Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, October 3, 2017 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Lucy Wallace in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Ken Swanton, Alice von Loesecke, Stu Sklar and Kara McGuire Minar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

Appointment
Council on Aging member Sue Guswa introduced Carl Sciple for appointment to the COA. Sciple has recently moved back to town, has experience serving on volunteer town committees and is excited help. On a Sklar/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Carl Sciple to CoA.

Capital Planning & Investment Committee (CPIC) interview
Nathan Finch was the third candidate interviewed for the open position on CPIC. Finch is a computer programmer interested in math and describes himself as an excellent problem solver. He is an enthusiastic spreadsheet creator and is careful with finances at home. Finch has been in town for several years and has children in the school system. He is 40 years old and would like to contribute as the younger voice of parents with children in the school system. He is interested in working to help make town finances better. Sklar supports the appointment of Finch. He said Finch can bring a different perspective and serving on CPIC is a great opportunity for him to get involved in town politics. He also pointed out with young children he will be vested in the town for at least the next 18 years. The board members asked a few questions. Von Loesecke clarified CPIC had voted to recommend either Marinelli or Green; it was not a split vote. She also added co-chairs have been chosen therefore the new member will not be required to serve in that capacity. They discussed the value of adding an associate position to CPIC which currently does not have one. After more discussion the board members decided to cast their votes. Sklar, von Loesecke, and Wallace voted for Finch. Swanton voted for Bill Marinelli and Minar voted for Paul Green. Nathan Finch will serve as the new member on CPIC.

Ambulance update
Co-Director Jason Cotting and Director of Finance Operations Will Stevenson reviewed statistics from the last year showing number of calls, number of transports, number of transports w/ ALS, % of calls with DTS, time to scene, dropped calls and number of calls for mutual aid. They also had statistics on response times which have improved however late evening and early morning hours continue to be a challenge.

Ambulance purchase contract
Stevenson said Bulldog Fire Apparatus comes highly recommended and have provided a cost of $256,756 which includes a new stretcher. The ambulance will arrive in six to seven months. The agreement has been reviewed by the Procurement Officer and Town Counsel. On a Swanton/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize the chair to sign the contract.

Ambulance appointments
On a Swanton/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the rehire of Emma Noyes and to appoint others listed as members of the Ambulance service.

Minutes
On a von Loesecke/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 9/19 minutes, as amended.

Public communication

Kathleen Doherty, Harvard school teacher, does understand the decision made by the BoS to remove teacher retirees from the GICRMT but urged them to mitigate this change by grandfathering current retirees percentage splits. This shows respect to current retirees and will help to cushion the blow of this change. She saw the board was discussing finalizing budgets later on the agenda and does not want this crucial decision to become lost in the new budget process. She implores the BoS to vote to leave the current teacher retiree percentages as is to avoid a dramatic financial impact particularly for those who have been retired the longest. She reminded the BoS grandfathering is a very common approach. Doherty realizes the savings to the town would be reduced however they will be there in the future. She has done some investigation and had not found anything that would prohibit the town from taking this approach. She understands this change is in an effort to create fairness and parity however it is ultimately very unfair to retirees. She indicated Gloucester and Winthrop are communities who have made the change and grandfathered the retirees. Doherty pressed the BoS to do the right thing.

Julia Chadwick, Woodside Road, volunteered in the schools and also taught for twenty years. She asked how the board members would feel if this was done to their mothers, fathers or a grandparent at the end of their careers when they are living on a fixed income.

Town administrator report

Bragan reported Harvard's oldest veteran James Dunlap Jr. has passed away.

Bragan announced the War Monument Restoration Committee has received a $500 donation as did the Friends of the Council on Aging from the movie production company that was in town a few weeks ago.

Bragan reported the Ambulance service and Fire Chief conducted interviews for the Firefighter/EMT position and local resident Andrew Perry has been offered the position. He will start on Monday, October 16th.

Bragan announced an entertainment license request has been received from the Historical Society. A hearing will be held at the October 17th meeting.

Bragan said the Nashua River Watershed will hold a scenic paddle on October 16th if any board/committee member is interested. Two people from Harvard can attend one of which will be Conservation Agent Liz Allard.

Bragan indicated the Water and Sewer Commission met to discuss the initial application from the Housing at Hildreth House Committee and will continue the discussion at their next meeting in a couple of weeks.

Bragan reported the Board of Assessors have finished their quinquennial revaluation. The updated values are on the town website and can be viewed by location, owner or map. Questions can be directed to the Assessor's office.

Bragan told the BoS an initial meeting will be held in the morning for employees on the upcoming personnel study. Town Hall and the Hildreth House will open at 9:00am.

Bragan is working on the warrant for the fall Special Town Meeting. Articles are due by October 12th. The warrant will be signed at the October 17th meeting.

Bragan visited the state house to testify on behalf of Harvard's bill to revise prevailing wage laws. Former Selectmen Ron Ricci testified as well.

Bragan said a landscaping plan for Town Hall is underway.

Bragan reported local retailers are requesting the sales tax be lowered to 5% from 6.25%. This will be a question at the state election.

Eagle Scout proclamations – William Hopper & Matthew Adams
On a Swanton/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to sign proclamations.

Retiree communication letter
Swanton drafted a response letter to the teachers that provides more explanation as to why the decision was made to remove the retired teachers from the GICRMT. The letter will be sent to all those affected and to the Harvard Press. A few revisions were made to the letter. The BoS will discuss mitigation options at the next meeting. On a Swanton/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize the chair to follow up with the Executive Assistant and send the letter out and submit a copy to the press.

Termination agreement for new fire truck
Bragan explained unfortunately the company we approved a contract with two years ago went out of business therefore it is in the best interest of the town to sign a termination agreement removing any liability on either side. He confirmed the agreement has been reviewed by Town Counsel. On a Swanton/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to execute the agreement to terminate on contact with Arnprior Fire Trucks Corp.

CDBG grant subordination
On a Swanton/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to subordinate mortgage.

Master plan assignments
Wallace reviewed recommendations for the BoS. Members gave brief updates on items assigned to them. Most of the items are ongoing.

Annual town meeting and town election
On a Swanton/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to set the annual town meeting for Saturday, May 5th and the town election for Tuesday, May 8th.

Selectmen reports
Von Loesecke said it is critically important the School Building Committee maintains $48,000,000 as the target budget moving forward. Her fellow board members agreed.

Sklar announced the War Monument Restoration Committee has received a $2,000 matching grant, from the Pritzker Foundation, towards the World War 1 flagpole.

Budget document
Bragan distributed a document which he will sent to all boards/committees/departments with explanation, important dates and instructions for the upcoming budget process. The board members suggested a few edits. Bragan said the upcoming BoS meetings will need to begin at 6:00pm in order to accommodate review of capital and budget submissions. The BoS decided to move their second meeting in November from the 21st to the 14th.

Sklar exited the meeting at 9:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15pm

Documents referenced:
Sciple vol form – dated 9.20.2017
Finch vol form – dated 6.22.2017
Ambulance – FY17 statistics, ambulance contract, dated 9.28.2017, appointment letter request dated 9.26.2017
Eagle scout proclamation request – 8.27.2017
Retiree draft letter – dated 9.28.2017
Fire truck termination contract – dated 9.22.2017
Subordination – dated 9.27.2017