

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2008**

Chairman Belanger called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Members present were Douglas Belanger, Thomas Belanger, Richard Antanavica and Stanley Zagorski. Town Administrator Robert Reed was also present. Selectwoman Dianna Provencher was absent due to educational commitment through her workplace.

Appointments, Resignations

Economic Development Committee – Mr. Zagorski noted application from William Shea, who was present and seeking appointment. Mr. Shea noted his background in finance and teaching, he noted the vacancy and hoped to be able to contribute to the Town he lives in.

MOTION: Mr. Zagorski moved to appoint William Shea to Economic Development Committee, term to expire annually on June 30th. Mr. Brennan seconded. UNANIMOUS

EMS Department – Memo from EMS Executive Director requesting appointment of Benjamin Morris as per-diem, on-call EMT Basic.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to appoint Benjamin Morris as requested, subject to all Town personnel policies and procedures. Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Part-time Police Officer – Letter of resignation from Matthew Girouard, part-time Police Officer, along with Civil Service Form 56 to execute.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to accept with regret and letter of thanks for time served, Civil Service Form to be signed by Chairman. Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Town Hall Office Hours

The Board was provided with reports on employee responses to “summer hours” as well as public survey results (on file). Mr. Belanger asked if number of hours worked are the same as with a 5-day work week. Mr. Reed stated yes, both employees and department heads work their allotted weekly hours within the four-day week. Mr. Belanger knew the intent this year was to help with utility costs, but he is still concerned with meeting the public needs. Mr. Antanavica felt the pilot program last year and then this year’s adjusted schedule have worked out well. He feels residents that work out-of-town find the late 7pm work day helpful. He felt it difficult to assess any energy savings during summer, but expects to see a difference over the winter months; we should save on heating costs with the building shut down three days when no one is opening the doors. He also felt the 4-day work week may be easier on employees, conserve energy with the increased costs we all face. He did feel, however, that the department heads should be made more accountable, that tasks need to be completed by week’s end with nothing left open for Monday. Mr. Belanger, noting the employee comments, saw where certain offices are concerned with being closed on Fridays; it seems certain services are affected when the offices are closed. Mr. Antanavica agreed that it was noted in the report, but no one had brought it to his attention; besides, the Town Clerk stated that she is willing to accommodate the public on Fridays if need be. He did wonder what will happen if a “snow day” should be declared; will the staff have to work instead on Friday. He asked how the staff was paid when this occurs. Mr. Reed stated that if a “snow day” is called, the Town Hall is closed down and employees are paid regular salary. Mr. Reed suggested this issue be discussed instead at a later date. Mr. Brennan felt we should continue with “summer hours” from an economic standpoint, we should try whatever means to save dollars. He also felt this was a type of benefit we could offer the employees; a 4-day work week doesn’t cost the Town anything. He was concerned with recreational programs scheduled on weekends though, the Parks & Rec programs must continue. Mr. Zagorski did not expect any savings to be significant, but is in favor of continuing the trial program. He sees the responses as split opinions, but we could try it this winter. He did see where it would be difficult for those with small children. Mr. Belanger reiterated that his main concern was public service. He didn’t think savings would be significant either, but felt a trial period should be implemented again; the summer is quiet anyway, we may get a clearer picture now. He suggested we try it through October now that school is back in session and schedules are back to normal. He wanted the public survey to continue to make certain we are serving the public need, and we can look at this again at our meeting on October 20th.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to extend the schedule for summer hours through October 28, 2008; the public survey will continue and the Board will consider further action on October 20th. Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Fall Special Town Meeting

Mr. Belanger asked for any pending issues that need to be addressed. Mr. Reed reported on budget transfers that will be needed eventually, including Council on Aging salary for Outreach Worker and Tax Collector funds for Tax Title attorney; perhaps the departments can wait until Special within the Annual 2009. Other items for consideration include the EPA stormwater permit issue, possible Personnel Bylaw amendments, adoption of tax demand fee, and changing the date of annual town meeting to follow annual town election, along with zoning bylaw relative to wind turbines. If we want the General Bylaw changed with regard to date of town meeting for next year, this needs to be addressed now. Mr. Brennan wanted to wait until the School population figures are known for this school year, and that money articles should not be presented at this fall town meeting. Mr. Zagorski felt issues such as stormwater, wind turbines, and outdoor boiler regulations may need to be addressed now as well. Mr. Antanavica agreed with the wind turbine issue, as we pushed for the Planning Board to prepare and they did the work; there are those interested in subsidizing the ever increasing energy costs with these green technologies. Mr. Zagorski wondered if the Fire Station project would be ready for the next phase. Mr. Reed did not think so, as siting is still uncertain. Mr. Belanger agreed, although noting a \$50,000 feasibility study funding we should be receiving from the State to assist with this phase of the project. Mr. Reed noted certain posting requirements for town meetings, and limited timeframes involved through mid-November to hold a meeting. The Board noted the limited availability of members through mid-October, and agreed to hold next Selectmen's meeting on October 20th. The Board will have to review article requests, close Warrant that evening, with a November 10, 2008 Special Town Meeting date.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to hold Special Town Meeting on November 10, 2008, Warrant to be closed at Selectmen's meeting of 10/20/08. Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Correspondence

1. Memo from Town Clerk regarding limited committee meetings on election days and holidays. FILE
Mr. Reed noted that the Attorney General's Office recently approved the Annual Town Meeting bylaw changes, which were many this year, and the first time our new Town Clerk, Deb Davis, had to produce the documents. There were a few clarifications suggested, but all passed. The Board asked that departments receive a copy (which is distributed by Town Clerk).
2. Notice from ABCC regarding upcoming training seminar in Worcester on September 29th, to be held for licensees in the morning and licensing authorities & staff in the afternoon. Copies have been forwarded to all licensees. FILE
3. Notice from Rep. Binienda regarding upcoming office hours on 1st Friday of each month. It was noted that since the Town Hall will continue to be closed on Fridays, at least through October, Rep. Binienda may choose another site, such as the Senior Center or the Police Station, or another date. PENDING
4. Letter from Transportation Secretary regarding Mr. Brennan's recommended Mass Turnpike interchange in Oxford on Route 56. Mr. Brennan was pleased that this is at least being considered for further study. Mr. Reed reported that this has become part of the Worcester mobility study he is involved with, a sub-group of CMRPC which he sits on. The original work plan focused on 6.5 miles radius from Lincoln Square, but now this component has been added.

Mr. Antanavica asked we could follow up on replacement of Rawson Street bridge, the temporary structure having been there about ten years now. He noted recent motor vehicle accident and resulting detour; traffic was rerouted via Rawson Street, which could not handle the cars resulting in altercations.

5. Editorial regarding Charter Communications and service interruptions in area. Mr. Brennan wrote a draft letter to Charter requesting abatements on residents' bills. He noted they were always sending us rate increases; let's send them a letter requesting compensation for outages.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to authorize letter from Board to Charter Communications, as indicated. Mr. Zagorski seconded. UNANIMOUS

Signatures

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved for Chairman to sign CEMLEC Mutual Aid Agreement, as recommended by Chief of Police. Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Late Correspondence – request from Arts Council for one of the Board members to act as judge at the upcoming Harvest Fair. Mr. Antanavica noted that “Hearts for Heat” will have a booth selling goodies as a fundraiser, and they have had donations from local vendors for raffle. Mr. Zagorski noted the Lions Club will be selling food, and will add a health fair this year along with the mobile site van. Mr. Antanavica noted that Hearts for Heat will not be limited to heating oil; contributions can be made for pellet stoves, propane, etc. He noted that the utility companies have been very supportive and generous. He thanked those who volunteered and those that gave to the recent toll booth, raising some \$2500+ as a start-up fund.

Town Administrator’s Report

- Mr. Reed reported on outstanding charges to developers for snow and ice maintenance of private roads within developments. Mr. Reed stated that he has had discussions with Town Counsel, who supports Mr. Antanavica’s suggestion to file a claim for moneys owed.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to take action through Town Counsel as deemed in the best interest of the Town. Mr. Antanavica seconded.

Mr. Antanavica noted one such developer, C.B. Blair, has not paid and owes some \$16,000. The 1997 Order of Conditions from the Planning Board for this sub-division known as Carey Hill Estates clearly states that road maintenance is the responsibility of the developer. Mr. Blair did pay bills sent by the Town previously, therefore setting a precedent. Additionally, the roadways within the development have been neglected for years and are now in desperate need of much repair. He feels we need to recoup our costs to include any legal fees and damage to Town equipment due to negligence. Mr. Brennan agreed, and thought we should act as one unit with mutual interest of the Town on behalf of both boards. Mr. Zagorski felt this should be discussed in Executive Session. Mr. Reed explained that at this point the discussion can be in Open Session, which will allow residents to know what the Town is facing regards to Carey Hill Estates.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

- Mr. Reed noted that long-term disability insurance has been offered to certain Town employees without being offered to all, which is not in compliance with Chapter 32B statute. He has met with School Departments representatives in this regard, and recommends the Board act at our next meeting to either:
 - Offer long-term disability insurance to all individuals, which may very well increase premiums paid by those who currently hold these policies
 - Handle as group insurance with no contribution from Town of Leicester, but full premium paid by those who sign on, such as with dental insurance
 Mr. Zagorski asked about those currently enrolled and any bridging of policies or pre-existing conditions. He suggested we first acquire what is referred to as a census from the underwriter. Mr. Reed noted that a tentatively scheduled open enrollment in December or January is being recommended by the Town Treasurer
- Mr. Reed reported on recent large-tank heating oil bid opening, a program we joined with French River Collaborative. He noted favorable rates received at 3.34/gallon. Mr. Zagorski asked if rates are fixed, and can we receive lower rate if prices decrease dramatically. Mr. Reed will inquire.
- Mr. Reed reported on continuing electricity rate discussions with vendors, which Ms. LeChasseur is working on. A 40% increase from our 5-year contract that ends December 2009 being a good prospect at this time; he wonders if rates may continue to drop, however.
- Mr. Reed reported on completion of sewer connection project at Police Station, 90 South Main Street, which seems to have solved the problems of the past.
- Mr. Reed reported on recently awarded Hillcrest Country Club sewer connection project, with work to begin next week by low bidder Dennis Johnson at price of \$13,999.
- Mr. Reed reported on recent meeting with Mark Armington and Nault Architects relative to Phase 3 of Town Hall rehabilitation project. Under consideration is elevator placement and new heating system, with possible relocation of School Administration to 3rd floor of Town Offices building.

Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Antanavica moved to approve 5/19/08 Regular and Executive Session minutes, and 7/21/08 Regular Session minutes. Mr. Zagorski seconded. 4-0, Mr. Belanger abstained.

Board Reports/Other Business**Selectman Zagorski:**

- Becker College:
 - Upcoming dedication of new Becker College residential facilities to be held September 25th at 4pm
 - Leicester High football will play under the lights at new Becker field – the Board asked that a letter of congratulations be sent to Becker College
 - Becker College president resigned for new position elsewhere; they are seeking replacement
- Senior Center representatives recently participating in energy summit and toll collection activities. He commended the volunteerism in this community

Selectman Antanavica reported on behalf of Selectman Provencher:

- Commended participation in recent Master Plan Update committee meeting
- Commended work of Ruth Kaminski in formatting overdue Stormwater Management Reports, which were recently submitted to EPA and others involved

Selectman Antanavica:

- Announced upcoming golf tournament sponsored by Leicester Firefighters to be held September 20th at Leicester Hill CC; funds provide for gift baskets to be donated to needy families at holiday season
- Congratulated Leicester Fire Department on recent grant award from Mass Call Volunteer Firefighters Association; \$500 funds will purchase personal flotation devices for the Dive Team.
- Commended efforts of firefighters during recent 6" rainstorm, who continued to work on behalf of residents and their homes
- Upcoming Board of Health hearing tomorrow to consider adoption of Outdoor Wood Furnace regulations, noting regulations concerning health nuisances are under BOH authority, not the Town. Mr. Zagorski asked that Health Board also look into needle disposal requirements that will be regulated soon.

Selectmen Brennan:

- Looking for update on Route 9/Route 56 intersection reconfiguration. Mr. Reed noted that Lorian Company is doing traffic counts for Mass Highway, so there should be a hearing held soon in this regard.
- Upcoming opportunity for voters on September 16th for primary election ballot from 7:00am-8:00pm in Town Hall, mark your calendar. Absentee ballots are taken up to the day before election. Mr. Antanavica urged residents to put their differences aside and vote for our own Doug Belanger, who will fight for the Town of Leicester and other communities; we need him there as State Senator. He felt it our turn to have the right person in the driver's seat. Mr. Belanger thanked the Board and many others for the support shown him and his family. He has many memories living in and working for the Town of Leicester. He feels those angry people should let go of the hate; it is okay for us to disagree. He has given all he can to the Town and lives a very fulfilled life because of his service here to the community. He feels he has led with dignity and respect and would appreciate the positive votes of the residents.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to adjourn.
Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan LeChasseur,
Administrative Assistant