

**MARION BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS**

**April 21, 2011
Meeting Minutes**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Roger Blanchette, Chairman
Stephen Cushing
Jonathan Henry, Clerk

ALSO PRESENT: Paul Dawson, Town Administrator
Andrea Keene
Lincoln Miller
Mark Gaffey
Anne Kakley (Wanderer)
Gretchen Gundstran (Sentinel)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Blanchette announced that the meeting would be televised, video recorded by ORCTV, and audio recorded by Town of Marion staff.

NOTE: A list of the materials reviewed at the meeting shall be attached to these minutes.

APPOINTMENTS

Fire Department Study Committee

Committee Chairman Mark Gaffey, EMS Director Jeffrey Habicht, Police Chief Lincoln Miller, and Fire Chief Thomas Chief were present. Last November the Board requested that the Committee study combining the Fire Department and EMS into one department.

Mr. Gaffey told the Board that at this point it is the recommendation of the committee that the two departments be combined as quickly as possible.

During the discussion the following statements were made:

Various studies have revealed that smaller numbers of rescue personnel reside within the community, resulting in a diminishing number of Fire and EMS personnel available to respond during the day.

Approximately 18 months ago the Fire Department was asked to provide supplemental response to assist EMS.

It was the feeling of the committee that the primary focus should be on providing some sort of regular staff available to respond to calls, particularly during the work day. The committee also discovered a need for assistance to the Fire Department at the Fire Station. Chief Joyce said he does not think the community needs a full time Fire Department at this time; however, during the weekday the Fire Department is under the same restrictions as EMS, with limited response. He said hiring people to provide Fire and EMS service would provide coverage to both services and personnel could be used to respond to any and all EMS and Fire calls and also to assist with maintenance, inspections, mutual aid calls, and transports. Slightly more than half of all EMS calls occur during the daytime work hours, resulting in the need for staff. The committee recommends the hiring of two full time (Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) firefighter/paramedics; the cost for one firefighter/paramedic would be approximately \$50,000-\$54,000 in addition to equipping costs. Weekend coverage would add

approximately \$25,000 to the cost. Chief Joyce recommended that if a change is made it involve the creation of an EMS division within the Fire Department. EMS would transfer management from the current director to the Fire Chief if the Board so chooses. The EMS Director has indicated that he will be resigning June 30.

Mr. Habicht said when the committee considered the merging of the departments it was agreed that an enhancement of services would be required. He said many employers are not as willing to allow employees to leave for calls; additionally, many people work out of town, making it difficult during the day to respond to calls. Mr. Habicht said the recommendation is to have two paramedics on during the day being able to respond immediately to calls to provide the best possible service to the residents of the town.

Mr. Blanchette said he appreciated that as head of EMS this must have been a difficult time for Mr. Habicht.

He asked if the proposed new employees would be trained to perform inspections. Chief Joyce said approximately 300 inspections are done annually outside of special inspections. Mr. Blanchette said those inspections are paid for and would result in approximately \$6000; he asked if that money would be used to pay for inspections or deposited with the Town. Chief Joyce said the funds would not be paid out because both individuals would be trained to perform inspections.

Mr. Henry said inspections would take away from the intended purpose of the employees, which is to be immediately deployable with equipment from a central location. Chief Joyce said if one individual was using a service vehicle (pickup truck) to go out on inspections the other would remain in the station and respond to calls with the ambulance. The employee doing inspections would then immediately respond from the location of the inspection and go to the emergency call.

Mr. Cushing thanked the committee for their work and said there obviously has been a lot of thought put into the recommendation. He said he liked the idea of putting both departments under a single umbrella and it appears that there are some opportunities afforded short term.

Mr. Gaffey said the town of Acushnet cross-trained their employees to be firefighter/EMTs and firefighter/paramedics. Mr. Cushing said not all EMT's wish to be firefighters and they would need to be protected. Mr. Gaffey said it was voluntary and none of this was about eliminating jobs.

Dale Jones said he has had a leadership role with EMS for 35 years. He described problems encountered by the town of Norton when the Fire Department and EMS were combined. Mr. Jones voiced opposition to the merge and said he did not understand where money would be saved. He said if the Board gave him six months he would make sure the department was running successfully. Mr. Jones urged the Board to be very careful with their consideration of this proposal.

Cornelia Dougall, paramedic, questioned the information presented relative to EMS/Fire calls, particularly the statistics showing that circumstances have changed over the last couple of years. Mr. Habicht provided the following information – mutual aid was requested 10 times in 2010, 16 times in 2009, and 4 times in 2008. Ms. Dougall said Marion EMS provided mutual assistance to Wareham 35 times in 2010 and mutual aid will be required even if the departments are restricted. She voiced concern for the degradation of the volunteer system. She said the cost of the employees will be \$120,000, nearly the entire EMS budget, and the proposal is for eight hours a day, five days a week. Ms. Dougall said many firefighters do not want to be EMT's and many EMT's do not want to be firefighters.

Mark Gaffey said from 1986 to 1998 Marion had an on-time (6 minute) response time 81% of the time and from 1999 to 2002 it dropped to 42%. He does not know what the response time was from 2002 to 2011 but he does not believe it is getting better because the responders are traveling a greater distance. Mr. Gaffey explained that the on-time response impacts the insurance rates of residents.

Eric Radin said the Town of Marion has a very highly thought of EMS and ambulance service, better than in most communities. He said it made economic sense to cover two jobs with one person but not in this case. He voiced opposition to merging the two departments and said the resignation of the EMS Director is not a reason to merge them.

Mr. Jones said a number of years ago a State study was done of the response time and the conclusion was that Marion was responding better than Boston and other cities. He said the response in Marion was for the closest person to bring the ambulance to the scene with EMT's closest to the scene going directly to the scene to begin treatment.

Ms. Dougall said the Fire Department is very fast and it's an unfair portrayal to say the firefighters come from far away and are not doing their job. She asked the Board to consider, rather than hiring two full-time employees, paying some of the current firefighters and EMT's to be on call and commit to respond to calls.

Mr. Gaffey stated that he was not saying there was anything wrong with EMS or with the Fire Department.

Mr. Blanchette said the Board members will consider all of the information and comments heard tonight, and then discuss it among themselves at a future meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

One day, wine & malt license, Music Hall, Eastern Bank Economic Update (5/17)

Moved by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cushing to approve. VOTE: 3-0-0

Approve Request of Tabor Academy to close Front Street

The request is to close Front Street on June 4 between 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. for commencement.

Moved by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cushing to approve. VOTE: 3-0-0

Approve Request of Tabor Academy

The request is to allow an outdoor dinner dance on June 18 from 6:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. Moved by Mr. Cushing and seconded by Mr. Henry to approve. VOTE: 3-0-0

Appointment to Council on Aging

Three individuals have expressed interest in serving (Christina Hingston, Helen Westergard, and Joanne Mahoney).

Moved by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cushing to nominate Helen Westergard to fill the vacancy.

After discussion it was agreed to postpone the appointment until the next meeting. Mr. Henry withdrew his previous motion.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Ambulance Billing Rates

Mr. Dawson explained the billing rates; a very slight increase (3%-4%) is proposed. He informed the Board that he has received only a few requests for waivers and has never denied a request.

Moved by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cushing to accept the proposed ambulance billing rates. VOTE: 3-0-0

Update – 185 Wareham Street

Mr. Dawson reported that the Town is now the owner of the property. The rear portion of the property will be conveyed to the Open Space Acquisition Commission and the portion containing the dwelling will be conveyed to the Affordable Housing Trust for a Habitat for Humanity project.

Update on Insurance Related Activities

Mr. Dawson said there has been a spike in the Worker's Compensation rates due to some large claims in the past. In an attempt to reduce the rates, training opportunities will be offered to employees.

Unrelated to the Worker's Compensation issue, the Town's insurance company has arranged for a sexual harassment training session for employees.

Town Meeting, Annual Report Update

At the April 5 meeting the Board closed the warrant for Town Meeting; the warrant has been posted by the Constable, sent to the printer, and will be mailed next week. The Annual Report has been printed and copies are available in the building.

Memo from Jon Witten Regarding Washburn Park

Mr. Henry had requested this be placed on tonight's agenda. He said he has had conversations with Mr. Dawson and Attorney Witten regarding Washburn Park. Some of the park belongs to the Town and some belongs to the Washburn Park Trust, with access over the property owned by the Washburn family. The Parks Committee is involved in discussions in an attempt to solve some of these issues, including liability.

Attorney Witten has indicated that the Washburn Trust would have to be reconstituted before anything can be done. There currently is one Trustee (Mr. Winters), and the requirement is for six. Mr. Blanchette said the Trustee is in Florida and he is the only one allowed to appoint new ones. Mr. Henry said he is free to appoint whoever he wished but the Board could provide him with a list of names to consider.

It was agreed Mr. Dawson will send a letter to Mr. Winters informing him that the Board would like to meet with him to discuss this. A copy of Attorney Witten's memo will be included with the letter.

Recreation director Jody Dickerson offered his assistance to the Board in this matter.

CORRESPONDENCE

Email from James J. Cattell, Jr., concerning quick response for assistance by DPW

The Board thanked Mr. Dawson and the DPW for their timely response.

Copy of letter from Tata & Howard to Rochester Women's Club regarding installation of groundwater monitoring well

Invitation from Recreation Department to throw first pitch at inaugural opening day of Girls' Softball (4/23/11)

Invitation from Recreation Department to attend the Inaugural Easter Egg Hunt (4/23/11)

Letter from Old Rochester Little League to attend Opening Day Parade and ceremonies in Mattapoisett (4/30/11)

Letter from Carver Marion Wareham Regional Refuse Disposal District announcing Household Hazardous Waste Collection sites for Saturday, May 7

Cease & Desist Order/Violation Notice issued by Building Commissioner regarding 514 Front Street

Notice from Building Commissioner regarding unsafe structure on the property at 760 Mill Street

Violation Notice from Building Commissioner regarding 3 Rose Cottage Lane

Letter from Division of Marine Fisheries – Middle River closed to shellfishing

Letter from Department of Fire Services regarding changes to fire safety requirements effective June 1, 2011

Email from Carol Sanz regarding new Town Hall sign

AGENDAS, DECISIONS, AND MEETING MINUTES RECEIVED FROM BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Notice of Decision – ZBA – Case #644 – T-Mobile Northeast, LLC (4 Derby Lane)

Notice of Decision – ZBA – Case #645 – Michael Curran (38 Point Road)

Moved by Mr. Cushing and seconded by Mr. Henry at 8:50 p.m. to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,


Jonathan F. Henry, Clerk
Date approved:
7 June 11

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK OF MARION, MA
JUN 20 10:17

**MARION BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS
April 21, 2011**

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT MEETING

One day wine and malt license – Eastern Bank at the Music Hall (5/17)
Letter from Tabor Academy requesting closure of Front Street June 4, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. (April, 2011)
Letter from Tabor Academy requesting extension of time for outside entertainment June 18, 6:00 p.m. – 11:30 p.m. (April 8, 2011)
Letter from Christina Hingston requesting appointment to Council on Aging (2/27/11)
Letter from Helen Westergard requesting appointment to Council on Aging (2/25/11)
Email from Joanne Mahoney requesting appointment to Council on Aging (3/14/11)
Draft 2011 Ambulance Billing Policy
Memo from Attorney Witten regarding Charles R. Washburn Memorial Trust (3/1/11)
Email from James Cattel Jr., regarding DPW (4/6/11)
Copy of letter from Tata & Howard to Rochester Women's Club regarding groundwater monitoring well (4/5/11)
Letter from Recreation Department regarding Opening Day Girls' Softball (4/19/11)
Letter from Recreation Department regarding Easter Egg Hunt (4/19/11)
Letter from ORRLL Baseball Opening Day Ceremonies (4/5/11)
Notice from CMW Regional Refuse Disposal District regarding Household Hazardous Product Day (undated)
Copy of letter from Building Commissioner regarding 514 Front Street (3/29/11)
Copy of letter from Building Commissioner regarding 760 Mill Street (4/4/11)
Copy of letter from Building Commissioner regarding 3 Rose Cottage Lane (4/4/11)
Letter from Division of Marion Fisheries regarding Middle River (4/1/11)
Letter from State Fire Marshall regarding revisions to fire safety requirements (March, 2011)
Email from Carol Sanz regarding Town House sign (4/6/11)
Decision notice from ZBA regarding T-Mobile Northeast/4 Derby Lane (3/31/11)
Decision notice from ZBA regarding 38 Point Road (4/4/11)