



Town of Boylston 221 Main Street, Boylston, MA 01505

Board of Selectmen Minutes 09/29/2014

Date of Meeting: Friday, September 29, 2014

Location: Town Hall, 221 Main Street

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:01 PM

Members Present: Chairman James Wood; James Underwood; Stephen Madaus, Town Counsel; Martin McNamara, Town Administrator; Lori Esposito, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Michael May

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Report of the Town Administrator to the Board of Selectmen:

Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co. (Kinder-Morgan) filed a request to implement a pre-filing process with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Copies of the project overview and letter to FERC have been presented to the Selectmen. Marty asked the Selectmen for their thoughts on this. He said several people have come to Town Hall looking for maps of the proposed pipeline. This is the first in a long process. They have to hold public hearings and hold discussions with state officials. Selectmen indicated they don't want to rush into anything. Marty thinks it a good idea to get it on the record that we are opposed to the pipeline. He presented a resolution in opposition to the pipeline for the Selectmen to sign.

A motion was made by Jamie Underwood, seconded by Jim Wood, and voted al in favor, to sign the resolution and send it to the Secretary of FERC in Washington.

New DPW Facility: In response to previous inquiries as to the ownership of the proposed site for the new DPW facility, the Town does own the property. When Digital owned the property there was a plan to change the location of Elmwood Place and the conservation restriction was placed on there by Digital. There is nothing in the Registry of Deeds to indicate it is State-owned land.

Tax-taking letters were sent out to 19 delinquent taxpayers advising them of the Town's intent to perform a tax-taking and recording of a lien against their property. The letter advised that the advertisement of their tax delinquency would appear in the local newspaper on Thursday, October 23. In response, we have received approximately \$20K from property owners.

Lease for MPT, second floor: Marty had a conversation with David Devine of the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management regarding a lease extension. He advised him the Town was looking for a three percent increase in rent and an increase from 60 to 120 in the number of days required for a lease termination notice. They have agreed to the 120 days' notice and mentioned they gave us \$25K last year (as an earmark) and indicated it would be an annual thing. Jamie Underwood asked how our lease rate compares with other areas. Marty said we are a little higher locally, but less than most facilities inside Route 128. Here, however, they have the advantage of the grounds and the gym.

Verizon FIOS: A year ago we contacted Verizon regarding FIOS. Verizon's engineers found that there is no cable coming up the hill from the street and they have backed out of providing FIOS to us, stating "we're not ready to do that right now." We, along with the police academy, have had ongoing problems with internet connectivity; the TA spoke with the academy administrators and they will attempt to put some pressure on Verizon to get FIOS to Town Hall.

FY2013 Audit: We have accepted the bid from Melanson Heath and will enter into a three-year contract with them shortly. With regard to the F'13 audit, the management letter they sent noted a few areas that need attention and the Town Accountant and Treasurer will be addressing those issues.

- One item noted involved the ambulance receivables account. The Fire Dept. currently does the billing and collections. The report suggested we use an outside company to do collections. This would entail paying a fee, which could amount to somewhere between \$26K and \$52K. Jamie Underwood stated he felt the Fire Dept. was doing a good job of collecting moneys. The TA agrees and said the Fire Dept. takes into consideration the ability of people to pay. If the bill isn't paid, they attempt to collect the money for one year, following which they let it go. Jim Wood said some people can't afford it. All agreed the amount let go does not exceed what the fee of a collection agency would be.
- The second issue involved the Hillside Reserved Receipts Account. The Selectmen established this account several years ago and all money received from rental properties goes into this account. At the Annual Town Meeting each year funds are transferred from this account and appropriated for any repairs. It also pays for our facilities technician. Each year the account builds up and the auditors don't approve of that. They think that money should go into the General Funds. However, Town Counsel informs us that the State does allow revolving accounts and we have a number of them, e.g., Parks & Rec and the Planning Board.
- At the next Town Meeting the TA proposes we include an Article proposing we establish a revolving account and call it "Hillside Revolving Account" and each year the Selectmen authorize that account. The annual surplus does not have to go back into the General Fund. As of this time there is approximately \$100K still in that fund. It remains there in case there is some major issue to fund. If, for instance, we had to put on a new roof, it would come out of that account.

Lightning Strike: Lori is compiling the expenses we incurred as a result of the recent lightning strike and will submit them to our insurer for reimbursement. It has been necessary to get quotes from DCAM-certified contractors to install a new alarm system. One of the companies will replace the fire alarm system. It would be possible to get it running for \$25-26K but it would not be a new system. The present system is so old we can't get parts for it. A new system would cost approximately \$100K but the insurance company is paying for it.

Bay Path Drive paving: Work has begun on the manholes and catch basins; the reclamation work is scheduled to begin next week and the paving should be completed by the following week.

Chief Procurement Officer: Years ago the Board acted as the CPO; however, the State is looking to the Board to appoint a CPO to handle all bidding, quotes, etc. Awarding of bids would still be done by the Board. Jim Wood said he thought the Town Administrator should be the CPO. Steve Madaus said the State updates the Town on certified bidders, etc., and they want to know who they can call, if necessary.

Jamie Underwood made a motion to appoint the Town Administrator as Chief Procurement Officer for the Town of Boylston. Jim Wood seconded the motion; voted all in favor.

Personnel Board: Dick Prince and John Stowe, former Personnel Board members, appeared before the Board to advocate for the reinstatement of the Personnel Board. The by-law passed in April 2013 calls for a Personnel Board but no one has been requested to sit on one. They feel the Town is exposing itself to problems by not following the by-law. Several years ago the existing Select Board indicated they wanted to handle all personnel matters, leaving the Personnel Board with little input. Although he does not want to serve on the Personnel Board, Mr. Prince feels a request for volunteers interested in serving should be put out. Jamie Underwood and Jim Wood agreed on the importance of the Board.

Report of the Highway Superintendent to the Board of Selectmen:

- Steve Mero said the Department has done a lot of highway repairs and addressed drainage issues by cleaning catch basins, etc. Roadside mowing has been completed to approximately two thirds of the Town. They are trying to maintain a lot of old dirt trails in Town and are maintaining present guard rails until we can go to the new guard rails.
- The Dept. purchased a tractor, voted on at the last Town Meeting, and picked it up last week. The tractor should last a long time. The Water Dept. was planning on splitting the cost with the DPW. The DPW had \$15K that was agreed upon at Town Meeting, but they spent only \$10K; they should get a check for \$5K from the Water Dept. The Water Dept. might store the truck for the DPW.
- The Dept. purchased a new catch basin truck and took delivery at 5:00 AM today. Although the asking price was high, we got it for \$25K; it will be used strictly for catch basin maintenance. By purchasing

used, we saved about \$200K.

- The DPW got some extra money from the State last winter and did some guard rail repair on French Drive.
- The Dept. did line painting and we should be reimbursed for that soon.
- Mr. Mero is planning on grinding Bay Path on Wednesday. If all goes well, they might be able to do a base coat on Friday or Saturday.
- Mr. Mero wanted to thank the High School kids who helped out at Hillside this year; they did a terrific job.
- The DPW paved one road at the cemetery.
- Five Saturdays have been set for leaf collection dates. The entire crew will each take a Saturday.

Joint Meeting with Planning Board: (Four members of the Planning Board appeared.)

The Planning Board is recommending that Judith White be appointed as Associate Member of the Planning Board. Ralph Viscomi, Chairman, stated that, in addition to five regular members, they have the ability to have an Associate member. This is necessitated because, if they don't have enough members for a vote at any hearing, the Associate Member could vote just as though she were a regular member. At hearings not requiring a vote, the Associate Member would just be there learning. Jim Wood asked if making this appointment requires a joint vote of both Boards and response was it does. He suggested the Chair of the Planning Board make a motion.

Ralph Viscomi made a motion that the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board vote to approve Ms. White as Associate Member of the Planning Board. Richard Baker seconded. Roll call vote recorded as follows: Richard Baker: Yes; Laurie Levy: Yes; Ralph Viscomi: Yes; Kim Ames: Yes; Jim Wood: Yes; Jamie Underwood: Yes. The Chair man of the Board of Selectmen declared Ms. White appointed to the Planning Board as an Associate Member.

Town Accountant: The Town Administrator told the Board that, with the resignation of Dan Haynes, a new accounting firm will start on Thursday at 8:30 AM. They will be spending the day with the TA, Dan and the Treasurer. Today the TA met with Dan and they closed five or six old accounts containing approximately \$80K. This will now come back as free cash.

Regionalization of Boylston and Berlin elementary schools: Lorie Martiska, Chair of the Boylston School Committee, along with members Brad Wyatt and Larry Brenner, and Angela Yildiz of the Berlin School Committee appeared before the Board to explain the efforts that are being made to realize full regionalization of the Boylston and Berlin elementary schools into the existing regional school district for the following reasons:

- They believe it will lead to a higher level of student achievement.
- Some redundancies will be eliminated. There are three districts (four, if you include the Union District); three payrolls, three contracts to be negotiated, leading to additional legal expense. There are also school calendars to consider, along with professional development efforts, etc.
- They have also seen a need to be able to allocate personnel, e.g., the music teacher episode.
- They also feel there is the potential for cost savings to both towns.
- Last spring CMRPC conducted a study which indicated we should pursue regionalization; however, the Boards felt it lacked the depth of financial analysis necessary for them to determine the costs. The Boards expressed concern about the adequacy of information to vote on regionalization but understood at that time that a positive vote on regionalization by school committees was required to apply for a grant to help further explore regionalization. They voted five to one to explore regionalization. The grant being requested is called "Community Innovation Challenge Grant." This grant would fund further financial analysis. However, it does require school committee votes and a positive vote from the selectmen in both communities. There are also other potential grants available. Following a positive vote from all parties, a committee would be formed which would include a school committee member from each town, one selectman from each town, along with a finance committee member from each town. Also to be included are both town administrators, along with two to three members of the public from each town. It would also include the school Superintendent and business manager.
- The process includes the need to determine the financial liability and implication of full regionalization. A consultant would develop a budget and estimate income for the new district.
- Their purpose in attending this meeting of the Selectmen is to pursue amending the original agreement for Boylston and
- Berlin to incorporate each of their elementary schools into the existing school district. The grant

application requires signatures from the Boards of Selectmen and they also need the name of the Boylston Selectman to serve on the committee.

- Last, the Superintendent is seeking a Selectman from each of the towns to serve on the Budget Task Force. This group would meet three times: at the end of October, in December and again in February. Jim Wood confirmed with Ms. Martiska that she was requesting the Board sign the grant application; the grant would then pay for the study. He asked if there would be any cost to the Town or whether the grant would take care of the entire cost. Ms. Martiska said she did not know yet.
- Their estimate now is a \$35K cost: \$27K for a consultant and \$8K in legal fees. She stated they were not asking for any Town money to pursue this grant; what is needed now is a positive vote to allow them to apply for the grant. Jamie Underwood asked when they would find out whether or not the grant is approved. Ms. Martiska said in December. Jim Wood asked what the chances are of getting the grant. Mr. Brenner said they were quite good. Jim Wood said he was good with it. Ms. Martiska handed a document to Mr. Wood for his and Mr. Underwood's signatures.

Jamie Underwood made a motion, seconded by Jim Wood, that the Selectmen sign the grant application document as presented by Ms. Martiska. Voted all in favor.

Messrs. Wood and Underwood signed the document.

At 8:01 PM Jamie Underwood made a motion, seconded by Jim Wood, to adjourn. Voted all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rose Bardsley
Selectmen's Clerk