

**JOINT MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AND
GOVERNMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE
Proctor School Library
Minutes of September 17, 2012**

Chairman Eldon Goodhue called the meeting to order at 4:35PM. Board members present in addition to Chairman Goodhue, were Martha Morrison, Dick Gandt, Laura Powers and Ken Vogel. Of the Selectmen's staff, Town Administrator Virginia Wilder and Board Secretary Donna Rich were in attendance. Other persons present during all or part of the meeting were Government Review Committee members Holger Luther, George Anderson, Al Wallace and Jan Ablon, residents: Alexander & Carole Carter, Philip Knowles, Dick & Bette Cullinan, Steve Lais, Jeanine Cunniff, Kim Sherwood, and Town Clerk Paula Burke.

Announcements: Chairman Goodhue announced that the Board will go into Executive Session at the end of the joint session to discuss the strategy for hiring Virginia Wilder as interim Town Administrator and would not return to open session.

Board of Selectmen Business:

Water Main Improvement Contract Administration: Selectman Morrison made a motion to approve the contract amendment for Engineering Contract Administration Services for Water Main Improvements with Stantec Consulting Services Co., Inc. of Westford MA in the not to exceed amount of \$18,975, seconded by Selectman Gandt; so voted: 5-0.

Wildes Road Temporary Poles: Selectman Morrison made a motion to grant a revocable license to Verizon New England Inc. and Massachusetts Electric Company to erect, operate, maintain, replace and remove temporarily three (3) Poles on Wildes Road as indicated on the Petition #37, dated September 13, 2012 and further to authorize the Chairman to sign, seconded by Selectman Gandt; so voted: 5-0.

Presentation by the Government Review Committee: Chairman Holger Luther presented the Committee's recommendations, in their entirety, relative to their findings for an alternative form of government in Topsfield. After the presentation Mr. Luther entertained questions from the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Morrison asked for clarification of the reporting structure of the recreation committee. Al Wallace replied that the recommendation is for the recreation committee to report to the town administrator and not the Park and Cemetery Commissioners. Selectman Gandt asked Mr. Luther if the back-up material to support the recommendations presented would be available for review. Mr. Luther commented that he had studied 25 home-rule acts and would make them available to the Board. Chairman Goodhue asked why there was a need for these recommendations; what is wrong with how the Town government works now? Mr. Luther replied simply that the Board of Selectmen had charged the committee to research alternative forms of reorganizing the Town's government and how the delivery of services could be made more efficiently. Then there ensued a discussion regarding the need to formalize the form of government. Mr. Luther explained this further using Middleton Town Administrator Ira Singer and Wellesley Town Administrator Hans Larsen as examples of very strong personalities that can work without a formal structure, but the question remains, is this really what Topsfield should depend upon. Chairman Goodhue then opened the floor to questions from attendees. Resident Jeanine Cunniff commented that the recommendations presented may likely go nowhere and would the Government Review Committee's members be able to handle the disappointment. At which Mr. Luther replied that no one on the committee would be disappointed. Jeanine Cunniff also commented that the recommendations as presented require the Board of Selectmen to increase their work-load by taking on the road, water, and cemetery

commissions. Mr. Luther reminded her that the Board would mostly only hear reports from the Town Administrator and sign contracts, as they do already. Resident Richard Cullinan noted that time is marching on and a decision is needed quickly; he noted that in his opinion a “strong” Town Administrator would be good for the Town. Resident Phil Knowles mentioned that the formation of a Department of Public Works was put before the Town in 2006 and actually passed the vote the first time, but due to a defect in language a second vote was required that brought out a negative outcome. Mr. Knowles noted that by statute the Board of Selectmen could not be cemetery commissioners, but would need to appoint such a commission. Mr. Knowles also suggested the name be Department of Public Services. Chairman Goodhue then closed the floor for comments, commended the Government Review Committee for their work, and set a date for further discussion of this topic at the October 9th regular Board of Selectmen meeting.

Warrants: The Selectmen signed and approved warrants in the amount of \$ 416,850.16. The breakdown is as follows:

	Warrant #FY13:
23T	\$ 91,452.20
24	\$ 325,397.96

At 8:28 PM, Selectmen Powers made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the strategy for hiring Virginia Wilder as interim Town Administrator, seconded by Selectman Gandt. In a roll call vote, a yes was recorded for Chairman Goodhue, Selectman Gandt, Selectman Powers, Selectman Vogel and Selectman Morrison. The Board would not return to open session.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Rich, Secretary
Selectmen’s Office

Per the Open Meeting Law, the documents that were either distributed to the BOS before the meeting in a packet, or at the meeting were:

1. Agenda
2. Government Review Committee Presentation documents
3. License Agreement with Verizon New England Inc. and MA Electric Company
4. Water Main Amendment documents

Approved as amended at the October 9, 2012 Board of Selectmen’s meeting.

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law,' G.L. 39, § 23B, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.