

**Town of Needham
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for January 24, 2017
Selectmen's Chamber
Needham Town Hall**

6:00 p.m. Executive Session: (Exception 6)
A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman Matthew D. Borrelli. Those present were Maurice P. Handel, Marianne B. Cooley, Daniel P. Matthews, John A. Bulian, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. Recording Secretary Mary Hunt joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to enter into Executive Session.

Exception 6 - To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Second: Mr. Handel. Mr. Borrelli polled the Board. Unanimously approved 5-0.

6:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens:
Padma Jammalamadaka, 305 Dedham Avenue spoke with the Board regarding an easement along the train tracks allowing for a small house to be built on her property. The Board referred the matter to the Town Manager.

7:00 p.m. The public portion of the Board of Selectmen meeting of January 24, 2017 was convened by Chairman Matthew D. Borrelli.

7:00 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:
Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.

APPOINTMENTS

Council of Economic Advisors	Bob Hentschel (Reappointment: Term Expires 6/30/2019)
Traffic Management Advisory Committee	Kara Holmquist (Term Expires 6/30/2019)
Historical Commission	Don Lankiewicz (Term Expires 6/30/2019)

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Accept a \$150 donation made to the Needham Fire Department's Student Awareness of Fire Education program from The Needham Pack 8 Cub Scouts.**
- 2. Approve a 2017 Common Victualler License for A New Leaf located at 920 Great Plain Avenue, Needham.**
- 3. Approve a request for a Special One Day Wines & Malt Beverages Only license from Sandra Rizkallah of Plugged In Band Program for its "British Invasion of Needham" event to be held on April 29, 2017 from 7:00 p.m. to**

11:00 p.m. The event will be held in Powers Hall at Town Hall, 1471 Highland Avenue, Needham.

- 4. Approve a Special One Day All Alcoholic Beverages license for Gloria Greis of the Needham Historical Society to hold “Mardi Gras at the Mills House” event on February 4, 2017 from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Needham Historical Society, 1147 Central Avenue, Needham.**
- 5. Approve a Special One Day Wine & Malt Beverages Only license for Robert Timmerman of the Needham Knights of Columbus to host its annual Superbowl Party on Sunday, February 5, 2017 from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The event will be held at Needham Knights of Columbus, 1211 Highland Avenue, Needham.**
- 6. Approve a Special One Day Wine & Malt Beverages Only license for Robert Timmerman of the Needham Knights of Columbus to host its annual St. Patrick’s Dinner Dance on Saturday, March 11, 2017 from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The event will be held at Needham Knights of Columbus, 1211 Highland Avenue, Needham.**
- 7. Water & Sewer Abatement #1230**
- 8. That the Board vote to designate Marianne Cooley to serve as the Board’s representative to the School Committee’s sub-committee on school naming.**
- 9. In accordance with M.G.L. c.115 Section 11, vote to designate Christopher Coleman to serve as the designee of the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen on the West Suburban Veterans District Board.**

Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.

7:00 p.m.

Town Manager:

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager appeared before the Board with one item to discuss:

1. Budget Presentation

Ms. Fitzpatrick presented the Board with the “Balanced Budget Proposal 2018” dated January 24, 2017. A Powerpoint presentation was viewed.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said the proposed budget complies with the best practices adopted by the Board at the end of 2016. She said a common theme throughout the presentation includes planning ahead, saving, and maintaining reserve funds, noting maintenance and replacement of capital facilities. Ms. Fitzpatrick said the budget is resilient and sustainable, as the Town is planning to address known expenses in the next few years.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said budget priorities determining recommendations include town-wide goals and objectives set by the Board of Selectmen every year, as well as goals and objectives of other boards and committees. She said in many instances the goal is to preserve capital assets, remain financially stable, and continue operating efficiently.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on the financial forecast/revenue including contributions from the federal government, state aid, consolidation of overlay, new growth, free cash, and reserves for capital planning. She said free cash is high due to continued building permit activity and a very positive 2016 snow year, allowing reserve funds of almost \$1 million to be rolled over. She also said the collection of a significantly past due tax bill increased the free cash amount. Ms. Fitzpatrick estimated that certified Free Cash will be a minimum of \$8.6 million. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on the last five years of state aid (Chapter 70 and Unrestricted Government Aid) saying no increase in state aid is projected this year. She said the Governor's concerns about the state budget are well known in the Commonwealth. She noted however, Governor Baker proposed a 2% increase in Chapter 70 and 3.9% increase in the Unrestricted General Government Aid at the Mass Municipal Association annual meeting held last weekend. Ms. Fitzpatrick said while the projection is very early, should the increase happen, she proposes that the Board reevaluate the appropriation of funds in the fall.

Mr. Handel commented on recurring revenue asking if there has ever been a time when state aid decreased. Ms. Fitzpatrick said yes. Discussion ensued on the level of recurring revenue and past declines due to downturns in the economy.

Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed key budget drivers including school enrollment which continues to press on the Town's budget. She noted 575 new students since the 2007-8 school year (11.5% increase), commenting some comparable communities are seeing increases of over 20%. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on the average change salary lines and increases in head count.

Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed specific budget recommendations including hiring a Benefits Coordinator in the Human Resources department, replacement of a copier and the implementation of a Wellness Program at the Fire department, creation of a Contract Administrator position in the Public Facilities department, summer help and Needham Center street sweeping in the Department of Public Works, data gathering, a Compliance Program for alcohol and tobacco, and an allocation for a young adult librarian. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on the proposal for the hiring of firefighters and police officers in the coming years due to the growth in Needham Crossing and growing enrollment in the public schools. Discussion ensued on the initial Minuteman School assessment, school budget, hiring a project manager for the Hillside School project, and a grant received to help fund the age-friendly community program.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said the recommendation for the Needham Public Schools is a 4.8% increase over the FY2017 budget at \$68,350,083, including reallocation of \$181,684 to be reserved full day kindergarten in the Debt Services Stabilization Fund. It was noted the School Committee is voting tonight, January 24, 2017, on its recommended budget.

She addressed the Enterprise Fund Budgets (RTS, Sewer, and Water), and exploring with the Board over the coming year whether the RTS should remain an Enterprise Fund.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on recommendations for Warrant Articles including the Senior Corps. Program, Property Tax Relief Program, Facility Maintenance Program, Environmental Assessment, Fleet Refurbishment and Replacement, Matching Fund N2 District, survey of Town-owned land, and General Fund Cash Capital.

Mr. Bulian commented on the Matching Funds N2 District and asked the status of Newton's contribution and timing. Ms. Fitzpatrick said the contribution is one time over two years. Mr. Borrelli said he and Ms. Cooley met with Greg Reibman, President of the Newton Needham Chamber of Commerce, saying Newton has committed their share which is greater than Needham's share. Mr. Handel commented the match is similar to the initial N2 match, noting the benefit for Needham far outweighs the benefit to Newton on a dollar basis, in his opinion. Mr. Bulian said he has concerns about the issue.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on the \$28,051 allocation to the Capital Improvement Fund, \$1,295,000 allocation to the Athletic Facility Improvement Fund, and \$1,091,874 allocation to the Debt Services Stabilization Fund. Ms. Fitzpatrick recapped the discussion noting a total budget of \$163,598,081 (7.6% increase over FY2017).

Ms. Fitzpatrick concluded the presentation with a list of projects occurring around Needham in 2016. She commented this is the 12th budget she and Mr. Davison have presented to the Board of Selectmen, noting the Patriot's have also been in the playoffs every time but one (2010). She said there is much optimism and "as Patriot Nation goes, so goes Needham Nation." She concluded saying putting away money for projects down the road is a story that should be told. She asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Borrelli agreed the mantra is "reserves, reserves, reserves." He asked about the goal in the Debt Stabilization Fund. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented free cash would be used to help future debt service payments, but recurring payments will help to fund program improvements. Mr. Borrelli commented separating free cash and recurring revenues is a good idea.

Mr. Borrelli asked for Board questions and comments.

No questions or comments were made.

- 7:40 p.m. Board Discussion:
1. MBTA Train Idling Update

Mr. Borrelli said he and Ms. Fitzpatrick met with State Representative Denise Garlick, Senator Ross, Senator Rush, and representatives from the MBTA and Keolis to discuss the issue of excessive train idling behind Dana Place. Mr. Borrelli said the MBTA have agreed to remove the train, which he said was a very positive step. Mr. Borrelli said train noise and whistle blowing is automated on new locomotives and includes a federal mandate on the decibel level. He said engineers no longer have the discretion of how long to sound a train whistle. Mr. Borrelli said representatives from the MBTA and Keolis have agreed to meet with the public in Needham to answer questions from neighbors. He said a meeting will be set up in the near future. Ms. Fitzpatrick said the MBTA is open to another layover place for trains at night. Mr. Borrelli commented the head engineer gave his cell phone number for residents to call when there is an issue. He thanked Representative Garlick for setting up the meeting.

Ms. Cooley commented on the future of Keolis and how to convey information to a new commuter services operator. Ms. Fitzpatrick said a new commuter services operator is not anticipated until 2022. Mr. Borelli said Ms. Cooley makes a good point. Ms. Cooley suggested the train tracks near the Needham Golf Club could be an alternative nighttime location for idling trains. Mr. Handel suggested trains idle in Boston at night.

2. Eversource Reliability Project Update

Mr. Borrelli said a meeting was held last night, January 23, 2017 at the Broadmeadow School. He said the Board of Selectmen told Eversource it does not want overhead lines along the existing right of way. He said the public had strong opinions on the primary route, with questions requiring answers. He said data received may conflict with data from Eversource. Mr. Borrelli said the situation needs to be reassessed to figure out the best option for the Town.

Mr. Handel said it's clear the public has deep and heartfelt concerns. He said Eversource must make a more compelling presentation to address issues. He commented the final decision is not being made at the Town level, but rather at a regional level. Mr. Handel said there is a way to go before a decision is made.

Mr. Matthews concurred, adding all the proposed options have issues. He said there were many questions including the process of selecting the proposed route, safety of technology, and EMF concerns. He noted it appears Eversource will need one or more easements from the Town requiring Town Meeting approval. He commented it is not in anyone's best interest to move forward at this time when the goal is to have a safe and reliable regional system. He concluded a lot more homework is necessary.

Mr. Bulian agreed with the previous comments saying a lot more work is required.

Mr. Borrelli said the Board of Selectmen will reach out to Eversource to express concerns from the community. He said another public meeting will be held sometime in the future.

3. Committee Reports

No Committee Reports were made.

7:55 p.m.

Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board of Selectmen vote to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting of January 24, 2017.

Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0.