

Friday, March 27, 2009

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held this morning in the Juliani Meeting Room, Town Hall. In attendance were: Gregory B. Mills, Chair, Barbara D. Searle, Vice Chair, Katherine L. Babson, Jr., and Terri Tsagaris, Owen Dugan was absent. Also in attendance were Hans Larsen, Executive Director, Christopher J. Ketchen, Senior Deputy Director, and Albert S. Robinson, Town Counsel. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

The following warrants were executed: None.

1. Citizen Speak

None present.

2. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Searle moved, Ms. Babson seconded and the Board voted (4-0) to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2009 meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

3. Investment Policy

Finance Director Sheryl Strother and Treasurer Marc Waldman came forward to participate in a discussion regarding the Town's Investment Policy. Mr. Waldman provided a brief history of the current policy. Mr. Larsen pointed-out that diminished returns in the value of the OPEB, Trust, and Stabilization Funds, resulting from the recent economic downturn, have provoked a review of the policy. Ms. Strother and Mr. Waldman also reported on recent losses in all funds since June 30, 2008. Ms. Babson suggested that two Board members work with Ms. Strother and Mr. Waldman to revise the policy. The Board agreed that Ms. Babson and Ms. Searle would represent the Selectmen to develop these revisions.

4. Linden Square Development Agreement – Amendment Regarding VW Parcel

Mr. Steve Langer came forward and presented the Board members with an Amendment to the Linden Square Development Agreement.

Ms. Searle moved, Ms. Tsagaris seconded and the Board voted (4-0) to accept the proposed amendments to the Linden Square Development Agreement.

Mr. Mills, acting in his capacity as chair, signed copies of the amendment after the Board's affirmative vote.

5. Citizen's Petition – Noise Bylaw

Mr. David Himmelberger came forward to present a Citizen's Petition restricting noise generated by landscaping, construction, and other equipment. He described meetings that he held with Town officials since his last presentation to the Board. Mr. Larsen pointed-out that the Advisory Committee supported the bylaw amendments. Chief of Police Terrance Cunningham, accompanied by Deputy Chief William Brooks, spoke briefly in support of the bylaw change.

The Board discussed the nature of its support at Town Meeting. The Board members agreed that, if called upon, they would simply acknowledge that the Police Department has reviewed the proposed bylaw change and does not anticipate a problem with enforcement.

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Ms. Babson moved, Ms. Searle seconded and the Board voted (4-0) to approve support for the proposed bylaw insofar as it does not impose an undue burden of enforcement upon the Police Department.

6. Briefing on Bank Robbery/Bomb Scare

Chief Cunningham and Deputy Chief Brooks remained to describe the events of the prior day involving a robbery at the Bank of America and two bomb threats on Washington Street. Mr. Mills specifically thanked Deputy Chief Brooks who, in the absence of Chief Cunningham, was in command at the scene. Deputy Chief Brooks described the events that began with the Police and Fire departments' response to a 9-1-1 hang-up at Star Market. He commended the performance of officers, Special Police, dispatchers, Fire Department personnel as well as assistance provided by the Needham Police.

7. Final Preparations for 2009 Annual Town Meeting

Mr. Larsen gave the Board members a brief financial update. The balance and claims against the Town's Free Cash account was also discussed. Mr. Ketchen walked the Board members through a history of borrowing for major construction/renovation projects as it related to the use of debt exclusion financing. Mr. Morris Kellogg, chairman of the Advisory Committee, discussed with members of the Board the benefits and drawbacks of seeking a debt exclusion for the Senior Center project as opposed to carrying the debt inside the levy limit set by Proposition 2½. Mr. Larsen indicated that he was still awaiting construction cost estimates from the Permanent Building Committee. There was also brief discussion on the High School project and salary/contract motions under Articles 4 and 5.

The meeting adjourned at 9:44 a.m.