

**BOARD OF
SELECTMEN
MEETING
MINUTES**

March 23, 2016

Fire Station/ Town Hall

Chairman Kenneth Picard; Selectman Robert J. Fleming; Selectman James Brochu; Town Manager, Blythe C. Robinson; Executive Assistant, Sandra Hakala

1 Chairman Picard called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

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3 **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

4
5 **Meet with Fire/EMS Department members to discuss the direction of the department**

6 The Board of Selectmen called a meeting and invited all Fire/EMS department members to
7 discuss the direction of the department in response to the recent rumors and innuendo arising
8 from the public meeting held with the Fire Chief on March 8th to discuss the pathway to the
9 future for the EMS service.

10
11 Chairman Picard conveyed to the members of the department that the Fire/EMS department was
12 reorganized in 2008 when the town accepted MGL 48, Section 42A; whereas the Chief is the
13 department head and all conversation should follow the chain of command. He further voiced the
14 Board of Selectmen's commitment to providing the best Fire/EMS services and ALS to the
15 community. Chairman Picard thanked everyone for their selfless service.

16
17 Selectman Brochu expressed concerns having heard misstatements and misrepresentations of the
18 facts regarding the meeting held on March 8th and reiterated the Chairman's resolve to base their
19 decisions in the best interest of the Town and their commitment to ALS.

20
21 Selectman Fleming assured those present that all members of the Fire/EMS department were
22 valued and appreciated in their commitment to the Town. He also reminded them that the Board
23 of Selectmen were the policy makers in town government and respected the chain of command
24 and asked that they adhere to this process as well.

25
26 The Board of Selectmen will continue to review and discuss the ALS/EMS staffing options only
27 at public meetings and encouraged those who wish to participate in future discussions to attend a
28 meeting those meeting or attend an invited guest.

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30 **Motion #1:** At 6:30pm Motion was made by Chairman Picard to recess the meeting to attend the
31 Finance Committee meeting at Town Hall.

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33 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous: Selectman Brochu.

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35 **Motion #2:** At 7:30pm Motion was made by Chairman Picard to reconvene to attend the Finance
36 Committee meeting.

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38 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous: Selectman Brochu.

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40 **Discuss FY 2016/2017 Budget Strategy with the Finance Committee**

41 The Selectmen met with the Finance Committee and reiterated their commitment to take a
42 conservative approach to this year's budget to relieve the burden on taxpayers. The Selectmen

43 stated would like to contain costs so that the residents see no increase in their taxes next year.
44 Chairman Flaherty asked whether their goal was a zero tax rate increase or zero tax bill increase.
45 The Board discussed with the Finance Committee strategies by which services could be
46 delivered with a level tax rate.

47
48 Kenny Costa was invited to the joint meeting to suggest ways to approach the budget this year
49 given the fact that the levy limit must be raised by 2.5%. He clarified that the levy limit must be
50 raised by 2.5% even if the Town doesn't plan to spend those dollars next year; therefore the
51 Town is not required to tax residents that much. He explained whatever the Town doesn't tax
52 people becomes excess levy capacity that could be used in the future. This year the excess
53 capacity is just over \$8,000. He also pointed out that the Town had an extraordinary past year
54 with the override to fund the schools; assessed values went up; and that caused tax bills to rise
55 further.

56
57 The Board affirmed that they would be looking to reduce the school budget to \$250,000.
58 Chairman Picard will relay this message to the Superintendent.

59
60 Ms. Robinson will prepare a revised budget reflecting the detail the Boards agreed to:

- 61 • Move all articles from Free Cash to raise & appropriate
- 62 • Changed the summary page to deduct \$100,000 of "levy limit capacity" that won't be
63 used (Explain at Town Meeting this is money that could be taxed but will not)
- 64 • Increase two line items to get closer to using all of the Free Cash and let lapse to next
65 year
 - 66 ○ Increase OPEB to \$100,000 from \$50K
 - 67 ○ Increase Fisk Mill Bridge to \$70,000 from \$50K (Early estimates indicate that
68 this project will have higher engineering and permit fees than anticipated, though
69 we're getting other quotes)
- 70 • Create a warrant article for the Heritage Park Gate for \$1,000, and reduced the expense
71 line correspondingly

72
73 The budget items still in play:

- 74 • Discuss with Ken Glowacki about the tax title account next week, that probably can be
75 lowered from the \$20K request
- 76 • Health Insurance – Design changes with the insurance advisory committee – may not
77 resolve that in time for changes to this budget

78
79 The next joint meeting will be held on April 7th.

80
81 **ADJOURN MEETING**
82 **Motion #3:** At 8:45 pm motion was made by Selectman Brochu to adjourn the regular meeting.

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84 Second: Selectmen Fleming, Unanimous Chairman Picard.

85
86 Respectfully submitted,
87 Sandra Hakala
88 Executive Assistant