

SELECTBOARD MINUTES  
DECEMBER 8, 2014

Meeting opened at 6:00pm

Present: Alan Vint, Chair; Howard Knickerbocker, Clerk; David DiNicola  
Duane Pease, Administrative Assistant (AA)

Warrants reviewed and signed. Payroll: \$13,293.90; Expenses: \$36,699.42.

Minutes approved on motion by Alan, Howard 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0.

Howard requested Alan sign the Council on Aging Grant for the Town.

Howard reported he attended the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) hearing regarding the Worthington withdrawal held at Gateway Regional School. There were 75-80 in attendance, the comments were excellent and the crowd was well-behaved. Howard felt the DESE was just trying to get this hearing out of the way and the withdrawal was a done deal. A conference will be held with Worthington to work out what they will owe when the withdrawal occurs. A law suit has been filed against the withdrawal and an attempt at an injunction against it will be pursued.

Joe Kearns, Finance Chair, and Dave DiNicola also attended the meeting. There was continued discussion about the meeting. Representative Pignatelli also attended the meeting and his questions were not answered and he chided the committee over their lack of responses. DESE has until December 30<sup>th</sup> to report back to the legislature so Worthington can withdraw effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. Dave noted one of Middlefield's School Board representatives, Noreen Suriner, spoke very effectively for the Town. The budget shortfall with Worthington's withdrawal would be approximately \$40,000 for the Town. Huntington's would be \$260,000 and Russell's \$100,000.

Building Commissioner, Bill Girard, spoke to the Board regarding setting up a credit card payment system for building permits. He stated this would make it easier for contractors as they would not have come to the office to obtain permits, applications are now taken on-line. He also felt since it would be easier, more permits would be requested. AA will check with the Treasurer to have her set up the on-line payment account.

6:30pm: Assessors met with the Selectboard for the Tax Classification hearing. Since there is only about 4% commercial in Town, the Assessors requested a single rate. After some discussion, Alan motion to accept the single rate, Howard 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0. The new tax rate will be an increase of 2 cents from last year with the new rate being \$17.44.

The Board next met with the Emergency Management team. Ed Vivier, Emergency Medical Services, Ron Radwich, Fire Chief, Tom Austin, Police Chief, Bob Hoynoski, Emergency Management Director and Skip Savery, Highway Superintendent. Alan asked if anything was needed from the Selectboard for them to carry out their duties. Bob stated they are all on the same page and are communicating on a regular basis and during the recent power outage on Thanksgiving, he received no calls from residents needing assistance. Tom advised all the Town radios are programmed so each department can radio each other. There was further discussion including problems with dispatch not calling the Police Chief regarding an auto accident in Town, not having the Highway Garaged wired with the fiber optic network, they are still working on obtaining a radio tower to improve communications throughout the Town. Sherri Venditti questioned if there was any list of residents that has special medical needs or equipment and that perhaps a phone list of Emergency Contact phone numbers should be sent out with the tax bills. Town Clerk, Marge Batorski, volunteered to send this out with her yearly census forms that go out in January. Ray Gero also advised if someone is on oxygen, this should be known to responders.

Ed said the Town should actively look into a reverse number calling system such as Blackboard. Currently Ron has access to a reverse 911 system that can be used only in case of disaster or emergency. Some departments get messages from western Mass Electric regarding power outages. Bob gets an email advising him of when the storm center is open and a phone number for him to call. Overall, everything has been going smoothly and the Board thanked the members for coming.

Next discussed was a communication problem that Alan had with Kathy O'Brien, Town Hall custodian. The Town hall was not cleaned during the week and Alan's calls to Kathy were not returned. Howard felt it was not up to Alan to address this on his own, but it was something the entire Board should have addressed with Kathy. There were continued heated discussions. It appears this stemmed from payment of hours worked that were not paid to

Kathy, she was only paid for hours of some of the various jobs she performs for the Town. Dave felt there were 2 issues, not getting paid and how to handle the situation.

Highway Superintendent, Skip Savery, asked the board for signatures for his Chapter 90 reimbursements. The Board signed the forms. He has had no major problems the last couple weeks.

Final discussion was regarding kitchen usage now that the kitchen has been okayed for use. Determination will have to be made on charges to cover the opening, closing and inspection after use. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

Alan motioned to adjourn the Selectboard Meeting and open a board of Health Meeting and not to reconvene the S/B Meeting, Howard 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0 and S/B meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease  
Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

Alan Vint, Chair

Howard Knickerbocker, Clerk

David DiNicola