

Selectboard Meeting  
September 26, 2011

Present: Noreen Suriner, Chair; Mitch Feldmesser, Alan Vint  
Duane Pease, Administrative Assistant

Meeting called to order at 7:02pm.

**Diana Schindler**, Director of Regional Services, and **Todd Ford**, Executive Director, of Hampshire Council of Government (HCOG) were present to speak to the Board.

**Diana** wanted to touch base regarding the building inspection program that Middlefield belongs to. HCG currently has an interim inspector that will handle the inspections in Middlefield. **Jim Hawkins** is a certified building commissioner that has been contracted from Franklin County Council to do the inspections. Since he is being paid on a contract basis, she is trying to bundle as many inspections as possible into one day.

**Alan** wanted to make sure HGOC was aware the Conservation Commission has to sign off on any new building permit. In the past, the Commission would get a “heads up” from the Paul Tacy, former inspector.

The building inspector’s office now has as assistant in on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and Monday evenings according to Diana. This will make contact with the office more convenient. The fees have not changed and are based on actual hours spent in the community.

**Todd** said the fees charged are uniform as they are trying to get a consistent and high level of service. HCOG is also looking at the possibility of providing plumbing, electric and gas inspectors for the towns.

**Noreen** said she felt she had an advocate with Paul Tacy when she was building her house.

**Diana** stated Paul was the consummate professional and the HCG is working to get all in order and smoothed out. They do have a database of all permits ever issued and have mail merged them to all departments. This info is available to the member communities.

**Alan** questioned the Zoning issues that don't seem to go away and some are from 5-10 years ago and that the inspector has to be responsive and cooperative to several persons needs and he also needs to be fiscally responsible.

**Diana** asked that they be given another month to see how it goes and she understood there was a lag between inspectors and they are trying to get everything back to normal.

**Alan** said he had called the prior interim inspector and for 2 weeks he did not get a response. Generally, there had been good results in dealing the HCG.

**Todd** asked that the Board continue with HCG and he would consider a "stick it out" discount, he will look at the fees and see what he can offer in line of a discount for the services Middlefield did not receive in the time between Paul and the current inspector. And, there could be another service he could offer to the Town.

**Alan** felt the fee should be reduced by one month.

The District Incentive Grant (DIG) was discussed next.

**Todd** stated there is no regional Board of Health (BOH) and that all towns have their own. DIG would allow HCG to look at a regionalized system for the towns. The grant being pursued if for \$325,000 spread over 4 years (100k, 100k, 75k & 50k). This would bring the towns together.

**Mitch** wondered if HCG would be considered one Board of Health district.

**Todd** said it could be one or an umbrella and that would allow the towns to retain their BOH structure. Benefit would be a high level of expertise.

**Diana** said at this time they are not sure what the makeup would be, initially.

**Todd** said the small towns rely of State funds in an emergency such as the recent hurricane and this would provide structure for emergencies.

**Noreen** questioned how the functions would be arranged so the small towns have a voice in decisions.

**Todd** said the towns that participate will run the program.

The last discussions were concerning the Solar Survey sent by **Eric Weiss**. He is putting out a RFP for the entire HCG to try to keep any solar applications as local as possible. Towns can submit sites and all could go out to bid at once.

Also, the Council is investigating the possibility of a regionalized IT program for the HCG.

**Alan** said Middlefield currently has a Communications Committee that is doing a great job but will see what HCG has to offer.

**Todd** says he sees stronger and stronger programs and the HCG goal is to serve its members.

Board thanked Diana and Todd for their information and time.

Next item discussed was the location for the bonfire that will be held Friday night as part of the Middlefield Days celebration. It will be needed to be run by the Fire Chief. **Skip Savery**, Highway Superintendent, said he would bring some stones in to help delineate the fire pit.

**Skip** told the Board he met with FEMA last Friday and they viewed the sites that received damage. FEMA will be back on 10/7 and will be bringing another person to view and discuss the sites that may receive mitigation money.

**Alan and Skip** discussed the highway payroll; Skip said it was high due to the hurricane and subsequent storm. FEMA should reimburse a large portion of the overtime required.

Also, **Skip** needs to have the septic tank at the Senior Center pumped so he can ascertain why the alarm continues to go off. He is not sure what the cause is but it could be a burnt out pump. He will have this done prior to Middlefield Days so the system will function.

Finally, **Skip** informed the board of problems with the loader. It is a 1990 year model and has in excess of 16,000 hours on it. It needs a head gasket and he fears once he gets into the repairs, the cost will continue to rise. Right now, he estimates the cost at least \$10,000. He is able to obtain a John Deere loader through the State bid list on the lease to own program. He would use some of his Chapter 90 money to pay for the lease and at the end of the lease the Town would own it. He prefers the John Deere as the Town currently has a John Deere grader and having both the same would make it easier for repairs and parts.

**Alan** asked **Joe Kearns**, Finance Chair, if this had to go out to bid. Joe advised it did not have to go to bid as the State had already placed this bid out for towns to use when purchasing equipment.

**Skip** will come back to the Board for approval when he has gathered all the information.

Next was the appointment of a Police Officer, Michael Pensivy was previously appointed but he refused the appointment. It appears this has been an ongoing misunderstanding over the past years. The appointment of Officer Jenny Austin Dion was to have been made at the time.

**Mitch** motioned to appoint her, **Alan** 2<sup>nd</sup>; **vote was 3-0 in favor.**

**Personnel policy** discussion was moved to next week.

Mail was received from **Jamula's** attorney regarding Harry Pease Road, discussion on how to handle the legal aspect and negotiations will be discussed next week in Executive Session.

**Alan** received request for additional information from the Mass Dept of Energy Resources. DOER does not have enough information on the siting of the proposed solar installation. **Eric Weiss**, HCG, and **Marcos Marrero** of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission are looking into it. It has to be determined if the solar will be a roof mount on the Town Hall or a ground mount.

**Mitch** said they will need to come back to the Board for approval for the final site approval.

According to **Alan** there are still some problems with the new e-mail system and that anyone reading them remotely should not delete them as that may cause them to be deleted from the main system. It seems the number of e-mails has declined. I will see if the e-mails sent to the previous address are being forwarded or just being dropped.

**Noreen** said we need to get a building usage policy in place as soon as possible to avoid any problems or confusion among the residents. That will be discussed at next week's meeting.

**Halloween:** discussion on what night to have trick or treating. The 31<sup>st</sup> is Monday, a school night, so it may be best to have it either Friday or Saturday. Decision will be made at next meeting.

Motion was made by Alan to adjourn, seconded by Noreen, **vote 3-0** in favor and meeting was adjourned at 9:28pm.

Minutes respectively submitted

Duane Pease  
Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted with/without changes

Noreen Suriner, Chair

Mitch Feldmesser

Alan Vint