



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF NEW MARLBOROUGH
OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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Tara B. White, Chair
Nathaniel H. Yohalem
Michele Shalaby
Board of Selectmen

Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting
July 28, 2014

Board Members Present: Tara B. White, Chairman
Michele Shalaby
Nat Yohalem

Others Present: Michael Skorput, Administrative Assistant
Sharon Fleck, Administrative Secretary
Scott Farrell
Louise Eichstedt
Herb Eichstedt
Jason Eichstedt
Chuck Loring

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen convened at 6:04 p.m.

The Board read the minutes. **After a discussion, a motion was made and seconded and so voted by all members to approve the minutes of the June 30, 2014, July 12, 2014, and July 14, 2014 Selectmen's minutes, as amended.**

Police Chief Resignation – The Board received a letter from Scott Farrell dated July 22, 2014 resigning his position as Police Chief. This resignation is effective August 7, 2014. The Police Chief explained that he and his wife have accepted positions “out east.” He is confident in Graham Frank’s ability to become Police Chief. He explained that Graham needs some “transition” time, and he is available via telephone, email, etc. to assist Graham during this process. Selectman Yohalem asked if an “exit interview” would be helpful in determining how the Board could further assist the Police Department. A meeting has been set with Scott for Monday, August 4, at 10:30 a.m. Scott Farrell also advised there are many tools available to be able to evaluate the position of Police Chief, i.e. on-line, other Police Departments, etc., as well as obtaining position descriptions; however, Scott Farrell will write a position description. One way to evaluate a Police Chief’s performance is to have the Chief set goals that are measurable. The Board thanked Scott for his service and wished him “good luck” in his new position. Scott Farrell will also resign as Moderator of Town meetings. Per Council, a moderator can be called from the floor until a new one is elected.

Spiess Property –The Town of New Marlborough now owns the Spiess property, located at 129 Lake Road, New Marlborough. Chairman White explained that under Land Court’s decision (Chapter 60), a resident has one year to reclaim the property, after all taxes, fines, etc. have been paid, although the Land Court rarely reverses its decision. However, a prospective owner needs to be made aware of this law. A discussion ensued regarding the need for insurance on this property. Mike Skorput will investigate insurance options, as well as maintenance on the property until it is sold or put up for auction.

Trees on the Green - Louise Yohalem explained that although the Village Association does maintain the grounds of the Town trees on the Green, landscaping, etc., a report has been received from Peerless outlining the state of the trees on the property. The trees are in need of maintenance, and Louise explained that the Village Association does not have the funds to do this. Mike Skorput explained that the trees are on Town property and, therefore, the responsibility of the Town to do pruning, cabelling, etc. Louise Yohalem requested the Board provide a letter stating that the Town will be responsible for the maintenance of the trees. Mike Skorput will draft a letter.

Senior Tax Work-Off Abatement Program – Prue Spaulding informed the Board that twelve seniors worked 669 hours for the Town during the past fiscal year, and that two of the seniors worked a total of 140 hours with no compensation. Prue is further investigating with Rep. Pignatelli and Senator Downing having the seniors receive increased compensation as minimum wages are increased.

Transfer Station Compactor – Mike Skorput is working with Roger Levine on purchasing a new compactor. They are currently evaluating two different suppliers and will meet this week to make a decision. Delivery will take 4-6 weeks. In the meantime, a concrete slab will have to be poured and electrical work is necessary. Mike Skorput advised he does not want to take delivery of this compactor until all preliminary work is complete.

Increase in New Marlborough Retirement Program – Chairman White explained that, after meeting with Sheila Labarbara, she was able to determine that the increase of \$100,000.00 from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 was due to the addition of an Administrative Secretary (\$25,000), increase in Police salaries (\$21,200), New Marlborough Rescue Salary Account (\$3,300), Emergency Management Salary (\$2,000), Roads and Bridges (\$21,400), as well as a 2% salary increase. In view of the fact that this was a topic of discussion at the Annual Town Meeting, Selectman Yohalem suggested he put together a summary of this information which will be disseminated to the Town via NM5VN, Maggie’s List, as well as information to be available at the Library, General Store, etc.

Meeting with Rep. Pignatelli and Senator Downing – Chairman White explained that Selectman Shalaby has put together a “cheat sheet” outlining many of the issues discussed at the meeting that the Town may wish to discuss with other towns. Selectman Yohalem stated he had spoken with Dave Smith about getting together to discuss the sharing of services, such as Highway Department needs (salt, sand, sharing a mower, etc.). Available dates from the Selectmen will be given to Mike Skorput, who will arrange a meeting with Dave Smith.

Town Hall Renovations - Per Mike Skorput, because of the high cost of the proposed renovations, perhaps only the bathrooms can be done in order to comply with ADA. Mike Skorput to contact EDM to explore other options.

School Committee – Chairman White advised that Kenzie Fields was not running for School Board.

Schools – Chairman White explained that she and Selectman Yohalem attended the School Committee Meeting on July 24, 2014. The purpose of that meeting was to give an update on the outlying schools and the meetings that were to be held with those schools. To date, the School Committee has only met with Monterey; arrangements are being made to meet with the other four towns. One of the subjects discussed was “choice.” The Committee handed out a sheet that identified “choice” students both coming in and going out by town. The Committee feels that the policy that is in place for “choice” students needs no revision at this time.

Broadband – Selectman Shalaby has schedule a meeting on August 6, 201 with Senator Downing to discuss moving forward with Wired West and MBI, and how future decisions will affect New Marlborough.

Treasurer’s Position – Two qualified applicants will be interviewed on Wednesday, July 30, 2014.

Department of Revenue Meeting – Michele Shalaby will represent the Board at the Department of Revenue meeting on Tuesday, July 29, 2014.

Eichstedt Property – The Eichstedts attended the meeting in order to update the Board on their property damage. Louise Eichstedt showed pictures of the gravel on her property, flower beds and frog pond, etc. that have been damaged by the excessive rains during the month of July as well as a foot bridge that was lifted up and out of the way. She explained that in the 30+ years they have lived there, they have never experienced such damage.

Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring explained he had Joe Wilkinson put down a different type of stone that should adhere better to the road. He also explained the need to put down gravel after the severe rainfalls was for safety purposes, to fill the ditches that resulted after the storms, and that this was done on all the roads in Town that experienced damage. Chuck also explained he had been in this business for 25 years, and that the rains New Marlborough has experienced this year are unprecedented and have done extensive damage to dirt roads throughout the Town. Chuck explained he felt the only way to remedy this problem on Sisson Hill is to pave the road, for which the Town does not have the funds this year. He further explained that Chapter 90 money from the State may be available next year to pave this road. Selectman Yohalem suggested that the Highway Department budget for the road to be paved next year. The Highway Department will investigate putting in a swail to help divert the water.

Part of the problem is that Jim McGarry is cleaning out his yard, removing shrubs, trees, etc. at the top of Sisson Hill, thereby allowing more water to wash down the road. A “settling pond” was discussed, but it would have to be put on private property, and the Highway Superintendent was reluctant to commit to this idea.

The Eichstedt’s presented an estimate from Great River Construction Co., Inc. for \$2500.00 to clean up the gravel and reuse it around the stream, as well as clean out the stream and reshape the banks. The Eichstedt’s are concerned about the culverts under their driveways. Selectman Yohalem stated that the Town could not be responsible for damage done on private property, and that the Town is only liable if something incorrectly was done to the road during construction or during efforts to keep the residents safe from road damage. The Town will also check with

Council regarding the Town's responsibility. However the Town would be willing to have Wilkerson remove the gravel from their yard and the stream after it dries out. The Highway Superintendent suggested that he leave a larger culvert (30") with the Eichstedt's which should be able to divert more water. The Highway Superintendent will continue to monitor Sisson Hill in an effort to find a solution to the water problem, at least until the opportunity arises to pave the road.

Being that there was no further business to be brought before the Board, a motion was made, seconded and so voted by all members to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Fleck
Administrative Secretary