

**Town of Royalston
Board of Selectmen's Meeting
Tuesday, October 16, 2007
7:00 p.m.**

Present: Linda Alger, Chairperson; Jon Hardie, Clerk; and Andrew West, Member.

1. Chairperson Alger called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.
2. The minutes of the 10/2/07 meeting were read. Mr. Hardie made a motion to accept the minutes as read. Mr. West seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.
3. Acknowledgements/Announcements/Correspondence:
 - a) The Public Information Session for the Route 32 Rehab Project will be held at 7:00 p.m. on 10/30/07 at Royalston Community School. Mr. West will advertise. Ms. Alger moved to allow signage for the information session and to waive the fee. Mr. West seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.
 - b) A Special Town Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/19/07 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.
 - c) A Meet & Greet for the school district's Strategic Planning Committee will be held on 10/25/07 at 6:30 p.m. at the Athol Town Hall. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet on 10/26 and 10/27.
 - d) An All Boards Meeting is scheduled for 10/17/07 at the Athol-Royalston Middle School.
 - e) Mr. Hardie will register the town for the HHAN Strategy Plan as approved by MEMA.
 - f) The Board will review a questionnaire from MEMA & FEMA about prioritizing training needs.
4. Department Head Reports:
 - a) Animal Control Officer – Robin Mowrey reported about another incident with the Linus' dog on Toney Road. Ms. Alger was going to write a letter to the Linus' a few weeks ago reminding them of the leash law and imposing a fine, but couldn't find the applicable information. A dog hearing on this matter will be held on 11/6/07 at 8:00 p.m.
 - b) DPW –
 - 1) Chapter 90-reimbursement paperwork as completed by Keith Newton and Helen Divoll was presented to the Board. Amounts were \$178,865 for North Fitzwilliam and Falls Road, and \$177,418 for Falls Road and Route 32. Mr. Hardie moved to sign the paperwork. Mr. West seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.
 - 2) Mr. Newton reported that he has received a letter from the Orange Town Administrator stating that they have engaged a company to mark the town's boundaries and asking if anyone from other towns is interested in participating. Mr. Newton wasn't given any detailed information on cost. Mr. West stated that he would want to know what we'd be paying for. Mr. Newton hopes to get cost information tomorrow. Discussion was held regarding the Mass. General Law that requires towns to establish their boundaries every five years. Mr. Hardie suggested that we determine what our fair share would be based on running feet.
 - 3) Mr. Newton presented the Board with applications he has received for the vacant position in his department. The Board reviewed the applications. Mr. West moved to accept the recommendation of Keith Newton and to hire John Doucette for the Truck Driver/Laborer position. Mr. Hardie seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.
 - 4) Mr. Newton is working on getting information from Larry Siegel in order to resolve the tree cutting issue on the common.
 - 5) Mr. Newton met with the Board of Health regarding the Whitney Hall basement situation. They recommended that the area be treated with bleach, which the DPW crew and custodian have done, and also to install a

dehumidifier and clean the area with bleach occasionally. No sewer lines have been breached. Mr. Newton will pursue putting a concrete floor over the brick and installing an on-going sump as a more permanent resolution.

- 6) Mr. Newton is working with the grounds maintenance contractor regarding adding more mowings for the FY 09 contract.
- 7) The Sewer Commission, along with Mr. Newton, is working on DEP's requirements for the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

5. Old Business:

- a) Fire Department Job Descriptions: Fire Chief Wayne Newton is ill and will not be in attendance tonight. The review of job descriptions was postponed until the 11/6/07 meeting.
 - b) Streetlight Maintenance Planning: The Board members continue to receive calls about streetlights being out. The Union has issues with DPW workers doing the street light maintenance. Mr. West felt that a formal policy is needed including safety training and providing protective equipment. Keith Newton and Mr. West will get more information from the Union and private contractors for discussion at the next meeting.
 - c) Geoffrey Newton, Building Inspector & James Hamilton Re: 1 School Street: Mr. Hamilton does restoration and renovation work and is in constant need of some of the materials contained in the #1 School Street property. He has been in contact with Attorney Paul Fitzgerald from Kopelman & Paige and also with Attorney Mark Gladstone. Mr. Hamilton presented a proposal to the Board for demolition of the property whereby he would salvage some of the parts of the building, clean up the area, and possibly make a park there. He would request \$10,000 from the town to get the work started, and the town would then share in any revenue gained. Mr. Hamilton will complete his proposal with more detailed information. Mr. Hardie requested that he report back to the Board on 11/6/07.
 - d) Section 125 Plan – Mr. West has been unable to reach our insurance contact person. Ms. Alger stated that the town could join the Group Insurance Commission to get state insurance rates. Mr. West will get 125-plan information and sign up for the Mass. plan.
 - e) Insurance Costs – Mr. Hardie will have completed information from Kimball-Cooke at the 11/6/07 meeting.
 - f) Asset Audit Inventories – A reminder will be sent out to department heads regarding these inventories.
6. Discussion Regarding Regional Agreement Changes: Ms. Alger stated that Athol voted no on two of the regional agreement change articles at their recent STM. She feels that the issue has become adversarial and that Royalston has done their share. She hopes that it does not spoil the momentum with the District's Strategic Planning Committee.
7. At 9:43 p.m., Mr. West moved to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy regarding possible litigation. Mr. Hardie seconded. The vote was Ms. Alger, yes; Mr. Hardie, yes; and Mr. West, yes. The regular meeting will reconvene to sign the treasury warrant and to adjourn.
8. The regular meeting reconvened at 10:37 p.m.
9. Mr. West moved to approve a one-day beer and wine license for Ginger May for an event to be held at the Town Hall. Ms. Alger seconded. The vote was Ms. Alger and Mr. West, yes; with Mr. Hardie abstaining. Discussion was held about the extent of activity and physical changes in the upstairs hall and how they were beyond those contemplated in the beginning.
10. The Treasury Warrant was signed.
11. At 10:51 p.m., Mr. West moved to adjourn. Mr. Hardie seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor. Minutes recorded by Diana Newton.

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This Executive Session was called for further discussion of possible litigation relating to the #1 School Street property. Geoffrey Newton stated that he has spoken with Paul Fitzgerald, Kopelman & Paige, regarding the next steps. Atty. Fitzgerald said that a title search should be done to determine if there are any other owners of the property. He also questioned the likelihood of the Town's approach to Mr. Gladstone being successful. Ms. Alger said that the priority should be to get the building demolished and the Board should see what Mr. Hamilton comes back with for numbers. Mr. West felt that the Board should ask Atty. Fitzgerald about the legalities of selling materials from the property. He also stated that a town meeting vote could approve negotiation of a deduction in the tax lien. Mr. Hardie said that if Mr. Gladstone relinquished title to the property, then the town could decide what to do next. We would need to do the title search first. Mr. West moved to approve a title search on the #1 School Street property. Ms. Alger seconded. The vote was Mr. Hardie, yes; Ms. Alger, yes; and Mr. West, yes. Mr. Hardie said that we should also ask Atty. Fitzgerald to determine the legality of a public nuisance demolition.

Mr. Hardie moved to adjourn from Executive Session at 10:37 p.m. Mr. West seconded. The vote was Mr. Hardie, yes; Ms. Alger, yes; and Mr. West, yes.

Minutes recorded by Diana Newton.