



**Town of Boylston 221 Main Street, Boylston, MA 01505**

## **Board of Selectmen Minutes 02/17/15**

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, February 17, 2015  
Location: Town Hall, 221 Main Street  
Time: 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Members Present: Chairman James Wood, Jamie Underwood, Mike May,  
Martin McNamara, Town Administrator, Stephen Madaus, Town Counsel, Nina Gardner-recorder

Mr. Wood called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.  
Financial Warrants signed in approval.

### **Food Pantry**

Jamie Underwood met with the Food Pantry regarding relocation to the Archive room in the basement of Town Hall so that the Library can use the Food Pantry room temporarily if the renovation of the Library passes at Town Meeting. The archives can be moved upstairs in Town Hall. The Food Pantry needs shelves, a few tables and refrigerator. They will still have a private entrance and the library is not open on Monday when the Food Pantry is.

*Jamie Underwood motioned to move the Food Pantry to a mutually agreeable portion of the archive room in Town Hall. Mike May seconded; all voted in favor. Jamie Underwood motioned to rescind the vote from November 17, 2014 for appropriation of money to renovate Town House for the library relocation, not to exceed \$10,000.00. If it does not pass at Town Meeting, they will stay where they are. Mike May seconded; all voted in favor.*

### **Overspending on Sand/Salt Budget**

The Town Administrator thanked Steve Mero and the Highway Department for the great job they have done clearing the roads. Boylston was rated the fourth best in Central Mass for clearing of roads during these storms.

The 2015 Fiscal Year budget was expended before last weekend's storm. The budget has been approved to overspend by the Finance Committee. Right now, we are \$67,000.00 over the budgeted \$120,000.00, not including last weekend. There could be some possible reimbursement from MEMA, FEMA. Steve Mero did a recap which Joe Flanagan will submit to FEMA.

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to allow overspending of the snow/sand/salt budget for Fiscal Year 2015. Mike May seconded; all voted in favor.*

Mr. May informed the Board he had a call regarding fire hydrants. The resident was concerned that hydrants around town were not dug out. There was discussion as to whose responsibility it is. Steve Mero stated it is not designated. The hydrants are owned by the Water Department. The Fire Department does try to clear and sometimes borrows the backhoe to dig out. Mr. May felt we should have clarity as to whose responsibility it is.

Perhaps a message on cable to residents to help clear the hydrants would help as well. The Board suggested the Town Administrator decide who is responsible. The Town Administrator also discussed damage to fences and mailboxes on private property. If it is in the right of way, the Town is not responsible, but occasionally, some get damaged. The Town Administrator would like the Board to review this issue. After a brief discussion, Town Counsel recommended that the Town consider each case of damage as presented. Each situation is different and a blanket rule may open the door for different things. Mr. May pointed out that the Post Office states the mailbox must be able to be reached, therefore, forcing homeowners to put on Town property. The Board agreed that the Town Administrator and Highway Department Superintendent shall make the decision as to responsibility as cases are presented. If no resolution can be made, then they should consult the Board of Selectmen.

### **Jared Piche Commendation**

Officer Piche was present and accompanied by his wife, Jackie. Chief Sahagian thanked those in attendance

and gave a short summary of a situation in which off duty Officer Piche was attending GH2 fitness in Holden. The instructor, an off duty State Trooper, collapsed. Officer Piche trained in CPR approached and began CPR and the officer breathed on his own and stopped again. There were three attempts to save his life and Officer Piche kept him alive until paramedics arrived. He is alive and well due to the actions of Officer Piche. Chief Sahagian presented Officer Piche with The Lifesaving Certificate and Pin. Major Dan Rustein of the Holden State Barracks was present and thanked Officer Piche for his actions. He stated that he performed under pressure and thanked everyone for the opportunity to acknowledge Officer Piche.

Susan Templeton was present on behalf of Senator Harriet Chandler and Representative Harold Naughton. She presented Officer Piche with the State Senate Citation signed by Senator Chandler and the House of Representatives citation signed by Representative Naughton. On their behalf, she acknowledges his heroic act of performing CPR on Trooper Ross Baker and saving his life. Jim Wood presented Officer Piche with the Town of Boylston citation on behalf of the residents in recognition of extraordinary lifesaving efforts. Officer Piche thanked everyone and stated basically it is his job.

### **Weston and Sampson**

Jeff Alberti and JP Parnais presented an updated overview of the proposed new Highway Department Facility. They reviewed the history of the building and responsibilities of the Highway Department and the reasons the Town needs a new facility. The building is more than 50 years old and the equipment is much larger now and is exposed all winter to the elements and it is harder to maintain the vehicles. They are very far away from their storage area at a different site. They are proposing a new fabric covered salt shed. Weston and Sampson is proposing a 14,300 square foot building which has been downsized by 49%. The new facility would be located near the storage facility off of Elmwood behind the football field. It is the most effective way to construct the building. There would be bays at angles, administrative offices and a mezzanine for extra storage. Two extra bays would be installed for later use. The cost for the new facility is \$3,445,000. Steve Wallace, Main Street, stated he just wants to make sure the inside of the building is done correctly and if the Town is going to approve this project, it needs to be done right. Jamie Underwood stated the Board has looked at 7 different plans and they know a new building is needed, but they have to be fiscally responsible. He stated that Steve Mero feels the proposed building will allow everything to be indoors and make the employees safe and the two extra overhead doors will allow for future needs. The 14,000 square feet will allow for storage above and is designed economically, but with a look into the future so that they don't outgrow it. Right now it is bigger than they need. It can fit 16 or 17 vehicles including the equipment such as plows. There was discussion regarding bids and Mr. Alberti stated they are at or above level. The new building will have a pitched roof. Frank Reale, Twin Spring Road has been on the Committee for the Highway Project for many years and just wanted to clarify to the Library Board and residents that he was in support of both projects. Also, no money was spent on a new study because that had been done several years ago.

### **Library Trustees – Renovation Update**

Brad Barker, Trustee presented projected finalized costs for construction plans for the library renovation. The total project estimate would be \$2,369,214. If it passes at Town Meeting, it will go to bid in August and start in October. They are expecting a substantial donation of \$300,000 over a three year period, but they must ask for that amount up front and once the monies have been received, the tax rate will go back down. Jamie Underwood asked what amount they will bring to Town Meeting. The donation cannot be deducted from the amount of the total cost requested at Town Meeting. The Board of Trustees will request the total project estimate. There will be no relocation costs because they will be going to Town Hall. There is also a \$400,000 contingency built into the estimated project cost. There was discussion regarding relocation expenses at prevailing wages and professional companies as movers. The Board of Trustees have \$450,000, including the \$300,000, committed for donations and will continue fundraising and any amount they can take off at Town Meeting, they will. Mr. Barker expressed his concern regarding the Highway Department project seeking approval at the same time. Mr. Underwood stated even if it were presented in separate years, it would still affect the tax rate. Town Hall will be paid off soon and that will free up \$140,000 a year off the tax rate. The treasurer projected the numbers for both projects as 5 million dollars; \$600,000 a year for 10 years. Mr. May suggested perhaps combining both projects and go for a higher bond amount if the community supports both projects. They are both long term buildings. Mr. Barker stated the library would like to move forward with both projects and work together. Mr. Wood stated each project will stand on its own. The Town Administrator told Mr. Barker the final number has to be included in the warrant article.

### **School Budget FY 2016**

Ms. Ekstrom and Brad Wyatt of the School Committee were present. The Finance Committee is recommending a

2.55% increase of their budget for Fiscal Year 2016. Ms. Ekstrom and Mr. Wyatt wanted to go over issues and they explained that they are still doing estimates and they will not receive any numbers from the government until March 4, then the Department of Education has a few days before they give the towns their numbers. The School Committee looked at encumbrances and any transfers they could make. They reviewed December, January and February bills and reviewed every line item. They are asking for a 7.5% increase on health insurance and are being advised that is low. They do not know what the percent is as of now. Ms. Ekstrom reviewed changes from FY 2015 to FY 2016. The elementary school reduced the budget by negative .56% from the original budget. \$55,000 was added for contractual raises. The Preschool revolving account has \$11,000 less than last year which has to be offset into the general fund. She discussed "Circuit Breaker" which is out of district placements and how those affect the budget. The Town pays for out of districts placements and then receives reimbursement the next year and can use in their budget the year after that. So, that is \$10,000 less in their budget this year. They are reducing speech therapy hours. One para professional is retiring and they are not replacing. There will be no out of district transportation which costs \$24,000. The net change is negative \$15,988. Ms. Ekstrom is confident with what they are recommending for the Boylston Elementary budget. Brad Wyatt pointed out with one less employee, that is one less health care plan that needs to be paid for.

- High School Budget** – last year they were at a negative percent in the region. This year there are many more students and they are anticipating more. Some classes are expanding. The Superintendent discussed electives that are needed. They need more science labs to meet state requirements. They are hiring two additional teachers at the High School. They currently have four English, four math, three science and two social studies teachers. They need to increase the Science and Social Studies. There is one out of district tuition with residential placement. The cost is \$200,000 which is paid for in 2016. The reimbursement is received in 2017 and can be used in 2018. There is \$144,000 in contract raises due to teachers taking more courses and moving to a new step lane and then up a step. There is additional school choice anticipation and that would offset by \$29,000 that is paid out. Science text books are 20 years old. The total change is \$483,575, or a 6.9% increase. Worst case to best case scenario for vocational tuition is a 2.77% decrease and 4.6% decrease in transportation costs based on a bid from NRT. They do not know assessments yet. There is \$48,852 in vocational monies that was anticipated and is not needed and they would request that be moved over to Fiscal Year 2016. If those funds can be transferred, the School Department is asking for a 3.5% increase instead of 2.5%. There are a lot of unknowns and they requested the Board of Selectmen reconsider the 2.5%. Mr. Wood questioned the ratio Berlin/Boylston and discussed with Dave Butler of the Finance Committee the ratio for Berlin/Boylston was 60/40. Last year, it was 5.1 in Boylston. Mr. May asked for the student and teacher headcount regionally for last year and this year. Ms. Ekstrom stated there are 60-80 more students this year and the teacher amount did not change. Students have stayed at the High School rather than go to vocational. Ms. Ekstrom will email the Board members with exact numbers of students staying in Boylston. The classes are larger and there are not enough seats for all the students. There was a brief discussion regarding Assabet numbers and students graduating this year and number of applications. When the Assabet renovation is complete, more students may apply.
- Discussion regarding School Choice and funds from that. Tahanto had a beginning balance this school year of \$907,000 and anticipate receiving \$520,000 and anticipated expenses are \$620,000. The balance is \$800,000. They are planning to use \$740,000. The anticipated balance at the end of the year will be \$587,000. What is received in FY 16 is used in FY 17. Ms. Ekstrom stated the goal is to use half a million dollars each year and take in the same amount.
- The Elementary School is using more than they are taking in. The beginning balance was \$ 289,000, anticipate taking in \$68,000 and using \$136,000, with a balance of \$221,000. Then, the beginning of next school year starting with \$221,000, taking in \$53,000 and using \$198,000; with a balance of \$76,000.
- Last year, a Curriculum Director/Grant Writer was added. Town Administrator stated 63% of the budget is the School. New growth is \$180,000. Frank Reale questioned Ms. Ekstrom why she can't cut the budget as she did in her previous job and she explained it was a different situation. There was a brief discussion regarding GIC insurance. Mr. Reale also questioned class sizes and Diane Tucceri explained to him that the small numbers are combined, but it has to be listed on the student's record. Mr. May stated the school is performing well and has a good ranking and the Board understands there are mandates. There are a wide range of variables, but Ms. Ekstrom should look for ways to save and make the Board more comfortable with the numbers. Mr. Underwood questioned music class for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. They are not losing a class. There was a miscommunication when they went up to the High School. It has been corrected. Sixth will have music class and 7<sup>th</sup> music technology as an

elective. There will be no increase of fees for activities. Mr. Wyatt stated that Boylston is at the bottom 5% for state funding for Chapter 70 formula.

Mr. May asked how Boylston can get an increase from the State. Ms. Ekstrom told the Board there are public hearings being held on Feb 28 at 11:00 in Bolton at the Mary Pollins School regarding Chapter 70. There is a Chapter 70 Committee. Mr. Butler stated we need the ratio of where the students are coming from. If they are from Berlin, then the ratio will go down for Boylston.

- **Bus Contract** – Ms. Ekstrom asked the Board of Selectmen to approve a five year contract with North Reading Transportation. They are a well- respected company and have been highly recommended by other towns. They will service all three districts. The cost is less than we are currently paying. The savings is 4.7%.

*Mr. May motioned to approve the district to enter into a five year contract for transportation services with the North Reading Bus Company. Mr. Underwood seconded; all voted in favor.*

#### **Approval of Minutes**

*Mr. May motioned to approve the Minutes of Monday, October 27, 2014 as written, the minutes of Friday, November 7, 2014 as written, the minutes of Monday, November 17, 2014 as written and the minutes of Monday, December 8, 2014 as written. Mr. Underwood seconded; all voted in favor.*  
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#### **Report of the Town Administrator to the Board of Selectmen**

- The Finance Committee approved Reserve Fund Transfers as follows: \$11,000.00 for Veteran's Benefits, \$35,000.00 for the Accountants Salary line and \$19,620.00 for Design and Engineering Services for the Highway Building.
- Approval of Wachusett Regional Recycling Center Agreement- Town Counsel recommended changes which have been made – *Mr. May motioned to approve and accept the agreement. Mr. Underwood seconded; all voted in favor.*
- Regional School District has been looking into relocating their offices possibly to the Gough House second floor and back section of the first floor. The possibility of using Assabet students for the renovations that would need to be done has been discussed with Russ Mangsen, Director of Technical Programs at Assabet and they are very interested in working on this project. There is a meeting of the Hillside Restoration Committee and Ms. Ekstrom, Superintendent, Mr. Mangsen, Mark Hollick, the Assabet Principal, Ernie Houle, Assabet Superintendent and a member of the School Committee on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss their program and ideas for moving forward with this project.
- Kinder and Morgan has rescheduled the Informational Open House Meetings regarding the pipeline that were postponed. The new dates are:

Berlin Memorial Elementary Gymnasium  
Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>  
6 pm – 8 pm

Fitchburg Memorial Middle School Gymnasium  
Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>  
6 pm – 8 pm

- Town Administrator requested the Annual Town Meeting Warrant be opened today and closed March

2<sup>nd</sup>. *Jamie Underwood motioned to open the Annual Town Meeting Warrant Tuesday, February 17, 2015 with a closing date of Monday, March 2, 2015. Mike May seconded; all voted in favor.*

- Letter from Lt. Governor Karyn Polito announcing Community Compact Cabinet to create a partnership between state and cities/towns. Mr. May would like to discuss this in the future.
- Letter from O'Connell and Company regarding land for A. Dipilato to be used for Route 140 Corridor Sewer System.
- YMCA Survey – Mike May will come and speak to Town Administrator on Wednesday, Feb 18<sup>th</sup>
- Annual Form from Charter Communications was signed by Board of Selectmen
- Negotiations with Dispatchers will begin on Friday, March 6, 2015.

*Mr. May motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Mr. Underwood seconded; all voted in favor.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Nina Gardner