

MENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING----- February 5, 2015

APPROVED-----February 17, 2015

Chairman Goddard, Selectmen Schofield and Reil, and Town Administrator Newman are present in the Upper Town Hall, Mendon.

Chairman Goddard called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to approve the regular session meeting minutes of January 20, 2015 as written and the executive session minutes of January 20, 2015 not to be released. The motion carried unanimously. Selectman Schofield thought he had an amendment when initially reading the minutes. *Action: Selectman Schofield will forward any changes he finds.*

Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to allow Mendon Boy Scouts Troop 44 to hold a can and bottle drive on Saturday, April 18 in the Town Hall parking lot and to hang a banner advertising the event for one week prior. The motion carried unanimously.

Doug Parcher, Spectra Energy joined the Selectmen to discuss the Algonquin Gas easement. Chairman Goddard explained that there is an article on the March 18 STM warrant that will give the Selectmen the opportunity to negotiate. The Town needs to do a valuation for the easement. Ms. Newman will handle specifics offline. Mr. Parcher explained and showed how one easement goes across the field, along the ball field and within 10 feet of the fence. Another one is on the opposite side of the road along the river. He would like to get equipment in this summer. Anodes will be 20’ deep in wetlands. Current is injected which will protect eight miles of pipe line.

Ms. Newman said she has been meeting with the Finance Committee and department heads to prepare the FY16 budget. Seventy percent of budget has been reviewed. She will be meeting with BVT and MURSD. She explained that the Finance Committee has reviewed most of the level-serviced budget which was distributed. Some drivers caused an approximate \$144,000 deficit. Deficits include approximately \$74,000 for Worcester County Retirement, \$32,000 projected health insurance increases, a slight increase in property and casualty insurance and approximately \$34,000 in overall utility/energy increases. The final estimate for health insurance won’t be known until the end of February. Selectman Reil noted we have a Constellation Energy contract that will be expiring in March. Ms. Newman that has been addressed and is cautiously budgeting a 37 percent increase. She also asked department heads for their requests beyond level funding for multiple years which totals \$645,000. This has been outlined in a separate, prioritized list. The Assessors have requested software which will increase efficiency and includes online maps at \$1800. Training for the backup Assessor is \$1250. *Action: Ms. Newman will confirm as \$1500 is in an article on the March STM warrant for Assessors training.* She also recommends an additional \$20,000 for town counsel funding. The Veteran’s Agent needs additional funds based on bills that are being received. The Building Department is requesting software at \$10,000 to increase efficiency. Chairman Goddard stated he would like to know the difference between the software requested and the software Upton is using that was acquired in conjunction with CMRPC pricing. Ms. Newman also included \$10,000 for routine, ongoing building maintenance. There is a small amount in the budget now but not enough. We need to look at options to maintain the infrastructure. A new voting machine costing \$650 is a number one priority due to the presidential election. It needs lead time for it to be certified. This is a one-time purchase. The COA Director said her Board Chair is requesting an additional ten hours for the current Outreach Worker and an additional five for the Senior Center Director. There is compelling evidence about increased use at the Senior Center. This was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting last night. Consideration has been given to using more volunteers. Selectman Schofield calculated that there is a

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cost of \$45,607 of non-recurring items on the list. Chairman Goddard stated that department heads should be asking for what they need for a multi-year budget. Members agreed that the items requested will be prioritized and addressed after the level-serviced budget is finalized. Selectman Schofield said he would not be in favor of bumping anything off the budget to fit something on the ‘ask’ list. Ms. Newman said the Finance Committee asked for funding \$420 to send members to municipal training. Ms. Newman recommends a recurring amount in the operational budget with \$20,000 to fund studies which allow for better future planning similar to the road study. There is also an additional \$10,000 for recurring IT expenses. The next phase would be to upgrade the phone systems and add Outlook Exchange. Selectman Schofield wants to make sure we do not have to run more cable. Ms. Newman said the upgraded system would provide better phone coverage during building closings due to storms and wouldn’t require any new wiring. A request for an additional, temporary person to do payroll as a backup is on hold. Ms. Newman stated we are going to try to solve the problem with current staffing. The elected Town Clerk is asking for a salary increase based on Upton’s study. Selectman Reil said this can wait until we see our compensation survey. Selectman Schofield noted that like the Highway Surveyor, who is elected, a motion can be made at town meeting to increase their salaries.

Ms. Newman said the Council on Aging would like a study to add an L-shaped addition to the Senior Center. The Friends of Elders will pay a portion of the study. The Conservation Commission asked the Board to consider changing the Clerk’s position to a full-time Agent. They expect this will help with enforcement. Revenue from fees could offset the cost. Selectman Schofield wants to see what the return on investment (ROI) would look like before they come to the Selectmen. Chairman Goddard would like to see what other towns do, their job descriptions and what their roles look like. Public Safety mentioned replacement of the epoxy floor and roof at the fire station. This is in preparation to get another ambulance. Selectman Schofield said the lease was up last year. We need to budget \$45,000 instead of \$35,000 to replace it. If it is not replaced, the money allocated can be used to offset the budget. Ms. Newman said we need to explore options based on Chapter 90 money and the snow and ice expenditure. The Highway Surveyor would like to have additional fog lines in roads and guard rails. The road study is on the March STM warrant but is on Kim’s list in case it does not pass. The Highway Surveyor requested a plow truck at \$160,000. All agreed one-time purchase requests should be on the Capital Planning list. There is also a \$40,000 replacement pickup with a plow. Another ten hours requested for the Highway Department Clerk. Ms. Newman thinks that recommended hours for each department head would be part of our compensation study. The amount needed for the new library will not known until later in the year. Ms. Newman recommended they estimate their operational budget at the new location for a full year. An opening of February or March 2016 is estimated. They are asking for additional funding for programs.

The Parks Department is requesting a walk-behind mower as well as a larger one that they can share with the Highway Department for \$150,000. Selectman Schofield would like to know how much a larger mower would save the town in manpower. Chairman Goddard suggested getting hours spent on maintenance by the Parks Department to calculate the ROI. A generator is being requested for \$75,000. Selectman Schofield suggested getting a competing quote as Rich Lareau, who has some experience in the industry, said it would be \$28,000 to \$30,000.

Ms. Newman informed members that the Finance Committee is meeting with Dr. Marusczyk and the Conservation Commission on March 11 at 7:00 p.m. and on the 25th with the Library, Board of Health and Water Board. In mid-March we will have a joint meeting between the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

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Ms. Newman reviewed several of the Special Town Meeting warrant articles. Selectman Reil wants us to look into the fixed rate the Town has for electricity which is in effect through March and determine why our costs are increasing. Selectman Schofield recommended changing the estimated LTD costs for FY16 based on current LTD rates. Article 20 will cover cost of moving offices, wiring, for Town Hall flooring installation. Article 21-Chairman Goddard doesn't want to put any articles on that would reduce revenue. Selectman Reil read Article 27 which is to transfer control of the land on North Avenue that was designated for a joint library to the Board of Selectmen. Chairman Goddard would like to remove Article 21. Selectman Reil would like to know whether the \$1300 in tax revenue coming from one farmer or from more. **Selectman Schofield made and Selectman Reil seconded a motion to remove Article 21.** Selectman Schofield said in the best of both possible worlds he sees why the article is on the warrant but he sees Selectman Goddard's point. The farmers get the benefits of Chapter 61A. He suggested that leaving it on gives voters chance to vote on it. Chairman Goddard feels they are financial stewards and is not comfortable putting it on the warrant. Selectman Schofield said if enough people want it, they can petition to put it on. **The motion carried unanimously.** *Action: Ms. Willoughby or Ms. Newman to inform Ms. Gould of the decision.*

Ms. Newman said she is waiting for cost estimates from the architect for the Friends of the Mendon Police Station for completing the building and value of what has been completed. This is scheduled for March. She met with Mr. Peterson to see if anyone on his committee would want to be on a town committee. This will be back on the agenda in March once estimates are received.

Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion that the Mendon Board of Selectmen does not object to the issuance of a Keno license to Barry's Place, 35 Hastings Street. The motion carried unanimously.

Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to deficit spend the Snow and Ice Removal Account up to \$ 250,000 through June 30, 2015. Selectman Schofield said he trusts Highway Surveyor Tetreault to not spend more than he needs on snow and ice removal and does not want him to have to come back to ask for additional money. Selectman Schofield said budget is based on 75% of the trailing five-year average, Department of Revenue best practice guidelines and the Long Range Financial Plan. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Willoughby explained that there are no fees set for General on Premises Wine and Malt Regular or All Alcohol license. The Town did not distinguish those from Restaurant Wine and Malt Regular or All Alcohol license fees. Ms. Willoughby suggested setting the fees to be in line with the Restaurant license fees. Once fees from surrounding towns are obtained, all license fees can be reviewed. Members agreed. **Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to set the following fees: General on Premises Wine and Malt Regular \$1,000 and General On Premises All Alcohol \$1,200. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Newman reported that \$65,000 of the \$70,000 budget has been spent on salt. She cannot tell if there are any outstanding bills. The Town Hall project on the warrant has an expedited time frame of April 29 when the trailer lease is up. She met with Lt. Kurczy and the Building Inspector to work on details on the project and specifications for the bid to be able to go to the Special Town Meeting with numbers. We will only have 45 days to complete the project within the deadline. The majority of work is the office portion which can be done quickly. It will be advertised the Sunday after next. They will open

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and award the bid the night of the Special Town Meeting in order to move quickly. She has spoken with the Sheriff's office to schedule the work. She will also be discussing how and when the work will be completed. This can be further discussed at the meeting during the first week in March. We are in the middle of contract negotiations. Ms. Newman said she forwarded the schedule for the next few weeks. Counsel will come back to talk with the Board. Interviews will be held with employees for the compensation study next week. Ms. Newman wants to thank residents for their patience during the storm and thanked Ms. Hawkes for coming in last Friday. She reminded viewers that many things can be paid online.

Selectman Schofield mentioned he will be leaving on business this Saturday and returning the following Friday.

Chairman Goddard would like someone from the Planning Board and Historical Commission to come to a Selectmen's meeting to talk about the Historic District.

Ms. Newman reported she will be meeting with Jeannie from the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce to discuss water. There will be a meeting on February 24 at 2:00 p.m.in the Town Hall regarding Village Preservation with different boards to coordinate the effort. Ms. Newman will report on the outcome at the first March BOS meeting.

At 8:45 p.m. Chairman Goddard made and Selectman Reil seconded a motion to enter into Executive Session under M.G.L. C.30A Sec.21 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Mendon Coalition of Police as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Selectmen and I so declare. A roll call vote is needed. We'll reconvene only to adjourn. Schofield-aye, Goddard-aye, Reil-aye

Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:22 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane Willoughby
Administrative Assistant

Documents Discussed located in 'Administrative Secretary's' Office:
Regular Session and Executive Session Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2015
Proposed FY 16 Budget Preparation Report
Department Requests
Draft March 18, 2015 Special Town Meeting Warrant
Selectmen's Fees Rev. 10/28/13