

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of January 3, 2011

Chairman Dick Gandt called the meeting to order at 7:30PM. Board members present, in addition to Chairman Gandt, were Martha Morrison, Nancy Luther, and Laura Powers. Eldon Goodhue was absent. Of the Selectmen's staff, Town Administrator Virginia Wilder and Board Secretary Donna Rich were in attendance. Other persons present during all or part of the meeting were Topsfield Cable Evelyn Hammond, resident Jeanine Cunniff and Boy Scout Alex Gharabegian.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Gandt announced that the Board would go into Executive Session at the end of regular session to discuss the Police Union Contract and the Fire Chief Contract and would not return to Open Session.

Chairman Gandt reminded citizens that Christmas trees may be dropped at the Highway Department Compost area between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM on Saturday, January 8th and Saturday, January 15th. There will no fee for Christmas tree drop-off.

Selectman Morrison announced that there would be a public hearing for T-Mobile's monopole on River Road by Fox Run on Wednesday, January 5th at the Town Library, not at the Town Hall as published on the website.

Chairman Gandt announced that Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) annual meeting would take place on January 21st and 22nd.

APPOINTMENTS:

7:30 –Chairman Gandt stated the nomination for the Housing Authority would be tabled and taken up at the next meeting on January 18th.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Old Business

New Class II Used Auto Dealers Licenses: Chairman Gandt stated that the application from Lawton Welding Company for a new Class II Used Auto Dealers was postponed until the applicant completes the special permit process through the Zoning Board of Appeals.

New Business

Review of the Interest Rates for Bonds: Chairman Gandt reviewed the current bond refunding. The Town has a 2001 bond that will go out to bid shortly; with interest rates presently at 2.7% the Board agreed that it was a great opportunity to take advantage of refunding. The Board thanked the Finance Team for their many hours of work to prepare for the refunding.

FY2012 Board of Selectmen Budgets Review: Chairman Gandt explained that the Board had met with several departments to review FY12 budgets prior to submission to the Finance Committee. The Chairman commented that most departments had stayed within the Finance Committee Guidelines of level funding. The Chairman commented on some issues that came up during these discussions: the Council on Aging requested the use of the transportation donation fund to pay the salary of the Friday van driver, as was done in FY11, Conservation Commission requested the use of the Wetland Revolving account to correct a salary error that occurred in FY09 and to include longevity, Inspection Department requested an increase in salary/wages to correct a salary error that occurred in FY09, Insurance budget for Workers Compensation was submitted at 0%, however would need to be revisited when actual data is known, Medical Coverage shows an estimate of 13% increase, Unemployment shows an estimated increase of 50%, MSW budget represents a contract increase of 4.8%, Recycling increased due to the

replenishment of trash stickers, Retirement budget increased 10%, Selectmen’s budget increased due to FiOS and contractual obligations and Town Hall decreased by 2.8%, Treasurer budget increased because of longevity and GASB45 and costs of Deputy Collector, which increases when tax bills are issued twice a year representing a 5.9% increase, Veterans Benefit budget increased 4%. Additionally, the Police Department submitted within the Finance Committee guidelines, however, Selectman Powers questioned the liability reduction training line-item, and the Fire Chief had just submitted a revised Fire Department budget. Therefore the Board decided to meet to review both Fire and Police budgets on January 6th at 1PM. Selectman Morrison made a motion to approve the Selectmen, Selectmen’s Special, Parking Clerk, Web & Cable, Town Accountant, Treasurer-Collector, Town Hall, School Street Building, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Ambulance, Inspectional Services, Sealer of Weights & Measures, Animal Control, Animal Inspector, Board of Health, MSW Collection, Recycling, Council on Aging, Veterans Benefits, Soldiers & Sailors Graves, Tree Department, Memorial/Veterans Day, Historical Commission, Retirement, Life/Medical/Medicare, Liability/Accident/Accident/Workers Compensation, and Unemployment FY12 budgets as presented, seconded by Selectman Powers; so voted: 4-0.

Scleroderma Walkathon: Selectman Morrison made a motion to allow the New England Chapter of the Scleroderma Foundation to conduct its Seventh Annual “North Shore Stepping out to Cure Scleroderma Walkathon” in Topsfield on Sunday, September 18, 2011 both the route and time of the event to be in accordance with the letter dated December 20, 2010 as filed with the minutes of this meeting, seconded by Selectman Powers; so voted: 4-0.

Liaison Reports

Selectman Powers reported that the Recreation Committee would be holding a yoga class for residents at Proctor School, Wednesday’s from 7PM -9PM, the class is for beginners to intermediate.

Selectman Luther reminded residents that tax bills have been mailed and are due February 1st. Selectman Morrison announced that the Open Space Plan was submitted to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, meeting the 2010 deadline.

Town Administrator’s Report:

- Updated Bonding status
- Reminder that Warrant is open and will close February 4th, Articles have been received
- Comcast negotiations – nothing new to report
- Union Negotiations update-
 - Police Union mediation is continuing
 - Union negotiations with the Highway/Water and Park & Cemetery Unions have begun,
 - Fire Fighters have submitted a letter of intent to negotiate a new union contract,
 - Reserve Police have indicated a desire to commence Union negotiations on a successor contract,
 - Call Firefighters have indicated they will wait for Department Liaison Selectman Goodhue to return before entering into negotiations, and
 - Dispatcher Union had submitted initial proposals via their Teamster representative Edward King.
- EMS Study recommendations were distributed; other towns involved are Ipswich, Rowley and Georgetown
- Public Health Regionalization update

Correspondence & Reports

Correspondence

Space Heater Safety Tips: Information received from the Office of the State Fire Marshall on the safe use of space heaters.

Warrants: The Selectmen signed and approved warrants in the amount of \$ **117,042.63**. The breakdown is as follows:

Warrant FY11:	
055T	\$ 79,223.56
056	\$ 37,819.07

At 8:20 PM, Selectmen Luther made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the Police Union contract and the Fire Chief Contract; seconded by Selectman Morrison. In a roll call vote, a yes vote was recorded for Chairman Gandt, Selectman Morrison, Selectman Luther, and Selectman Powers. The Board would not return to open session.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Rich, Secretary
Selectmen’s Office

Approved as amended at the February 14, 2011 Board of Selectmen’s meeting.

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law,' G.L. 39, § 23B, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.
