

**Town of Mansfield
Board of Selectmen
Minutes of September 2, 2009**

Present: Chairman Baldwin, Vice Chairman Moran, Clerk Jess Aptowitz, Selectman Sandra Levine, Selectman Dentino, Nick Riccio, Interim Town Manager

Executive Session

Motion: To adjourn to executive session to discuss contract negotiations with union personnel. (Aptowitz/Levine) 5:0 passes

Roll call vote: Chairman Baldwin, Vice Chairman Moran Selectman Dentino aye, Selectman Aptowitz aye, Selectman Levine aye. 5:0 passes

Town Engineer position

John Sullivan, Town Engineer; Rick Alves, Assistant Town Engineer and Lee Azinheira, DPW Director are present for meeting.

Mr. Sullivan explained the structure of the department and the future needs of the town that will necessitate the need for a new town engineer.

Mr. Alves provided a recap of the dept. activities over the past year. Over the past 12-18 months the dept. has responded to over 20 major projects that have come to their attention or needed to be addressed in the near future.

Mr. Azinheira explained to the board how the Engineering Dept. is funded. The costs associated with this dept. are shared with the Sewer and Water Depts. enterprise accounts.

Selectman Aptowitz did not see any difference in which way the dept. is funded. Either general fund or by enterprise accounts, the taxpayer and rate payer are still paying.

Mr. Azinheira stated that this is correct, however reducing staff would inevitably increase consulting costs and the town loses the continuity of having the same person handle the issues. (loss of institutional knowledge, that is critical in many cases).

Selectman Levine also had questions about the costs associated with the use of consultants.

Selectman Aptowitz maintained that the town may end up spending more in the long run by hiring another engineer with ongoing health and pension costs that go along with the labor costs.

Selectman Moran echoed that we need to be cognizant of hiring personnel, however engineering is an important dept. in which to keep manpower up. They are one of the depts. that have feet on the ground and keep the town infrastructure up.

Selectman Dentino has done a survey from towns around the area and many do not have full time engineers. They share positions with planning, DPW, conservation, etc.

However, Mr. Sullivan has his own survey data that reflects many towns not only have one full time engineer but two. A town the size of Mansfield with all the development and projects we have requires maintenance by staff. Even state work by MA Highway needs a lot of planning and prep work done by the engineering dept.

Selectman Dentino stated that Dam work is done with consultants before bridge work is done by MA Highway. Mr. Sullivan responded that preliminary engineering work is required by the dept. before those projects are done by the prospective consultant/MA Highway.

Selectman Dentino continued that the town needs to do more with less. Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Alves are excellent engineers but the town needs to conserve resources in this slumping economy.

Mr. Sullivan again responded that while some towns do not have full time engineering staff, many do and towns the size of Mansfield not only do, but some have more. The Town of Mansfield has a waste water plant and an I& I program that many do not have to support as we do. Mansfield is in good shape presently. Without the Engineering Department staff working on further developments on current projects, the town will begin to suffer and backslide. It's great to do more with less however, without engineering staff you will get less.

Selectman Moran stated that the town is gambling with its future either way. However, he does feel that this dept. needs to be staffed and services maintained.

Mr. Azinheira is not comfortable with absorbing the engineering dept. within his dept. There are a lot of projects going on in DPW and Engineering and he does not feel that he or his dept. can adequately tend to both. Services to the town will suffer without a full engineering dept.

The Board of Selectmen and the town manager wished Mr. Sullivan the best of luck in his retirement and thanked him for his many years of service.

Motion: That we keep at least one engineer in the dept. (Levine) withdrawn

Motion: That we have Mr. Sullivan post and recruit the position of Town Engineer. (Moran/Levine) 2:3 fails. (Baldwin, Aptowitz, Dentino nay)

Mr. Sullivan stated that the town charter states that certain positions be filled "forth-with". The Town Engineer is one of those positions.

Motion: To not fill the position at this time. (Dentino/Aptowitz) 2:1:2 (Levine nay, Baldwin, Moran abstain)

Chairman Baldwin asked Mr. Sullivan if he would agree that if Mr. Alves stayed on in his current position, we roll town engineer into DPW and increase the secretary back to full time, if that would be sufficient. Mr. Sullivan responded no, the dept. needs engineers and DPW is already stretched thin.

Selectman Aptowitz and Chairman Baldwin are not certain that going with a DPW consolidation wouldn't work. There is a hiring freeze in place and its there for a reason.

Selectman Moran expanded upon the rationale behind his motion and further explained that even in the private sector strategic hiring is happening. Selectman Dentino still does not agree with the need and does not support the replacement of the Town Engineer.

Selectman Moran stated that the industrial park is located in a prime location for future growth but it is old and, without proper staffing, revitalization will not be possible.

Asia Grill & Sushi liquor hearing

Bobby Lau and his Attorney Charles Mulcahy were present for meeting. Clerk Aptowitz read the public hearing notice into record.

This restaurant is proposed for Mansfield Marketplace on School St. across from Mansfield Crossing. Mr. Lau gave a brief recap of his history in the restaurant business and his vision for this upcoming restaurant.

Selectman Dentino had questions about parking at the Mansfield Marketplace. Mr. Riccio stated that the restaurant would be located in a mixed use mall where parking is ample.

Selectman Aptowitz asked in Mr. Lau had signed a lease and yes he has signed one for 10 years.

Selectman Levine and Chairman Baldwin did not have any questions and wished the best of luck.

Motion: To close public hearing. (Moran/Aptowitz) 5:0 passes

Motion: To approve license for Asia Grill and Sushi. (Aptowitz/Moran) 5:0 passes

FinComm presentation

Chairman Gazzolo gave a brief recap of the FY10 budget. Revenues are in a shortfall however it is small (about \$30k)

Exposures are undetermined at this time. 9C cuts are also key in formulating a budget.

The state budget is in an even greater shortfall so we cannot count on government stimulus funds in the future. The schools will have to make cuts for FY11, we just don't know how much.

Selectman Moran and Mr. Riccio have talked about the possibility of a 5% reduction in expenditures starting in the second quarter. Without reserves and an uncertain revenue stream, we need to restrict spending.

Even so, the town manager will be given the discretion to determine how to control spending and when to approve expenditures when warranted.

Mr. Ratcliff gave a recap on the study that FinComm did on ambulance utilization. In the long run it will cost the town more to privatize ambulance service than to keep it in-house. The costs of ambulances will be incurred by the town but the cost savings generated by ambulance receipts balance it out.

Mr. Lazzara provided an overview of what they have been analyzing in regards to health care costs.

FinComm is also looking at cutting back MIS/GIS programs for possible savings.

Selectman Aptowitz stated that the five year budget forecast is usually done by the town manager and the town accountant with the assistance of FinComm. However, as we do not have either at this moment, FinComm has taken on a bigger role in providing this function.

He further stated that union negotiations being completed are critical for the town so we can appropriately budget for not only this year but next. We are trying to get the school and municipal contracts onto the same cycle.

Selectman Levine has issue with FinComm conducting their own health insurance committee. She would like them to collect the data and bring it directly to the Selectmen as a whole. Selectman Aptowitz has been involved in the FinComm health insurance activities and will brief the bos.

Q&C

None

Weekly Business

- **This week:**

Warrant No. 10009PT in the amount of \$301,204.15

Motion: To approve. (Aptowitz/Levine) 4:0:1 passes (Dentino abstain)

Warrant No. 10009TV in the amount of \$82,730.30

Motion: To approve. (Aptowitz/Levine) 5:0 passes

Warrant No. 10009PS in the amount of \$201,597.83

Motion: To approve. (Aptowitz/Levine) 5:0 passes

Warrant No. 10009SV in the amount of \$51,184.88

Motion: To approve. (Aptowitz/Levine) 5:0 passes

Warrant No. 10009T in the amount of \$1,225,695.44

Motion: To approve. (Aptowitz/Levine) 5:0 passes

Warrant No. 10009E in the amount of \$16,752.31

Motion: To approve. (Aptowitz/Moran) 4:0:1 Levine abstain

- Request for water installers license from P. Beatty Excavation.

Motion: To approve. (Aptowitz/Levine) 5:0 passes

- Executive Session Minutes 2007

Motion: To approve. (Levine/Dentino) 3:0:2 passes (Moran/Aptowitz abstain)

- Executive Session Minutes January - May 2008

Motion: To approve. (Levine/Dentino) 3:0:2 passes (Moran/Aptowitz abstain)

- Executive Session Minutes May - December 2008

Motion: To approve. (Levine/Moran) 5:0 passes

October 10, 2008 Executive Session minutes with Eric Hart

Motion: To approve but not release due to personnel items. (Moran/Levine) 4:0:1 Dentino abstain

- Executive Session Minutes 2009 hold for atty. review before release.

Motion: To extend meeting to 11pm. (Aptowitz/Dentino) 4:1 passes (Levine nay)

Correspondence

- Letter from John Sullivan regarding license fees to the MBTA that the town did not have to pay due to the diligence of the engineering staff.
- Email from Keith Purrier regarding Atty. Mangiaratti advice not to release Mr. D'Agostino's performance evaluation.
- Email from Elizabeth McWhirk, Paula Lane resident, regarding making Mansfield a more pedestrian friendly town. She would also like to see more stores locate downtown.
- Letter from John Hogan, Veterans Agent. The Mansfield Historical Society is proposing to add a small star next to the names of those who died in service on the Keach Memorial. This would not cost the town anything but bos approval is needed.
Motion: To approve. (Levine/Aptowitz) 5:0 passes
- Invitation to Kick off meeting of the Mansfield Chapter of Stand for Children on September 15th 7pm at the Mansfield Library.
- Letter from DHCD regarding the approval of our Housing Production Plan.

Town Managers Report

- We hired Elizabeth Leidhold to be the new conservation agent. She will be starting Tuesday.
- Affordable Housing update. The group has become inactive and we need to revitalize it with new membership. Selectman Levine suggested that we post descriptions of the goals and responsibilities of various committees on the web.

Post copy of acts of 2006 for Housing Corp. on web as well. IDC needs members and info on web as well.

- Meeting with Seekonk Board of Selectmen for regional symposium on current issues such as collective bargaining, health insurance issues and others. Chairman Baldwin called for a volunteer to go. However, we meet the same night so we will request a CD of the meeting.
- Mr. Riccio received letter back from Registry of Motor Vehicles that the Registry Express will not be coming to No. Attleboro as discussed.

Selectmen's Old & New Business

- Old business from Selectman Levine: None
- Old business from Selectman Dentino: Update on RFP for town counsel. Mr. Riccio stated the Board has not moved forward on this yet. He was waiting for board input and will now go forward and advertise in Beacon.
- **Motion:** Requests to work at home need to be routed through the town manager and notification to the bos. (Dentino/Aptowitz) 4:1 passes (Levine nay)

Selectman Levine was concerned that this motion would be the bos making policy for the town manager. This is an administrative policy that the town manager is responsible for making.

- Old business from Selectman Aptowitz: TM search is ongoing and Slavin is reviewing resumes to forward to group. The town accountant interviews are scheduled for next week.
- New business from Selectman Moran: Kudos to the fire dept. for their handling of the airplane crash on Rt. 495 a few days ago.
- Old business from Chairman Baldwin: Torres report is still under review.
- New business from Chairman Baldwin: None
- New business from Selectman Aptowitz: The lock box issue has been somewhat resolved. Sale of Fales Oil property, he would like to see it off the books. Mr. Riccio will look into the possibilities. Selectman Dentino does not feel that this is the time to sell as the market is soft.

- New business from Selectman Dentino: Dead trees need to be removed from Memorial Park. The poor lighting at Hutcheson ball fields need to be addressed. Litter at Memorial Park has become an issue as well.
- New business from Selectman Moran: None
- New business from Selectman Levine: Thanks to all the personnel that handled the airplane incident. The fire dept. also did a great job handling a large fire in town this afternoon as well.

Adjournment

Motion: Adjourn at 10:56pm (Moran) 5-0 Passes

Jess Aptomity
Signature of Clerk

October 7, 2009
Date of Approval