

#08-10

Meeting opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons Patricia Allen, Patricia Pruitt and Allen, Ross. Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio, Police Chief Ray Zukowski, David Jensen, John Reynolds, Peter Golrick, Jean Golrick

Approve Minutes of February 19, 2008

Pruitt made a motion to approve the minutes of Tuesday, February 19, 2008. Seconded by Ross. Minutes were approved with one correction. Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye. Ross abstained as he did not attend the February 19, 2008 meeting.

Liquor License Hearing

Allen: This hearing was continued from January 7, 2008 and it is for F. L. Roberts & Co., Inc. for 132 Third St., Turners Falls, MA. We will continue this hearing for April 28, 2008 at 7:01 PM.

- **Police Station Building Committee.** Pam Hanold asked me today to see if the SelectBoard would appoint Jason Burbank of 195 East Chestnut Hill Rd. in Montague to be on the Police Station Building Committee to replace William Whiteman, who recently moved out of Montague. Bill wants to remain as a consulting party.

Pruitt made a motion that we appoint Jason Burbank of 195 East Chestnut Hill Rd., Montague to be a voting member of the Police Station Building Committee, replacing Bill Whiteman who will become a supporting member. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

- **Request for more reserve officers from Civil Service**

I request that we ask for a list of reserve officers. We are down to five reserves. They get jobs elsewhere, and depletes our list. Right now we are down to five and we would like to have nine or ten. The list just came out about a month ago or so. I would like to have that to start the process of interviews, hiring, etc.

Pruitt made a motion that we ask for a reserve officers list from Civil Service, so that we may hire someone. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

- **Request to hire per-diem dispatchers.**

Is there any possibility that we could advertise and try to hire a few more per diem dispatchers? I think we are down to three that can work, and they are all full-time elsewhere. Our dispatcher has one that contacted her who works full time for the Shelburne Control and is looking for a part time work. It would be nice to get someone with experience like that. We would also like to get three or four more on a per diem basis. This would help our pool.

Pruitt made a motion that we advertise and hire some per diem dispatchers to help us out with the shortfalls in coverage. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

- **345 Alarm calls in 2007**

Chief Zukowski stated that there were 345 alarm calls that the Police Dept. had to respond to in 2007. These were not 911 calls, these were burglar type alarms; 345 is a lot of alarm calls. 30-40 were legitimate calls, the other over 300 were false. We had six calls over this past weekend that were false. This year (2008) one business has already had approximately a dozen calls. A lot of communities have the Alarm By-Laws. I've got Northfield, MA reports and they adopted the Alarm By-Laws in May 2005. For their fourth and subsequent alarms it is a \$50.00 per false alarm charge for a twelve month period, payable to the Town of Northfield. Their charge is payable within 20 days from the date of the notice, and it is a non-criminal disposition, enforced by the Police Department.

Discussion followed regarding the pros and cons of implementing a civil infraction/fine system, similar to the one they have in the Town of Northfield. False alarms do cost the Town money – an officer responds and has to wait for the key holder to arrive to shut the alarm off. If we had this regulation it might make the people with alarms a bit more efficient in using the alarm system. .

Allen: Samples of other Town By-Laws were requested so the Board can prepare a By-Law for our Town.

Town Administrator's Report

- **FRTA G-Link fixed transit route**

We no longer have a grant to assist with our assessment. Originally our assessment was projected to go up by \$22,000 for the G-Link service that serves Greenfield to Athol and Orange and Erving and Montague. We are allocated based on population. I called the Director to try and get a bit more information on the usage. We know how many times it goes through Town, and we know how many times it stops; five days a week, seven runs a day. It is roughly \$35. per day or \$5. per run. I don't know how many people are actually on the bus. I have tried to get that number out, but apparently they don't have that information available right away. Now that they found out that they have additional help, through another grant, and so the overall cost of running the G-Link has come down a bit. They revised the cherry sheet estimate of \$56,418. instead of the original number which was \$69,698. So it is considerably less. It is still about a \$7,000 increase in our overall assessment, between FY'08 and FY'09. The question is, is it still worth keeping now that we found out that the only times it actually stops in town are on its way to and from Greenfield and Athol, and also that we don't have the exact usage.

Discussion followed regarding if we knew the exact ridership, we could then figure out whether or not it is worth it to continue with this service. It was then suggested to have someone from FRTA come in and talk with us at our next meeting, if they are available.

Updates

Abbondanzio: One item with Strathmore is to award the quote for moving the bales of paper that are on the fourth level. Taking down the stacks of bales and making them more accessible so they can be eventually moved down to the lower level. We have a quote of \$6,000 from Richard Young, who submitted the lowest bid.

Discussion followed regarding the process of getting these bales of paper out of the building. Mr. Young will lift a forklift to the fourth floor and move the 200 – 300 bales of paper, estimated to weight about 1,300 pounds toward a hole leading onto the third floor. Mr. Jones will then be able to move the stacks down to the third floor, which is where the loading dock is.

Pruitt made a motion that we award the contract in the amount of \$6,000 to Richard Young of 84 Federal Street, Millers Falls, MA to remove the 200-300 bales of paper, weighing approximately 1,300 pounds within the fourth floor, spreading it out in such a manner that the material will be accessible to pallet jack. Seconded by Ross. Motion approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Discussion followed with David Jensen indicating that the sprinkler system and alarm system are being repaired and monitored. So, we are trying to build up a level of confidence of having the system protect the building instead of having people there all the time.

Allen: We appreciate the time and effort that you are putting into this and that it takes away from some of your other tasks.

Discussion followed regarding the remaining issues at Strathmore, which include the roof, covering the windows and sprinkler system. David Jensen indicated that he thought we caught it in time, and I think we will have protected that structure. It will be useful for somebody someday.

Documents to be Signed

Abbondanzio: Bruce Hunter is actually back. We are going to be meeting on Friday to talk about the sidewalk project, the unity sidewalks and the ones on Seventh Street. This huge project is scheduled to be done this year. The Town appropriated the money a few years ago. I have the final Town payment of \$6,636.88 that needs to be approved. We have the money for it in the budget.

Pruitt made a motion that we pay the final payment of \$6,636.88 for the Avenue A Crosswalk Project to the CA Construction Company. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Abbondanzio: Requests that the Board authorize the Chairman to sign paperwork, the Certificate of Substantial Completion of the Work on the Avenue A Sidewalk.

*Pruitt made a motion that we authorize the Chair to sign the Completion Certificates for the Avenue A Sidewalk Project. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously.
Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.*

Abbondanzio: Letter from Jonathon Dobosz. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 138, General Laws – Inhabitants are hereby notified that the Montague Parks and Recreation Department will be sponsoring a meeting regarding Norma's Park in the Village of Lake Pleasant. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 12th at 7:00 PM in the Spiritualist Hall on Montague Avenue in Lake Pleasant. Public participation is welcome.

Landfill Issue

Allen: I recluse myself as I am an abutter to the property in question.

Ross: The project has to be put back on the table for something that we look at in great detail. I have reviewed, in some detail, the many attempts we have had over the last decade and a half or more to try and do the right thing over there, and I think there are real challenges, but I think we have learned a lot from the last attempt to put out a RFP. I think a committee should be reformed and appointed. Looking at other possibilities that this Town has to develop an income stream, also to remedy the residual need that we have to re-look and remedy the burn dump, which we are under some obligation. There are a number of reasons to go and re-look at that site. It is actually kind of a precious site to have a permitted landfill site. I think we should have a vote to reform the committee to review the previous landfill proposals and then start to develop an agenda as to how to approach it.

Pruitt made a motion to reform the landfill committee. This doesn't preclude former members of the committee from participating again. People should indicate their interest. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye.

Ross: There is a lot of information that has been accumulated; engineering data, hydrology data and financial data. I think Frank will have access to that. There are some very nice summaries that you did. The town is facing some very significant financial challenges. That has been discussed at almost every meeting for the last number of months and for sure it is in the newspaper all over. I think the Town also has opportunities to develop income sources, and developing unused industrial property, while it is a hopeful possibility, the cost and the time frame to those kind of developments are from three to five years and up; assuming that we have industries and businesses that are interested in them. I think the landfill is clearly an asset that we have now and should be looked at very carefully as a source of revenue

John Reynolds: If I remember those studies that came in along with the proposals, almost all of them said it would be three to five years before any such operation could function.

Ross: Correct. That is also my understanding. My sense is that a two year time frame would be an optimistic look. The needs of the Town, are only as far as most of the projections that we deal with in the Finance Committee, are only going to increase in the next few years and as our reserve supplies are on the down side of the curve, we need to plan for our financial needs now in terms of developing other revenue sources.

Discussion followed regarding inquires over the last two years about the permitted landfill. There probably would be some interest, but we haven't put anything out there to gauge the interest. We don't know if the revenue potential has changed since the last time.

Appointment of Two Members to Airport Commission

Ross: There have been some discussions and the question remains as to whether these appointments should be defined in any particular way with regulations about their voting rights or whether or not, we as a Town want people on that Commission, who are residents of Montague or non residents as the statute allows. I think we should have that formal discussion and then seek other people who might be interested and then with a more crystal clear definition of what the candidates might look like so we can hopefully make a decision.

Allen: Should we put that on the agenda for next week?

Pruitt: Yes.

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 3RD, 2008**

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John Reynolds: That would be in the form of a policy before the Board as to what you are looking for.

Allen: Yes

Pruitt made a motion to go into Executive Session for Collective Bargaining, and we are only to adjourn our regular meeting. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.