

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
JULY 21, 2008**

Chairman Belanger called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Members present were Douglas Belanger, Thomas Brennan, Richard Antanavica and Stanley Zagorski. Also present was Town Administrator Robert Reed. Ms. Provencher entered the meeting at 6:47pm.

Appointments

Highway Foreman – Mr. Reed reported that position was posted internally with only one candidate that applied within the Department. It is the recommendation of Supt. Wood that David Miller be appointed as Highway Foreman, which Mr. Reed supports.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to appoint David Miller as Highway Foreman, effective immediately.
Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Mr. Belanger asked that we make sure to give the Highway workers the tools they need to get the job done, the position will need to be backfilled, noting they have been very cooperative over the past couple years running without a full compliment of staff.

Highway Clerk – Mr. Reed reported that position was posted internally with only one candidate that applied, who has worked temporarily at the Highway Department for the past several months. It is the recommendation of Supt. Wood and Mr. Reed that Maureen Henderson be appointed as Department Assistant I, Highway Dept., effective immediately. Mr. Zagorski asked if this was a 20 hour/week position. Mr. Reed stated yes.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to appoint Maureen Henderson as DAI/Hwy., effective immediately.
Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Bid Awards – Highway Materials FY'09

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to award bid for materials as listed on report (on file) from Supt. Wood.
Mr. Antanavica seconded for discussion.

Mr. Antanavica wanted to be certain we are comparing apples to apples, as there was a problem last year with quantity per quoted price.

MOTION and SECOND amended to reflect "subject to comparable quantity/price" clarification. UNANIMOUS

The Board discussed this year's prices compared to last, and what prices may have been affected by skyrocketing fuel prices. Mr. Reed will look into analysis.

Council on Aging Bus Driver – amend classification(s)

Mr. Reed noted recent pilot program of WRTA, which the COA program falls under. The proposal reflects changes made to the job and hours allotted. He reported that this change was pursued by Department Head, approved and recommended by Personnel Board. Members asked if the employee was on board with the changes. Mr. Reed stated that the employee has accepted the changes.

Because this is a pilot program, the Board agreed that our new classification, workload, and the WRTA program should be monitored for 90-days, perhaps by the Selectman liaison rep. Mr. Belanger suggested instead monthly reviews, as system might be tweaked by WRTA at their next meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan voted to approve amended job classifications, with monthly reports submitted from COA and WRTA. Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Correspondence

1. Memo from Selectmen's Office requesting disposal of obsolete phone equipment.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to approve request, along with another request in Late correspondence from School Dept, subject to all hard drive information being removed and destroyed.
Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

2. Reappointment request for Recycling Committee members for FY'09.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to appoint list of volunteers, along with two Arts Council appointments requested in Late correspondence (on file). Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

3. Memo from Police Chief requesting permit for warning signs in roadways.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to approve permit per request.
Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

The Board discussed pending legislation relative to cameras posted within communities to assist public safety with ticketing. Some felt home rule acceptance would allow towns to vote this in. Mr. Antanavica noted that privacy rights are in question with enhanced systems that can depict drivers vs. the basic system that would photograph just the license plates.

4. Letter from Governor Patrick regarding Commonwealth Capital program, what Mr. Reed described as the latest version of criteria needed for communities to apply for certain grants. He will make copies available for various departments, with an intent to apply for lighting upgrades, etc. FILE

5. Letter from National Grid regarding vegetation program. FILE

Mr. Belanger noted that he had an opportunity recently to meet again with Ngrid representatives, who have been very responsive since our last issue involving storm response concerns. Mr. Zagorski asked if we had received report since their debriefing meeting. Mr. Reed said no, although he has received bits and pieces of information but still awaits comprehensive plan.

Late – Memo from Police Chief looking for support of Senate Bill 2808 for additional 911 funding.

MOTION: Mr. Antanavica moved to send letters of support to Representative Binienda and Senator Augustus. Mr. Zagorski seconded. UNANIMOUS

Town Administrator's Report

- Mr. Reed updated the Board on what will be an affiliation agreement with St. Vincent's hospital; we need to send a Letter of Intent. He noted that our EMS Services need to be tied to local emergency room services, which will allow for our recertification to be approved by the State.
- Mr. Reed reported we should soon have an Agreement in place for Hillcrest Country Club's sewer connection. The plan is ready, with Agreement in place we will be able to go out to bid for installation.
- Mr. Reed reported that our Route 9 road opening permit will be extended for a period of time to allow sewer work to be completed to the Police Station prior to reconstruction of Route 9 East roadway, scheduled for August. The Board asked that area developers, districts, and the like be notified of the reconstruction project, as Mass Highway does not allow roadway cuts for five years once work is done. The Board asked also that they look into reconfiguration of Route 9/56 intersection as requested many times before. Mr. Reed felt this might be the impetus to get that accomplished.
- Mr. Reed reported on upcoming heating oil bid openings for small and large tanks through French River Collaborative, who has hired a consultant to run the bid solicitation. The Board discussed pricing, with TA noting that only the transportation portion is fixed, the oil prices fluctuate. We have used State bid over past few years, as vendors have not been bidding, although we did receive one heating oil bid this year. This discussion prompted further consideration of energy saving remedies and how to maintain buildings over the weekend at lower temperatures, but allow for important recreational activities. Mr. Antanavica noted that website survey results show that many folks like having the late evening hours once a week. He feels we should continue with a 4-day workweek to help defray fuel and electricity costs. He reminded the Board that we must decide in August what to do in regards to establishing a permanent 4-day work week or not.
- Mr. Reed and the Board spoke further about energy savings, how to put Town Hall auditorium on separate thermostat, regulating lower temps in the building on weekends, grant opportunities for green energy or insulation upgrades, utilizing third floor of this building and selling off 1078 Main St facility. Mr. Zagorski suggested sending out an electronic questionnaire for input, other ideas may be forthcoming.
- Mr. Reed submitted State law and Executive Summary regarding smoke-free workplaces. He recommended that the Selectmen follow the State law and hold the licensed establishments under the Selectmen accountable. He recommended that the Selectmen support the Board of Health in fulfilling their responsibility. Mr. Belanger noted that there are facilities such as veterans clubs that are exempt. Mr. Reed recommended we adopt a policy that would be tied to State regulations.

Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to approve 3/10/08 and 4/14/08 Regular Session minutes.
Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

(Ms. Provencher entered the meeting at this time.)

Board Reports/Other Business

Mr. Antanavica reminded all of hearing to be held by the Board of Health at 7:00pm on July 31st at the Senior Center with regard to outdoor wood boiler regulations. He recommended anyone with concerns about these heating units to attend and express any thoughts they may have. Mr. Brennan noted that if some are unable to attend, they should write to the Board of Health. He also felt any regulations should be in line with manufacturer's guidelines. The proposed regulations seem to make it difficult to install a new unit. Ms. Provencher noted that current units will not be grandfathered in, all must comply. The Board agreed; people need to participate in process, not complain afterward.

Public Hearing – EMS Rate Change

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to open public hearing.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

EMS Director Robert Wilson was present to discuss proposed rates for EMS services, noting that rates were last changed in 2005. New rates will coincide with insurance and Medicare reimbursement requirements and help the Department stay competitive. He did feel that call volume has plateaued, while expenses are all increasing. They were asked by the Town Administrator to look at the rates; a proposal was made and posted according to our Bylaw requirements.

Mr. Belanger asked how insurance reimbursements are. Mr. Wilson stated that they have a good rate of return, but sometimes the patient has no insurance, or with attorneys involved it can take months to resolve. Mr. Zagorski asked that the list of services be explained, which Mr. Wilson put items into laymen's terms. Mr. Brennan noted that write-off requests have been little to none of late. Mr. Wilson reported that many are done automatically now with no authorization needed with many insurance plans.

Mr. Brennan suggested a method where the rates could be increased automatically, making the rates somewhat inflation proof. Mr. Belanger did not recommend such a setup, as our Bylaw requires posting of rate changes prior to a hearing being held.

MOTION: Mr. Antanavica moved to adopt EMS service rates as presented, effective August 1, 2008.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Board Reports/Other Business (continued)

Mr. Zagorski:

- Concerned with heating, food, prescriptions for our elderly or low income population, he feared the worst, and asked that we act as a community to plan ahead. He noted recent "Hearts for Heat" campaign, which Deb Antanavica has volunteered to head up, local church food pantries that are gearing up for the winter, and our Council on Aging Director Janice Nowicki who is proposing a Leicester Cares group be formed to administer needs we are certain to see this year. It was agreed to host meeting in August and invite local caregivers and support groups. Mr. Reed recommended that we proceed cautiously, that we remain a resource outlet to assist our residents; the Town cannot raise or distribute funds. Mr. Zagorski reported that the Leicester Lions Club have already voted to get involved in just such a project to help the community; they are very experienced fundraisers and this is what they do.
- He commented on the good quality of the repaired Route 56 corridor from Pleasant St to Oxford line.
- He noted private wind turbine subject will come up again at the fall town meeting, and asked that we be prepared. He thanked residents Scott Broskey and Fred Looft for their continued assistance. Mr. Antanavica questioned the report; he knows it's windy around here. Mr. Zagorski explained that it is not so much the wind factor, but that it does not appear cost effective to install municipal wind turbines. Mr.

Belanger felt we must move forward in this technology, we must be close enough to make a difference. Mr. Reed noted that Mass Technology had to follow the methodology laid out in the application.

Mr. Antanavica:

- Noted recent graduation of three Leicester firefighters from auxiliary rank to regular status. Mr. Wilson commended the firefighter recruit academy training program that they started years ago, which includes over 180 hours of training on the recruits own time; they have had more than thirty guys go through it over the years, a bargain at the \$1000/year dues. Both felt that the standardized procedures and mutual aid practices that are learned are phenomenal. And, Mr. Antanavica noted, the instructors are fantastic. Mr. Zagorski asked that a letter be sent to the graduates, noting one with perfect attendance.

Ms. Provencher:

- Master Plan upgrade continues to move forward through committee meetings
- Asked what the status is on complaints received on Olde Rock Pub in Cherry Valley. Mr. Reed, noting that she had missed the earlier discussion, explained that he will work toward a policy to be tied to State smoking regulations, to be presented at our next meeting.
- Burncoat Park recreation process has moved through yet another step toward completion. They will look to utilize appropriation toward RFP project. She was impressed with the hearing process at the State House, and thanked our local representatives.

Mr. Brennan:

- Asked about concerns from neighbors regarding Water Street fire station and required fencing in the area. Mr. Wilson offered to meet with the Town Administrator on this, but that they did install fencing around the new tanks at the station, as requested.
- Expressed concern over recent letter to the editor, and defended our Selectman Belanger, a forthright and proactive friend of the people who has been a champion of business development over the years. Mr. Antanavica agreed; the Town has steadily made improvements to allow for commercial or retail development zones. Unfortunately, he felt, some landowners held out for more money and now the economy has turned down. Mr. Belanger stated that he often brags that he's from Leicester, a forward thinking community that works together to get the task at hand done.

Ms. Provencher:

- Encouraged participation in the Town's Master Plan update; this is the people's opportunity to participate in any changes or improvements they see that could benefit the community.

Mr. Belanger:

- Asked for an update on the status of taxi cab licensing summary from other communities. Mr. Reed will finalize his report for our next meeting.

Mr. Zagorski:

- Announced new Lions Club Park collectible, available at \$20 from Cats Meow productions, to benefit maintenance of the Park.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan LeChasseur,
Administrative Assistant