

Minutes
Select Board Meeting
Wednesday – October 5, 2005
Police Station Community Room
7:00 p.m.

Chair Person John Papale called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

Present: Select Board Persons John Papale, Kathleen Grady, Brian Ashe, William Scibelli and Hal Haberman.

Also Present: Town Manager Robin Crosbie; Capital Planning Committee Members Mark Gold and Roger Wojcik; School Committee Members Jim Nittoli, Mary Vogel, Geoff Weigand and Jerold Duquette; Joe Occhiuti; Carla Gunn; and Diane Nadeau.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Minutes of the September 19, 2005 Regular Meeting were accepted with one addition and September 19, 2005 Executive Session were accepted as presented.

Visitor Comments and Questions:

Joe Occhiuti briefly voiced his thoughts about the recent Town Forum, as did Roger Wojcik. Chair Person Papale and Town Manager Crosbie both thanked all involved with the forum and mentioned a few things to think about for the next one.

Jim Nittoli spoke on behalf of the School Committee with regard to the consolidation issues and problems. He felt that the School Committee and Select Board should meet to work out the plan. Mr. Nittoli noted Ch. 71, Sec. 37F of the Mass General Laws as one interpretation and stated that the School Committee wished to work out a plan in writing so all parties knew what was to be expected.

Fire Chief Eric Madison – Update on Emergency Management:

Chief Madison reviewed for the Board the steps that have taken place to bring the Town to its current level of preparedness. He noted that the first step had been that he and Town Manager Crosbie reviewed the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. The second area looked at was that of shelter, and that he felt that the Town's sheltering capabilities at this time are somewhat inadequate and that he has been working with the Red Cross. They have identified Center School as the main shelter due to the power backup system, with the high school as a secondary shelter. Electrical work and engineering would be required to make the high school the main shelter. The third area looked at is communication: How to get information out to the Town in case of an emergency? Chief Madison is looking at a phone system, similar to the ConnectEd system that the schools use, to get information out to the public. The other area of communication is within Town departments and the Chief is working on a system to have one radio system to operate together, and he has brought this to the Capital Planning Committee for consideration this Fall. The Chief mentioned that he and several of his firefighters attended several Homeland Security drills and a conference recently. He noted the Emergency Management Team core group, in addition to himself, consists of DPW Director Michael Wrabel, Health Director Beverly Hirschhorn, Town Manager Robin Crosbie, Acting Finance Director Paul Pasterczyk, Police Chief Robert Danio and School Superintendent Scott AndersEn. Select Person Haberman asked about the Command Center and the Chief is making arrangements to have the Fire Station serve as the Command Center in the future. Select Person Grady mentioned that she has been in contact with the Council on Aging regarding identifying the elderly who may be living alone in case of emergency. Significant discussion ensued between Chief Madison and the Board and Chair Person Papale thanked the Chief for his update and information.

Acting Finance Director Paul Pasterczyk – Update on Electric Supply Purchase:

Mr. Pasterczyk informed the Board about the process and opportunities the Town had to lock in electric supply pricing after the March 2005 deregulation. He explained that he was new to this process and had been in contact with Paul Schroeder from the Lower Pioneer Valley Collaborative, who was an expert in the field of energy. Mr. Pasterczyk was advised by Mr. Schroeder at that time (May) not to lock in pricing for long-term, since the current price of electricity was lower than what the lock in price would be. Mr. Pasterczyk met again in August with Town Manager Crosbie, Select Person Grady and Paul Santaniello to review a proposal but decided to wait until the market came down. On September 14 they decided to get quotes and subsequently on September 30 they locked in electric supply pricing for 11.4¢ for 60 months with the ability to extend the contract. Mr. Pasterczyk explained that while we are paying more now, long-term it will be a lower price. Some discussion ensued and Chair Person Papale asked about the other energy costs for the Town such as gas and oil. Mr. Pasterczyk did not have that information at hand and Chair Person Papale voiced his concern that those numbers needed to be available to make the best decisions. Town Manager Crosbie explained that they had been getting conflicting information from the people they relied on to provide the best advise and that they realize they cannot rely on others and timeframes need to be in place for institutionalizing such decisions. There was considerable discussion with the Board and Town Manager Crosbie will get a full report to the Board regarding the energy costs. Chair Person Papale thanked Mr. Pasterczyk for coming in to the meeting.

Old Business:

Approve and Sign Special Town Meeting Warrant: Town Manager Crosbie explained that the Board needed to approve and sign the warrant in order to meet posting requirements. Members of the Capital Planning Committee and School Committee were present for discussion regarding the article on the warrant about school repairs. The Board discussed the words “or a greater or lesser sum” on several of the articles. Select Person Scibelli made a motion to delete “or a greater or lesser sum” on every article where it appears; Select Person Grady seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously. Select Person Haberman noted his concerns that the special town meeting warrant, which historically was for “house-keeping” only type articles, was now dealing with financial and by-law items that he did not feel belong in a special town meeting warrant and should be reserved for Annual Town Meeting, and that he felt it should be getting back to the way it used to be. There was some discussion among the Board members about this issue.

Capital Planning Committee Chair Person Mark Gold was then asked to give his Committee’s recommendation of Article 3 on the warrant, which deals with school repairs. Mr. Gold explained that at the time of the Committee’s meeting, many of the answers that they needed regarding the school repairs were not available. They have since gotten answers to their questions and while many of the items do not fall under Capital Planning jurisdiction, on the whole, they are in favor of the requests. Chair Person Papale noted that earlier he had reminded members of the School Committee to speak with Capital Planning Committee members regarding these requests and that none of them had done so. He expressed his concern about the lack of communication. Finance Committee Member Carla Gunn asked to speak to the Board and expressed her concern as well, that she was surprised to see this list since some of the items had been presented previously and that some of the items were clearly Capital Planning items. After some discussion, Chair Person Papale asked Mr. Gold if his Committee would unequivocally support the article and he replied that they were in favor of the repairs article.

At this time Chair Person Papale decided to discuss the school articles and School Committee Chair Person Jim Nittoli voiced his opinion that his committee was surprised to see the energy article on the warrant and felt they had been left out of the loop. Some discussion ensued regarding these and the other articles and with a few changes to wording and the summaries, the Board approved and signed the warrant.

New Business:

Administrative Consent Order:

Town Manager Crosbie explained to the Board that this Administrative Consent Order was issued from the DEP regarding the recent coliform case and the response actions taken and that the Board needed to approve and sign it to meet DEP requirements. The Board voted unanimously to approve and sign the document.

Consent Agenda:

The Board voted the consent agenda unanimously, including a one-day liquor license application for a Caldwell Banker fundraising event on October 16th and a block party application for Duxbury Lane on October 9th.

Correspondence:

None was noted.

Town Manager's Report:

Town Manager Robin Crosbie briefed the Board regarding the agenda for the Town Forum; her recent meeting with DEP on the compliance status; Mass Highway would be repaving the I-91 extension beginning on October 17; water hydrants will be flushed the weeks on October 17-28 and notices will go out; her recent meeting with the Charter Transition team; and her meeting with the Finance Committee to review the warrant articles and FY07 budget strategy.

Executive Session:

At 9:16 p.m. on a roll call vote (Papale – yes, Grady – yes, Scibelli – yes, Ashe – yes, Haberman – yes) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of strategy with respect to labor negotiations and not to return to Open Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Crosbie
Town Manager