

SELECTBOARD MINUTES
DECEMBER 22, 2014

Meeting opened at 5:00pm

Present: Alan Vint, chair; Howard Knickerbocker, clerk; David DiNicola
Duane Pease, Administrative Assistant

Alan motioned to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue with Kathy O'Brien and then reconvene regular Selectboard meeting, Dave 2nd. Vote: Alan, Aye; Howard, Aye; Dave, Aye. Vote 3-0 to go into Executive Session.

Kathy requested hearing be held in Open Session, so meeting held in Open Session.

Alan personally apologized to Kathy. He explained there was a misunderstanding on his part. He has no issues with her work. She works very well with no supervision and does her jobs very well and he is grateful. She maintains the Town Hall, has been in charge of the painting of the building as well as cleaning the Senior Center and maintaining the Transfer Station. She also obtains the Wednesday meal for the seniors and distributes the Brown Bags. He felt the issue he has is communication.

When Kathy did not show up to clean the Town Hall during the week and did not respond to the messages he left on her answering machine, he spoke to her at the Transfer Station. He thought the conversation was private and questioned her as to why she did not clean and why she did not respond to his voice mails. He also had concerns about her health as she has had issues in the past. When she told him about the issues with her pay, he spoke with the Treasurer and Accountant. In Alan's opinion, it is never appropriate to decide on ones own not to work; she should have advised the Board of the situation.

There was continued discussion among the Board and Kathy. Howard felt the problem was not with Kathy but with the manner of paying employees when more than one account is being used for payment. It was agreed it was not appropriate to express any displeasures to the Townspeople. If Kathy has any issues in the future, she will contact Howard. There is also the expectation that any messages should be returned within 24 hours. Howard said specific issues should be addressed and it was not right to make broad statements.

Alan said he is deeply appreciative of her work, but she just needs to communicate with the Board.

Warrants were approved and signed. Payroll: \$17,678.91; Expenses: \$53,266.03

Animal control Officer Terry Donovan advised she picked up stray dog on Arthur Pease Road on Saturday tagged the door of the owner and brought it to her kennel. She checked with the Town clerk and the dog was not registered. A short time later the person that has control of the dog showed up at her house and went to the kennel and removed the dog.

This lady was Christine Latta, she said she did not own the dog but was just taking care of it, when told she could not go in the kennel, she went in anyways and removed the dog. Terry feared for her safety and did not try to stop the lady. Since this happened in Chester, she will meet with the Chester Police Chief to determine what her course of action will be. Terry had also received a complaint about this dog in November, but when she went looking, the dog was not around. She also left a tag on the door at that time. She advised the Board the State frowns on her keeping dogs in her kennel as they may spread diseases to her dogs. Terry is looking into sharing a kennel with other towns. The kennel must have fencing and a run; it does not have to have heat. Alan volunteered to let her use his kennel/barn in an emergency situation.

Building Commissioner, Bill Girard, met with the board next. There was discussion regarding the fee schedule the Town currently uses, Bill would prefer to use the same schedule he uses in Becket. He will have to include a fee for trenching as there is none in the Becket schedule. On a motion by Alan, Howard 2nd, vote 3-0, bill will submit a new fee schedule to the board for review.

Dave has spoken with Al Sirard regarding his being appointed the Assistant Electrical Inspector and he is willing to do it. Dave motioned to appoint, Alan 2nd, vote 3-0 to appoint.

John Savery submitted a letter of interest in being the Town Electrician; his rate would be \$60/hour. John is a Master Electrician and has done much work for the Town in the past. This position has been advertised many times in the past with no one showing interest. Alan motioned to appoint, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 to appoint.

Alan advised the Becket Road Bridge in Washington is still in limbo, there seem to be a bureaucratic foul-up in getting the temporary bridge approved. The Washington Selectboard is doing everything possible to get the bridge approved.

The WiredWest bonding request was discussed next. WiredWest is requesting the S/B vote to put the bonding request on the warrant at the Annual Town Meeting. Currently, the estimated bonding amount is \$800,000. Howard spoke of his research into the fiber-optic system they want to install. He feels this is the "Cadillac" system and the most expensive. There is no guarantee on the return from the users of the system and it could be many years down the road before the Town would reap any profit to pay the bond; in the meantime, the Town would be responsible for paying the bond as it becomes due. He feels WiredWest is overstating the potential customers as the Town population is decreasing and aging. Howard felt he could not recommend this to the townspeople.

Further discussion on this showed the cost to bring the cable would be approximately \$3,100 to each house with an additional \$900 to connect. The monthly average cost to each customer would be \$125. WiredWest claims there are 250 houses in town that would benefit from this. However, Howard said this includes 42 second homes and 15-20 houses that are either for sale or empty.

Steve Harris, Communication Committee member, has posted the construction and Operating expenses on the Town website. Steve also said he is looking into a possible wireless system for the Town that would be less expensive. He has also been to other towns that are proposing to install their own systems, either hard wired or wireless.

The WiredWest request will be a burden for the Town to pay and at this time Alan motioned to send the request to Town Counsel for review, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 in favor. Alan then motioned to table this request at this time, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 to table.

Next item discussed was the possibility of having Town counsel give a seminar for the Building Commissioner, Assessors Board of Health, ZBA, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Selectboard regarding the Zoning By-Laws as well as the existing Town By-Laws. Sherri Venditti questioned how this could be done if not all the by-laws are available. She was informed this would be a general seminar but specific questions could be asked. Alan would see if the various Town entities would be willing to contribute to the cost of such seminar. Alan motioned to go ahead with the seminar and he would poll the various boards to seek their input as to its value, Howard 2nd; vote was 2-1 with Dave voting against.

Howard advised there are 3 computers in the auditorium that are available for use by residents. Also, SHAEC will be offering free yoga classes in the auditorium in January.

Alan motioned to adjourn, and go into board of Health meeting and not reconvene the S/B meeting, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 8:16pm

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

Alan Vint, Chair

Howard Knickerbocker, Clerk

David DiNicola