

SELECTBOARD MINUTES
OCTOBER 15, 2018

Meeting opened at 6:00pm

Present: David DiNicola, Chair; Judith Hoag; Albert Sirard
Duane Pease, Town Administrator (TA)

Dave said he had spoken with Berkshire Bank regarding the Dickson Trust and the treasurer did nothing when the 3 year CD expired, the bank then renewed it for another 3 years. This was supposed to be transferred to a money market account and the moved to Adams Bank. The penalty for early withdrawal will be about \$260 and will be deducted from the CD and not charged to the treasurer's account. Also, when moving the Cemetery Accounts and stabilization account to Adams Bank, the total interest gained will be over \$6,000 for the year .Dave also stated paperwork will be filed with the bank to authorize the Selectboard Chair to obtain the financial information on the Town's accounts.

Dave received information from Erica Johnson, PVPC, on possible short term accountants. It was very expensive for a short period. Town will continue search for a replacement for Bev. Melanson Heath has agreed to do a cash audit and submitted a cost of between \$3,000-5,000. We never got a response back from Scanlon and Associates. Dave motioned to accept Melanson's cost, Judy 2nd; vote 3-0 and agreement signed. TA will scan and email to Melanson.

Judy stated the Town will hold its Halloween Trick or Treat on Saturday, October 27th. Also, the town tag sale will be on the same day and the Town Hall auditorium will be used in case of rain.

TA advised Board the State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife submitted the appraisals on the Slocum Lot and the Dodge property. Slocum was appraised at \$55,000 and Dodge at \$20,000. These 2 properties are included in the Tax Title Auction on October 24th. After brief discussion, both will be left in the auction with minimum bids set at the State's offer.

The Nature Conservancy had prior interest in the Ryan Road property that is going to be auctioned, TA will follow with Markelle Smith and advise her of the auction.

Al said the Rural Commonwealth group is pushing the State to provide more PILOT money on the properties it owns in the western towns. Joe Kearns stated that 2 former selectmen are on the Rural board.

Steve Harris is meeting with PVPC tomorrow to discuss the IT grant and items he would like purchased for the town.

Also, the Transfer Station is now operating on winter hours, open Saturday and Sunday.

Judy said some hooligans messed with the letters on the Town Hall sign, but was thankful they did not bother the Senior Center.

Dave questioned the by-law on trailers and unregistered vehicles, there was brief discussion on what to do. If the town goes after one, they will have to go after all and everyone knows everyone involved.

Joe Kearns questioned how the audit would be paid for, he was advised it was a separate article on the Annual Town Warrant.

Board next met with Jay Swift and Maureen Sullivan, members of the Broadband Committee. Maureen stated there had been a breakdown in the committee and emails were being sent from personal accounts, the 3 members had worked hard to get to this point and present a balanced view to the town. The committee was to serve the community, work within the Open Meeting laws and create trust and transparency. The third member, Brent, wanted information Maureen had received in a phone call and told him there was no record of the conversation. He challenged her in emails and said I should be ashamed of myself. The committee had no guidance on the Open Meeting laws and the chair was not the boss but would run the meetings.

Dave said the Open Meeting law was not his area of expertise but during his time as a committee member in Dalton, they did not have any problems.

Maureen said this issue created problems as any meeting requires openness. The Selectboard paid Town counsel to present the rules governing the Open Meeting law. Maureen stated when she attends other town meetings she can tell when prior conversation have been held in violation of the Open Meeting law.

Jay said he got an email from Dave kicking us to the curb and he was using Worthington's Comcast contract and plugging in Middlefield's numbers. Dave said he is the contact person with MBI and is not pushing for Comcast.

The committee got a late start on obtaining the information from various providers and Jay said the work is tedious, tiring and boring. Also, the 9/11 meeting was attended by him and Maureen as they believed Brent was out of town on work. They would not have held a meeting behind Brent's back. Maureen said the committee needs to have trust with each other in order to be able to serve.

Dave added he met with Peter Larkin of MBI in Lenox. Peter was trying to get information on Comcast's pricing but could not get the numbers from Brent. Jay said at the last meeting Dave sat in on he had a Comcast bill from a user in Chester that showed a 26% increase in the monthly cost. Maureen said she also had Comcast bills but did not present the actual bill.

Al couldn't understand why they all did not have the same information.

There was continued discussion, Jay wanted to make sure the town was building for the future and we have to make sure we are careful in making a decision and that every citizen has a right to have their voice heard.

Judy said it seems as if this has escalated and the intent is being questioned. The committee should collect the information and facts and bring them to the people.

Discussion continued regarding Open Meeting, collecting data and then bringing it all back to the Selectboard. There was an attempt to bring the three members back together however, Brent said he would not work with Jay or Maureen anymore.

The board thanked Jay and Maureen for their input.

Brent spoke to the board and said he had received new financials from Comcast and was plugging them into his excel spreadsheet and that it would be available to the board. Brent has other issues with the committee and was not notified of the 9/11 meeting and it was not posted on the town website. Brent was thanked for his information.

Dave said he is considering resigning from the selectboard on 5/1/19, there is too much to do and he can't seem to get things going forward.

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

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

David DiNicola, Chair

Judith Hoag

Albert Sirard