

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
December 22, 2008
Slade Building**

Members present: Paul Hale, Chairman, Kristie Casey, Vice Chair and Matthew Castriotta, Clerk.

Staff present: Deb Roussel, Town Administrator

Meeting commenced at 6:00 PM

Warrant #14

Town Accountant Karen Chick and Treasurer Jim Dunbar presented Warrant #14 for approval.

Motion: K. Casey

2nd: M. Castriotta

To approve Warrant #14 in the amount of \$92,924.41

Vote: All in Favor

Mr. Dunbar exited the meeting.

Emergency Declaration

Ms. Chick presented a draft letter for the Board to sign, requesting permission from DOR to deficit spend for expenditures related to the ice storm of December 11th. Ms. Chick explained she had spoken to Department of Revenue looking for guidance on payment for the large unanticipated expenditures until reimbursement was received through MEMA. Funds would be paid through creation of a special revenue account, rather than from line item appropriations. In this way, if reimbursement were to be held up beyond the end of the fiscal year, the expenditures would not be charged to free cash, reducing funding. Ms. Roussel questioned expectation of 100% reimbursement, indicating MEMA only reimbursing 75% and while state legislators are advocating for reimbursement of the remaining 25% for communities, it has yet to be established. MGL C44 §31, the act creating permission to deficit spend by vote of the Board of Selectmen with approval by the Department of Revenue, requires the Assessors include any remaining deficit in the next year's tax rate, which would reduce available levy for services. Ms. Chick indicated the Treasurer could also pursue borrowing against future revenues, government anticipated notes (GAN), explaining this was merely mechanics; priority at this time is vendors need to be paid for work contracted.

Motion: K. Casey

2nd: M. Castriotta

To allow incurrence of liability in excess of appropriation in payment of expenditures related to the ice storm of December 11, 2008, which posed an immediate threat to the health and safety of persons or property in the Town of Hubbardston, as prescribed in M.G.L. C44, §31.

Vote: All in Favor

Ms. Roussel requested to provide copy of Emergency Manager's preliminary damage assessment to MEMA, totaling \$324,912.00.

Winter Plan

Highway Superintendent Lyn Gauthier entered the meeting. Mr. Hale commended Mr. Gauthier, noting Lyn was one of the last ones in Town to have electricity returned and in spite of that had been on duty nearly 24/7 during the duration of the emergency.

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Mr. Hale also indicated he had rethought his concerns related to the Winter Plan, retracting his statement regarding reduction in services, recognizing the need to provide public safety regardless of available finances. Board discussed various options available, including borrowing and subsequent override for debt if expenditures related to snow and ice again go beyond appropriation, noting no further funding available from stabilization.

Board discussed provision of sand for residents, realizing it was a service the Town wanted to provide. Mr. Gauthier noted he had made it available as had been historically. Discussion focused on location, signage and possible security camera to prevent residents from taking beyond posted limit of two buckets. Mr. Gauthier requested assistance from residents on removing basketball hoops, trash and recycling buckets from roadsides that may obstruct the clearing of public ways, and further secure rural mailboxes. Board suggested message for cable, school newsletter and website. Board approved winter plan as presented, Chairman Hale again hailing the entire highway crew for their valiant performance during the storm and the teamwork displayed by heads of big three departments and Emergency Management Services.

Private Ways Designated

Ms. Roussel requested confirmation by Superintendent Gauthier of private ways to be designated. Mr. Gauthier confirmed Streeter Road and Plumtree Lane however need to discuss required road conditions, as unable to obtain bids due to road conditions. Discussion of Town adopting as public way and bringing ways up to decent standard, in an effort to avoid damaging Town equipment, requiring residents to pay for bringing up to certain standard for Town to consider adoption as public way or perhaps a betterment. Board agreed to designate ways for this year, however invite landowners along both private ways to meet with representatives of the Board in mid March to discuss future plans.

Motion: M. Castriotta

To designate Streeter Road and Plumtree Lane as private ways eligible for public funding for winter snowplowing

2nd: K. Casey

Vote: All in Favor

Mileage Reimbursement Rate

Ms. Roussel presented information from Internal Revenue Service, noting increase in rate to .55 per mile effective January 1, 2009. Board opted to take no action at this time, considering our current reimbursement rate of .505 as sufficient, given the downturn in the price of gasoline.

Sawyer APR

Board took up discussion on municipal application in support of application for an agricultural preservation for Sawyer Farm. Ms. Roussel noted support of both Open Space and Conservation Commission. Mr. Hale questioned the requirement of municipal contribution of up to 20% noted as required. Ms. Roussel indicated Town meets two of the three criteria, each of which reduce required contribution by 5%, which can be met in a number of ways including CPA funding, reduction in sale price by owner and funds from non-profit organizations.

Motion: K. Casey

To support the municipal application and Enclosure E on behalf of the application for a agricultural preservation restriction for Sawyer Farm on Root Road

2nd: M. Castriotta

Vote: All in Favor

Miscellaneous

Board signed two original agreements for the Union and Town extending the police union contracts by one year, approved at the Board's meeting on December 8, 2008.

Ms. Roussel questioned email suggesting minutes of October 27th, 2008 did not include motion related to need for grammatical change in contract after Board had signed.

Motion: K. Casey

2nd: M. Castriotta

Any contracts signed by the Board that require change for any reason must be brought before the Board and require initialing, documenting assent to change **Vote: All in Favor**

Board reviewed Administrators Report, reporting on progress by Charter Cable and Verizon, providing contact numbers for residents still without service and Board of Assessors announcement of DOR approval for the FY09 tax rate at \$9.51 per thousand.

Ms. Roussel presented listing from brainstorming session, requesting input for follow-up. Ms. Casey suggested breaking the list into short and long-term goals. Suggestion to hold follow up meeting with Finance Committee, inviting all participants to return for the next Finance Committee meeting scheduled in January. Ms. Roussel to contact Chairman Mark Dymek to confirm meeting date.

Ms. Roussel voiced concerns over highway department's ability to clear walkways and entrances to town buildings in time for opening to public, as they are concentrating on roads. Need for funding for ongoing maintenance for buildings a problem. Board suggested inclusion of line item in FY10 budget.

Mr. Hale reiterated his thanks to the score of workers from town departments, including Fire, Police, Highway, EMS, Dispatch, town offices, teamwork from residents to workers, making their homes and families a secondary priority. Board requested Ms. Roussel draft a letter To the Telegram Editor on their behalf.

Motion: M.Castriotta

2nd: K. Casey

To adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Vote: All in Favor

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Roussel,
Town Administrator

Approved: January 5, 2009.