

SELECTBOARD MINUTES
MAY 12, 2014

Meeting opened at 6:00pm

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

Board welcomed new member, Dave DiNicola. Gave explanation on the warrants, how to review, where backup receipts, etc were within the warrant.

Warrants were signed; Payroll: \$6,554.63; Expenses: \$25,123.39

Minutes were approved on motion by Alan, Howard 2nd; vote 2-0 with Dave abstaining as he was not member at time of previous meeting.

6:10pm: Lawn mowing bid was opened by Howard. There was only one bid received and that was from Alan Vint DBA as Tapestry Landscaping. Disclosure notice was enclosed with bid as Alan is Board member. Also, a Certificate of Insurance was filed with the bid. Bid was for \$305 per as needed mowing if he is considered a temporary employee of Town and \$350 if he is to be considered a contractor. There was discussion and question of legality but since disclosure was filed with bid it was accepted on a motion by Howard, Dave 2nd; vote was 2-0 with Alan abstaining. Dave also questioned insurance requirements of Town contractors, AA advised any contractor has to file a Certificate of Insurance before bids are accepted. Alan stated he most likely will do the mowing as an independent contractor.

Alan was re-elected Chair on a motion by Howard, Dave 2nd; vote 2-0 with Alan abstaining. Howard was re-elected Clerk on motion by Alan, Dave 2nd; vote 2-0 with Howard abstaining.

Alan explained to Dave that he would have to take the on-line Ethics test and submit copy of his Certificate to The Town Clerk. Also, it was recommended he review the Open Meeting laws as well as the list of Executive Session reasons. Email discussions on Town business are also not allowed.

Interviews with prospective Town Counsel firms are to be arranged by the AA over the next 2 meetings. There was brief discussion on having the selected firm work on a retainer for the year and any unused money would be returned to the Town. a retainer system would allow the various Board/Committees to seek legal guidance without having to come before the Selectboard for permission.

Next item discussed was the forming of a 9-1-1 committee to research option for the Town's departments. Currently, Berkshire County is assessing the Town more that \$7,700 a year for this service. Neighboring towns such as Chester and Huntington use Northampton Control and the service is of no cost. A driving force behind this was last

summer's drowning in the River Road area, the Police and EMT had no radio communication at the site. Northampton does provide coverage to that area as there is a repeater in Chester. Northampton would be able to provide coverage to the entire Town area. It was agreed the Communication Committee, in conjunction with the Fire Dept, Police Dept, EMT, Highway and Emergency Management, would take the lead and report back to the Board with their findings. Judy Hoag questioned the ambulance service and where it would come from. She was advised the ambulance service would stay the same and would still be provided by Hinsdale.

Kitchen discussion included report from AA that in spite of repeated attempts, only 2 parties came to inspect the kitchen for the fire suppression system. The low bid received was from Allstate Fire. Alan motioned to accept the Allstate bid, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 to accept. AA will contact Allstate and arrange a site meeting to discuss the parameters of the bid and any additional work that will be necessary for the Town to perform prior to the installation of the system.

Also discussed was the electrical supply to the Town Hall, currently the power comes in through overhead wires and the Town owns the 2 poles between the road and building. Joe Kearns advised the current power supply is inadequate and it would be of better service if it were increased to a 400 amp service and the service put underground. Also, the current electrical panels were installed when the building was initially constructed and replacement breakers are no longer available. The last time a breaker had to be replaced as suitable used breaker was located in New Jersey.

The Board is looking into ways to have the Selectboard notes given to the Country Journal (CJ) for publication without having any misrepresentations in the report. Currently, the CJ does not have a paid reporter for Middlefield and any notes submitted are not an official version of the various boards, committees or commissions. There was extended discussion and various ideas were put forth including a Town news letter that could be made available at the Post Office, notes on the web-site as well as having the various boards submit their own information to the CJ. There was a question of who would proofread the notes prior to submission to make sure they were accurate.

Howard spoke on the appointment process for the various positions that the Board makes each year. He felt there should be tracking mechanism so each appointee would receive a letter, the Town Clerk would then record the swearing in and Ethics certificate. If that person did not respond to the appointment or Ethics requirement within 30 days, the position would then be open for a new appointment. He found there may be some committees that are no longer active and should be disbanded.

During Open Forum, it was agreed to send letter to accounting firm to arrange for an audit of the financial departments. AA will compose and send the letters.

Highway Superintendent, Skip Savery, brought Chapter 90 form for the Board to sign. He explained how the funds are obtained to Dave.

Joe Kearns advised the Worthington Bill has been signed by the Governor and is with the Dept of Elementary and Secondary Education. If all is approved, Worthington would be able to withdraw from the school district effective June 30, 2015.

Eleanor Doyle advised there will be a Memorial Concert for her brother on May 19th at the church. Also, she presented a list of names for possible appointment as the Building Commissioner (BC) for the next fiscal year. Alan requested the AA arrange interviews for a possible replacement. Howard felt the BC was not doing a terrible job but there was friction between some of the parties.

The next Selectboard meetings will take place on May 27th, June 2nd, June 9th and June 23rd. also, a Special Town Meeting will be held on June 23rd to transfer funds, \$5,000, to the Highway Department fuel account.

Alan motioned to adjourn, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

Alan Vint, Chair

Howard Knickerbocker, Clerk

David DiNicola