

**MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
FEBRUARY 5TH, 2015 at 6:30PM**

CALL TO ORDER/OPENING

Vice-Chair Provencher called the meeting to order at 6:31pm. Vice-Chair Dianna Provencher, 2nd Vice-Chair Matthew Dennison, Selectwoman Sandra Wilson, Town Administrator Kevin Mizikar and Assistant to the Town Administrator Kristen Forsberg Garza were in attendance. Chair Thomas E. Buckley, III and Selectman Douglas Belanger were absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No members of the public provided comment.

1. SCHEDULED

A. 6:30pm - Senior Center Donation

This item was rescheduled.

B. 6:35pm - Underground Utility Hearing – National Grid

This item was moved to the next Board of Selectmen's agenda.

C. 6:45pm – Becker College One Day Beer and Wine Permit

Chartwells at Becker College is requesting a one day beer and wine permit for a Leicester Business Association Event to be held on March 11, 2015 from 5-9pm at the Student Center. Chartwells has provided all required information and is in compliance with all Town regulations.

A motion was made by Mr. Dennison and seconded by Ms. Wilson to issue a one day beer and wine permit to Chartwells at Becker College for March 11, 2015. The motion carried with one abstention (Ms. Provencher).

Dave Mero, Finance Advisory Board Chair, asked Mr. Mizikar if the motion could carry with only two votes. Mr. Mizikar clarified that the motion must have the majority of voting members present to carry which is 2 out of 3 with Ms. Provencher's abstention.

2. CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Provencher read a proclamation for the Paxton 250 Year Founders Day Celebration. A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Ms. Provencher to recognize February 8th, 2015 as the Town of Paxton's 250th anniversary and congratulate the Town of Paxton on all of its accomplishments. The motion carried unanimously.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Appointment – Capital Planning Improvement Committee – John Cove

Mr. Dennison reported that John Cove attended several Board meetings and feels he would be a good fit for the committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Dennison and seconded by Ms. Wilson. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Wilson asks how many committees Mr. Cove serves on. Ms. Garza responded that Mr. Cove now serves on the CIPC, Commission on Disabilities and the Burncoat Park Sports Planning Committee.

B. Power Purchase Agreement – Syncarpha Palmer, LLC.

Mr. Mizikar presented an agreement with Syncarpha Palmer, LLC to purchase 1.3 MW of solar electricity for Town buildings at 11.5 cents/kwh. National Grid will provide a credit of over 21 cents/kwh for all electricity purchased through this agreement. Mr. Mizikar noted that the Town has spent over \$237,000 on electricity for the past two years and this agreement will save the Town \$50,000 per year, resulting in \$2M in savings over the 20 year term of the agreement. The agreement provides for price stability as rates can only increase by 2% annually. Town buildings will use nearly 100% renewal energy sources once the energy audit improvements are complete.

A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Dennison to approve the purchase power agreement with Syncarpha Palmer, LLC. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Letter of Support/Approval – Historic Mile Marker

Mr. Mizikar presented a request from the Historical Commission for a letter of support to reinstate the #54 Ben Franklin Historic Mile Marker on the north side of Main Street near the Town Common. The proposal has already received the support of the Historical Commission and the Town's Highway Superintendent.

A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Dennison to send a letter of support for the reinstatement of the #54 Ben Franklin Historic Mile Marker. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Statement of Interest – MSBA Grant for School Repairs

Mr. Mizikar presented a request for a letter of support from School Superintendent Dr. Paolucci for a Statement of Interest to be submitted to the MSBA for repairs to the roof at the Leicester High School. The estimated cost is \$800,000 and the MSBA would reimburse 50% of the cost if approved.

A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Dennison to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form for the Leicester High School located at 174 Paxton Street in Leicester, MA 01524.

Under discussion, Rory Marty, Facilities Director for the School Department, stated this is the first step in the MSBA process to obtain reimbursement for necessary roof repairs at the High School. There is no cost to the Town to submit the Statement of Interest and no obligation to the Board other than authorizing the Superintendent to submit the request. Should the project be selected from the initial round, there will be additional requirements and the project will come back before the Board.

The motion carried unanimously.

E. FY'16 Budget Proposal

Mr. Mizikar presented the annual budget binders to the Board including the FY'16 Budget Message. This is the same proposal provided to the Board in detail at the last meeting. The total proposed budget is \$27,508,523 which represents a \$515,203 or 1.91% increase over the FY'15 budget. One change has been made to increase ambulance receipts revenue to \$363,600 to balance the base budget in the proposal due to strong revenues received in by this department over the last 12 months. There is currently more than \$97,000 in revenues that are unallocated in this proposal. These funds should be considered for one-time expenditures to ensure revenue growth continues as expected. Mr. Mizikar also stated that free cash has been certified and can be used at Town Meeting, if needed, to fund articles on a one time basis and to offset any increase in general liability insurance or decrease in local aid. Mr. Mizikar asked the Board to support the initial proposal and forward it to the Finance Advisory Committee for their review.

Mr. Dennison stated that Mr. Mizikar did a fantastic job and recommended putting \$100K aside for a per diem grant writer who would receive 10% of all successful grants. Mr. Mizikar noted he would prefer this be a stand-alone article so as to not inflate the budget. Ms. Provencher stated a grant writer could look for different types of grants for different Town departments and could be beneficial.

A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Ms. Provencher to accept the FY'16 Budget Proposal and forward it on to the Finance Advisory Committee for review. The motion carried unanimously.

F. Appointment – Part-Time Custodian

This item was moved to the next Board of Selectmen's agenda.

4. DISCUSSION/OLD BUSINESS

A. Police Department Staffing Plan

Mr. Mizikar presented a staffing plan for the police department developed by Chief Hurley and the Town Administrator in light of changes including the move to regional dispatch and the hiring of new officers. Chief Hurley stated the plan addresses the PD's number one issue of understaffing. Chief Hurley noted that two new officers are graduating from the Academy tomorrow and a third stated the Academy two weeks ago. Chief Hurley reminded the Board they asked 6-8 months ago how to retain police officers and the key is upward mobility and keeping them active with new skills including tasers, canines and ID fingerprinting.

Ms. Wilson expressed concern about the ratio of sergeants (supervisors) to officers and disagreed with filling the two open sergeant's positions until the newly hired police officers are in place. Ms. Wilson stated that 4 full-time supervisors cover all three shifts in most other department. Ms. Wilson further stated she supports promoting one sergeant now and a second when all 10 officers are fully hired next fiscal year.

Chief Hurley responded that the plan proposes 5 sergeants and 10 officers which is a 2:1 ratio and allows for a supervisor on every shift for accountability. Chief Hurley stated that one sergeant and two police officers are needed every shift and with administrative work 4.5 sergeants are needed to fully cover the schedule. A requisition was created with Civil Service for two sergeants and a testing process has been completed with the understanding that two officers would be promoted to sergeant. Chief Hurley further noted that 8 part-time police officers which were laid off were never replaced and even with the 3 new officers there is still 1 full time opening.

Ms. Wilson stated the Board of Selectmen never voted to promote two officers to sergeant. Mr. Dennison stated he was always under the impression that the promotion was for two officers and noted that the police department is understaffed, losing officers and can't continue to go backwards.

A motion was made by Mr. Dennison and seconded by Ms. Provencher to approve the staffing plan for the police department.

Under discussion, Ms. Wilson asked for an estimate to fix the radio issues and if it would come out of the PD budget or if additional funds would be needed. Ms. Wilson stated that if repairs are not in the budget and one police officer must be cut to fund the repairs this puts us behind. Chief Hurley responded that 50% of the payment to the radio equipment vendor was withheld until issues are resolved.

Mr. Mero asked how many sergeants and police officers the Town had before the recent resignations of 4 officers. Chief Hurley responded 5 sergeants and 12 police officers but prior to the recession the Town had 5 sergeants and 17 police officers, including part-time officers.

Ms. Provencher noted that the 2001 Police Department report recommended 24 staff including the 4 dispatchers and that we should have 19 police officers today if we are following the report. Chief Hurley noted that this is correct; however, the report was only a 3 year projection and the Town should have had 19 officers by 2004.

The motion carried 2:1 with Ms. Wilson opposed.

B. Special/Annual Town Meeting Articles

Mr. Mizikar provided an overview of draft articles for Town Meeting including the Fire truck lease/purchase, \$220K for the OPM for the fire station and prior year bills. Mr. Mizikar stated the anticipated cost to build the Fire Station is \$5.5-6M and the OPM will go out to bid in February or March in hopes of receiving funding from Town Meeting and going to a ballot question at the June election for a debt exclusion to fund it. Mr. Mizikar stated the Fire Station Building Committee would provide a full presentation on the proposal at Town Meeting. Ms. Provencher asked if the \$200K was for a project manager. Ms. Wilson responded that a project manager is required by State law for any project over \$5M. Ms. Wilson further noted that Mr. Mizikar has scheduled several Town Meeting information sessions in the five weeks leading up to Town Meeting. Mr. Mizikar also discussed other key Town Meeting articles including the energy audit, Waite Pond Dam and LHS roof. There are 26 proposed warrant articles as of now and the Board will be asked to sign the warrant on April 6, 2015.

Ms. Provencher asked about the estimated borrowing amount for the energy audit. Mr. Mizikar responded that while there are no official estimates at this time, the RFQ anticipated \$2-3M of borrowing to be offset by \$150K-\$250K in annual utility savings.

Mr. Mizikar noted that free cash was certified at \$1,811,336 which is \$450,000 higher than last year. Mr. Mizikar stated that the proposed FY'16 budget includes more revenue up front so the Town should end up with less free cash at the end of that fiscal year.

C. Town Meeting Information Sessions

The Town Administrator will hold four Town Hall Meeting Information Sessions and record one additional session for LCAC. The dates are as follows:

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| • Tuesday, April 7, 2015 | Town Hall, Lower Level, Room 3 | 6:30pm |
| • Wednesday, April 15, 2015 | Town Hall, Lower Level, Room 3 | 6:30pm |
| • Thursday, April 16, 2015 | Senior Center | 9:30am |
| • Tuesday, April 28, 2015 | Town Hall, Lower Level, Room 3 | 6:30pm |

D. Collection Box Bylaw – Proposed Amendment

Mr. Mizikar presented a proposed amendment to the Collection Box Bylaw. A draft was submitted to the Bylaw Committee yesterday to meet the 90 day notification requirement as the Board meeting was rescheduled from Monday due to weather. Changes can still be made to the amendment as need be.

Ms. Garza summarized the proposed changes including allowing the Board discretion to set fines, take action against non-compliant property owners and to require each collection box to be clearly labeled with contact information including a contact number in case of issues.

Mr. Dennison suggested the fines be agreed upon prior to adopting the bylaw at Town Meeting. Mr. Mizikar stated the way the bylaw amendment is written gives the Board discretion to set the fines and change them as needed. Mr. Dennison recommended looking at neighboring town fees and not being excessive. Ms. Wilson recommended the fines cover at least 75% of the cost of enforcement. Ms. Garza noted that the bylaw as currently written allows the Town to charge removal and storage fees for non-compliant boxes which the Town takes. Ms. Wilson and Ms. Provencher expressed their support for the amendment.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Mizikar presented highlights from his Town Administrator report including highway dept. cost estimates for blizzard cleanup estimated to be at \$35K for the Town and \$5K for the Schools, an update on the classification and compensation study, new interns requested by the Planning Dept. and the Council on Aging, contract renewal with EBS Foran for HR services, meeting with MassDevelopment and CMRPC regarding economic development in the downtown and a conference call with MEMA regarding required submittals to obtain reimbursement for the blizzard if the President signs a major disaster declaration.

Ms. Wilson asked if the Town was exempt from issuing an emergency declaration because the Governor issued a State of Emergency. Mr. Mizikar responded in the affirmative noting that during the ice storm, the Town had to issue an emergency declaration due to localized impact.

Mr. Mizikar also discussed bringing forward a policy to allow the Town Administrator to have short term appointment authority for a period of 14-21 days in cases where the Board is not meeting for 2-3 weeks. This item will be brought forward for further discussion at a later date.

6. BOARD OF SELECTMEN REPORTS

Ms. Wilson asked residents to assist in clearing areas around fire hydrants and reminded residents of snowmobile regulations including only riding on trails where the local snowmobile club has permission unless you have written permission from the property owner, required snowmobile club membership, not crossing roads if you are under 16 and not leaving the yard if under 14. Furthermore, Ms. Wilson stated that Hillcrest Country Club has not given permission for snowmobiling on the golf course.

Ms. Provencher reminded residents they are not to snowmobile on any streets except to cross over as she received phone calls about individuals riding their snowmobiles on the roads which is illegal. Ms. Provencher also reminded residents not to shovel or blow snow into the streets to keep them clear for emergency vehicles and to use sidewalks whenever possible.

Mr. Dennison asked residents to be cautious of kids waiting for the bus behind snowbanks and thanked the Highway, Fire, EMS and PD departments as well as the Town Administrator and the Emergency Management Director for their coordination during the storm.

Mr. Mizikar also thanked the Highway, EMS, Fire and PD for doing a fantastic job during the storm and expressed his gratitude for the extra hours the highway department team put in to keep the roadways clear.

Mr. Mero asked all drivers to slow down considerably and beware of decreased visibility due to snow banks.

7. MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Ms. Provencher to accept the minutes of January 20, 2015. The motion carried with one abstention (Mr. Dennison).

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session was held

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Dennison and seconded by Ms. Provencher at 7:44pm. The motion carried unanimously.