

Selectboard Minutes October 9, 2024

The meeting was opened at 6:30 PM, by Ann Marie Visconti, Chair, with Curt Robie and Tamarin Laurel-Paine, members also present. Sean Curran, Town Administrator and Mark Doane, Administrative Assistant were also in attendance.

Multiple Town residents were also present: Adair Laurel-Cafarella, Kenneth Murray, Maureen Longobardi, Alfonso Longobardi, Doanld Trask, Karri Trask, Louise Harlow, Judy Hoag, and Susan Schneller.

The warrants were signed, the minutes of the September 25, 2024 minutes were signed off on, and no mail was necessary to review. The Presidential Election Warrants were signed, an invoice from McFarland office products was ordered to be paid, and the septic permit for Michael Brighentti was signed off on.

There was no public input offered.

Sean Curran reported that the position of Town Accountant has been posted on the Massachusetts Municipal Association website, in the Country Journal, the Treasurer/Tax Collector Association, and on the Town Website. Sean reported that one candidate has applied, however, it is for doing the position remotely. Lynne from the Town of Washington continues to assist Middlefield as a Consultant Accountant. Sean will contact Kershner Accounting Firm and invite them to participate in the October 23, 2024 Selectboard meeting. Kirsten Henshaw, Town Treasurer and Mary Ann Pease, Tax Collector will also be present. Sean also put in for the Community Compact Grant for a dump compactor, as well as for design, engineering, and cement pad work. He is requesting \$100,000.00.

Ann Marie Visconti reported that she attended a public health meeting . It was for Emergency Management as well as Public Health. Ann Marie also reported all three Selectboard members attended a Legislative Breakfast in Ludlow. Questions were raised about the upgrade of Police radios to the 800-band width. It was reported that the State is not funding those needs, but due to cost to Towns, the State is discussing payment options. Ann also met with Jim from the Department of Environmental Protection, Wayne Suriner, Skip Savery, and Linda Cernak. A new design will be looked at for the transfer station secondary to having received the Wetland Delineation Report, as well as the boundary report. Ann reported that the Town will have to look at options with the Conservation Commission. Ann doesn't like the idea of townspeople having to go up and down stairs for recycling items. Ann reported that Linda thought we could use a smaller electronic trailer. Ann also reported that the Transfer Station is only required to have a trash compactor and recycling bin. Ann also reported that the benches for the Town Park have been delivered, and she and her friend will dig out the space for the cement pads

Curt Robie reported that the Town Hall project is complete, and we just need to pay the bills as they come in. Curt also reported that we will get added flooring stock to have on hand, should the need arise to fix any tiles in the coming years. He also called Ann Gobi about the Council on Aging Grant, and she told Curt that all grants are awaiting the Governor's signature, then a press release will be made. Curt

sent a job description, for the position of custodian, to the other Selectboard members for review before posting. Crystal Main has given her notice. He also has drafted a copy of the Custodian Job Description for review by the Selectboard. This report is for the Annual Town Report.

Tamarin Laurel-Paine reported she attended the State Municipal Council Conference on October 8th. She reported that the Inflation Reduction Act has no cap on money requests, and the time frame for use is from 2023-2032. She reported that the State is pushing all secretary's to help Towns, including Non-Profits, to seek more Federal Grant money to come to Massachusetts. She went to the demonstration on windmills for the Becket Town Hall in their endeavor to seek Federal Grant money. Tamarin also reported that James Burns had a long discussion with her concerning his property on Cone Road. He is seeking Town action to remedy the damage to his property from Cone Road drainage. Mr. Burns states there is water damage to his access and his building, along with black mold.

A discussion then took place about the Holiday Tree Lighting at the Town Park. Susan Schneller stated she didn't know that Church Services had been cancelled for December 6, and that people should just talk to those planning the event. Judy Hoag stated she was trying to see if a band would be available. Judy stated part of the Eagles Brass Ensemble is available, but the Ensemble can't be in attendance until 6 PM and perform at 7:00 PM. Also, Judy brought up the possibility of having a dinner prior to the band performance, with a question of using the Town Hall for dinner and performance. If there is no dinner, maybe the Church could be used for the performance. Susan brought up the fact that this was going to be just a "sweet, non-denominational, kid oriented, multi-helper event". Further discussion occurred, about logistics of the evening, and finalization of plans will be forthcoming.

Sean Curran announced his resignation for November 1, 2024. He stated he loved being the administrator for both Middlefield and Washington, however, the commute is too much, especially in the winter. He stated that he's been to close to 100 meetings since his hiring, and accomplishments have been many in Middlefield such as new Town Hall floors, a new website, and new computer equipment. He continued on to state that he feels Middlefield, and small towns in general, need a voice at the executive state level. He feels what each town is paying towards his salary is adequate, and should continue to work with a new Town Administrator.

An update on the Vadar Accounting software, and use of, was presented. Ann Marie stated that Lynne, Consultant Accountant has been doing a good job and was here on Monday, October 7, 2024. Beverly Cooper has not completed the closing of FY 2024, however, she will stay until it is closed.

The Finance Committee Chair then had multiple items to discuss. Adair Laurel-Cafarella handed out a draft of a 5-year Capital Plan, a list of DPW vehicles, including 5 vehicles not on the insurance list for FY 2025, and pages of information requests, including 9th one, to Sean. Once Sean Curran leaves, it was told to Adair that Mark Doane, TAA would be able to get Vadar Condition of Accounts, however, Mark will need access to Vadar before he can do this. Adair then requested: copies of the competitive bids on the accounting program, Sean will; Grants received year to date of which there is only one for storm damage in the amount of \$20,000.00; and since the Finance Committee can't get access to Vadar, the FC needs all accounts on the Condition of Accounts sheet, Sean will convey this to the Consultant Accountant. The discussion then continued on regarding the number of log-ins available to Vadar: 4 according to Adair, 3

according to Ann Marie. Ann Marie to call Vadar for resolution. Adair had other questions concerning if the Town has a Capital Asset list and a Culvert list. It was recommended to wait for the Highway Superintendent to be present to discuss this area. Questions were raised concerning when the By-Laws will be updated, and a copy of the Wetlands Study, and the survey results at the Transfer Station; also the status of the Clark Wright Road Grant. It was then asked if this is a Finance Committee meeting with the Selectboard, and if it is, then it is not posted as such and is in violation of the Open Meeting Law. This discussion then dissolved into a rather heated discussion between the Finance Committee and the Selectboard, and the lack of appropriate methods to communicate between the Boards. It was decided that Mark Doane, TAA would be the point person on emails from the Finance Committee to the Selectboard.

Discussion then went onto the Capital Planning Committee in conjunction with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Ann Marie asked if we already had a Capital Planning Committee, and the Finance Committee stated they were just coming up with ideas that any department might need. Curt felt there are some good things on the list, however, better definition is necessary. It was recommended to have a Capital Planning Meeting on a Friday morning. Contact will be made with the PVPC, in the hopes to begin Capital Planning Meetings again, and Curt informed those present that Eric Weiss has returned from an extensive medical leave, and Ira Bresinsky is no longer with PVPC. Much of the Capital Planning will require Grants, and Curt said it isn't an issue of writing them, but who is going to administer the grant(s). Curt then emphatically stated that the Town can have whatever it wants, but it's going to cost money. This whole discussion then devolved into a discussion about a new Town Administrator. Ann Marie was on the phone with the Washington Selectboard to see what a good date would be to meet with them to begin the advertising and hiring of a new Town Administrator.

Chipman Road was brought up, and Curt reported that culverts are being shored up, and Palmer Paving will be putting on a 2" base coat. Chipman Road will be completed in the Spring/Summer of 2025.

Mark then brought up the posting of minutes on the Website. He stated he is responsible for the Selectboard's Minutes, and posts other departments as they send minutes to be posted. All Committees don't meet on a regular basis, but on a as necessary basis. Curt then reported that septic contractors are complaining about the response they get from Northampton. Curt reported that contractors receive comments such as "we have 30 towns to deal with". Curt feels someone needs to contact Northampton about this. Ann Marie reported she would call. Mark then stated he was going to call comcast about switching our phone system over to Comcast.

Old business to come before the board: Louise Harlow has completed going thru documents on the stage that are of a historical nature, the Board of Assessors still has to go through what is up there. Mark reported he has the forms necessary to submit to the State to receive approval to destroy documents.

.
A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adjourn at 8:33 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark W. Doane,
Administrative Assistant

Ann Marie Visconti, Chair

Curt Robie, Member

Tamarin Laurel-Paine, Member