

TOWN OF HAMPDEN, MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES

May 18, 2009
6:30 pm

625 Main Street
Town House

Board Members: Vincent J. Villamaino, John D. Flynn, Richard R. Green
The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Vinnie Villamaino.

Safety Discussion: Fire Chief, Mike Gorski and Police Chief, Jeff Farnsworth came in to talk about the radio communication between various emergency departments, in that currently the departments are unable to talk directly to each other in the middle of an ongoing event, without going through the dispatcher in the police department. They very often work via cell phones, or one working through the dispatcher which slows response times down and impedes the process. The cost for a new system is approximately \$250,000 for the total system. The Fire Chief has applied for a grant as has the Police Chief. It is a mandatory acquisition in that in the near future, the current frequency used by the Fire Department will no longer be in effect. Hampden has never had an engineered plan to meet the full needs of all the departments. Rick does recall that in 1999 there was a study to fill in some of the blind spots.

The question was asked if any wireless companies have offered any services to the town. Jeff Farnsworth has written grants, sometimes 2 times a year. Mike Gorski has one grant submitted which would allow all three departments to be on the same frequency. When will the grant decisions be made? Perhaps 3 months from now, maybe a year out. If we had the money right now, it would take 6 months to be operational, with the purchase, installation, etc. The two companies that will do the work are both state certified companies and Mike and Jeff will work directly with them (perhaps adding a couple of staff members to join them). If the project is engineered, there would be tests done such as venturing to different locations to see the best site for radio receivers and radio transmitters. Rick suggested that we ask an engineer to identify our problems and offer options on how to proceed. The Chief's will work with an RFP, the Chief will check with ABCO as to how to best proceed with our next step.

Mike Gorski asked that letters be written to our Senators and Congressman to seek support for the grant process.

New Police Policy: The Fire and Police Chief presented a new policy for the Police Department related to a Fire Duty Officer and Carbon Monoxide Procedures.

Municipal Hearing Officer: Mike Gorski has asked the Board to support a position for a municipal hearing officer who can mediate any appeals written by local code enforcement officers. There is a training session available, and the position cannot be held by a member of the Fire Department. The Board will try to find interested parties.

Fire Department: Mike Gorski reviewed the two grant applications he completed for a new radio communications system which would allow both Fire and Police to be on the same radio frequency which is not currently the case. The grant would provide a new system with a value of \$154,600. The other grant application is for a tanker at a cost of \$240,000. Both applications have been submitted and the Board will send letters requesting support from senators and congressman.

Traffic Control Issue: Jeff Farnsworth, Police Chief and Dana Pixley, Highway Superintendent came before the Board to discuss traffic control for the Allen Street project. In reviewing the list of proposed projects, the two agreed about traffic control on most projects, with the exception of the Allen Street project.

Rick stated that an effort was made by the Highway Department to train and prepare the department members to work the details as required, which would reduce the overall cost of the project.

Vinnie is not a big supporter on the use of flaggers, given his line of business; he feels that a busy road requires that a cop be on duty.

Jeff clarified that when roads are closed, the answer is clear, but with the road being open, the authority should lie with the police officer to direct traffic. Jeff stated that it comes down to safety only, and protects the risk to the town and its liability.

Dana responded that the group of flaggers are certified trained individuals and have received state approval to do the work. All of the flaggers were required to be first aid certified to respond to a medical emergency.

The Chief wanted it stated in the minutes that he opposes the use of flaggers, due to the potential safety issues.

The Board stopped the debate and took a vote.

A motion was made by John Flynn to allow the use the flaggers for the Allen Street drainage project, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: John Flynn yes, Rick Green yes, Vinnie Villamaino, opposed.

The Board then reviewed the recommendation made by Dana Pixley, Highway Superintendent for the North Monson Road project.

A motion was made by Rick Green to award the bid to perform the reclamation and paving of North Monson Road to Lane Construction, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Dave Hayward, Town resident met with the Board to discuss possible assistance he might give to the town. He currently works with National Grid on energy savings plan. John explained that we recently went through the lighting upgrade program in the town hall and noted that there is a five year window between grant applications. He did inquire about Energy Star air conditioner, rebate program possibility.

Dave currently administers these programs for industrial and commercial properties. He offered to attend a regional meeting to hear what various towns' needs are and to be able

to inform those attendees what is on the horizon. There are tremendous opportunities for businesses that are available now.

Add this topic to the next regional selectmen's meeting agenda.

Highway

South Ridge Road: The Planning Board had requested that Dana give his opinion on the swale that had been reconstructed by the Morton family (as part of their original agreement with the town). Dana recommended that money be held in escrow until we are certain the repairs hold due to the fact that it was not done according to the original plans. The Board will discuss the project when they meet with the Planning Board at their June 10th meeting.

Mike Conrad: Town resident came before the board to discuss the possibility of using eminent domain as a way to purchase the Simkins' Farm property as he is opposed to the construction of the Bethlehem Baptist Church. The Board explained the process that would be required; the gathering of signatures to put it on the town meeting warrant, etc. and that it was not something the Board supported.

Transfer Requests:

- Longevity Benefits: A transfer request for longevity benefits will be redone to come from the Reserve Fund in the amount of \$200.
- Town House Custodial: Not signed since the account is not in the red now.
- Veteran's Benefits: A request was made for a transfer in the amount of \$944 from the reserve fund to cover expenses until year end.
- Legal Advertising: A request was made for the transfer of \$300 to cover expenses until year end.

Veterans' Agent: The board will submit an ad to post to replace Bob Mathison in his position as Veterans' Agent with resumes to be submitted by June 10th.

MRHS Building Committee: Minutes reviewed without comment.

142 South Road: A request has been made by the property owner for the release of a Right of First Refusal on property formerly classified as Chapter 61A land. The Board reviewed and a motion was made by John Flynn to release the Right of First Refusal on property known as 142 South Road, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Unregistered Cars: The Board will ask that the Police review the sites currently noted for unregistered cars and report back with their findings.

Correspondence:

Water District Balance: The town accountant will be asked for the balance in this account.

Farmer's Market Sample Permit: Lorri McCool presented a sample permit for Individual Home Inspection fees. She suggested a fee of \$25. A motion was made by John Flynn to approve the fee for \$25 for a home inspection fee, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Letter of Request: The Board received a letter from Bill Olmstead offering his services for the Council on Aging Board. The COA board members will advertise the position.

Minutes of May 11, 2009: The Board reviewed the Open Session and Executive Session minutes for the meetings of May 11th. A motion to approve the Open Session and Executive Session minutes as presented for May 11 was made by John Flynn, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted. Executive Session Minutes: A motion was made to approve as presented, second by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Minutes of May 4, 2009: A motion was made by John Flynn to approve the minutes of May 4, 2009 as presented, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Seeing no further business, a motion was made by John Flynn to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm, second by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney
Administrative Assistant

/pbc