

**PRESENT:** Selectmen Joseph A. Sergi, Patrick J. McNabb and Joseph Hallisey, John Moak, Town Administrator; Peggy Mazzola, Administrative Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 PM.

**APPROVE WARRANT/SIGN PURCHASE ORDERS:** The Board signed the warrants.

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:** Mr. McNabb read a letter from Carter Wall, Executive Director of Renewable Energy Trust, notifying the Town that our request to draw down on matching funds under the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust's Clean Energy Choice Program has been approved. Library Director Deb Spratt had prepared the application, and the funds totaling \$10,128 will be used for solar lighting behind the library and associated public education and outreach. The project will begin in the spring. Mr. Moak commented that Ms. Mazzola was instrumental in finding a department on short notice that could benefit from this program. The Board congratulated Ms. Spratt on her successful application.

Mr. McNabb announced a vacancy on the Information Systems Technology Committee. Letter of interest or Citizen Activity Form should be submitted to the Board no later than 12 noon on Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Mazzola stated that another resignation from the IST Committee was received, so there are currently two vacancies.

Mr. Sergi thanked the Cable TV Advisory Committee for their efforts to bring on line equipment to broadcast up to 10 videos.

**OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:**

**Item #1 – Discussion: Police Chief and Staffing:** Mr. Sergi stated that Chief Davis will be retiring on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The Board delayed acting on a replacement until the new Town Administrator came on board. Lt. David Scott was present, and has expressed an interest in advancing his career. The Board needs to hear Lt. Scott's intentions, and decide how it wants to proceed both in the short-term and long-term. Mr. Sergi read a portion of Chief Davis' letter in which he recommends that Lt. Scott replace him.

Lt. Scott stated he is interested in serving as the interim Chief and also as the next Chief. Lt. Scott distributed information to the Board outlining his candidacy for the position. A lengthy question and answer session followed.

Mr. Hallisey thanked Lt. Scott for coming in. He has received a ringing endorsement from Chief Davis, who has done a remarkable job. Lt. Scott's resume is impressive, and he is saying all the right things. There are significant changes ahead for the Police Department, and he believes that Lt. Scott is prepared for those challenges. Mr. Sergi stated this was a very good discussion, and he didn't mean it to be an interview, but the Board wants to get to know him, and the residents want to get to know him. Lt. Scott has expressed an interest in filling the position of Police Chief on an interim basis, and Mr. Sergi asked the Board what their availability would be for an executive session for contract negotiations. It was agreed to meet with Lt. Scott on Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.

**Item #2 – Discussion: Waiver of hiring freeze to fill 16-hour per week Transfer Station position:** Highway Superintendent Peter Shattuck was present to provide further information to the Board relative to the part time position. Mr. Sergi asked if Mr. Shattuck had someone in mind for the position. Mr. Shattuck stated he did not, but was thinking that a retired person would be interested, and the position would have to be posted in house in accordance with the Union

contract. Mr. McNabb asked what the qualifications would be for the position. Mr. Shattuck responded the person would need a hydraulics license; if the person had a CDL license he could be utilized to plow snow. Mr. Moak remarked that someone with a CDL license is required to participate in the random drug/alcohol testing; for someone using town equipment this is good to have.

Mr. McNabb asked Mr. Shattuck the hourly wage for the position. Mr. Shattuck stated \$ 16.50 per hour. Mr. McNabb asked if the position would require overtime. Mr. Shattuck stated typically no overtime would be required. In addition, Mr. Shattuck stated that this person could be asked to plow snow during the winter to assist the Highway Department.

Mr. Hallisey stated it sounds like this will save money, and he could not argue with this request. Mr. Moak remarked that he and Mr. Shattuck had spent time analyzing this, and he has a good plan.

On a motion by Mr. McNabb and seconded by Mr. Hallisey, it was unanimously voted to waive the hiring freeze to fill a 16-hour per week position at the Transfer Station.

Item #3 – Any other Old/New Business: Mr. Sergi requested that Systems Administrator Joe Traverso provide the Board with a systems assessment. Mr. Moak will relate this request to Mr. Traverso.

Mr. McNabb remarked that the Board had received correspondence from Superintendent Maureen Marshall relative to questions that the Board had. Mr. McNabb asked if the letter and related information could be posted on the Town's website. Mr. Sergi stated he didn't have a problem with this, but a courtesy call should be made to the Superintendent. Mr. McNabb noted there was a typo in Dr. Marshall's response to the first question.

Mr. McNabb had asked Mr. Moak to talk to the unions about concessions; to be consistent, it is prudent and appropriate to ask the school administration and staff to take a pay reduction or wage freeze to give something back to the community. He asked that the administration lead by example, and not leave it all on the teachers. If everyone gets their contractual raises it could amount to \$1 million. Mr. Sergi stated the reality is what happens to the schools will determine the level of services at the Town level. He is thankful that the faculty made concessions, but the school department needs to look at administrative costs and efficiencies to cut the budget while not impacting students. He is looking forward to the meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> – the Board plans to stay for the full school committee meeting following the budget presentation. Mr. Hallisey remarked he will not be able to attend as he has a prior commitment. Mr. McNabb stated he would like to clarify that he is not advocating cutting teachers, but the way to soften the blow is for everyone to give a little. If there are less layoffs the school department will be able to cut their unemployment insurance budget. Mr. Hallisey remarked it's all about efficiency – we have asked the Town side to do the same, and we're just asking everyone to do a little more with a little less. Mr. Moak stated he will be setting up meetings with the library and DPW unions; letters went out to those two unions regarding wage freezes, bi-weekly payroll and direct deposit. He will do the same with the two police unions.

Mr. McNabb asked if there would be a potential reduction in the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health assessment. Mr. Moak stated he met with Jim Garreffo, NBOH Director, and the nursing assessment was high; there will be a decrease of around \$6,000 for nursing services, but he needs

a year of data to analyze before making a further determination on the Town's assessment. Pepperell is the most active community for NBOH.

Mr. McNabb asked for an update on his request to rank cuts at 5%, looking at the top 10 or 20 from the least to most severe. Mr. Moak stated this hasn't been done yet; we don't yet have the Finance Committee's recommendations, and the Finance Team has been trying to work on the revenue side of things while the FinCom concentrates on the expense side.

Mr. McNabb asked if there has been any word from the State on state aid figures. Mr. Moak stated he has not heard anything; he was with a number of state representatives last week and couldn't get any information from them.

**ADJOURNMENT:** On a motion by Mr. McNabb and seconded by Mr. Hallisey, it was unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Mazzola, Administrative Assistant

**APPROVED:**

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Joseph A. Sergi, Chairman

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Patrick J. McNabb, Clerk

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Joseph Hallisey