

SELECTBOARD MINUTES
JUNE 15, 2015

Meeting opened at 6:00pm

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

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

Board met with Accountant, Bed Cooper, Treasurer, Jane Thielen and Tax Collector, Mary Ann Pease. Board discussed with Bev the advantages/disadvantages of having the non-county retirement employees join OBRA. OBRA would replace Social Security (SS) retirement deductions, Medicare would still be deducted. The advantages of OBRA include saving the Town the matching share SS requires and that when an employee leaves, the OBRA account would go with that employee. There still would be a 7.5% deduction from the employee pay. Also, any employee currently collecting SS would not be paying into an account they could not longer benefit from. The retirement of the full-time employees would not change as they are covered under the Hampshire County Retirement Plan. The AA will check to see what the requirements are to enroll in the County retirement for the part-time workers.

Jane was questioned regarding her use of the SoftRite program, she has not taken the courses to date but will be soon as another Town she works in is going to be using the program. She has 10 properties in Tax Title and that includes the former General Store and adjacent house. She was questioned if any of the “low value properties” could possibly be sold to the Nature Conservancy. This group is looking to protect properties adjacent to waterways and lakes.

Jane also said she would be changing payroll companies at the end of the calendar year, this way all the required State forms for unemployment would be submitted by the payroll company. The current company, ADP, does not submit the forms.

Mary Ann advised the Board she had just received a large tax payment from a resident that covered his back taxes. She has set up payment plans with other residents and as long as they keep up with the plan, she does not start tax taking. One thing that the Town should consider is a By-law that allows the Town to refuse any permits or licenses to anyone who is not current with their taxes or other fees owed to the Town. Town Counsel is creating a By-law to remedy this.

The Board thanked them for attending the meeting.

Dave questioned the status of the Dowsey house on Skyline Trail and was told the house had been condemned and the property is now for sale.

Mail was reviewed. Alan sent an application for the position of outside maintenance; this would be for trimming trees, removing dead trees, removing rocks and general maintenance of the exterior grounds. Since he is a sitting Board member, he did not include himself in any of the discussion regarding this appointment. His application requested \$15/hour for labor and \$20/hour for use of his tractor. After discussion between Howard and Dave, Howard motioned to appoint Alan as a special Municipal Employee and have him report to the current AA who will be the Town Administrator effective July 1, 2015. Dave 2nd and vote was 2-0 to appoint Alan. Wally Smith questioned if a Contractor's License was needed for this position and was advised it was not.

Sherri Venditti wanted to know what happened with the old documents that were recently turned over to the Town and who was responsible for them. These are still with the Town Clerk. Archival boxes will be purchased for their safekeeping.

Alan advised the Board that he and the AA attended a meeting at the Hampshire Council of Governments that discussed Town Administrators and their role in the town. The speakers came from much larger towns and had budgets up to 72 million dollars. The meeting was informative but much did not apply to a town the size of Middlefield.

Sherri Venditti also noted to the board that Middlefield is unique and should market itself that way to attract new people into town but the one key item needed is high-speed broadband. That would attract professional and educational residents.

Alan motioned to adjourn, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 7:42pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

Alan Vint, Chair

Howard Knickerbocker, Clerk

David DiNicola