

**Town of Mansfield
Board of Selectmen
Minutes of January 7, 2009**

Present: Chairman Sandra Levine, Vice Chairman Ann Baldwin, Clerk Kevin Moran, Selectman George Dentino, Selectman Jess Aptowitz, John D'Agostino, Town Manager

Board reorganization

Motion: To nominate Ann Baldwin as Chairman. (Dentino/Aptowitz) 5:0 passes

Motion: To nominate Kevin Moran as Vice Chairman. (Levine) 3:2 passes

Motion: To nominate Jess Aptowitz as Vice Chairman. (Dentino)

Motion: To nominate Jess Aptowitz as Clerk. (Baldwin) 3:2 passes

Motion: To nominate George Dentino as Clerk. (Aptowitz)

After the Board of Selectmen reorganized a general budget discussion ensued.

Selectman Aptowitz expressed the need for a vehicle policy but was not sure in what form. He also asked Mr. D'Agostino for a brief update on the budget development process. The Town Manager will develop a policy that deals with departmental cuts if so necessary.

Selectman Dentino again expressed his feelings on the need to control the salaries and benefits of employees as union contracts are the biggest issue the budget faces.

FinComm Chairman Gazzolo stated that he has spoken with Mr. D'Agostino and Mr. Hart about the budget issues the town is facing. The FinComm budget subcommittee will also be advising the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen very soon as they are looking at a deficit of approximately \$150 thousand to \$250 thousand.

More budget numbers will be coming out from the state mid January and he will be meeting with the town manager and accountant; both of whom will be tracking expenses closely.

Executive session will be scheduled for January 21st to discuss union contract negotiations.

Vehicle Policy discussion

Lee Azinheira, DPW Director was present.

Selectman Moran gave a brief overview of what he would like to see in regards to a car policy as he has received a lot of input/suggestions from dept. heads. Now he is looking for assistance from the board in relation to crafting a final document.

Selectmen Aptowitz and Dentino suggested perhaps they might wait until union contracts have been negotiated. The use of vehicles is a bargaining point that could change the policy so the board may want to wait to formalize a policy.

Selectman Moran had previously suggested that the board leave the policy as is and change the use of cars allotted to personnel upon their departure/transfer from job.

Mr. D'Agostino stated that perhaps they could use the vehicle policy as a tool or guide in regards to contract negotiations. There are two issues addressed within the proposed vehicle policy. The use of town vehicles and who (job position) is using them.

Chairman Baldwin would like the board to review the policy and perhaps vote on it next week.

Professional development/education

Selectman Dentino feels it was uncalled for that staff be rallied to come to the Selectmen's meeting to bombard the board with needs and wants. He did not appreciate the fact the he was told the public would not only suffer but people may die due to a restrictive education/travel policy. Selectman Aptowitz concurred that he too did not appreciate being bombarded by staff emails and would like the town manager to assist the dept heads in reigning in costs.

Selectman Dentino also asserted that every item of the budget needs to be reviewed for savings including the MMED/Sewer Dept. expense lines.

Mr. D'Agostino explained how while this is true the board really needs to focus on how the town is going to save on big ticket items such as health care costs. That's where the big money savings will come from and the board would be better served doing such.

Selectman Moran stated that the previous professional development was voted as is with one exception. It should have been cleaned up prior to dissemination but it was voted and immediately noticed that it still needed additional tweaking in order to make it workable.

Selectman Levine continued the discussion with the fact that she was in support of department heads and staff coming to the meeting to express their concerns. Many of them are town residents in addition to being professionals that want to keep up to date with training and education in order to help them serve their town.

She also stated that grant funded programs should be excluded from the policy as they pay for themselves.

Weekly Business

- Warrant No. 27B in the amount of \$662,045.37
Motion: Approved (Aptowitz/Levine) 5:0 passes
- Warrant No. 28A in the amount of \$1,472,895.11
Motion: Approved (Aptowitz/Levine) 5:0 passes
- Common Victual license renewal from Cold Stone Creamery.
Motion: (Aptowitz/Moran) 5:0 passes
- Board and committee renewal application from Peter DeTrolio.
Motion: Approve (Aptowitz/Moran) 5:0 passes
- Constable renewal applications from:
 - D. Marie Smith **Motion:** To approve (Aptowitz/Moran) 5:0 passes
 - Daniel Dalton **Motion:** To approve (Aptowitz/Moran) 5:0 passes
 - James Corey **Motion:** To approve (Aptowitz/Moran) 5:0 passes
- Drainlayer license applications from:
 1. Brunelle Contracting : **Motion:** To approve (Levine/Aptowitz) 5:0 passes
 2. Ferrara Construction **Motion:** To approve (Levine/Aptowitz) 5:0 passes
 3. J.H Lynch & Sons **Motion:** To approve (Levine/Aptowitz) 5:0 passes
 4. Plainville Pump & Excavating **Motion:** To approve (Levine/Aptowitz) 5:0 passes
 5. SLT Construction Corp **Motion:** To approve (Dentino/Aptowitz) 5:0 passes
 6. Kenny Jones Corp **Motion:** To approve (Aptowitz/Dentino) 5:0 passes

Correspondence

- Copy of Second Place winner essay from Adam Birmingham. (in the Bristol County VFW's contest in which there were over 900 entries.) **FYI...** this was given to me by a member of the VFW and he said Adam was a Mansfield boy from St. Mary's School in N. Easton. I could not find any Birmingham's in the street directory.
- Email from Al Keyworth, Elm St. suggesting the town reduce salaries/benefits before cutting services as his company has done.
- Letter of invitation from Rep. Barrows regarding a presentation by "Operation Lifesaver" on Tuesday, January 20th at 7pm at the library. This is a forum to highlight the importance of rail safety education. Ed O'Connor, State Coordinator for Operation Lifesaver, will be on hand to make the presentation as well as answer any questions the public may have.
- Email from John and Therese Campbell, Samoset Ave. In summary they are quite disturbed that the board voted to remove Mrs. Levine as Chairman. They also expressed dismay over the board decision to hire a lawyer to review the TM's contract while asking everyone else not to spend money.
- Letter from the VFW Post 3264 announcing the upcoming Institution and Installation of a Ladies Auxiliary as part of our Post. The ceremonies will take place on Sunday, January 11th at 1pm. We would be honored if you would join us.
- Letter from Richard Gordon, West St. He is also quite upset over the removal of Chairman Levine and has requested that his letter be read in its entirety.

Town Manager report

Dispatcher classification discussion has been postponed quite some time. Mr. D'Agostino will gather the information again and have it ready for next week.

42 million dollars of requests were detailed that may or may not be provided for in the governors stimulus package request.

Overview of budget message and comparison of FY10 level funded budget vs. 5% reduction. Mr. D'Agostino feels that the 5% reduction budget is a more realistic one and depending on what comes from the Governor they may need to cut further.

The budget message in addition to the forecasted budgets will be posted on the town website later this week.

Questions and Comments

Pam Gagnon, Gladiola Terrace. Happy New Years to all and thank you to all of the board members that voted for reorganization last week.

Questions about how Chairman Levine obtained her email to Selectman Aptowitz. The freedom of information act does not allow for certain interceptions of mail to government officials. She is requesting that this be looked into and acted on upon immediately. She expects an explanation, policy formulated and apology from Chairman Levine by February 1, 2009.

Julie Novio, Plowshare Ct. Questions and professional development and payment of dues of employees. She feels that these benefit the employee more than the town.

Mary Barton Rau: still looking for future agenda/past stuff addressed list. One will be published on the web and in the bos packets on a weekly business going forward. The bos has used one for quite a while and will share what it can with the public on a regular basis.

Mike Whitney: wanted to let the bos know of areas of industry that are experiencing severe losses and cutbacks. He suggests that the town may have to utilize those cost cutting measures as well.

Selectmen's Old & New Business

- Old business from Chairman Levine: Questions about changes at the Shell Station on the corner of Rt. 106 and N. Main St. They are changing owners and renewing fire/flammables certifications.

Has the date of visit to Franklin been scheduled yet? No, it will be soon though.

- Old business from Selectman Dentino: Many questions regarding the way the streets are being plowed. He has received many calls on this. The plow drivers are not following the town plowing policy and he believes that there must be a more efficient way to handle this. Mr. D'Agostino will look into it with Mark Cook.
- Old business for Selectman Moran: Questions about the approval of Tyco Valve TIF from the state. They have been approved and moving forward soon.

Follow up on statement made last week by Ellen Whitney regarding the posting of agendas. The meeting needs to be posted 48 hours prior but the agenda does not have to be posted at all.

Condolences to the McCue family in regards to their sons passing. Matthew McCue was a very popular Eagle Scout whose life was cut short by cancer at a young age.

- Old business from Selectman Aptowitz: Questions about financial matters regarding the value of vehicles in relation to employee compensation. In addition; quarterly budget stats should be updated on the website. Mr. D'Agostino will follow up. Prepared statement read about selectmen being harassed and assaulted at the last meeting. An explanation of why he supports an RFP process was also read.
- Old business from Selectman Baldwin: Would like follow up on how much the town was reimbursed for John's auto accident. (old one)
- New business from Selectman Baldwin: **Motion:** Vote to amend BOS policy. 7pm start and 10:30pm end. (Aptowitz/Levine) 4:1 passes
- New business from Selectman Aptowitz: More discussion on snow plowing and removal from sidewalks.
- New business from Selectman Dentino: Mathew McCue was a 20 year old eagle scout who died too young and gave back so much to the town and he will be greatly missed.

Selectman Dentino would also like his town email disabled and have his home email address published on the website. He does not want his email communications to go through the town server. There was a brief discussion as to if this can be done.

- New business from Selectman Moran: None
- New business from Chairman Levine: None

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn at 10:00 PM
(Aptowitz) 5-0 **Passes**

Jess Aptomity
Signature of Clerk

February 25, 2009
Date of Approval