

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
Slade Building
October 6, 2008**

Members present: Paul Hale, Chair
 Kristie Casey, Vice Chair
 Matt Castriotta, Clerk

Staff present: Deb Roussel, Town Administrator

Chairman Hale opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Board reviewed revised assessment letter received this day from Quabbin Regional School District in the amount of \$3,291,156. Deb Roussel reported the Town has forty-five (45) days in which to hold a special town meeting to act on the certified revised assessment in accordance with MGL Chapter 71 §16b.

Motion: M. Castriotta **2nd: K. Casey**
To open a warrant for a Special Town Meeting to be held on Thursday, November 13, 2008 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Hubbardston Center School, said warrant closing on Tuesday, October 14, 2008 at 12:00 p.m. Vote: All in Favor

Board discussed possible uses for \$25,000 pothole grant awarded including the repair needed for the entrance to the Slade Building, to extend the roof/cover the length of the ramp entrance eliminating the ice overhang in the winter, creating a hazard for those entering the building, the ice melts and refreezes creating a hazard on the walkway and furthermore shifts the foundation of the building that is cracking the exterior wall. Another suggested use was funding a one-time expense that may be necessary for communications if regionalization of dispatch is achieved.

Paul Hale reported on meeting held last week at Department of Elementary and Secondary Education attended by representatives of the Quabbin District, legislators and Department of Revenue staff last Monday afternoon regarding the Towns' ability to appropriate funds necessary to reach the newly certified.

Deb Roussel reported the office had received a telephone call subsequent to the meeting from Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson indicating that the Commissioner was concerned about the ramifications of the District not coming to agreement by December 1st, chiefly that the State did not have an interest in taking over the District's budget, and further, that there was concern that the lack of agreement might have an effect on the number of choice students for the District and ultimately affect the revenue the District receives for that purpose, which would be disastrous for all involved. Mr. Wulfson commented that it was his belief Hubbardston representatives at the meeting had made a good case that the Town was stretched to the limit and suggested a compromise. The compromise suggested was that the outstanding amount needed for the Town of Hubbardston to fund the Quabbin District at the level Hardwick appropriated, \$47,234, be divided between the DESE, the District and the Town. The Quabbin District would agree to apply one-third of the amount, \$15,745 from District reserves to directly reduce Hubbardston's assessment. The Board of Selectmen would need to send a letter of request to the Commissioner for application to the Foundation Reserve Program in the amount of \$15,745, which would be approved contingent upon Hubbardston agreement to appropriate two-thirds of the amount, \$31,490, with the assumption that the additional foundation funding would be used to fund one-third of the needed appropriation.

The paperwork received from the District confirmed Quabbin District School Committee voted on October 2, 2008 to reduce Hubbardston's assessment from their reserves by that amount.

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Deb Roussel presented a draft press release requested earlier in the day by Chairman Hale reporting on the meeting, the compromise suggested and the need for a fall Special Town Meeting, at which time a recommendation for appropriation to meet the revised operating assessment within the balanced budget will be made after conference with the Finance Committee.

Motion: K. Casey

2nd: M. Castriotta

To approve the release of an announcement as reported

Vote: All in Favor

Deb Roussel presented a draft press release requested by Chairman Hale to update the public on the proposal to move town offices from the library basement to the Slade Building, consultations with Seniors and offices effects, plans to date and acknowledging a commitment to taking the time necessary to ensure the operation of the Town, its employees and seniors are not adversely impacted.

Concern with inadequacy of funding for library building utilities still a major concern, noting no heat is turned on in library or third floor, only heat is what rises from basement offices. State of economy also cited as concern, believing it was Board's responsibility to ensure no stone had been left unturned in quest to secure adequate space for town facilities. Matt Castriotta asked if any consideration to renewing investigation for Town to secure Breezy Hill Corner, present location of EMS services had been given. Understanding was only one tenant remaining due to condition and lack of attention by current owners. A forty-year loan on the parcel and a new roof would be a good long-term solution for town offices, police and EMT services. Slade Building should be dismantled and a plan put in place for expanding needed playground space and parking.

Kristie Casey requested the Board's permission to assist with minor editing for the fifth and sixth paragraphs, to be provided to the Town Administrator to allow release by noon tomorrow.

Motion: M. Castriotta

2nd: K. Casey

To approve the release of an announcement regarding Town Office reorganization, as deliberated

Vote: All in Favor

Chairman Hale asked Board members if they had taken the opportunity to review the code of conduct samples provided. Members indicated need for more time. Concern was raised regarding public perception of suggestion for Board off-site meeting, preferring to schedule working meeting date, as had done in the past. October 20th meeting tentatively scheduled with agenda to include review of Code of Conduct and prioritization of projects.

Motion: M. Castriotta

2nd: K. Casey

To authorize Chairman Hale to sign on behalf of the full Board an application as owners for a special permit and/or variance for construction of the communications pole tower on Mt. Jefferson Road.

Vote: All in Favor

Motion: K. Casey

2nd: M. Castriotta

To adjourn the meeting at 6:40 pm

Vote: All in Favor

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Roussel,
Town Administrator

Approved: November 10, 2008.

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