

SELECTBOARD MINUTES
JUNE 30, 2014

Meeting opened at 6:00pm

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

Judy Hoag addressed the Board regarding the ZBA's need to contact Town Counsel on an emergency basis regarding an application the ZBA had received. Since they were using their own expenses, they did not seek authorization from the Selectboard. She was advised that all contact with Town Counsel had to go through the Board for approval. A Selectboard meeting could be arranged on 48 hour notice and only 2 members had to be present to hold the meeting. There was continued discussion regarding this issue and Alan motioned to allow the ZBA to contact counsel, Howard 2nd; vote was 3-0.

Next Jim Caffrey of the Trustees of the Reservation asked the Board to sign off on the demolition of the Merritt property as the Board of Health. Alan motioned to allow sign off, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0. Alan also signed off as the Conservation Commission Chair. Howard signed off as Historical Commission member.

Minutes were approved on motion by Alan, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0.

Mail reviewed.

Town Handyman appointment was discussed next. Donald Munger appeared before the Board and is interested in the position; he has 20+ years experience in construction and building. He is currently working full-time but has time on weekends. Current handy person, Kathy O'Brien, has no problem with him being appointed to position. Alan motioned to appoint, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0. Don was advised the position paid only \$10/hour and there were no pressing issues to be repaired. The items that need to be addressed are the Playscape, handicap ramp entering/exiting from the auditorium and the Senior Center lock.

Don was also appointed as the 2nd Alternate to the Westfield River Wild and Scenic Committee on a motion by Alan, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0.

Howard updated the Board on the GTAC meeting he and Joe Kearns attended in Huntington. Huntington has hired an attorney to represent them in the withdrawal of Worthington from the Gateway Regional School District. They are looking to other Gateway member towns to join them and share the costs of the legal bill. There was discussion regarding the pros and cons of joining in. Howard supports the Town joining Huntington in this matter, the cost would be split 6 ways if all towns join. Howard motioned to have Middlefield support Huntington in the legal costs with a \$2,000 limit. Alan 2nd; vote 3-0.

Howard also advised the Board on the town property owned on Town Hill Road, this was taken for taxes 52 years ago and still remains with the Town. One parcel of 6.1+- acres is on the river bank is pretty much worthless, it was also the site of an old dump. The other parcel contains a spring that has the best drinking water in town. Howard felt the Town should retain that property and give the other to the Nature Conservancy.

Also discussed was the property at 92 River Road, it has been a year since the Town took the property and it can now be auctioned with a clear title as the owners can no longer redeem it. Tax attorney Ron Berenson has sent an email outlining the step necessary to auction it off (attached). There was discussion regarding whether the property was conforming or non-conforming with the current zoning. The Board did say they would not be warranting anything to the potential buyer of the property. A Tax Title Custodian needs to be appointed by the Board to handle the sales of Town property at auction. Howard motioned to appoint Alan, David 2nd; vote was 2-0 with Alan abstaining.

Jack Guyette spoke to the Board and advised he believes both Frederickson's urns are buried on the property. He is also interested in buying the property as it abuts his land. There was discussion about removing the urns and Jack stated Jimmy Dodge of Worthington knows where the urns are buried. This will be further researched.

Appointments were made to the Highway Dept. on motion by Howard, Dave 2nd both Ron and Matt Radwich were reappointed 3-0.

Michael Hale was appointed Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Representative on motion by Alan, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0.

The Town Center Committed was also reappointed (attached). Dave questioned what the Town Center Committee was and it was explained to him by Alan and Howard of the various entities involved including DEP, Town's Tax Attorney as well as Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

Wally Smith questioned costs and options for the old store, he was advised at this point, the property is still owned by Janice Haywood and the DEP has approximately a \$250,000 lien against the property. When decisions are to be made, the Townspeople will be made aware of the options.

Wally also questioned the old dump that was located near Anita Myers property. Joe Kearns said the engineering firm hired by the Town had sent letters to DEP and had no response. DEP is aware of all the former dumpsites in Town.

Steve Harris, Communication Committee, brought in letter to be sent to Town Counsel requesting advice on gaining access to various password protected computers. The Communications Committee is looking into purchasing an overhead projector for the auditorium. They are also renewing service from C.I.S. for the overlay maps of the Town. Wired West is requesting area Selectboards send a letter of support to the State for the "last mile" connections. Lastly, Chester is going to help in seeing how emergency radio

coverage would be if the service were provided by Northampton Control. They will attempt communications from various “dead spots” that currently exist with the present service.

Highway Superintendent, Skip Savery, asked the Board to authorize the closing of Root Road for a couple of days while he is installing a fabric underlayment on the road prior to paving. He will check with the residents and advise them of the closing. The road would only be closed during working hours. Closing was approved for 3 days on motion by Howard, Alan 2nd; vote 3-0. Also, when he replaces the collapsed culvert on Arthur Pease Road, he will need to close that road for a day. Skip also stated that Jack Cobb places flowers and benches in front of the old store and someone had thrown the flowers out. He will speak with the Police Chief and give him the names of possible suspects.

The advertised positions of temporary on call summer help resulted in 4 applicants, 2 from Middlefield and 2 from Chester. The board voted to hire both Middlefield applicants on a motion by Howard, Dave 2nd; vote 2-0 with Alan abstaining as one of the applicants was his brother./

Selectboard meetings scheduled for July 7 & 21, August 4 & 18.

Alan motioned to adjourn, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 8:02pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted with/without changes:

Alan Vint, Chair

Howard Knickerbocker, Clerk

David DiNicola