

2017 - Minutes of February 6, 27 Meetings

Board of Selectman
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2017

6:00 PM: Open meeting
Quorum present Chair Curt Wilton (CW) Earl Moffatt (EM) Peter Skorput (PS). Also present Marjorie Powell – minutes, Press present: Local Yokel, Richard Squailia Filming

Board reviews and approves previous meeting minutes.
Board reviews and approves warrants.

CW - Congratulates Pats Fans

EM - Review and act on articles for special town meeting. 1- Article for school reorganization, 2- Accept whatever changes may develop on zoning from the planning board hearing/meeting being held tonight 2-6-17. 3- Solar project MA./Turnpike site on 102. A procedural item that needs to be approved by majority vote pertaining to how they will be paying personal property taxes for equipment at the site in lieu of property taxes.

CW Would like to entertain another article to be added regarding dam site on river. There is an erosion issue where we have lost a substantial section of the retaining wall. Received estimate from Maxymillian for repair. Would like to discuss with board entertaining an article to get it repaired. It will be a financial article. Finance committee to be notified as well. CW discussed cost for equipment manpower and consultation with conservation, engineering firm on best way to repair wall as it was. Conservative estimate of \$19,520. Worst case. Hoping for it to be lower. Board is welcome to seek other quotes.

EM - It needs to be done. Maxymillian has been in town and the figures fall within the amount the board can approve. It can be added to the agenda for special town meeting and leave it to the voters to decide.

PS It has got to be done.

EM -Motion to put on special town meeting February 27th.
CW Second motion - Discussion from audience PS, CW, EM - no more business to review

CW - Agenda W. Stockbridge Fire Department discussion of Municipal Resource Institute (Inc.)
CW - We are here to discuss the WSFS Management letter developed and presented by a professional service MRI. This review will become a tool to help the board of selectman and the fire chief establish and build a better fire department for our community. We are not here to fire Chief Skorput nor to abolish the WS Fire & Rescue. Through this process we will not allow personal attacks or insults of any individual towards or by for past grievances/accusations.

CW- We accepted the review CW has read the management letter. As a board of selectman CW is willing to work with PS as a fire chief regarding the recommendations, some of which are very attainable. There is a step process. Which goals can be met rapidly. Some may take six months to a year and some may not be in the best interest of the town. PS - recuses himself and will continue at dais.

EM - Would like to concentrate on the management review which consisted of two separate reports. One was more comprehensive to verify some complaints from individuals and some concerns as a board. Report verifies most of those concerns, they are administrative in nature. Administrative fault places the town and FD members at risk which can have serious consequences if anyone was injured on duty due to the deficiencies in the record keeping. Intent tonight is to take two steps. 1- To verify the personnel on the WSFD to ensure they are appointed properly and insured under the town's policy. 2- To review dispatch procedures for calls to the town of WS and discuss mutual aid from bordering towns. Clear in report and discussions with PS that participation is limited. CW - Asks PS to respond.

PS - Goes over procedure they now use from dispatch center. There is a roster of active members, does not have a copy tonight. Reviews how attendance is taken for drills and calls. Help is skinny. Average of five new recruits a year, who then decide not to continue. Very hard to get people to commit. PS explains the training available, fire academy,

in-house mutual aid. Firefighting training is always available. The average age of current members is 50. With members having multiple jobs and families the commitment for firefighter 1 is difficult to do. \$600.00 a class, training every other weekend is easier for a twenty year old to make that commitment. Does have someone interested in joining. PS Is always open to ideas.

CW - Would like to accomplish having all files in town hall to Karen. PS - Was working on that with Mark before he got injured. PS - Will get rid of the old and start from scratch and have the applications in.

CW - Inquires about recruitment process. PS - Application first, six months probation, The association meets to vote on new members. They meet every three months. Meetings have an agenda, take minutes, go over books, what type of equipment needed and fund raising ideas. CW - During application process can we have quick Cori check. PS - tired with Chief Rubino who did not want to do, will discuss with police chief. CW - Would like to see this be part of application. CW - Asks Chief Portier what the process is. COP - Says there are forms available for CORI checks. CW - Would also be nice if new applicants are introduced at a board of selectman meeting. CW - It is important to have everyone on file and a paper trail for everything as well as electronically.

EM - Asks to confirm application/appointment process. PS - reiterates the process. He has a file on every member. EM - Asks if he has the minutes from last meeting or previous meetings for enlisting new members. PS - He does, not last meeting. EM - Just curious how new members are brought into the ranks. PS - Has some minutes/computer but spotty, book of minutes disappeared from fire house. MS - Asks if it was an Association Meeting. CW - Would like to see list of active fire members. MS - Good idea if letter comes from the select board for CORI checks. PS - There should be a CORI check. JH - Questions why PS does not have a copy of a roster which has been asked for over a year ago. Asks for the roster to be retrieved from firehouse. CW - Peter will have the roster in town hall by 10:00am tomorrow.

BP - Asks to confirm \$600.00 for training. CW, It is 600 hours of training. Is there a cost to the volunteer for training. PS -No cost to volunteer. CW - Roster will be in tomorrow on file with town treasurer. CW - This will also take care of Stipends corresponding with Roster. CW says PS will admit there are record keeping problems. AT - Maybe a joint effort with dispatch and other towns which can generate an e-mail which reminds you to fill out the form. You would have it electronically and a paper trail.

JH - A program already exists called IamReporting it is all done by computer. You can fill out on line, you know who is responding many local fire departments are already using this program. PS - Service cost money. CW - We should look into the service to save time, money spent may go a long way. PS - Still needs to manually send in report to state. Discussion regarding IamReporting and reporting procedures. PS - will look into IamReporting.

CW - Reiterates that the board will use the report as a tool which has been done by a professional service. We do not want to interfere we are here to help. EK - asks if there is a procedural manual from the town for duties of the Fire Department. EM - MA General Law 48. It outlines what the chief is responsible for. such as Protection of Life and Property and putting his house in order like any other department. CW - We are going to have goals. AF - If you have a problem is there a grievance procedure. What is the chain of command. Can things be addressed with there department head. CW - Chain of command is supposed to be in house. Thinks that is all done through the association. PS - Done in the association. CW - We are here today because there was no response. We have recommendations on making this work. ~

CW - Discussion on mutual aid and response times. When and who rolls. Would it be wise to have mutual aid respond other than structural fires. PS - Automatic alarm is like crying Wolf. RD - Asks how alarm service calls are handled. GA - Discussion regarding response times, roll times mutual aid. LL - Tones go off for Richmond and he goes. Firemen get burned out. If a home owner's alarm went off as a false alarm more than three times they were fined. Audience member asks how many members are on the department. CW - 10. SA - New firefighters were offered training. EK - How much report cost and authorization. Discussion from floor if mutual aid costs the town. PS - There is a mutual aid agreement and we do not charge each other for it.

EM, CW, PS - Discussion on mutual aid how often to use, The board and fire chief have acknowledged how short handed we are and need to grow. They will have numerous meetings on this and go through all recommendations. PS - Asks if anyone has any other questions from audience. JH - Asks how many hydrants in town do not work. PS - 1 and low producing hydrants on main that is back flushed. LT - (former fire chief) discusses low producing hydrants and how time consuming back flushing is. LT - also discussed mutual aid since he was the one who set that up for the town. One stipulation was that you needed to have a certified structure fire for them to respond. If the side show continues it will not be good for town. MS - We should look at increasing the stipend. CW - We have discussed that with Peter. In respect to the side show. There is no disrespect to the Fire Dept or the Fire Chief. You are all here because we all need to work together. GA - Mentions news articles and responses from public. BP - Regarding newspaper articles, talk on main St. he asks how many people in audience have read the professional report. 10-20%.

He suggests reading it and then coming to meeting. CW - The report has been done by professionals who have over 30 years experience in the firefighting field. It is helpful to have an outside review. Some suggestions are above what we need. SA - What about forming a committee with someone like the former chief and others on the dept to discuss recommendations from report to meet goals and then present to town. CW - This open forum was for today and the board will discuss how we go forward on various items. There was a recommendation on forming a committee for certain things in the report.

CW - PS will submit roster and applications to town hall. CW - would like to address training and work on recruitment. PS - would welcome the help with recruitment. CW - There are many volunteer depts. that do not have Fire 1 & 2 certified members but did mention 5 graduates from the Springfield academy for firefighter 1&2 from Richmond, Lee, Stockbridge and Great Barrington. There are people that have a desire to do this. Discussion regarding members staying after being certified. CW - Confirms that the applications will be updated and subject to a Cori check and physicians note. Future meetings should proceed with the selectman and fire chief. CW - would like to set up another meeting. EM - Would like to work into procedures document. Special town meeting is February 27th.

BP - Asks if there is a town ordinance for screening on solar project. Vegetation screening. Discussion regarding the 102 solar project which will have screening. There is no indication of tpk. having screening.

CW - Citizen speak time - KC - asks question regarding a police officers departure. CW - says that is currently in executive session. CW - Anything else? Would like to adjourn. MS - Complaint on proper posting procedures for meetings. CW - will follow up on that personally.

8:20 PM CW - Motion to adjourn EM - Second. Meeting adjourned 8:20.

Meeting minutes approved by:

Curt Wilton, Chair

Earl Moffatt

Peter Skorput

Date: _____