

SELECTBOARD MINUTES
APRIL 19, 2016

Meeting opened at 6:00pm

Present: Alan Vint, Chair; David DiNicola; Robert Costa
Duane Pease, Town Administrator (TA)

Board met with Fire Chief, Ron Radwich, Police Chief, Tom Austin and Highway Superintendent, Skip Savery, to discuss current dispatching service. Town is currently dispatched out of Berkshire County, Berkshire currently dispatches for 22 towns. The costs have been steadily rising and now are approaching \$9,000. Ron has kept track of the calls to Middlefield and since 1/1/10 there have been 188 calls, this averages out to about 36 calls a year. Tom stated Maryland is about the same size as Massachusetts and their emergency services are dispatched out of 7 statewide centers while Mass. has 140 dispatchers across the state. The Northampton dispatch center handles all of the cell phone calls in Western Mass and does not charge any fee to the communities it dispatches, this service is funded by the state. Skip said it didn't matter to him who dispatched as just about all of his calls are vehicle to vehicle and do not go through dispatch.

Dave questioned the cost of using Berkshire versus Northampton, Ron said there is a 4-5 minute delay getting the information from Northampton to Berkshire and then dispatching to Middlefield and what cost is worth a life. Ron also wanted to know if the town switched its ambulance service to Hilltown, who is their backup.

There was continued discussion regarding the 2 dispatch services, TA will follow with Northampton as the director is on vacation and will be returning next week.

The \$35,000 requested for radio improvements was discussed with Ron, Tom and Skip next. These improvements would cover all the "dead" spots currently affecting radio communication in town. Ron questioned the licensing and Tom stated the licensing agreements would be part of any upgrade in the radios. Also, each department would have its own frequency rather than using the Fire Dept. frequency as they now do. Skip said any improvements would have to be compatible with Motorola radios as they are what the town currently has.

Skip advised the Board he attended the Complete Streets program at Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. This is a State program that provides grants for sidewalks, cross walks and bike paths; it is not user friendly for small towns but is one of things that aids a town in applying for other grants. He is also grading the dirt roads.

Board next continued its review of the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. Articles 33 and 27 were suggested to be funded with Free Cash rather than Raise and Appropriate. Also, transferring \$90,000 to the Stabilization Fund rather than the \$50,000

recommended by the Finance Committee. After deducting the \$203,000 from Free Cash it would still leave approximately \$100,000 in Free Cash to carry over to the next fiscal year.

Alan motioned to adjourn, Bob 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

Alan Vint, Chair

David DiNicola

Robert Costa