

Selectboard Meeting
November 7, 2012

Meeting opened at 7:05pm

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

Review of letter from Office of the Inspector General listing complaints brought against various functions of the Town.

Alan has sent an email to Caprice Shaw, Mass DEP, requesting she come before the Board to discuss the former General Store. She had not responded by meeting time.

Noreen has a call into Blair Sutherland regarding the Northampton dispatch Service. He has not returned her call.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved with changes.

General discussion regarding the license renewal process and further information is needed.

Town Clerk, **Marge Batorski**, introduced **Eleanor Doyle** as a potential Assistant Town Clerk. The Board was pleased with her selection. Marge is showing her some of the functions of the Clerk.

Alan continues to gather information regarding the Harry Pease Road situation and he has a meeting on November 14th with Attorney **Alexandra Dawson**. She very well versed on the statutes of roads and their closings.

Joe Kearns, Finance Chair, has met Ms. Dawson and heard her speak. He also noted the Board may not appreciate what she has to say.

It is hoped that Ms. Dawson will have provided the Board with her opinion and perhaps provide a written summary.

Attorney Lynch, who represents Mr. Jamula, has accepted the Board's invitation to meet. A letter will be sent to him giving him the option of December 5th or 12th for the meeting.

Attorney Lynch has been copying Kopelman & Paige (K&P) on the correspondence he has been sending to the Town. However, K&P has been advised not to take any further actions on behalf of the Town at this time. In previous correspondence K&P advised the burden of proof is on the private party to prove Harry Pease Road is a public way.

Alan stated the Board may end up dealing with them or some other firm in the future. In his review, Alan said that both sides have occasionally used the same documents in an attempt to prove their point.

Alan also stated a Special Town Meeting could be called for a vote on discontinuing the road.

Noreen was not recommending the STM and said the Town may have to pay for the devaluation of property if the road was discontinued.

Sherry Venditti, who was in attendance, questioned what the repercussions would be if Harry Pease Road was deemed to be a town road.

Alan stated the cost of bringing it up to current standards would be quite significant but had no firm dollar amount.

Marge Batorski noted a person had been in her office looking through old records and she believes it may have been the person assisting Attorney Lynch.

The Inspector General's letter was discussed next. First was the use of the Town Hall by a Co-op that has its food delivered to it. The Co-op does make in-kind donations and makes cash donations to various Town entities. The complaint regarding excessive use of fuel by the highway department will need more specifics. **Skip Savery**, highway superintendent, said the new grader does use much more fuel but without specifics he could not respond. The diesel storage tank is outside but the pump is shut off from inside the garage so no one would be able to take the fuel. He also addressed the timekeeping, he does all the time cards and writes in the time the employees get to and end work. It is not feasible to install a time clock for 2 employees.

The allegations regarding the photocopier and Police details for private events (Middlefield Fair & Heritage Days) were addressed. There is a cost for private use of the photocopier and the fee is posted at the copier machine that is located in the Selectmen's Office. Heritage Days is a town function that is sponsored by various town committees and commissions. In the past the Hampshire County Sheriff's Office has also donated officers to the Fair.

The property assessment in 2008 not being completed is an issue for the Assessors to respond to. But **Joe Kearns** suggested a call to Jeff Reynolds of the Department of Revenue could probably resolve the issue.

The issue of the board of Health agent not turning over fees as required was questioned as the prior Health Agent was paid from a revolving account and if the funds were not turned over, he would not be paid. Currently the BOH agent is paid on an hourly basis.

A Planning Board member does have the laptop computer in her home but it is used only for Board work. However, she uses her own computer for personal use.

The complaint stating that Town policies and procedures allow invoices to be paid without proper documentation was something the Board was not aware of. They review all bills prior to signing the warrant for payment and do not approve if there is no invoice.

Joe Kearns suggested the Board plan to place an article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant requesting funds for a 2012 audit.

Alan Vint left the meeting at 8:20pm.

A response letter to Attorney Lynch was drafted and revised and signed by Noreen Suriner, Chair.

Motion to adjourn was made by Noreen, Mitch 2nd, vote 2-0 to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted with/without changes

Noreen Suriner, Chair

Alan Vint, Clerk

Mitch Feldmesser