

**BOARD OF
SELECTMEN
MEETING
MINUTES**

December 15, 2015

Town Hall

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

1 The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm. Chairman Picard opened the meeting and after the
2 pledge of allegiance reviewed the agenda.

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4 **MINUTES**

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6 **Motion #1:** Motion made by Selectman Brochu to approve the December 1, 2015 Regular
7 Session Meeting Minutes.

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9 Second: Selectman Fleming, Unanimous Chairman Picard.

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11 **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

12 **Motion to Approve Contract for DPW "Clear-Span" Portable Garage**

13 At the special town meeting an article was approved to purchase a storage trailer and a portable
14 gable type garage for the DPW facility. The Director outlined the procurement process leading
15 to a recommendation that a contract with Clear Span to purchase the material and technical
16 assistance in the amount of \$25,800.65 be executed.

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18 **Motion #2:** Motion made by Selectman Fleming to authorize the Town Manager to execute
19 a contract with Clear Span to purchase the material and technical assistance in the amount of
20 \$25,800.65.

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22 Second: Selectman Brochu, Unanimous Chairman Picard.

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24 **Review Board of Selectmen's Action Plan**

25 This item will be discussed at the first meeting of the month.

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27 **Discuss Goals for the FY 2016/2017 Budget**

28 The selectmen decided they would take a conservative approach to the fiscal 2016 budget in an
29 effort to give taxpayers a break. Chairman Picard suggested that since there are indications that
30 growth would be good this year, utilize the staple tax base to fund operations and all new growth
31 go to stabilization accounts.

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33 He would like to develop a new trend making sure money is put in stabilization for future needs
34 and don't purchase something until funding is available so not to impact operations.

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36 The selectmen agreed on this budgetary focus and will meet jointly with the Finance Committee
37 to discuss the direction of both the operating and capital budgets and then all other boards to
38 promote a conservative budget.

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40 **RECOGNITION**

41 The Board thanked the Women's Club for decorating the Holiday planter's around town and the
42 efforts of the Fire Department in lighting the Town Common with holiday lights.

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MANAGER'S REPORT

Letters went out to 500 residents regarding dogs that are believed are unregistered. State law requires that all dogs that are more than six months old be registered with the Town and have received that residents were aware of what needed to be done for compliance and returned letters from those who are no longer residents. Kelly has ordered more tags for 2016 in anticipation of the number of licenses increasing.

The site visit to renew the accreditation for the Police Department went well according to the team of assessors that were was on site for three days with only one significant area to address, which is to better secure the evidence area. It is anticipated the department will receive award and become re-accredited in January.

Matt Selby, an employee of the Town of Ashland, and who has provided Conservation Agent services to Upton over the past 4+ years under a contract with Ashland is moving on to a new job and the Town Manager and Selectmen wished him well. Ms. Robinson has reached out to Ashland to find out what their next steps are, and if they wish to continue working together. The agreement was up for renewal in 2016, however if they do not, the Town of Northbridge has expressed interest in jointly hiring someone to fill this role.

The insurance advisory committee met this week to review the Town's health insurance experience, and talk about how to address the rising cost of health insurance for the upcoming year. The plan usage continues to be high, and with the rising cost of medical and prescription drug costs/trends, it is likely there will be an increase next year. Various plan design changes were discussed and they will meet again early next year to discuss how that could be mitigated.

Governor Baker announced a piece of legislation this week regarding municipal modernization. The bill is a result of feedback the administration has received from cities and towns this year on impediments we have to doing business efficiently. The bill contains many items that would benefit Upton such as spreading out the Assessor's certification to every five years from three, eliminating the need to print procurement notices in the newspaper and instead on the Town's website and State sites, and others.

The police cruiser budgeted this year is in service, and the retired one has been put up for auction at publicsurplus.com.

The updated version of the website is in progress. Departments and boards are reviewing their content and deciding what to move to the new site.

Discuss Heritage Park Conservation Restriction

Selectmen reviewed the current version of the conservation restriction, which includes comments from the two relevant state agencies, as well as the grantee which will be the Metacomet Land Trust. Final word from the State on this version is eminent and voting will be held until feedback is received.

Review Tri Valley Front Runners Road Race Application

89 An application by the Tri Valley Front Runners Road Race to hold their annual road race on
90 April 2nd at Nipmuc High School was reviewed. It was been approved by both the Police and
91 Fire Chiefs in accordance with the road race policy and recommended for approval by the Town
92 Manager.

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94 **Motion #3:** Motion made by Selectman Fleming to authorize the Tri Valley Front Runners Road
95 Race to hold their annual road race on April 2nd.

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97 Second: Selectman Brochu, Unanimous Chairman Picard.

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99 *Discuss Revised Solar Array Pilot Agreement*

100 At a recent meeting the Board reviewed with the Board of Assessors a proposal from Nexamp to
101 enter into an Agreement to set the financial terms for payments in lieu of taxes for a solar array
102 the firm wants to build on a site located at Route 140 and Chestnut Street. At Town Meeting
103 permission to negotiate such an agreement was granted and Nexamp has received approval of the
104 site plan from both the Conservation Commission and Planning Board.

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106 Nexamp has offered to increase the value of the project per kilowatt to \$12,500 and has offered
107 to increase the escalation percentage from 2.0%/year over twenty years, to 2.0% for each of the
108 first ten years, and 2.5%/year for years 11 – 20. The contract value is \$801,890, which is an
109 increase of \$43,812 from the original version. Town Counsel will proceed to negotiate the legal
110 terms.

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112 *Discuss Town Manager's Performance Evaluation*

113 The Board will discuss the evaluation at their second meeting in January.

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115 *Motion to Approve Extension of Town Manager's Contract*

116 The Town Manager's existing contract is set to expire on March 31, 2016. In discussing a
117 successor contract, the Board expressed interest in having that new contract coincide with the
118 fiscal year calendar. To bridge the gap between these two dates, Town Counsel recommends
119 that the Board vote to extend the current contract with no changes to its terms by a period of
120 three months from April 1 through June 30th. When the successor contract is ready for action, it
121 can be voted on for the three year period of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019.

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123 **Motion #4:** Motion made by Selectman Fleming to extend the current contract with no changes
124 to its terms by a period of three months from April 1 through June 30th to allow a new contract
125 coincide with the fiscal year calendar.

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127 Second: Selectman Brochu, Unanimous Chairman Picard.

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129 **MEETING LOOK AHEAD TOPICS**

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131 **NEW BUSINESS**

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133 The Selectmen discussed 47 acres which is part of a parcel of the Amato farm, on East Street,
134 directly across from the entrance to Rockwood Meadows as having value to the Town for multi-
135 purposes. Selectman Fleming he has met with the owner and walked the property.

136
137 The land falls under a state law that gives a tax break to owners who keep the property for
138 agriculture, which gives the town has first right of refusal to the property.

139
140 He suggested that the land could be used for cemetery space, athletic fields or other uses and
141 pointed out the tax impact would not be large.

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143 The Selectmen will move forward, to determine what is needed to do and come up with some
144 milestones to be reviewed in the next meeting.

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146 **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

147 The Board will enter into Executive Session under MGL c.30A, S. 21 exceptions #3: to discuss
148 strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining if the chair declares an open meeting will
149 have a detrimental effect on the Town's bargaining position.

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151 **ADJOURN MEETING**

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153 **Motion #11:** At8:03pm motion was made by Selectman Brochu to adjourn the regular meeting.

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155 Second: Selectmen Fleming, Unanimous Chairman Picard.

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157 Respectfully submitted,

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161 Sandra Hakala
162 Executive Assistant