

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
Slade Building
July 27, 2010**

Members present: Matt Castriotta, Chair
Michael Stauder, Vice Chair
Ernest Newcomb, Clerk

Staff present: Deb Roussel, Town Administrator

Finance Committee Members present: Ed Blanchard, Chris Norcross, Mark Connery

Others present: Tom Howlett, Walter Ducharme, Jim Dixson, Caleb Langer, Acting Fire Chief Hayes, Sergeant Ron Newton, Sergeant Robert Forte, Jean Paul Salamanca, Gardner News Reporter

Meeting commenced at 6:03 pm

Capital Exclusion Override Question

The Board reviewed a capital exclusion override question on the November 2010 ballot put forth by the Finance Committee for payment of the debt incurred to pay off 2008 ice storm cleanup expense.

Mr. Castriotta asked if a capital exclusion override could be used to pay for this. Ms. Roussel reported she had asked Town Counsel for clarification but hadn't heard back from them as of yet. Ms. Roussel stated the definition of a capital exclusion indicated it may be used to raise additional funds only for a capital purpose which is defined as any purpose for which a city or town is authorized to borrow under Mass. General Law Chapter 44, section 7 and 8.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd: E. Newcomb

To approve a capital exclusion override question be placed on the November 2010 ballot for the amount of \$90,125. 87 to pay the remaining balance for 2008 ice storm cleanup pending Town Counsel's approval

Vote: All in Favor

Ms. Roussel reported she has submitted the final documentation necessary from MEMA reimbursement for the remaining \$523. 50 due to the Town from the ice storm cleanup.

FY 2011 Council on Aging Formula Grant Application

Ms. Roussel presented the formula grant application competed by COA Chair Claudia Provencal for FY'11 funding.

Motion: E. Newcomb

2nd: M. Stauder

To approve and sign the FY'11 Formula Grant application

Vote: All in Favor

Ms. Roussel requested Mr. Stauder and Mr. Newcomb sign a page for Chapter 90 reimbursement that was previously approved but overlooked at the last meeting.

Fire Department Organization and Leadership

Ms. Roussel reported she had researched the Fire Chief term of appointment on request of the Finance Committee. The Town had accepted Mass. General Law Chapter 48, sections 42- 44. Once appointed, the chief's term runs until he no longer wishes to serve or if the Town has proven cause for removal. Ms. Roussel added in towns of populations of 5000 or less, the appointment may be for a period of three years.

Acting Chief Hayes presented a report on full-time staff positions, fire calls, motor vehicle accidents and serious medical emergencies, as well as mentioning other job duties such as secondary calls, supply

ordering and maintenance, water supply site maintenance, code enforcement, inspections, training, public safety education, and outside training. The report included funding, call volume analysis, and Fire/EMS trends from the past ten years. Hayes reported daily coverage is currently at two staff, instead of three, vacant since 2009.

The report recommended for safety purposes, a minimum of three firefighters are required to extricate and transport critical patients, two to attend to the patient and one to drive the vehicle. Mr. Castriotta asked how other surrounding towns are staffed. Hayes stated Barre and Templeton are on call. Rutland has two firefighter/paramedics per shift along with the Chief, and Westminster has three with a Captain or Chief during the day.

Ambulance revenue trends from 2000 to 2009 were presented. 2008 calls appeared to decline due to Barre establishing an ambulance service and a thus a reduction in calls for assistance from Hubbardston. Hayes reported on call volume and stated he had changed the tracking internally; motor vehicle accidents were previously counted as two calls, one for fire and one for ambulance service. That has been changed since 2009 so that calls are not reported twice and reports are more accurate. The majority of Hubbardston's firefighters are working at other jobs and 62 percent of calls are between the hours of 7 am and 6 pm, while call firefighter availability is at 75% between the hours of 6 pm and 7 am. Sergeants Newton and Forte entered the meeting.

Mr. Castriotta thanked Lt. Langer and Acting Chief Hayes for the report. Mr. Castriotta asked Mr. Stauder as liaison to the Fire Department, to proceed. Mr. Stauder stated the department needs a chief and to fill the third daytime position. Chief Hayes stated the funding is in place for a new chief, his only concern was the cost of the firefighter physical, approximately \$500.00.

Discussion on the strong chief model ensued and Board agreed to make no changes. Ms. Roussel stated a change from the current strong chief administration of the Fire Department would require a town meeting vote to rescind acceptance of MGL Chapter 48, sections 42-44.

Mr. Stauder stated he had full confidence in Acting Chief Hayes for the Fire Chief position. Mr. Newcomb and Mr. Castriotta concurred. Mr. Castriotta recommended a three year appointment versus a contract. Mr. Stauder agreed.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd:E. Newcomb

To offer the Fire Chief position to Acting Chief Robert Hayes

Vote: All in Favor

Mr. Castriotta congratulated Chief Hayes and those present applauded the motion.

Hayes stated he would consider the offer and return to the Board with his decision on August 16th.

Ms. Roussel presented the Fire Chief job description and wage scale, stating the Fire Chief pay began at Grade 13 previously. The Board indicated an executive session would be held on August 16 to provide strategy for contract negotiations. Mr. Stauder recommended hiring the third daytime staff position. Ms. Roussel stated according to Chapter 48, section 42, the Fire Chief would have authority to hire for his department as long as funding is appropriated annually.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd:E. Newcomb

To support the recruitment and hiring of a fulltime firefighter/paramedic

Vote: All in Favor

Mr. Castriotta thanked Acting Chief Hayes and the Fire Department officers for their continued support through difficult times. A short recess was taken. All but Finance and Board members exited the meeting.

The meeting recommenced at 6:52 pm.

Discussion on scheduling a quarterly meeting between Capital Improvement Planning and the Finance Committee as previously discussed. It was suggested to meet before the next special town meeting. Ms. Roussel suggested each committee chair propose items for the agenda. Mr. Blanchard requested discussing the amount of debt the Town can absorb within the levy at the meeting. Discussion ensued on

whether to place the Quabbin roof repair debt as a debt exclusion question in November. No action was taken.

Mr. Blanchard requested researching the process of bringing the ambulance budget back into the general budget. He also would like to discuss with the Fire Chief about brush fire fighting equipment funding. Mr. Blanchard also suggested placing fire permit revenue into the general fund and establishing a fire department line item for fighting forest fires. He suggested possibly the Town Clerk could handle registrations and create a file that the Fire Department could access to issue permits. He stated this would take away the cash and accounting issues. Mr. Castriotta stated as liaison Mr. Blanchard should have the conversation with the Chief. He asked Mr. Blanchard to report back after that discussion with the Chief. Mr. Blanchard inquired about the Chief's EMS stipend and if the Board would be going forward. There needs to be a change in the job description to include management of the emergency medical services.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd:E. Newcomb

To enter Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if such discussion would have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the governmental body

Vote: Mr. Castriotta-yes, Mr. Newcomb- yes, Mr. Stauder-yes

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

The meeting resumed at 7:30 pm.

Finance Committee members exited the meeting.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd:E. Newcomb

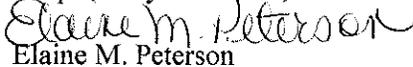
To enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the government's bargaining or litigating position

Vote: Mr. Castriotta-yes, Mr. Newcomb- yes, Mr. Stauder-yes

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine M. Peterson

Town Secretary

Approved: August 16, 2010