. Mr. Belanger noted a positive atmosphere in his recent discussions with School Committee Chair; hopefully they will share in our concerns as we move forward.
- Preliminary "Net School Spending" numbers from Town Accountant indicates less than \$125,000 over required level of funding in FY'14. He is very concerned, as he has stated in the past, that we may not be able to cut School funding while other departments continue to suffer. Mr. Dennison asked that TA send the Board members this information.
- He met with department heads today and will now meet with them individually to review budgetary issues.
- Per BOS's request, he has asked each department head for a list of "necessities" to make their departments whole. We will maintain this list separate from the budgets.
- Highway dump truck damaged in recent mv accident is a complete loss. Insurance proceeds amount to approximately \$15,800, due to the age of the vehicle, with another \$2000 or so for the plow. The Supt is looking at leasing, as the outright purchase is estimated at \$179,000 and this vehicle needs to be replaced; it is a front line piece of equipment.

Selectman Wilson inquired as to where we are with renovations to the 3rd floor Town Hall; funds were allocated for this project. Mr. Reed responded that a key part of this project was to sell the School Administration building at 1078 Main St. Ms. Wilson was confused as to why this hasn't been started. TA stated that he has looked into it but never pulled the trigger. Mr. Belanger noted that a 3-way deal was attempted when CVS was pursuing purchasing and re-zoning properties in the center of Town, which failed at town meeting. At that time an individual was interested in purchasing the 1078 Main St parcel. Now we would have to market the property and in the worst of times for sales. Mr. Dennison understood that we should sell that parcel first, but he did feel the building is worth something as a historic property. He is willing to make a Motion this evening to proceed. Mr. Belanger felt we should first invite the new school superintendent to join in this conversation; she might have some good feedback. Mr. Dennison felt we should communicate in this regard with our new Supt. but his take on how to proceed is different. Ms. Wilson noted that we approved borrowing of \$100,000 for this project. Mr. Reed felt things had changed. Mr. Buckley agreed that we should involve the new supt., but asked Mr. Reed to get moving on this matter.

Board Reports/New Business

Selectman Dennison:

- Attended MMA annual meeting and obtained what could be valuable information. He felt it a good learning experience.

Selectman Provencher:

- Discussions continue between Worcester officials and JetBlue Airlines in hopes of obtaining a carrier at Worcester Airport.

- Obtained information on recent dam inspection and related grants that have become available. She will leave info with secretary for copying to all members. Ms. Wilson noted that much of this information is available on MMA's website.

Selectman Buckley:

- Upon hearing about a new surcharge on credit cards, up to 4%, he researched and has found out that Massachusetts did not approve this option, so we will not be experiencing these fees.
- Also, the twenty-five cents being charged for credit card payments at the Tax Collector's office is a fee to the banking center, not the Town.

Selectman Wilson:

- Two special elections will be held this year in Massachusetts, with costs close to \$8000 here in Leicester. The State only pays for printing, programming and some payroll costs. She is hearing that we may be able to hold the State Primary the same day as our election, which may help. She asked the TA to check into this. As she sees it, the Federal government is stealing our Senator Kerry. She proposed that we write letters to our legislators requesting Federal and State funding for these unforeseen expenses. The Board agreed.
- Leicester Water Supply District and Hillcrest Water Supply District have acquired Reverse 911 services for their districts. Subscribers must go online to access; call the offices and they will enter you into the system if you do not have computer access. Mr. Reed asked if this service has been built out yet. Ms. Wilson stated yes.

Selectman Belanger:

- Where else can we consolidate departments: Building, Assessors, even the Town Administrator's position should be considered. We need to exhaust all resources before proceeding to Override discussions.
- American Legion ice fishing derby was well organized and well attended.
- Marshall and Crystal Street issue regarding Greater Worcester Land Trust will be heard at ConCom's meeting on January 30th.
- Thanked Jeff & Lucy Eller of Eller's Restaurant for their generous contribution of food stuffs for Founders Day fundraising effort. The football tailgate party held again was successful, although our team lost. He also thanked Parks & Recreation for their efforts toward this event.

Minutes

MOTION: Ms. Provencher moved to approve 1/7/13 Regular & Executive Session minutes.
Mr. Buckley seconded. UNANIMOUS

MOTION: Mr. Dennison moved to adjourn.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan LeChasseur,
Administrative Assistant