

Approved 11/09/15

TOWN OF HAMPDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES

November 2, 2015
6:00 pm

625 Main Street
Hampden, MA 01036

Board Members: Vincent J. Villamaino John D. Flynn, Norman Charest
The meeting was called to order by Vinnie Villamaino at 6:00 pm.

Chief Gorski: Chief Gorski, officers and members of the Volunteer Fire Department came before the board to discuss staffing issues that currently exist in the department. The Chief started out by thanking the board for their support of the department in the past and commended the group of volunteers on the high level of training they have achieved. The Chief is concerned with the weekly availability of fire fighters. Although the department does a fair amount of recruiting, they are experiencing marginal success in keeping new recruits. The retainage is about one in five recruits after a two (2) year period. There is trouble right now in getting calls answered within the hours of 7:00 to 5:00 during the week. Currently there are one or two members available. During that timeframe there are 70 or so calls a year; some are carbon dioxide calls, and some are not life threatening. But there is no rolling the dice to find out before responding to the call. Dave Markham happens to be the most constant around town volunteer; and his business will suffer as a result of having to be on call and sometimes being the only firefighter to respond to a call. With people leaving the department and increased obligations for the department that include training, volunteer time, safety and driving training, there are a lot of demands on the volunteers. It was noted that in today's day people's lives are busy. There are some young people coming in, but the Chief fears that the recruitment tool will not be successful much longer. Pay is an issue, and East Longmeadow has a waiting list for call firefighters who get paid for the time they work.

John asked the Chief for the percentage of smaller communities that continue to have all volunteer departments, and the Chief does not have that information.

This office will search for that information across the state.

If we changed to a "Call Department", those who come in would be paid at a different rate when responding.

Vinnie asked how many fire fighters are needed during the day. The Chief responded that at a minimum, four members need to respond. He suggested that pay could be used as a recruitment tool as well. John is looking for a ballpark figure as to how much money that means. There would be an hourly pay for "on call" workers.

The Chief also suggested that the town could require some town employees be trained as firefighters.

Matt Sterling interjected that there are five full time members in Monson, including the Chief.

Monday's through Friday's are the days requiring some "on call" members to be available.

If this change was made, the smoke and carbon inspections could be done by the duty officer on that day, or by a full time member.

The Chief suggests that a task force be organized to look at the problem and come up with some proposed solutions.

John then asked about when a new truck would need to be purchased for the department and the Chief's response was in 2017.

It was noted that if the regional dispatch center goes through, there would be a potential savings to the town, meaning more money in the budget.

Dog Hearing: A dog complaint was lodged by Sherry Himmelstein and Ken Bernstein about an attack on their chickens by dogs owned by Joy LeBlanc. Shelley Sears noted that there had been issues with Joy's dogs and this attack resulted in the death of one of the chickens. Joy explained that the day of the attack was a "perfect storm" and the battery had died on the dog's collar, that another dog could dig under or jump over a fence that exists on the property. She claimed to have resolved the issue with repair work done to the fencing surrounding her property. Sherry and Ken wanted it on record that Joy had not been a responsible dog owner and want to ensure this or another situation does not happen again. Joy explained that she has an electric fence and has spent additional money on the fence. Sherry asked that the fence be positioned below grade to ensure a dog can't dig his way out and that it is 8' tall to prevent them from jumping over the fence. Joy showed pictures of the work she had done on the property and it was determined that Shelley would do a site visit to inspect the improvements and to report back to the Board with her findings. If she finds them to be satisfactory, the matter will be considered closed. If not, Joy will be required to make whatever accommodations Shelley recommends. In either case, Shelley will report back to the board.

10 Riverside Drive: The board signed the Water Service and Release Agreement with Will and Joanne D'Angelo for the installation of a well to supply the D'Angelo's clean water.

Solar Installation 229 Somers Road: Master Operations and Maintenance Agreement submitted by the solar company. The board did a cursory review and thought this might be used as a template for future developments.

One Day Permit: The Senior Center requested a one day permit for Thursday, November 5, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm for the Elder Law and Shine Presentation. A motion was made by John Flynn to approve, seconded by Norman Charest. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Statewide Public Safety Mutual Aid Law: The board discussed this document that MEMA has been promoting. There was no real benefit seen by the Police Chief or Highway Superintendent to become a part to this mutual aid statewide. A motion was made by Norman Charest to not sign the agreement, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Country Auto: The Planning Board approved a Used Car License for Robert Fois of Country Auto on September 9, 2015. The board will respond that the Planning Board can only rule on whether or not the use is allowed on his property. Further research will be done and this board will forward information to the Planning Board so they may review the application again.

Cultural Council: The board reviewed the two members recommended by Betty Howarth and Cathy Mahoney as replacements for their spots on the Cultural Council. Betty and Cathy have

served as long as allowed and it is time for them to step down. John Flynn asked that the appointment slips for all members be printed to ensure proper staggering of terms for all members. The recommendation is for Holly Tuttle and Karen Leger to be appointed as soon as possible.

Medical Benefit for Police and Fire: Other communities were polled as to the amount of coverage they carry. The insurer will be questioned as to what the cost would be for another \$100k in coverage. The board will review at their next meeting.

Middle School Discussion: Superintendent Marty O'Shea sent an email with a proposed schedule of events that must take place to move towards a vote to eventually combine middle school students from Hampden and Wilbraham. The Middle School Task Force have been meeting on a regular basis to move on this process. The board discussed the possible options that exist for our students and their educational needs. Board members are not convinced that merging all of the middle school students into one school is necessary or the right thing to do. They want time to explore other possibilities and avenues about how to teach our students so students from both communities get the level of education that they all deserve. The board has a strong feeling that residents in this community will not be in favor of closing TWB and busing our students to Wilbraham.

Minutes: The minutes of the following meetings were reviewed: Minutes of September 14, 2015, Open and Executive Session, September 21, 2015, September 28, 2015, October 5, 2015 and October 19, 2015. A motion was made by Norman Charest to approve all sets of minutes as presented, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Pioneer Valley Community Profile Update: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission prints updates of communities in the valley and this year it will be updated to reflect the new additions to the town.

DOT Meeting: There is a Department of Transportation meeting taking place on November 5, at Springfield City Hall at 6:00 pm that Vinnie will attend. Perhaps there will be a chance to make a case for our needs on Wilbraham Road, to include drainage and road improvements that will cost in the millions.

Correspondence: Reviewed without comment.

Seeing no further business, a motion was made by Norman Charest to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 pm, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney
Administrative Assistant