

PRESENT: Selectmen Michael Green, Michelle Gallagher and Stephen C. Themelis; Mark Andrews, Town Administrator; Peggy Mazzola, Administrative Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Mr. Green announced that the meeting is being broadcast live and recorded for rebroadcast.

2/17/2015 - Minutes

1. **Acceptance Of Minutes**

1.1. January 12, 2015 Regular Session

On a motion by Mr. Themelis and seconded by Ms. Gallagher, with Mr. Green abstaining, it was voted to approve the minutes of January 12, 2015 as submitted.

2. **Approve Warrant And Sign Purchase Orders**

The Board signed the warrant in advance of the meeting.

3. **Public Communications**

Mr. Green announced he will not be running for re-election, and commented on his experiences while on the board and the changes that have been made to personnel. Mr. Themelis, Ms. Gallagher and Mr. Andrews expressed their appreciation to Mr. Green for his contributions to the Board.

Ms. Gallagher read a press release announcing the date for the Annual Town Meeting. Warrant articles are due by 2 PM on March 12th.

Mr. Themelis announced the next pipeline coalition meeting will be held on the 26th. There have been open houses scheduled over the next few weeks; dates will be posted on the website.

Mr. Themelis announced the next Veterans' Breakfast will be held on March 14th at the VFW beginning at 8:30 AM and will be sponsored by Pepperell DPW and Town Administrator Mark Andrews.

Ms. Gallagher announced a vacancy on the Nashoba Valley Technical High School Committee. Citizen Activity Forms and/or letters of interest are due by noon on March 18th.

4. **Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Andrews outlined his report, which included updates on the Southern New Hampshire Medical Center building, new Economic Development Incentive Program, new Community Electricity Aggregation Program, for which Philip Carr from Good Energy gave a brief presentation, transition for part-time Animal Control Officer (Mr. Themelis stated he would like to meet the interim Animal Control Officer), pipeline coalition and Town Administrator goals.

Regarding the electricity aggregation program, Mr. Andrews explained we would have to go through a bidding and regulatory process which would need to be approved by Town Meeting. If approvals are received, sometime in FY 2016 residents could see a deduction in their electric bill of \$100-\$150 per household per year. Individual residents can opt out of the program if they choose. Residents will receive one electric bill. There is minimal work to Town Hall staff to implement this program. Mr. Green stated he is leery of this; as an example he could have locked in his fuel oil rate for the year, but by not doing so is saving 69 cents per gallon. We could lock in rates for the Town and the rates could go down. However, Mr. Green would be open to this idea as long as people can opt out. Mr. Themelis asked what the term would be. Mr. Carr stated the municipalities decide, and the average term is two years. Each town can go all the way through the process

and then on bid day can walk away if it doesn't like the price. Each town decides. Mr. Green stated he would like to research further and discuss at the next meeting.

Mr. Andrews reported to the Board that there was a water main break this past weekend and thanked the DPW and Emergency Management Director Dave Querze for their assistance. Also today there is a major fire at 7 Elm Street and the scene is still an active scene.

Mr. Green remarked the Highway Department has been doing an excellent job despite the fact their crew is down another person because of the failed over-ride, so it is taking longer to work through these storms. They're doing a great job with the resources they have, but they're not doing the job they want to do.

Mr. Themelis remarked he had viewed the "Your Town Administrator's Report" with Peter Shattuck on cable TV and found it very enlightening.

Mr. Green remarked he had reviewed Mr. Andrews' updated goals; the board agreed there was no need to review at this time.

5. Appointments / Resignations

5.1. Resignation -- Animal Control Officer

Ms. Gallagher read a letter of resignation from Animal Control Officer Alicia Flagg effective January 30th. On a motion by Mr. Themelis and seconded by Ms. Gallagher, it was unanimously voted to accept the resignation with regret and thanks to Ms. Flagg for her service to the Town.

5.2. Appointment -- Interim Animal Control Officer

Mr. Andrews explained he has appointed Mary Letourneau, Townsend Animal Control Officer, as interim Animal Control Officer effective February 1, 2015. Mr. Andrews is reviewing the job description and will post the position to find a permanent Animal Control Officer. On a motion by Mr. Themelis and seconded by Ms. Gallagher, it was unanimously voted to confirm the appointment.

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6. Action Items

6.1. Presentation By UniBank On Refinancing Plan For Long Term Debt

Present were Lisa Dickinson and Brienne Susel from UniBank, who provided the Board with information relative to a refinancing plan for the Town's long-term debt and how this would be a great savings to the Town. A question and answer session followed. Ms. Dickinson will provide the Board with a motion from Bond Counsel for the next meeting. The Board thanked Ms. Dickinson and Ms. Susel for attending the meeting.

6.2. Discussion -- MA Economic Development Incentive Plan Formal Incentives Intent Letter From 1A Auto

Mr. Green recused himself from the meeting and left the room. Present were Lynn Tokarczyk, Business Development Strategies, Inc., Dave Willett, Real Estate Advisor for 1A Auto, Inc., Preston Farrington, Chief Financial Officer of 1A Auto, Inc., and Melissa Fetterhoff, Executive Director of the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce. The group showed a PowerPoint presentation to the Board. 1A Auto has purchased the former Mill site as a potential headquarters; plans are to construct an estimated 100,000 square foot, state of the art corporate office and customer service call center. Due to the site challenges, they want to make sure the site is economically feasible. Project investment is estimated at \$26.8 million. In addition to temporary construction jobs, 1A Auto plans to retain their current 95 full time employees and add 150 new, permanent full time jobs. The company and its employees are estimated to have a current economic impact of more than \$500,000 annually within the area, and employees are encouraged to spend their money in Town. Following completion of the proposed building, that figure may grow to over \$2 million. Mr. Farrington and Ms. Tokarczyk explained the incentives offered through the TIF plan would help the company and the Town due to the challenges of the site, redevelopment of a distressed property, increase in the tax base, encourage other businesses to expand, and assist with the Town's Economic Development agenda. 1A Auto has submitted to the Town a formal letter of intent, and the Town has granted previous TIF agreements to Masy Systems, in 2008 and 2012. A discussion followed. 1A Auto will submit a proposal to the Town Administrator, and will meet with the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen to discuss the proposal; the TIF proposal will be included in the Annual Town Meeting warrant, and once approved by the Town goes to the State for final approval.

Mr. Themelis remarked this would be a win-win for 1A Auto, the Town and Massachusetts, and he would love to see this investment in our community. Mr. Themelis will work to meet the time frame for the Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Gallagher stated she agreed wholeheartedly with Mr. Themelis and offered her support. Mr. Andrews stated he would like to see as many of those new jobs go to Pepperell residents. The board thanked Ms. Tokarczyk, Mr. Willett, Mr. Farrington and Ms. Fetterhoff for attending the meeting.

Mr. Green rejoined the meeting.

7. Old/New Business

7.1. Discussion Of Fiscal Year 2016 Budget

Mr. Green stated he is feeling pressure, especially from highway operations, police, and library; our budget is lower now than in 2007. Mr. Green's inclination is that we'll be talking about an over-ride again this year; even with the increase in revenue we are looking at a \$400,000 to \$500,000 deficit. We can't tap into our reserves and risk lowering our bond rating.

Mr. Andrews stated the FinCom is 75% through the departmental budget presentations and has two more meetings scheduled. Mr. Andrews will have a complementing document for the budget for the Board. Everyone is making good, solid requests, and 88% of the increases are coming from the schools. The Governor will submit his budget on March 4th. In some ways the budgets submitted are aspirational, but that is the realistic cost of doing business. We expect an additional \$100,000 in revenue from the new medical center to ambulance, based on three calls per week, and we've added this to our local revenues. The police department is asking for two additional officers at a cost of \$127,000. These two departments represent the major areas of increases. The library is asking for an additional \$43,000 to keep their state funding. We expect a 7.1% increase in health insurance and 3.37% increase in retirement. The reserve fund needs to be funded with an additional \$27,000. It may be a week or so before we know if we'll be able to chip at the deficit. Right now our revenue is expected to be \$21.9 million, with expenditures at \$22.3 million. We will know more in the next two weeks.

Mr. Themelis commented we need to see where the cuts will come from. Mr. Andrews stated he has backed any capital expenditures, i.e. police cruisers, out of the budgets and will be a separate line item in the budget. Mr. Green remarked he believes the Board asked the Police Chief to put new cruisers in his budget. Mr. Andrews stated this gives us a better handle on what our capital needs are. Mr. Green commented that the school budgets really affect us; our current projection is a 3% increase for North Middlesex; if they increase their budget to 3% that's an additional \$100,000. We planned for a 5% increase for Nashoba Tech, but it could be as high as 20%. Mr. Andrews commented the schools represent over 80% of our revenue.

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7.2. Discussion: Snow And Ice Accounts -- Authorization To Exceed Appropriation MGL Chapter 44, Section 31D

Given the tremendous amount of snow that we have experienced over the last two weeks and the prospect for additional snow and ice over the next two months, Mr. Andrews recommended that the Board vote to approve emergency expenditures to exceed the FY 2015 snow and ice budget. Mr. Andrews remarked that Congresswoman Niki Tsongas is pushing to have the Feds vote to reimburse cities and towns 75 cents on the dollar if we are declared a federal disaster area; this designation would be by county. Mr. Durno complimented the Highway, Sewer, Water, and Transfer station employees as well as anyone who helped a neighbor or dug out a fire hydrant.

Following a brief discussion, and on a motion by Mr. Themelis and seconded by Ms. Gallagher, it was unanimously voted to authorize the Town to exceed the FY 2015 appropriation for Snow and Ice in compliance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 31D and in accordance with all rules and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

7.3. Letter Of Support To Congresswoman Niki Tsongas For Federal Snowstorm Relief

The Board reviewed a letter prepared by Mr. Andrews to Congresswoman Tsongas urging the approval of a Presidential Major Disaster declaration for North Middlesex County. Following a brief discussion, and on a motion by Mr. Themelis and seconded by Ms. Gallagher, it was unanimously voted to sign the letter.

7.4. Discussion: Reserve Fund Transfer Requests - Tree Warden, Lawrence Library

The Board reviewed a reserve fund transfer request for tree clean-up. Following a brief discussion, and on a motion by Mr. Themelis and seconded by Ms. Gallagher, it was unanimously voted to recommend a Reserve Fund Transfer of \$7,500 to Tree Care/Tree Experts (Account #100-42700-52318) under MGL Chapter 40, Section 6, as an unforeseen expense relative to excessive storm damage to trees in Town.

The Board reviewed a reserve fund transfer request for repairs to the AC and furnace at the library. Following a brief discussion, and on a motion by Ms. Gallagher and seconded by Mr. Themelis, it was unanimously voted to recommend a Reserve Fund Transfer of \$4,452.86 to Library Repair and Maintenance (Account #100-61100-52241) under MGL Chapter 40, Section 6, as an unforeseen expense relative to the emergency replacement of an AC compressor, furnace circulator and fuel unit at the Lawrence Library.

7.5. EDSAT Licensing Agreement And Letter Of Agreement With NMCOG

Mr. Andrews stated Jay Donovan at NMCOG alerted him to this self-assessment tool. Mr. Andrews explained there is no cost to the Town for this program; our staff goes through a Q & A assessment, then staff from Northeastern will give seminars or workshops. Mr. Themelis explained his understanding of the agreement. Mr. Green advised Mr. Andrews to make sure Martin Cadek knows about this and we have adequate hardware. Mr. Andrews stated he is asking the Board to authorize him to sign the License Agreement and letter of agreement between NMCOG, the Town and Northeastern University. On a motion by Mr. Themelis and seconded by Ms. Gallagher, it was unanimously voted to authorize the Town Administrator to sign agreements for the EDSAT program.

7.6. Any Other Old/New Business

There was no other business before the Board.

8. Executive Session

8.1. None Scheduled

ADJOURNMENT: On a motion by Ms. Gallagher and seconded by Mr. Themelis, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Mazzola, Administrative Assistant
APPROVED:

Michael L. Green, Chairman

Michelle R. Gallagher, Clerk

Stephen C. Themelis