

*Board of Selectmen's Meeting*  
7:00 p.m., Monday, June 15, 2009  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

*Joint Board and Commissions Meeting*

Meeting Minutes

Laura Francis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led with the pledge of allegiance.

Present: John Szewczyk, James McLaughlin, Bill Witecki, Laurie Stevens, Bob Fulton, Melissa Bates, Dick McManus, Jim Ledford, Scott Wright, Roger Kleeman, Jay Berardino, Martin Anderson, Martin French, Stu Keating, Kim Garvis, Alicia Fonash-Willett, George Eames III, Casey Cordes, Ralph Chase, Jane Eriksen, Dick Eriksen, Ray Bahr, Bill Milardo, Ralph Chase, Peter Casini, Lainey Melvin, Sherry Hill, Harry Hall, Francis Willett, Stephanie Wilcox - Town Times.

L. Francis welcomed and thanked everyone for budget constraints and talked about next years challenges. She then started the meeting stating three main objectives she wanted to cover in a round table discussion.

- 1.) Cost saving measures that boards/commissions/committees/department heads instituted this budget year.
- 2.) Other measures to create efficiencies and savings.
- 3.) The importance of shovel ready projects; major capitol improvements that could be happening that the town may not have funding for but could be prepared to make ready if and when some funding does become available.

Item #1 - Cost saving measures or revenue enhancements that have been instituted this budget year.

Kim Garvis, Town Clerk talked about her office negotiating with current vendors for contracted services stating she was able to get pricing reductions on software, land record audit, and website provider services. She also noted the department was printing in house referendum ballots instead of sending them out.

Bill Milardo, Town Sanitarian stated new fees have been instituted for barbershops, hairdressing and cosmetology, sale of food or beverage, and child day care.

L. Francis stated the Recreation Program instituted a nominal fee for the summer program.

Lainey Melvin, Senior Board stated they were increasing fees for art classes next year.

Dick McManus, Building Inspector stated that building permit fees have been increased commenting that the increase was not excessive and still very competitive. He also talked about free or low cost training opportunities.

Stuart Keating suggested increasing the DMIAAB sticker fee and sharing surplus supplies with departments.

Jane Eriksen, Library Board of Trustees stated the Library saved money in energy; instituted a policy where nothing is turned on until 10:00 am and all unused doors are kept shut. She also noted the Library just went through an energy audit.

Francis Willett, Emergency Management talked about the importance of seeking grant funding.

Martin French, Tax Collector cautioned that if the town continues to scale back it will eventually cost the town money especially in the technology and building maintenance areas.

Harry Hall, Fire Chief talked about the public safety groups; fire, ambulance, and emergency management, working together very closely to share resources.

Scott Wright, Ambulance Corp spoke about lean budgets and being faced with having to spend extra dollars at the end of the budget year for unexpected expenses. He also talked about the availability of free software to 501c3 entities.

## #2 - Other measures to create efficiencies and savings

Harry Hall questioned the ability to work in conjunction with the school system on the purchasing of supplies and services. L. Francis commented that the Town may be able to look into areas such as road and field maintenance, and snowplowing budgets.

H. Hall also asked if the Board of Finance has looked into leasing vs buying. L. Francis confirmed that this has been put into practice. Martin French suggested expanding the Towns ability to analyze costs for contracts and services within departments.

L. Francis responded to M. French's statement by saying that she is working with Finance Director, Maryjane Malavasi on performance measures and a fiscal policy which would involve all departments where revenue is involved.

Bob Fulton, Ethics Commission asked what initiatives could be brought to the legislature. L. Francis stated that towns have asked for relief in the form of mandates. L. Francis responded that she is happy to go to Hartford to lobby but needs help from all departments.

R. McManus asked for clarification on the relationship between the school district and the town. L. Francis said the school district is a quasi governmental body; while some towns are now controlling the maintenance of all buildings.

S. Keating talked about RSD13 binding arbitration and thought the Town should come together to put pressure on the legislature because the schools are draining the towns. L. Francis responded that CCM and COST has put binding arbitration on their agenda every year and noted it has been very difficult for them. She also noted these two organizations have also brought up medical costs. Roger Kleeman commented that the town's people are happy with the RSD13 budget making reference to voting statistics. He also commented that he thought instead of eliminating brush collection the Town should consider hiring or outsourcing it.

Casey Cordes, Conservation Commission asked if the Town participated in Health Savings Accounts. L. Francis stated yes, the Town offers three different plans (required by the Union) one being a Health Savings Account. She noted that employees are hesitant to participate but she felt more would elect the HSA due to increased premiums for insurance and offering a reduced HSA premium as an incentive. John Szweczyk asked if the Finance Director has done a self insuring analysis. L. Francis responded that she felt she would need more expertise in this area to do the analysis. S. Wright asked if CCM could pool smaller towns together for cost savings. L. Francis said they have not for healthcare, but the town has been involved with CCM on the energy side.

B. Milardo offered the suggestion of the sale of unused surplus equipment and the creation of a needs list per department.

## #3 The importance of shovel ready projects; major capitol improvements that could be happening that the town may not have funding for but could be prepared to make ready if and when some funding does become available

K. Garvis stated the Town Hall will need new servers and technology upgrades. There was discussion on the inadequacy of the closet that houses the servers in the town; not secure, not clean, and ventilation is not adequate. There also was discussion of whether the ambulance building in the next 3 - 5 years could house all the towns' technology.

R. Kleeman offered the suggestion of a records management program.

Other areas discussed were:

- Compliance with DEP Stormwater at the Public Works Facility
- Facility Management
- Infrastructure; culverts, bridges, and guardrails
- Water from Middletown

Ray Bahr, Water Commission commented that the town should entertain the question of whether or not it wants to be in the water business noting long term risks with only 110 customers, costly testing and unexpected expenses. L. Francis talked about the connection to Middletown and the findings of the feasibility study that Middletown did not have enough water. She stated the contract has been extended to study two more sources of water in Middletown.

J. Eriksen commented that the Library roof needs to be repaired; steps are crumbling in areas, the ceilings need painting and noted she is very pleased with the facility management system that is being proposed.

H. Hall questioned what would happen if the town lost its top tax holder in town. L. Francis commented that the Town is losing businesses and the need to really look into this and how a residential home, recently a top tax holder, came before the Board of Assessment Appeals.

L. Francis concluded the round table discussion and asked for a brief update from the Boards and Commission members that were in attendance.

Sherry Hill, Recreation Commission stated they will be taking a walking tour of the Howd Road property to see if there is a potential for hiking and biking trails.

Casey Cordes, Conservation Commission stated they are focusing on working to improve management on current properties.

Francis Willett, Emergency Management stated he received two bids for the Coginchaug Emergency Power Modification and that both came in well below dollars budgeted. He has been attending H1N1 meetings. He expressed his disappointment over Middlefield choosing not to fund the Safer Emergency Notification Program and stated he will be looking for additional grant money to cover this expense. He talked about the Durham Animal Response Team being a great program and the launching of the Ready Durham Program.

Harry Hall, Fire Chief stated the volunteer department reached their 103<sup>rd</sup> call over the weekend for the year and noted his appreciation for a very strong group of Explorers. The department is down one officer who is serving his country and he talked about the constant challenge to get volunteers to step up to calls. He also talked about a scheduled meeting between Public Safety Departments and Senior Citizens to share what services they had to offer them that had very low attendance. L. Francis commented that she would like to work on getting more information out to our residents.

Scott Wright, stated the Volunteer Ambulance Corp reached their 198<sup>th</sup> call for the year over the weekend; covering all calls since October 2007, 6% were mutual aid calls because of only having one ambulance. He talked about surrounding towns spending up to \$145,000 a year for daytime coverage 6:00-6:00. He also talked about the condition of the ambulance building and is hopeful that something will come out of the architects study.

George Eames, Planning & Zoning Commission stated because of the economy things have been pretty quiet. On Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> the large animal crematory will be on their agenda and if this goes through it will generate additional tax revenue to the town.

Bill Milardo, Town Sanitarian stated that Hobson Motzer is close to finishing their addition and sales on homes are starting in the \$180-\$300,000 dollar range noting there have been many contingencies written into the sales of these homes with septic and sewer systems.

Dick Eriksen, Inland Wetlands Commission talked about many residents coming before the board due to recent rains with undersize culverts looking for relief. They have directed some residents to speak to the Board of Selectmen, others to the Town Engineer and offered some waivers. The commission has also reviewed major projects with Kurt Bober and commented on what a great job he is doing with what little resources he has available.

Dick McManus, Building Inspector stated permit activity is up for detached buildings, additions and some large homes with very complicated systems. He felt that people are very optimistic.

Laura Stevens, Board of Assessment Appeals stated that a number of issues that have come before the board had to do with water issues; due to the result of road work over the years and adjacent properties.

Bob Fulton, Ethics Commission said the commission is two meetings away from completing the draft of Code of Ethics. The next steps would be to send it off to the Town Attorney for review, entertain another commission meeting to review those results, schedule a Public Hearing, and then send to Board of Selectmen to review and approve. L. Francis asked if he thought this would be ready as an agenda item for the Annual Town Meeting. He responded yes.

Jane Eriksen, Library Board of Trustees talked about the increase in statistics within the Library contributing this to the economy. She also stated that the renovation project is complete and thanked all contributors and volunteers. Work will begin on a memorial garden in the next week at no cost to the town; she noted that the Public Works department helped with clearing.

Melissa Bates, Durham Library stated they are very busy. They are getting ready for the Summer Reading Program which is funded through PALS; they have talked to students at schools to encourage attendance.

Lainey Melvin, Senior Board stated they have been working with Scott Wright to compile basic facts for seniors noting the first meeting did not work due to mis-information in the paper or maybe poor timing. The Board is working with District 13 to host more senior programs; the computer program was very successful. L. Francis commented on looking into tax breaks for seniors who volunteer.

Peter Cascini, Economic Development stated they are alive and well and are in the process of putting together "Discover Durham". They will be inviting all businesses and service providers to present products and services to the community. The Durham Fair Association has offered a building for the event which will be held sometime in October. They will not only be inviting Durham residents but other communities as well.

Martin Anderson, Compensation Review - Personnel Policy Commission. The commission has been working on a policy manual, assisted in finding free or inexpensive training opportunities, and is working on benchmarking.

Jay Berardino, Board of Finance stated their next meeting is June 23<sup>rd</sup> and they could be voting on setting the mill rate at this time. The Board is in the process of trying to compile building maintenance; they have recommended the purchase of a purchase order system and have asked for energy audits. He noted he has not given up on self insurance.

Martin French, Tax Collector clarified the steps that would need to be taken in order to get the tax bills out due to the short timing involved; this entails about 3 weeks. Once the bills are mailed tax payers have 30 days from the date mailed to pay.

Kim Garvis, Town Clerk said they have been very busy with dog licensing and noted that revenue has picked up. She talked about current grant money received that she used to purchase space saving

shelving, a locking vitals cabinet and additional minute books; grant money applied for the next fiscal year, if awarded, will be used to back-file deed images to match the computerized index which goes back to 1967. She also talked about the possibility of COTT offering the e-Commerce Module for free to the Town; there would be potential of getting full revenue for copies vs sharing revenue with a vendor who provides a copy machine free of charge. At the spring CTCA (Connecticut Town Clerks' Association) conference, Town Clerk, Kim Garvis, received a 100 hour continuing education certificate through Central Connecticut State University Center for Public Policy and Social Research. Conversion to the new land record and fee system took place mid-May and both the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk completed training on this new system, Korn School grade 3 students will be making their annual visit to the Town Hall this week, the Rabies clinic was very successful; 100 cats & dogs were vaccinated and 54 dog licenses were renewed. She thanked Alicia and Francis Willett and also Bruce and Marty Rau for all their help. Intern interviews will be scheduled in the coming weeks and she asked everyone to go out and vote at the next referendum.

John Szewczyk echoed L. Francis remarks and thanked everyone for cutbacks commenting that the end results were good.

James McLaughlin talked about the Board of Selectmen from both Middlefield and Durham meeting with the high school students about local government and noted that they are anxious to learn. He noted that Durham is a volunteer town and the Selectmen are trying to encourage the students to volunteer. He also stated he would like to bring Chairmen from Boards and Public Safety volunteers over to talk to the students as well and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Jim Ledford, Fire Company Board of Trustees stated they are trying to fix the building up a little at a time and noted the young Explorers are great to have around and are very knowledgeable.

H. Hall noted that the Fire Department will be hosting a Hazardous Waste drill on Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at 201 Main Street.

L. Francis thanked everyone for coming and asked that everyone share their ideas and to communicate them. The next joint meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2010 and she asked everyone to attend the Special Town Meeting, June 22<sup>nd</sup> to support the Agriculture Ordinance.

MOTION BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN SECONDED BY LAURA FRANCIS TO ADJOURN MEETING AT 9:00 P.M. ALL AYE

Respectfully submitted:

Beth Moncata