

JOINT MEETING OF DURHAM/MIDDLEFIELD BOARDS OF SELECTMEN AND BOARDS OF FINANCE

MINUTES

In attendance

Durham: Laura Francis, John Szewczyk, Fran Korn, Loraine Coe, Jay Berardino, Maryjane Malavasi  
Middlefield: Jon Brayshaw, Dave Lowry, Alice Malcolm, Jen Brown, Ellen Waff, Chris Gilbert, Paul Pizzo, Rebecca Adams

Jon Brayshaw called the meeting to order at 7:05 and led with the pledge of allegiance.

He started the meeting by stating both administrations are concerned with the current state of the economy and arranged this meeting to talk about ways in which they can help each other, commenting that there is no economy of scale in CT.

Laura Francis talked about the regionalization of some areas for cost sharing and the possible aid from the State of Connecticut to do so although she realizes residents may not embrace these ideas. She stated she would like to talk about specific areas to start researching and her goal for this meeting was to bring one item to budget this season.

This first item to be discussed was the Durham Middlefield Interlocal Agreement Advisory Board (DMIAAB). Areas of discussion were fees currently being charged and the potential for increased revenue, how each town assessed this budget item, and oversight. Paul Pizzo suggested researching what works and what doesn't in turn making this a model for other departments. Laura Francis suggested creating a task force. Maryann Corona suggested Geoff Colegrove and Bob Bascom, who organized the present facility, and the recycling coordinator from Middletown for the task force stating they can give background and oversight. Jon Brayshaw suggesting inviting DMIAAB members to a meeting of the Selectmen and Boards of Finance to better help both administrations understand the current operation. Others suggested to the taskforce were Bob Mataskiewicz, Dominic DelVecchio, John Szewczyk, and Ellen Waff.

The second item discussed was insurance. Rebecca Adams asked who the insurance carrier for the Town of Durham was. Maryjane Malavasi responded CIRMA which is a municipal pool, and through an informal bid process the Town of Durham received a \$20,000 savings on the town's LAP Policy for FY08-09. L. Francis stated Durham has also taken advantage of CIRMA's training opportunities, hosting two workshops and attending others. Jay Berardino suggested considering self insurance for health stating if you pooled employee insurance between both towns savings achieved would be surprising.

The third item discussed was the Health Director position. Dave Lowry talked about Health Districts and stated the decision that Durham makes will impact Middlefield and feels both town's need to plan together to make a good choice now; not a hasty decision later on. L. Francis talked about Durham's water system and how the town relies heavily on their town sanitarian. She also stated there may be barriers one being town meeting approval. D. Lowry suggested that J. Brayshaw and L. Francis talk to Killingworth, as all three towns are very similar. R. Adams commented she thought each town needed to do a cost analysis to see if there is an advantage to join or not making reference to RSD13. L. Francis agreed to research alternatives.

The fourth item discussed was Emergency Management. L. Francis spoke about meetings she has attended on Community Notification Systems with Durham's Emergency Management Director, Francis Willett and Middlefield's Charlie Ziemelski. She stated that pricing has been secured for both towns and Homeland Security Grants can be used for the initial cost but there will be maintenance costs going forward. She noted if Middlefield was interested she would arrange a joint meeting to see a demonstration on the systems.

The fifth item discussed was the Police Departments for each town. J. Brayshaw commented that Middlefield has a very competent force; one Resident State Trooper, two constables, and a secretary noting that these individuals have worked their way into the hearts of the families and children of Middlefield and is very pleased with this element. He continued by saying he feels both towns would

benefit by sharing these resources. L. Francis stated there was no doubt that Durham residents would like more coverage and asked Frank DeFelice to comment. F. DeFelice stated the Durham Public Safety Committee has looked at several options; integrating with Middlefield, hiring off schedule troopers, adding additional man hours, utilizing temporary duty officers, and constables. He commented that Middlefield was very well equipped but expensive and the time has come for Durham to look for additional coverage. He spoke about several elements, location being one topic because of the large area of coverage; North Branford to Middletown, reiterating a lot of considerations and agreed with the human element J. Brayshaw referred to. Maryann Corona cautioned the administrations stating she felt this should be very well thought out commenting that Durham is two times the size of Middlefield with potential for growth and this would be a very sensitive issue for residents since they have strong emotional attachments to the police officers. The legality of combining the two departments was questioned with L. Francis noting she knows of no precedent of multi town police departments. J. Berardino suggested seeking legal advice on multi town services and suggested CCM as a resource. Loraine Coe stated this was just a fact finding meeting to see what would benefit both towns. L. Francis stated she would consult with CCM.

The sixth item was Animal Control. J. Brayshaw talked about meetings he and L. Francis have attended in Middletown in reference to a regional animal control center. Jen Brown stated that Middlefield's current facility is not big enough and endorses combining with Durham but expressed concern about having to purchase a larger facility to accommodate both towns. L. Francis commented that grant money was available at the time meetings were being held on the regional center. John Szewczyk stated he felt both towns should have one officer and to start action on this now, not to wait. R. Adams stated she would work on an analysis.

The seventh item was Youth and Family Services. J. Brayshaw stated Middlefield has housed the Youth and Family Services for years. He talked about how the town is running into storage issues and they are looking at utilizing one of the rooms YFS currently uses. He stated there may come a time to look for a better location commenting that most participants are from Durham and his thought is that this program should be administered under the school system.

The eighth item discussed was the option and cost savings of going to bi-weekly payroll. L. Francis stated the Town of Durham is considering this as of January 1<sup>st</sup> with a cost savings of approximately \$1,200 for this fiscal year and \$2,600 for next fiscal year.

The ninth item to be discussed was Capital Equipment. J. Brayshaw talked about the sharing of equipment as being a very touchy subject. Jason from Middlefield's Public Works Department stated he felt equipment sharing would be ineffective; most heavy equipment is used at the same time during the seasons and the wear and tear on the machines would not be cost effective. L. Francis asked if items such as chip sealing and asphalt would be appropriate to share. Jason responded in the case of chip sealing the company that Middlefield hires does all the work, town employees do not participate in that process. L. Coe stated she felt sharing purchasing would make more sense. M. Corona talked about a prior committee called the Equipment Improvement Committee and how at the time, Fleet Bank rolled the towns together into a heavy duty bond which was very cost effective. She suggested the administrations talk to Terry Larson from Fleet Bank to see if this is still being offered.

The tenth item discussed was the Tax Assessor Department. L. Francis started the conversation stating she feels that Durham is overloaded with personnel in this department and feels the two towns could easily share an assessor. D. Lowry agreed stating this could be a one person full time position. Maryjane Malavasi also agreed with D. Lowry and commented this person should be able to handle both towns with support. There was round table discussion around revaluation cycles and checking with CIRMA about insurance issues.

Mathew Lesser stated he would talk to his contacts at the State Capital about the legalities of a merger of police departments and report back to both First Selectmen.

J. Brayshaw made a motion to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Moncata