

**MEETING****BOARD OF SELECTMEN****JANUARY 4, 2017**

Members present: Christopher A. Rucho Barur R. Rajeshkumar  
Siobhan M. Bohnson John W. Hadley  
Members absent: Patrick J. Crowley

Mr. Rucho convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

**Public Comment:** There is no one present for this agenda item.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

Motion Mr. Hadley to approve the regular session meeting minutes of December 7, 2016, seconded by Ms. Bohnson, all in favor

Motion Ms. Bohnson to approve the regular session meeting minutes of December 14, 2016, seconded by Mr. Rajeshkumar. Vote on the motion – Messrs. Rucho, Rajeshkumar, and Ms. Bohnson yes, Mr. Hadley abstains as he was not present.

**REVIEW AND VOTE TO APPROVE WARRANTS FOR THE PERIOD COVERING  
DECEMBER 15, 2016 THROUGH JANUARY 4, 2017: PAYROLL WARRANT FY2017 #13  
& PAYABLE WARRANTS FOR THE TOWN FY2017 #25, #26 AND #27, SEWER  
ENTERPRISE WARRANT FY2017 SE-11 AND MUNICIPAL LIGHT PLANT WARRANT #13**

Motion Mr. Rajeshkumar to approve the warrants as noted, seconded by Mr. Hadley, all in favor.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1.Designate MMA Annual Business Meeting alternate voting member

Motion Mr. Hadley to designate Mr. Rajeshkumar as the alternate voting member as he will be attending the meeting, seconded by Ms. Bohnson, all in favor.

2. Consider approving the hiring of Timothy O'Brien, 3 Rivington Drive as a temporary part-time plow drivers for the Department of Public Works effective January 8, 2017 until May 31, 2017

Motion Mr. Hadley to approve the hiring, seconded by Mr. Rajeshkumar, all in favor.

3. Recognize the acceptance of \$1,946.26 in donations from the public for lost or damaged books and other materials, donations for the use of printers and copier, and donations given to support the general needs of the library and to approve expenditure of these funds for general purposes

Motion Mr. Rajeshkumar to accept the donations, seconded by Ms. Bohnson, all in favor.

4. Consider voting to sign Community Compact grant paperwork for Pavement Plan Update

Ms. Scheipers advises that one of the grants we will be receiving is for \$10,450, and it will allow us to work with a qualified consultant who will update the Pavement Management Plan.

Motion Mr. Hadley to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the grant paperwork, seconded by Ms. Bohnson, all in favor.

5. Consider sending request to legislators to amend Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2001 as voted by town meeting

At the October town meeting we asked for and received approval to change the General Bylaw language to change the qualifications for the position of DPW Director from mandated to preferred. We also need to amend the Special Act.

Motion Mr. Hadley to send the request to the legislators, second by Mr. Rajeshkumar, all in favor.

### **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

#### **1. Information Technology Grant program opportunity**

Ms. Scheipers reports that communities who are under the Community Compact Program are eligible to apply for IT grants with the focus being on innovation and transformation of government at the local level to make it more efficient and to save taxpayers money. She will be discussing this at the staff level and with the IT Director to see what improvements we will submit by the April 1 deadline.

#### **2. IAC health insurance plan design considerations**

The Insurance Advisory Committee has been reviewing our claim trends in an attempt to see what changes we would like to make to our health insurance offerings. Claims are trending at a 14% increase in pharmacy costs, 8% increase in medical costs, and nationwide we are seeing an average of 10%. The IAC wants to look at potential changes and deductibles and we may go with a higher co-pay for emergency room visits. One of the options suggested was to establish a health savings account, which would create a savings for both the town and the employee. However, it would be drastic and require a lot of education for the employees. The IAC hopes to make a decision in a month or so.

#### **3. Complete Streets Status**

CMRPC has been out doing a site assessment of our sidewalks and ramps and they will do another half day this week. They will be meeting with the Transportation Committee on January 10 to get feedback on the project.

#### **4. Transportation Committee Start-up**

The Committee will be meeting next week and will be working with CMRPC on the Pavement Management Plan. The Town of Rutland has asked to put the Holden Bypass proposal back on table and CMRPC will be looking for feedback from the town of West Boylston as to how we feel about that.

#### **5. FY18 Regional Pension Assessment**

We have received notice from the Worcester Regional Retirement System that our FY18 assessment will be \$1,058,044, a 5.79% increase. The total includes the MLP and the sewer department portions. We have requested a breakout of each entities share. Last year the increase was almost 8%. Mr. Hadley asked if they provide an update on what they make on the fund. Ms. Scheipers has a meeting with them tomorrow morning.

### **FISP UPDATE:**

Mr. Hadley reports that FISP will be meeting tomorrow night.

### **MEETINGS, INVITATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. January 9, 2-3:30 - EAP Performance review training for supervisors at town hall
2. January 18, 1:00 – Community Shared Solar Subscription Meeting at the Senior Center

Ms. Scheipers advised that they needed a minimum of 300 people to sign up, they have achieved that, and it is still open for people to sign up. Mr. Rucho would like to know about the savings to the town. Ms. Scheipers noted that it looks as though there is a potential savings of \$147,000 each year.

3. The Town of West Boylston has been awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the State of Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation for its efforts to eradicate the Asian Longhorned Beetle
- The town allowed them to place traps around various locations in the town.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SELECTMENS REPORTS:**

Mr. Hadley asked to have the DPW Director investigate installing flashing stop signs at the intersection of Prospect and Woodland Streets. Ms. Bohnson asked if we heard any feedback from Holden and was told thus far no complaints or concerns have been received.

Ms. Bohnson reports that on February 4<sup>th</sup> they are having the banquet for the Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade. Kevin McCormick is the grand marshal this year, and awards will be given to Leon Gaumond, Michael Mulryan, Erin and Andy Beardsley and Jen Breen. This will be the last year of the parade and no public funds are used for the event.

#### **Public Hearing to consider the adoption of Policy L-23 Policy on Locking Town Hall at the End of the Business Day**

Mr. Rucho opened the public hearing and read the following notice. Public notice is hereby given, in conformity with the requirements of the General Bylaws of the Town of West Boylston, Article XXIII - Public Hearing and Notice, that the Board of Selectmen will meet on Wednesday, January 4, 2017 at 7:15 p.m. for the purpose of considering the adoption of Policy L-23, Policy on Locking Town Hall at the end of the Business Day. The meeting will be held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of Town Hall, 140 Worcester Street, West Boylston. For additional information, or to review the proposed information, please contact the Office of the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator at 774.261.4012. All interested persons, groups, and agencies are invited to attend. Christopher A. Rucho, Chairman, advertised on December 21, 28, 2016

Ms. Scheipers explained that at various staff meetings there has been discussion that at times we have found doors unlocked when we come back to work in the morning. We discussed what changes we could put in place and this draft policy is a combination of suggestions put together by the staff. It is a common sense approach and states which offices will be responsible for unlocking and locking the doors at the beginning and end of the day. It also speaks to boards and committees that use the building. Ms. Bohnson suggested that if there is more than one meeting going on at night somebody should go around the building before they leave and if one meeting adjourns they should let the other group know they are done with their business. She asked about a sign in and sign out sheet. Ms. Scheipers believes it has been the practice of the Chairman to double check to make sure if there is an active meeting that the door be left open. She thinks the important thing is the Chair or committee member they should check to make sure the doors get locked. It will be easy enough to send the policy via email to the various town boards and committees. Mr. Rucho thinks we should look at security and access to the building and noted that when we remodeled the building we should have installed a system. He would like this placed as a future agenda item. Perhaps it could be a system that automatically locked the building by itself at ten or eleven o'clock.

Mr. Rucho opened the floor to questions from the audience. Hearing none, motion Mr. Hadley to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Rajeshkumar, all in favor.

Motion Mr. Hadley to institute the policy as presented, seconded by Mr. Rajeshkumar, all in favor.

### **Fire Chief Presentation on Bundling of Ambulances Rates**

Fire Chief Tom Welsh joined the Board. He noted that the last time he met with the Board he was joined by Rick Martin of Comstar who provided a demonstration on bundling of ambulance rates, a fairly new concept in the fire services, which he recommends. Reasons for bundling are supplies for ALS (advanced life support) or BLS (basic life support) have a shelf life and they are a cost associated with responding to calls. The ambulance is always ready to respond to all calls. A BLS call does not require anything other than oxygen, however, it can step up and you may need an epi pen. Mental health issues are usually BLS, however if something were to happen you can always step up to an ALS level. A BLS call has a base rate of \$895.10 and \$110.19 for oxygen, a total of \$1,005.29. If we bundle that it is the same price, \$1,005.29. Bundling will capture all the expenses of the call. An ALS call has a base rate of \$1,062.95 and you add in oxygen at \$110.19, a cardiac monitor \$330.58 and IV therapy at \$236.09 for a total of \$1,739.81. The ALS bundle rate is \$1,739.81. There are also costs associated with upkeep to the ambulance and keeping equipment up to date. Mr. Rajeshkumar noted that not every patient has a high level insurance plan and asked if the patient is charged for using the ambulance. The Chief explained that they first hit Medicare or Medicaid and if they do not have any insurance they get three notices, we attach their credit report, send it to a collection agency, and we get a certain percentage back.

The Chief added that we went to 24-hour coverage and we knew that the expenses were going to get higher. We are full-time 24-7 department and put out fires on the side. Mr. Rajeshkumar voiced concern that if the items are bundled a resident may pay more and didn't use all the items included in the bundled amount. They will be charged for something they didn't use. The Chief explained that they have to re-stock to keep things up to date. He also noted that the patient will still pay the same co-pay. The billing company deals with the insurance company and they negotiate the price. Mr. Rucho asked if any area towns are using bundling. The Chief has not seen any go with bundling. Ms. Bohnson feels it is a good point that we running a full time ambulance service and put out fires on the side whereas years ago it was the opposite. The Chief states that he seems the ongoing expenses and he is trying to keep better control of these costs. He doesn't think there is any reason why the billing company would not allow us to change from bundling back to a la carte.

Motion Mr. Hadley for the town of West Boylston to go forward with ambulance bundling for the next calendar year, seconded by Ms. Bohnson. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked the Chief if he feels we will save money. Chief Welsh states the people who didn't pay last year probably won't this year. However, he thinks we will make more and in the long run it will be better as costs are going up. There is a new statute that has added \$50,000 to the price of a new ambulance. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if he felt other towns will follow and also bundle their rates. The Chief thinks they will eventually. Now that we know how much it costs to run the ambulance he feels this will be fair and we will probably be collecting a little more revenue that we might be missing. Maybe somebody might not check off one of the boxes of a cost we might have missed out on. Vote on the motion – all in favor.

**PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AMENDING AMBULANCE RATES**

Mr. Rucho opened the public hearing and read the following notice. Public notice is hereby given, in conformity with the requirements of the General Bylaws of the Town of West Boylston, ARTICLE XXIII - PUBLIC HEARING AND NOTICE, that the Board of Selectmen will meet on Wednesday, January 4, 2017, at 7:45 p.m. for the purpose of considering amending ambulance rates. The meeting will be held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, #210, 140 Worcester Street, West Boylston. For additional information, or to review the proposed changes, please contact Fire Chief Thomas Welsh, at (508) 835-3233. All interested persons, groups, and agencies are invited to attend. Board of Selectmen, advertised on December 21 & 28, 2016.

Chief Welsh reports that annually the billing company sends him a sheet to see if he would like to adjust the rates. He reached out to the area chiefs to see how they are doing. Some had +100 of the Medicare rate or +200 of the Medicare rate. They take Medicare and set their rates. Currently we are at 236% of the Medicare rate. The closer you get to Boston the rates are from +200-+400. If you take the full-time staff budget plus 75% of that number and the budget for supplies and services it costs \$411,459 to run the department. Ambulance receipts are at \$361,686.00 leaving a shortfall of \$49,773. We took in \$180,000 from July 1 through December 30<sup>th</sup>. An increase of 3% in the ambulance rates will results in an additional \$10,850 if the call volume stays the same. The Chief stated that we are not going to be a profit maker. Ms. Bohnson suggested averaging the numbers up to avoid cents. The Chief noted that even with a 3% increase we are below other communities who charge more. However, it is a number he feels comfortable with and we have not increased fees for five years. It will bring us to 245% over Medicare. The Chief estimated that of the people they transport, 15% do not carry insurance. Those people are charged for the entire call and the company will work with them and help them with a payment plan.

Ms. Scheipers noted that the state allows town's to set fees for services they provide. We are responsible for setting a fee for the services we provide and make sure it covers the cost of ALS or BLS. It will be a 3% increase, the last change we increased fees was four and a half years ago and moving forward we will look at the rates more regularly. There is no one present who wishes to speak on the proposal.

Motion Mr. Hadley to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Rajeshkumar, all in favor.  
Motion Mr. Hadley to increase the ambulance rates by 3%, seconded by Ms. Bohnson, all in favor.

With no further business to come before the Board, motion Mr. Hadley at 8:25 p.m. to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bohnson, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: January 18, 2017

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Nancy E. Lucier, Municipal Assistant

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Christopher A. Rucho, Chairman

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Siobhan M. Bohnson, Vice Chairman

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Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Clerk

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John W. Hadley, Selectman