

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, February 2, 2009
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM**

Tape #04-09

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Meeting was opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons Allen Ross, Patricia Pruitt; Patricia Allen, Town Administrator, Frank Abbondanzio; Administrative Secretary Wendy Bogusz (Absent); Hugh Massey, WHAI, Arn Albertini

Approve minutes of January 26, 2009

*Allen makes the motion to approve the minutes of January 26, 2009. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously.
Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye.*

FRCOG Update

Allen: The FRCOG has voted to reduce the regional service assessments fee to the towns. For Montague's fourth quarter instead of \$8,500 it will be \$5,100, about a \$3400 cut. Then FY10, we voted to make a 10% cut. That should help some.

Tom Bergeron, DPW Superintendent, Plowing Issues

Bergeron: On a normal storm when we are fully staffed and have all the equipment available we will have 3 pay loaders for plowing and loading sand, 6 six wheeled dump trucks, 1 ten wheeler, 4 pickups and 2 one ton trucks. I don't have as many people to run all the trucks, but it takes about 5 hours to sand the whole town. Typically there are 2 trucks in Millers Falls and Lake Pleasant, 2 trucks in Montague Center, 3 on top of the hill, two in the downtown area, and 2 pickups that do the patch and Montague City. The last storm we all started working around noon. The two trucks in Montague Center both broke spring leafs within an hour of each other, then Steve Lively had to come in off his route while he works on the trucks which took 4 hours to repair each truck. In the meantime the driveshaft fell out of a truck then a shifting lever broke inside the transmission of another truck. Then the front drive shaft u joints went on our 2000 Dodge pickup. Later in the evening one of the loaders fuel pump went and was left in front of the post office. This was a lot of equipment to lose for hours on end. I moved people around to try and get plowing done, but we were thin for quite a while. I am buying a new loader with Chapter 90 money but won't be in until the end of February. We have been removing snow for days and days. If we get some nice weather for a week or so, we could begin scraping some of the ice. I will be losing another person soon who will be out for foot surgery. We've been called out 41 times this winter since November 27th. As of December 31st the balance was \$144,621.91, sand and salt has cost \$61,493.90; overtime wages \$31,432.70 leaving us a balance of \$51,749. As of December 31st we paid other companies about \$10,000 for repairs because of the type of breakage it was. Parts have been over \$14,600, plow items \$3,200 and out of the discretionary money I received through the budget \$36,500 has been used for repairs. The equipment is aging. There are also 3 trucks sitting in the yard that are uninspectable that I don't have for snow removal anymore.

Pruitt: I didn't realize you were 6 vehicles down, but I'm amazed you do as good a job as you do.

Ross: The breakdown of these trucks is quite unusual and every year we work with the Capital Improvements Committee and they are aware of the longevity of these trucks. Every year there is a debate on how frequently to replace vehicles/equipment in the Police and Highway Dept. I think we are cutting it as close to the bone as we can in terms of getting new equipment. In talking with Tom on these storms that go continuously on and off for 24 hours with sleet, rain, and freezing snow, some people that are working are working continuous shifts that really stretch peoples ability to function. Given the citizens concerns, are there better things we could do to keep people informed about delays in when their roads are going to be serviced?

Bergeron: The best thing I can say is when ever there is an emergency I try to clear the street. I don't want to say give us a call and we'll clear the street because that leads to everyone calling and saying they need their street plowed. I have contact with the police department in my truck and sometimes they will contact us and ask us to clear an area so an ambulance can get through. Several employees worked 32 hours straight and the lowest guy put in 17 hours and that was because his loader died and there was nothing for him to do.

Allen suggests putting a message on the DPW answering machine letting people know when vehicles are down.

A discussion regarding recycling will be put on the Selectmen's agenda for February 23

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Town Administrators Report

- There is a meeting at the WPCF tomorrow at 10:00 A.M. with the company that has an alternative technology for sludge reduction and you are all invited to stop by if you have time.

- The Energy Committee has offered to help implement the ESCO and have offered to bring in an consultant that has been used in Northampton to advise us on this. A meeting has been scheduled for February 18th at 3:30 PM.

- I have a number of forms that need to be signed for the new block grant application for FY2009. The Chairman can sign the forms at the end of the meeting.

Allen makes the motion to sign where appropriate and the appropriate person signs where appropriate the Community Development Block Grant FY2009 application form. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye

- I received a letter from the Solid Waste Management District and apparently for the first 6 months we actually generated about \$12,955 in MRF revenues. It started well July through October then it fell drastically in November and December so they are only expecting about \$6,000 for the second half. Not bad considering a lot of the Towns are actually paying to get rid of their recycling.

Allen: I wondered too if this new revised bottle bill goes through and your returning all the water and others, there goes the recycling because your going to get money back.

- There will be a Landfill meeting next Tuesday at 7:00 PM in the upstairs meeting room.

Allen makes the motion to go into executive session for the purpose of Real Estate at 7:32 PM. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye