

Board of Selectmen Minutes 01/26/2016

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Board of Selectmen	January 25, 2016
Regular Session	Al Merritt Media and Cultural Center, Market Street

Present:	Philip Crawford, Chairman
	Thomas Terranova Jr., Selectman
	Christopher Barrett, Selectman

Chairman Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He announced that the meeting was being recorded for transmission via cable television. He led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ClearGov presentation

Chairman Crawford said that at the December budget summit, he had spoken of bringing in additional software that would allow better and more expansive presentation of financial data. Tonight, representatives of ClearGov, a company that assist municipalities with these issues, will make a presentation to the Board.

Chris Bullock, chief executive officer and founder of ClearGov, said he has worked for many years in the analytics field, working with legal and financial data. Last year, as a resident of the Town of Hopkinton, he became curious about how his tax dollars were being spent. He located his town's financials online, but found they were difficult to read as he was not familiar with municipal finance. He also wanted to see comparison data with like communities, and found that much of the raw data was available from the state Department of Revenue (DOR). He created comparison communities by finding communities with similar populations and home values. He demonstrated the web site from the benefit of the Board and those attending, showing how Lynnfield compared to its comparison group in a number of categories.

The ClearGov website has such data for all Massachusetts communities available to the public, and also lets a municipality "claim" its page on the web site. For a fee, the municipality can upgrade the page by putting in data more recent than that provided by the DOR, provide additional information explaining the data, expand data to include school information, and provide additional financial data not available through the DOR. Users can personalize the data by entering their annual property tax bill, which yields data of how much money they contributed towards specific spending categories. He said this service helps residents easily understand complex and confusing data.

Mr. Bullock said that the municipal website can imbed the ClearGov data in its website or link to the ClearGov site. There are components that allow residents to leave comments and town officials to leave replies. Town officials can choose their own benchmark communities for internal comparison studies, and choose filters that will allow the program to choose the most suitable comparison communities for the type of study undertaken. The ClearGov program gives municipalities the ability to make more data-driven decisions on financial and budgetary matters.

Chairman Crawford asked how far down into the date the ClearGov program can go. Mr. Bullock said that it can break down by salaries, expenses and a number of categories. Chairman Crawford said the Town is looking to get more detailed information on finances in a more easily understood format. Mr. Bullock said that ClearGov is looking to partner with municipal clients to create best practices.

Selectman Terranova said that he saw ClearGov representatives at the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) conference and that he is favor of providing fiscal transparency. He noted that as a certified public accountant, he has seen that data is often presented differently by different sources. He said that the Lynnfield data provided on the ClearGov website was different than the 2014 audit. He asked what sources ClearGov uses.

Mr. Bullock said that the information comes from municipal governments and the foundation is the Schedule A report made by municipalities to the Department of Revenue. He said municipalities can edit certain information. Selectman Terranova asked how ClearGov is different than VisGov, a competitor that was also at the MMA conference. Mr. Bullock said that VisGov is a nice platform but much less feature-rich. It does not include benchmarking against other municipalities, and lacks complementary metrics to its graphics. Chairman Crawford said that he spoke with VisGov representatives and that model requires the Town to enter the data into the system. Mr. Bullock said the ClearGov model requires no maintenance on the part of the Town, other than exporting the data, validating the data and entering any comments.

Selectman Terranova asked about pricing. Mr. Bullock said that the fee is based on a municipality's population. Communities with populations of less than 25,000 pay \$7,000 per year. He said the initial year pricing could be pro-rated for the remaining months, as this was not an anticipated expense.

Chairman Crawford asked about the Open Checkbook offered by Tyler Technology, the company that provides the MUNIS software that is used as the Town's accounting system. Mr. Bullock said that program offers access to checkbook-level detail, which he said can be overwhelming for some citizens. He said the Open Checkbook could be a complementary piece to the ClearGov offering, which he described as working at a higher level first and then working its way down to details.

Selectman Barrett asked if competitors offered the comparison data with other like communities and said the ClearGov format helps residents understand what they are getting for their tax dollars. Mr. Bullock said that since launching the premier service in December of 2015, about 10 percent of municipalities have claimed their pages and seven have upgraded to paid users to access the additional features.

Resident Patricia Campbell asked when the software was developed. Mr. Bullock said that the software was developed in April of 2015 and it went public in June. Towns reached out asking to use the data, which caused the creation of the business plan. Ms. Campbell asked if there has been any problems with incorrect information.

Mr. Bullock said the biggest issue was that at first the comparison communities were chosen solely on population, which provided comparisons with essentially dissimilar communities. The more sophisticated method for identifying comparison communities cleared up that issue. He said that in cases where some communities receive grants and others do not, municipalities have the opportunity to address this in the comments sections. He said ClearGov also shows state aid figures. The platform does not allow communities to change the comparison communities chosen through the ClearGov formula on the public website, but municipal users can choose other criteria appropriate to specific issues to make comparisons for internal studies.

Board members thanked Mr. Bullock for the presentation.

Recreation Commission opening

Chairman Crawford said that two residents had applied for a vacancy on the Recreation Commission. Wayne Shaffer and Richard Sjoberg were in attendance and made brief statements to the Board.

Mr. Shaffer said he is a lifelong Lynnfield resident and former commission member who served on the commission with many of those present, including Selectmen Terranova and Barrett. He said that recreation is an important part of the community, and recalled when the Town operated a recreation center for youth across from the library. He said the Town now has the best athletic fields in the region due to the recent fields project. He said he is glad to see people step forward to continue the improvements that have been made by the commission and said he is willing to assist in that effort whether he is appointed or not.

Mr. Sjoberg said he is a 13-year resident with three school-aged children who has worked on many projects. He has been active in the Huckleberry Hill School Parent-Teacher Organization. He became involved with the fields project at the grassroots level, and joined Townscape to work on park and playground improvements. He said that his children are involved in the recreation offerings in Town and that this appointment seems to be a natural progression. He discussed his interest with Recreation Commission Chair Matt Monkiewicz and Director Julie Mallett.

Chairman Crawford said the Board has received a letter from the Recreation Commission that recommends the appointment of Mr. Sjoberg. Mr. Monkiewicz said that both candidates are very qualified and that he has known both for many years. He said he believes Mr. Sjoberg brings unique skills due to his involvement with the fields project. He said the commission voted unanimously to recommend the appointment of Mr. Sjoberg.

Selectman Terranova made a motion to appoint Wayne Shaffer to the Recreation Commission. That motion failed for the lack of a second.

Selectman Barrett said that he thinks of Mr. Sjoberg as a "go-to" person in Town and said that his children are benefiting from the efforts Mr. Sjoberg has made at Huckleberry Hill School. Chairman Crawford thanked both candidates for volunteering and said he concurred with the Recreation Commission.

On the motion of Selectman Barrett, duly seconded by Chairman Crawford, the Board voted 2-1 (Selectman Terranova in the minority) to appoint Mr. Sjoberg to a vacant position on the Recreation Commission expiring on June 30, 2016.

Appointment of Historical Commission associate member

Chairman Crawford said that the Board has a letter of interest from Steven P. Smith seeking appointment as an associate member of the Historical Commission. Mr. Smith has been involved in the commission's work and has the support of the commission. Selectman Terranova said he has discussed issues with him and found him well qualified. Chairman Crawford said he has an impressive resume.

On the motion of Selectman Terranova, duly seconded by Selectman Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Steven P. Smith to an associate position on the Historical Commission with a term expiring on June 30, 2018.

Fiscal Year 2017 Police Department budget presentation

Police Chief David Breen presented the Police Department operating and capital budget requests. He said that all salary lines have been level-funded pending the conclusion of collective bargaining, with the exception of step increases for police officers totaling \$21,000. He is seeking an increase in dispatcher training, some of which will be offset by grant funds after the Town makes the payment. Three new officers will require about

\$15,000 in educational incentives. He is seeking to increase patrolman overtime to its Fiscal Year 2014 levels, at \$375,000. He has increased patrolman training by \$51,520 for emergency medical technician certification, which seven officers need. Expenses include a small increase for radio licenses, an additional \$1100 for two new cell phones for the detective sergeant and on-call detective, an additional \$2731 for tires as the SUV-type cruisers wear out more quickly, an additional \$4000 for ammunition for training, a slight increase in dues and memberships, an additional \$2457 for equipment for the new cruisers, and additional funding for computers. The requested budget would call for a 3.6 percent increase.

Chairman Crawford asked if overtime would go down when the chief has a full complement of officers. Chief Breen said he is trying to get one additional officer into the academy, and that will leave him one officer short until March of 2017, when that officer will be fully trained. He noted one officer is out on injured on duty leave. Selectman Terranova asked if the budget had adequate funds for the traffic enforcement officer. Chief Breen said that the additional funds for traffic enforcement were put into overtime, and that once the new officer is trained, a dedicated traffic officer will be available.

In the capital budget, Chief Breen is seeking three vehicles, with older vehicles being passed down. One is a new vehicle for the chief, which would allow the chief's vehicle to be passed to the captain, and the captain's vehicle to be passed to the animal control officer, whose vehicle has 165,000 in mileage. One new Ford Explorer is sought as a supervisor's car, and one Ford Taurus is sought as a detective car. These vehicles would also be outfitted with lights, radios, and other gear.

Also sought is \$37,000 for upgrades to the radio transmitter on the south water tower, which must be moved; the Fiore Department is expected to have a similar amount in its capital budget for this shared cost. The budget includes \$34,157 for the second phase of the mobile radio upgrade, \$4337 for three additional Tasers, \$2559 to replace a ten-year-old radar unit, \$6400 for two mobile computers, \$2200 for an alcohol breath tester, \$8000 for four patrol rifles and accessories, \$3300 for an electronic keypad for access to the dispatch area, and \$4450 for three supervisor workstations. The total capital request is \$225,706.

Selectman Terranova asked about a cruiser involved in an accident recently. Chief Breen said that cruiser would be one those replaced by the new vehicles. Selectman Terranova said that the budget looked solid and noted that most expenses were well funded. He said some overtime savings should be realized when the new officer is added.

Chief Breen reviewed traffic enforcement activity. He said between November 9 and January 25, traffic enforcement has been conducted on weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and noon. He said compared to the previous year criminal citations increased from two to 26, with total enforcement actions increased from 106 to 348. He said word is spreading about the increased enforcement among truck operators, all of whom seem to blame global positioning device-assisted traffic routes for sending them onto Walnut Street south of Salem Street in violation of the traffic ban. He said about 75 percent of the traffic enforcement time has been on Walnut Street, and that he is spreading the enforcement out as the department received requests.

Chairman Crawford said that he often sees a truck pulled over on his way to work in the mornings. Chief Breen said enforcement has led to a lower amount of violations. Selectman Terranova asked if the Town receives half of the ticket fines. Chief Breen said the truck ban fines are \$55, but those who must appear in court also lose wages due to the work interruption. Selectman Terranova suggested adopting a traffic bylaw that would allow the Town to retain all the fines received. Town Administrator James Boudreau said that a model bylaw should be identified and adapted to Lynnfield.

The Board thanked the chief for the presentation.

Fiscal Year 2017 Fire Department budget presentation

Fire Chief Mark Tetreault said that discretionary expense line items were increased by 0.7 percent in line with the Boston Consumer Price Index. He said administrative expenses were increased by \$3300 due to underbudgeting in past years for software licensing and subscriptions. Other expenses increased by \$700. The operating budget for fire operations would be increased from \$319,494 to \$528,152 in order to implement the proposed staffing model outlined in an earlier meeting with the Board. This staffing plan would expand the hours and staff level of the professional firefighting force to alleviate pressures on the call firefighters. He said the expanded hours would result in some reduction in the overtime budget. He said that the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) enterprise budget would be reduced by \$80,000 as a result. Fire alarm expenses would be increased by 0.7 percent.

Chairman Crawford said he believes the staffing proposal should be discussed in detail prior to the annual town meeting as the cost will increase by approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000. He said he believes some tweaks to the proposal must be considered. He said how much this plan would alleviate issues identified by the chief, and whether there are less expensive alternatives, must be discussed. He said the rest of the budget is reasonable.

Selectman Terranova said his concern is whether this proposal is adequate to address the problems identified by the chief. He said he is in accord with adding to new full-time firefighter positions and utilizing the call firefighters for regular shifts as presented by the chief. He said it is important to provide the additional coverage for as many calls as possible. He said while this plan calls for full staffing to end at 7:00 p.m., data presented shows that there are a considerable number of calls until 10:00 p.m.

Chief Tetreault said that the calls begin to lessen at 7:00 p.m. and drop further after 10:00 p.m. He said he took this previously expressed concern under advisement and discussed it with call firefighters. He found that most of their availability to answer calls without disruption of the other jobs and personal life is in that early evening periods from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Selectman Terranova asked about scheduling full coverage until 11:00

p.m. He said there is a need for harmony with the personnel, but that the main goal is keeping the Town safe. He said if the firefighters agree with the chief's approach, he is relying on the chief's expertise. He is asking the chief to provide the Town with the best fire and emergency medical protection possible while keeping costs down as much as possible. Chief Tetreault said he believes his proposed staffing plan is the most economical approach and a natural continuation of the growth of the Fire Department over the decades, and will allow the department to maintain its call force, which allows for round-the-clock protection at a cost much less than a completely full-time department would require.

Selectman Terranova asked about staffing the EMS operation full-time but not the fire service portion. Chief Tetreault said the department hires people trained in both fire and EMS, and that some call firefighters undergo the very time-consuming paramedic training. He said that sending two people on an ambulance is not sufficient for many calls, which is why the fire truck responds as well. He said that there are multiple duties performed on each call.

Selectman Barrett said that the proposal is ambitious and that this would be a large expenditure. He thanked the chief for presenting this plan, consulting with the department and providing the necessary data. He said this is a wonderful way to build support and said it is a step in the right direction and said he wants to make sure the community receives the coverage it deserves and that the call firefighters receive the relief they need.

Chief Tetreault said he has implemented a system in which specific firefighters are on call for certain weeknights and weekends, and that while there has been a difference of opinion among firefighters about this approach, they have pitched in. He believes this will be a help.

In the capital budget, the request includes \$5000 for the annual hose replacement program, which is half of the usual amount; \$15,000 for personal protective clothing, which is higher than usual; \$8000 for a washer/extractor to remove potential carcinogens and smoke from firefighter clothing; \$19,700 for radio upgrades, which in conjunction with a grant would replace radios that are 15 or more years old - if the grant is not approved this would be used for the first phase of replacement; \$5000 for computer workstations, tablets and service boards; \$10,000 in dispatch upgrades to improve the digital readout to eliminate looking up codes to find locations of calls; \$36,500 for the department's share of moving the radio antenna on the south water tower; \$15,000 for replacement of automatic defibrillator; \$11,900 to replace reporting software that is no longer supported by the manufacturer; and \$489,000 for a new pumper truck, which he said is critical due to the age of the vehicle. He said it is one major repair away from being unusable. He noted the debt on the ladder truck is being retired this year.

Chairman Crawford asked about grants that might be available for the pumper. Chief Tetreault said last year's grant application was rejected and a new grant application is being submitted. He said these grants are very competitive, and the Town must demonstrate it cannot und the purchase on its own.

In the EMS budget, Chief Tetreault said call firefighter salaries are being reduced by 29 percent due to the proposed staffing plan, and that call firefighter callbacks would be reduced by 33 percent. Other items were level funded or increased by one percent or less.

The Board thanked the chief for the presentation.

Presidential primary warrant

On the motion of Selectman Terranova, duly seconded by Selectman Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to approve the presidential primary election warrant for March 2, 2016 as presented by Town Clerk Trudy Reid.

New mileage reimbursement rate

On the motion of Selectman Terranova, duly seconded by Selectman Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to approve a reimbursement rate of \$0.54 per mile for employees using their personal vehicles on Town business. This reflects the Internal Revenue Service rate, which is a reduction from the previous rate.

Resignation from Conservation Commission

The Board received a letter of resignation from Conservation Commission Chairman Denise Young, read by Chairman Crawford. She outlined steps undertaken during her tenure to protect wetlands and resource areas and stated it was an honor to have served the Town. Board members thanked Ms. Young for her service and wished her well.

Union Hospital update

Chairman Crawford said that he received a latter today in response to the January 7 hearing from the Department of Public Health (DPH) to Partners Healthcare regarding the proposed closure of services at the Union Hospital campus in Lynn. DPH stated its finding that these services are necessary to providing health services in the area. It asks Partners Healthcare to lay out how it would replace these service and measure travel times to alternative service sites. He said this is good news and a testament to those who worked to protest Union Hospital's proposed closure. He said the thrust is that DPH will require Partners Healthcare to main emergency medical services to this area at Union of an alternative site.

Resident Patricia Campbell said that she attended the determination of need hearing in Salem on the proposed expansion of the Salem Hospital campus. She noted that the DPH staff suggested writing to the attorney general about the lack of public transportation to Salem Hospital from Lynnfield. She also said that the Partners study did not reflect several new large-scale residential and commercial developments. She offered to write a letter with these comments. Chairman Crawford said this would be helpful.

Camp Curtis Guild antenna proposal update

Chairman Crawford said that the National Guard has approved a tower on the site in the Lynnfield portion of the camp, close to the access road in the woods behind Sevinor Way. He said he would attend a meeting on the proposal at the camp on January 27. He said one of his concerns is the proximity to the proposed and existing gas lines. He said the original tower proposal was 150 feet and has been reduced to 120 feet, and they say it will not be visible from any homes in Lynnfield.

Public comment period

Chairman Crawford read the guidelines for the public comment period, which will be no longer than 15 minutes total, and up to three minutes per person. He said that anything the Board would discuss would be noted on the agenda; the public comment period is for the Board to listen to the public and its discussion would be limited to whether to add the topic to a future agenda.

Resident Stephanie Rauseo thanked Selectman Terranova for supporting putting public comment on the agenda and Selectman Barrett for supporting it. She asked what the Board is doing to follow the 2002 master plan and to preserve the nature of the Town and its wildlife habitats. She asked how the master plan is enforced and whether it is still being used.

Ms. Campbell recommended adding to the budget funds to rent or purchase keypads for voting at town meeting, which she said would be a great benefit. She said it would allow voters to enter "yes" or "no" and would allow for the entry of numbers. She said this would assist in the counting of votes, especially if more than one room is being used.

Selectman Terranova said he had some topics he wished to raise, but Chairman Crawford said the guidelines states that members of Town boards and employees can make a request to be placed on the agenda but can not speak during public comment time.

Administrative matters

On the motion of Selectman Terranova, duly seconded by Selectman Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to approve the use of the South Hall lot for a car wash for the Lynnfield High School baseball team on May 1 with a rain date of May 8.

On the motion of Selectman Terranova, duly seconded by Selectman Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to approve the use of the common on May 21 for the Centre Congregational Church craft fair.

On the motion of Selectman Terranova, duly seconded by Selectman Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 21, 2015 as submitted.

Chairman Crawford announced that the Department of Public Utilities will hold a meeting on April 5 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lynnfield Middle School.

On the motion of Selectman Terranova, duly seconded by Selectman Barrett, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:10 p.m.