

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES  
May 26, 2009  
Slade Building**

**Members present:** Kristie Casey, Chair  
Matt Castriotta, Vice Chair  
Ernest Newcomb, Clerk

**Staff present:** Elaine Peterson, Town Secretary, Debra Roussel, Town Administrator,  
Jim Dunbar, Treasurer, Joyce Green, Town Clerk, Diane Lanney, Deputy  
Assessor

**Others present:** Christopher Bedard, David Bremner

**Finance Committee Members:** Ed Blanchard, Sue Motta, Kellianne Becker, Jennifer  
Chase Williams

Meeting commenced at 6:00 PM

<b>Warrant #25</b>
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**Motion:** M. Castriotta 2<sup>nd</sup>: K. Casey  
**To approve Warrant #25 in the amount of \$827,899.24**  
**Vote:** Ms. Casey-yes, Mr. Castriotta-yes, Mr. Newcomb-abstained

**Debris Removal Borrowing Options:** Treasurer Dunbar presented three scenarios for five and ten year terms of borrowing to fund the ice storm debris cleanup. MGL Chapter 44, section 8 (9) requires repayment within two years but the time period can be extended by home rule petition. Ms. Roussel advised the Board not to sign the contract with MEMA for reimbursement of funding for remaining cleanup until after annual town meeting, in case town meeting does not support borrowing. Discussion followed on whether to pay the amount incurred inside or outside the levy. Questions arose on the liability of not removing hanging limbs or damaged trees and the resulting cost of cleanup. Ms. Roussel stated the debris removal bid is out for public response and presented a draft job description for the debris monitor position. The Board requested conversation with the insurance company and tree warden on not taking action. Mr. Dunbar exited the meeting.

**Special Town Meeting warrant:** Ms. Roussel reported there had been an error on the date of the Special Town Meeting warrant showing the previous year's date of June 8, 2008. After consulting with Town Counsel Town Clerk Green reposted the first page as we were still within the 14-day period prior to the meeting.

**FY 2009 and 2010 Budgets:** Ms. Roussel reported Senate Ways and Means budget released for fiscal year 2010 providing a deficit of \$59,547.67. Ms. Roussel indicated a choice of increasing revenues and/or decreasing expenditures. She also recommended

reviewing the town's fee schedule structure. Ms. Roussel noted the town still has a \$74,122 deficit to make up for fiscal year 09 assuming Town Meeting approves the article closing out special appropriations. She recommended sending a memo to all departments freezing all unnecessary spending until July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Castriotta recommended revisiting Breezy Hills Corner business complex with the Capital Improvement Planning Committee to see if the building is compatible for town office space now that many of the tenants have moved out. Ms. Roussel will contact the realtor to schedule a visit.

**HPT Intermunicipal Agreement:** Ms. Roussel requested the Board review the HPT intermunicipal agreement regarding trash and recycling program for Hubbardston, Princeton and Templeton and submit any comments to her by June 8.

**Comet Pond Beach:** The Board was informed that due to state budget cuts there was a possibility that Comet Pond Beach would not open this year. Ms. Peterson reported Park Commissioner Barry was concerned about not being able to offer swimming lessons this year. The Board took no action at this time.

**Appointments:**

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**

**To appoint Donna Farrell to the Community Preservation Committee with a term to expire June 30, 2012**

**To appoint Peter Carmosino as the Planning Board Associate Member with a term to expire June 30, 2010**

**To appoint Catherine Galbreath to ad Hoc ZBA Affordable Housing Committee with a term to expire June 30, 2009**

**Vote: All in Favor**

**Pole Petition:** Ms. Casey announced the opening of the pole petition hearing from Massachusetts Electric Company and Verizon New England, Inc. **“To Install 1 JO pole on Old Boston Turnpike Road beginning at a point approximately 1078 feet east of the centerline of the intersection of Worcester Road.”** Resident Christopher Bedard and National Grid representative David Bremner were present for the hearing. Mr. Bremner explained the pole was to replace a tree guy wire that supported the pole across the street. Mr. Barnard had been concerned about his view being blocked but was satisfied with the reason for placement after speaking to Mr. Bremner. Ms. Peterson reported the Highway Superintendent had requested the placement area be marked and the pole not be placed in a ditch. Mr. Bremner stated the spot was already marked and was not in a ditch.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**

**To approve pole petition for Old Boston Turnpike Road**

**Vote: All in Favor**

**Liaison List updated:** The Board updated the liaison assignments with all departments.

**Budget Informational Meetings:** Ms. Roussel reminded the Board of the two budget informational meetings: Wednesday at 7:00 pm and Saturday at 9:00 am at Center School.

**MRPC Survey:** Ms. Roussel reported Montachusett Regional Planning Commission had sent a survey regarding sharing of municipal services and cooperative bidding for purchasing of goods. The Board requested Ms. Roussel respond. She requested the Board look over the survey and return with feedback for the next meeting.

**PEG Access/Website Meeting:** Ms. Roussel reported that she and Ms. Peterson had met with web site manager Mike See regarding some changes to the town website. Ms. Roussel requested permission to post her reports on a Town Administrator web page as a better way to inform the public of what projects the Board was working on. The Board approved. Ms. Peterson explained the plan to include a more dynamic look for the home page as well as a frequently asked questions section. Ms. Roussel reported that although Charter Communications had supplied the Town with a replacement programmer for the PEG cable access channels, the television being used as a monitor expired shortly after. Ms. Peterson and she will be purchasing a replacement as soon as possible.

**STM/ATM Warrant Articles:** The Board reviewed and assigned warrant articles for the Special and Annual Town Meetings on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Meeting with Finance Committee:**

Both Boards reviewed the fiscal year 09 budgeted expenditures list following warrant #24 to find possible funding available to close the deficit.

Accounts proposed were:

Selectboard Expenses \$7,500; Slade Building Utilities \$7,500; \$5,000 Fire Department Maintenance \$5,000; Fire Department Vehicle Maintenance \$7,500; Equipment Outlay \$20,000; Tree Warden Outside Services \$4,000; Veterans' Benefits \$7,500; Legal Services \$5,000 and \$10,000 from various Highway Department accounts. Ms. Roussel will check with department heads regarding the suggested account transfers to ensure they have no planned expenditures.

The Boards reviewed the proposed fiscal year 2010 budget and suggested reductions in line item accounts to balance the budget with Senate Ways and Means budget revenues. Selectboard expense was reduced by \$10,000. Questions arose on the Tax Collector requesting reinstatement of hours since the bulk of billing services are outsourced. The Finance Committee indicated it unwise to accept argument for need from an individual making the request; the supervisor should speak to the request. Ms. Roussel indicated it was difficult to present the need when staff works in a different building. Ms. Roussel requested the opportunity to meet with Ms. Doane to review her request. The need for an annual audit was discussed. Ms. Roussel stated Department of Revenue suggests annual audits are required only if the town plans on bonding or if there is a change in finance personnel. Since an audit was not done for fiscal year 2008, one should be conducted for the current fiscal year. Upon a suggestion to reduce Treasurer's Tax Title Expense to \$2000 since it had not been expended for several years, Ms. Lanney cautioned the group that when economic times are tough, more property goes into tax title. Legal services were also suggested but Ms. Roussel stated the town has several ongoing lawsuits, a personnel issue and union negotiations and it should be cut as a last

resort. Other accounts reviewed were Police Department Maintenance, Police Department Vehicle Maintenance, Fire Department Maintenance, Fire Department Vehicle Maintenance, Fire Department Equipment and Outlay, Tree Warden Outside Expenses, Unemployment Benefits and Veterans' Benefits. Highway Winter Materials was also questioned but Ms. Casey cautioned the group that once the amount is increased, the Town could not go below the previous amount or will be unable to deficit spend. Finance Committee Chair Becker stated that the Finance Committee was willing to consider a reserve fund transfer in the case of need for these departments if the situation warrants at a later date. Ms. Roussel recommended meeting with department heads before making decisions on cuts.

**Interdepartmental Transfer Requests:**

Ms. Peterson presented two requests for transfers. The first was to transfer \$350 from Custodial Wages to Highway Street Lights and the second to transfer \$2,000 to Library Utilities and Maintenance Account from available account to be determined. The Finance Committee recommended a reserve fund transfer for the Library Utilities due to use of fiscal year 09 accounts to close the deficit.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**

**To approve transfer of \$350.00 per Chapter 44, §33B, from Custodial Wages Account #122-5106 to Highway Street Lights #424-5200**

**Vote: All in Favor**

The Finance Committee approved the interdepartmental transfer and reserve fund transfer as well.

The Boards scheduled a meeting at 8:30 am on Saturday before the informational meeting to finalize budget items. The Finance Committee members exited the meeting.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**

**To enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and to adjourn at end of executive session**

**Vote: Mr. Newcomb-yes, Mr. Castriotta- yes, Ms. Casey-yes**

\*\*\*\*\*Executive Session Minutes Are Separate\*\*\*\*\*

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Peterson  
Town Secretary

Approved: July 6, 2009