

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
November 17, 2014
Slade Building**

Members present: Michael Stauder, Chair
Daniel Galante, Vice Chair
Jeffrey Williams, Clerk
Raeanne Siegel

Member not present: David Simmerer

Staff present: Anita Scheipers, Town Administrator; Elaine Peterson, Town Secretary

Others present: Larry Brandt, Building Commissioner; Darrell Sweeney, Wiring Inspector; Tom Monfreda, Plumbing/Gas Inspector, Tom Bratko, Jassy Bratko, Danielle Arakelian

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

Open Session: no one was present for this

Town Administrator Report- see attached

Ms. Scheipers stated she is worried by the state fiscal year 2015 budget deficits. The town may have to adjust its current budget spending to address those state funding cuts.

She presented an update on the DCR land swap- Ms. Scheipers received an email from a DCAM representative asking if the town was going to have a 400 foot frontage for the lot. She did confirm with him that a 400 foot frontage would be desired in order to meet zoning code.

Draft Inspector Policy Discussion:

Ms. Scheipers reported Town Accountant DeLaRoche had expressed concerns with backup documentation for the inspectors' payments. She wanted to provide the necessary backup for the inspectors' payroll to satisfy audit requirements. Ms. DeLaRoche worked with Building Commissioner Brandt and Treasurer Noel to set up some key policies to correct some of the deficiencies in the payroll process. Also researched during this time was whether the inspectors should be employees or contractors. It was determined they should be employees. The next step was to determine how the inspector should be paid. Mr. Brandt receives a salary, Mr. Sweeney receives 80% of the fee collected and Mr. Monfreda receives the entire amount of the permit fee. Mr. Brandt had conducted research on how other communities pay their inspectors and drafted a proposal for Hubbardston using a percentage split between the town and the inspector based on the cost of the job. Mr. Monfreda stated no matter what the cost of the project the permit applicant will receive the same amount of inspections. He added the applicant does not list the cost of the job on their permit application. Mr. Sweeney agreed. Mr. Sweeney stated he preferred a fee based compensation system instead of being based on the cost of the job.

Mr. Brandt described how he was paid in the Town of Berlin. He was paid a monthly stipend

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From the permit fee divided and paid equally over the timespan of project. Mr. Sweeney noted that with the solar projects coming to town in the past couple of years and the large permit fees coming in, all of the sudden there is discussion about changing the method of payment. He added he has stayed with the town through some lean years. Mr. Brandt wondered if an hourly rate might be better. Mr. Sweeney did not believe this would be fair to the taxpayers when work is slow. He preferred the fee based process.

Ms. Scheipers stated another need is to update the fees schedules which have not been raised since 2007. She recommended putting together a working group that addresses both residential and commercial permitting processes. Mr. Brandt agreed. Mr. Monfreda stated he does not get mileage, phone or any other administrative costs reimbursed from the town. Mr. Sweeney stated right now people call his home directly. Ms. Scheipers asked if he wanted that to change. He asked how that could happen when the town is on limited hours. He added he attends all fire calls at no cost. Mr. Monfreda noted they also pay for their own continuous education. Mr. Brandt stated it is time to put all these numbers together to make it work. Ms. Scheipers suggested working together to get these issues resolved. Mr. Brandt suggested Mr. Sweeney and Mr. Monfreda submit draft fee schedules. Mr. Brandt, Mr. Monfreda and Mr. Sweeney exited the meeting.

Police Dept. Administrative Assistant Hired

Ms. Scheipers reported Melissa Richardson has been hired to the position and is currently training with Ms. Stuart. **She comes with experience in working in police and dispatch settings.**

Motion: J. Williams

2nd: D. Galante

To waive the notification period for Melissa Richardson's appointment

Vote: All in Favor

CORI Policy

Ms. Peterson reported that a previous discussion on whether the Board should authorize running CORI checks on all auto dealers, current and new, prompted the question of whether it could be done and what justifies the need for a CORI check. Ms. Peterson stated she had checked with other communities to see how they conduct them. She was referred to M.G.L. Chapter 6, §172(a) (3) that allows a CORI to be conducted for "evaluation of applicants for a professional or occupational license issued by a state or municipal entity. " Criminal offender record information made available under this section shall be limited to felony convictions for 10 years following the disposition, including termination of any period of incarceration or custody, misdemeanor convictions for 5 years following the disposition, including termination of any period of incarceration or custody, and pending criminal charges, which shall include cases that have been continued without a finding until such time as the case is dismissed. Ms. Peterson stated the Board could only deny a license on information relevant to the license application. Ms. Scheipers asked if the Board would want to make this a policy for the auto dealer license application process and if so does the Board want to run them annually?

Discussion on whether the Board could view the results ensued. Ms. Peterson stated the CORI information could only be released to the Board if the applicant grants permission to read it.

Motion: D. Galante

2nd:J. Williams

To conduct CORI checks on current auto dealer license renewals annually and all new license applicants going forward

Vote: All in Favor

Mr. Stauder asked Ms. Scheipers to check with Town Counsel on wording for a waiver form in order for the Board to view the results. Another question was should the Board be authorized to review CORI results in the event a waiver cannot be granted.

Surplus Property

Ms. Scheipers reported DPW Director Kilhart has requested the Board declare the following signs as surplus.

- 63 street signs
- 50 stop signs
- 16 speed limit signs
- 5 weight limit signs
- 6 no passing signs
- 126 various other signs

None of these signs meet the federal MUTCD requirements to use on town roads. Mr. Kilhart would like to place these up for public auction.

Motion: D. Galante

To declare the listed street signs as surplus

2nd: J. Williams

Vote: All in Favor

Notification of acquisition of land in Hubbardston by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

Ms. Peterson reported DCR has notified the Town of acquisition of two properties; a 65+ acre parcel located on Underwood Road, an unmanaged forested woodlot and a 87+ acre wooded parcel located off Lombard Road. The proposed use of the properties will be land managed for open space protection including water supply protection, and access for the public for passive outdoor recreational purposes. The DCR requests the public announcement be made at this meeting and also requests the Board waive the 120 day notice period so the Commonwealth can proceed with the acquisition.

Motion: D. Galante

To waive the 120 day notice period and authorize the Chair to sign the waiver forms

2nd: J. Williams

Vote: All in Favor

FY 16 Budget Policy- see attached

Ms. Scheipers reported she originally believed she could recommend a 2 % increase while planning the FY'16 budget, but after looking at revenue projections from the Town Accountant's office, she has downgraded it to 1.2 %. The only increases the town has available for revenue is the allowed 2.5% revenue increase projection and new growth figures from the Assessors' office. She stated it will make for a very tight budget year. She presented a budget letter to be sent to all departments and requested Chair Stauder sign it.

Motion: D. Galante

To approve the budget message and authorize the Chair to sign the FY'16 Budget Planning memorandum

2nd: J. Williams

Vote: All in Favor

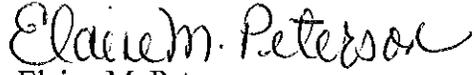
Ms. Scheipers requested feedback from the Board on a date to meet with Barre and Oakham Selectboards in order to request a five year forecast from the Quabbin Regional School District.

Ms. Scheipers will come back to the Board with the date and time.

Motion: D. Galante
To adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

2nd: J. Williams
Vote: All in Favor

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine M. Peterson
Town Secretary

Approved: December 15, 2014

To: Hubbardston Board of Selectmen

From: Anita Scheipers, Town Administrator

Date: November 17, 2014

Re: Bi-weekly Town Administrator Report

The following is a summary of key issues handled during the past weeks:

- 1. Slade Building Insulation:** Energia LLC is the contractor who is doing the work of insulating the Slade building. Work begins Monday Nov 17th, and will be completed by Monday Nov 24th at latest. The firm will be providing free extras of air sealing around the perimeter of the attic to minimize air leakage, and will be building 3 insulated access hatches and permanent walkways for easy access for servicing HVAC or electrical equipment in the future. Energia is also labeling the location of all electrical and HVAC components to speed future repairs. Due to the spray foam insulation work in the basement, and the fumes that the process generates, to be safe, the COA will have activities only on Thursday (the one day the spray foam work will not be done).
- 2. Dog License Court Order – Hubbardston vs. Philips:** Per the court order, we continue to receive small payments from Ms. Philips for reimbursement to the town of legal costs associated with processing the enforcement issues. The remaining balance still owed is \$1,700.
- 3. FY16 Budget Memo:** The Charter requires that the Selectboard prepare a budget guidance letter for town departments on or before Dec 1st. On Monday I will present a draft letter, but the basics of it will propose that each department be advised to produce a 2% increase budget which will allow a maximum of a 2% increase for all department costs – including wages and other contractual increases. Last year we asked the departments to produce three budget scenarios, which in the end was, in my opinion, a waste of time. I would rather have departments provide more detailed backup information for each line item on which their budget is built, so that when we have to consider possible budget reductions, we have all numbers available for consideration of impacts of such reductions. As we have done before, our FY16 revenue projections will be as conservative as possible, but there are many moving parts to the FY16 budgets. Consideration of wage adjustments proposed by our consultant, as well as both the police and DPW contracts being up for negotiation this winter will impact how the final budget plays out. I envision that there will be numerous revisions to the FY16 budget after we have received department submittals.
- 4. State FY15 Budget Deficits:** We have received the attached notice from the MMA that the state has announced a \$325M deficit in their FY15 revenues. They will be preparing a plan to close the gap and will announce said plan next week, but the Governor has stated he would rely on mid-year spending cuts to close the gap. In past years this has resulted in 9C cuts to local funding already promised to the cities and towns. This could affect C70 \$ or general local aid monies we have relied on to build our FY15 budget. Should 9C cuts be announced, I will work with our finance team to develop a proposal as to ways we can adjust our FY15 budget to account for any cuts proposed by the state.
- 5. Seaboard Solar:** Seaboard had requested that our DPW repair the berm in front of their facility, and provided Tim Kilhart with a \$200 check for the required amount. Unfortunately the check has bounced. They are still in non-compliance on this project. No action is being taken on a PILOT agreement with them as yet.
- 6. Land Use Clerk:** We had three qualified candidates interview for the Land Use Clerk position. With input from the Building Inspector, the Planning Board Chair and Elaine Peterson, I will make a decision regarding appointment during the week of Nov. 17th. I think it is important to note here that this position was originally created several years ago as a combined position to cover both the building office and planning office – as is done in many towns. It is typically hard to get a qualified person willing to take a position with a small number of hours per week. A shared position's combined hours solves that issue, and allows for open office coverage (of approximately 17 hours a week) to provide more access to the public in person and by phone for both offices. With the loss of the previous clerk, Planning Chair Vin Ritchie had asked if the Planning Board could separate out their clerk function from this position. I asked him to allow the position to be filled as the combined position, and we would have the new appointee work carefully with both Larry Brandt and the Planning Board Chair to track hours worked for each office, so as to allow us to understand how many hours are required weekly for each role. Once we have that information, I can evaluate the merits of keeping the position combined, or separating out the planning board coverage. It is too premature to make that decision at this time. We need to give the new employee a chance to work closely with both supervisors to understand the expectations of each and put good effort into meeting their needs.

From: Massachusetts Municipal Association <alerts@mma.org>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2014 3:37 PM
To: Town Administrator
Subject: Governor's Office Reveals \$325M State Budget Deficit in FY 2015

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Thursday, November 13, 2014

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE REVEALS \$325M STATE BUDGET DEFICIT IN FY 2015

- **Gov. Patrick Plans to Announce \$325M in Budget Cuts Next Week**
- **Municipal and Education Accounts Could be Targeted for Mid-Year Cuts**

\$325M State Budget Shortfall Announced – Last week, Gov. Patrick's Secretary for Administration & Finance announced that the state is facing a \$325 million shortfall in its fiscal 2015 budget, and said that the Administration would be unveiling plans to close the budget gap at some point during the week of November 17th. He said that the plan would not draw from the state's \$1.2 billion stabilization fund, but instead would rely exclusively on mid-year spending cuts.

The MMA has Called on the Patrick Administration to Avoid any Mid-Year Cuts Targeted at Cities and Towns – In a face-to-face meeting with A&F Secretary Glen Shor and top Administration officials at the November 12 meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission meeting, the MMA and local leaders presented a strong case that cities and towns should not be hit with mid-year cuts, especially since the shortfall is in no way related to local government or the overall performance of the economy, and is primarily due to state spending decisions and the administration of state government. At this point in the year, cuts in municipal or school funding accounts would be extremely painful at the local level. However, Administration officials responded that they appreciated the "input," but did not take local funding off the table.

State Budget Gap Caused by Shortfall in "Non-Tax" Revenues, Spending in the New Economic Development Act, and a Cut in the Income Tax Rate –A&F Secretary Glen Shor stated that the \$325 million shortfall is caused by several factors. First, although state tax revenues are still expected to meet expected levels, the state income tax rate will be automatically

reduced from 5.2 percent to 5.15 percent, effective on January 1, a cut that will be triggered by existing law. This will reduce the state's fiscal 2015 tax revenues by \$70 million. Second, lawmakers and the Governor approved an \$80 million economic development bill late last summer, and state revenues are not growing fast enough to offset the cost. Finally, and most importantly, the Patrick Administration is now reporting a \$175 million shortfall in non-tax revenues and agency fees. While the Administration is providing no specific explanation of the non-tax shortfall, independent budget analysts expect that a significant cause is the breakdown in the state's health insurance exchange website, which forced state officials to enroll thousands of residents in temporary Medicaid plans, for which the state will not receive full federal reimbursement.

Governor Can Impose Mid-Year Cuts on Spending in State Agencies Under His Control, and Ask Legislature for Authority to Cut Local Aid, the Judiciary and Others – Facing a \$325 million budget shortfall, the Governor has the authority to unilaterally cut spending in executive branch agencies under his control. In addition, the Governor can ask the Legislature to grant him expanded budget-cutting authority over other accounts outside of the executive branch, such as Unrestricted General Government Aid, Chapter 70 school aid, constitutional officers, the judiciary and independent agencies, a step he has taken in the past. With the Legislature in informal session and only able to pass items with unanimous consent, it is unlikely that legislators would grant Gov. Patrick expanded budget reduction powers targeting local aid, but if that is one of the Governor's proposals, local officials will need to contact their Representatives and Senators immediately.

Important Municipal and School Aid Accounts May be Targeted for Mid-Year Cuts – The last time Gov. Patrick faced a mid-year budget deficit was in December 2013, when state was projecting a \$540 million deficit. The Governor used his budget powers to impose \$28.75 million in mid-year cuts to important municipal and school aid accounts, which left cities and towns reeling from unexpected revenue losses. In 2013, the mid-year reductions included a 5% cut to the Special Education Circuit Breaker program, a 47% cut to the McKinney-Vento homeless student transportation account, a 70% cut to the Chapter 70 pothole account, a 3% cut in Veterans' Benefits reimbursements, a 1% cut in regional school transportation funding, a 1.4% cut to charter school reimbursements, and other important accounts. In addition, the Governor asked the Legislature to cut \$9 million from Unrestricted General Government Aid, a request that lawmakers rejected.

PLEASE ASK YOUR LEGISLATORS TO OPPOSE ANY PROPOSAL TO IMPOSE MID-YEAR CUTS TO UNRESTRICTED GENERAL GOVERNMENT AID OR CHAPTER 70 EDUCATION AID – The MMA will strongly oppose any cut to unrestricted municipal aid or Chapter 70, because that would destabilize local budgets in the middle of the fiscal year, and force reductions in community services. Unrestricted municipal aid has already nearly \$400 million below original fiscal 2009 levels, and any additional cuts would be painful for cities and towns across the state. In addition, please tell your legislators that you are very worried about potential cuts to important municipal and school accounts in the state budget, including the Special Education Circuit Breaker, McKinney-Vento funding, charter school and regional school transportation accounts, and other programs.



***Town of Hubbardston
Board of Selectmen***

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TO: All Hubbardston Town Offices, Boards and Committees
FROM: The Selectboard
DATE: November 17, 2014
RE: FY16 Budget Planning

According to the Charter, the Selectboard is required to annually provide budget guidance to each department to assist in the development of the next fiscal year's budget. The following are the key criteria we ask that you take into account as you prepare your submittals to the Town Administrator:

1. Budget Inflation Factor - Overall budget increases above FY15 numbers should not exceed 1.2 %.
2. Level Service - Budgets should reflect level service only. If a department has specific reasons (mandated or otherwise) to modify the level of service provided in a department, please provide a separate (second) budget submittal with details as to the reason for the change in level of service, and the specific costs associated with the change. Please contact the Town Administrator to discuss this prior to submitting a modified level of service budget.
3. Wages and Salaries COLA - Wages, salaries and stipends should, at this time, reflect only a 1.2% increase. These numbers may change as we take into consideration possible wage adjustments as suggested by the soon-to-be-finalized Compensation Study completed by consultant Human Resource Services, Inc of Andover MA.
4. Zero Based Budgeting Scenarios - The Town Administrator will be asking two departments to work with her to develop zero based budgets for FY16, in addition to the development of a proposed FY16 budget as normally developed. Ms. Scheipers will be contacting the chosen departments shortly to begin working with you in this initiative.

Very Truly Yours,

TOWN OF HUBBARDSTON
For the Board of Selectmen

Michael Stauder, Chair

cc: file