

March 21, 2017

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on March 21, 2017 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Conference Room, Town Hall.

Members Present: Brian Mannix, Chairman, Manny Silva, Derek DeBarge, Carmina Fernandes and William Rooney is absent.

First Order of Business: The pledge of allegiance.

At this time, the Board met with Sean McBride, Chairman, Recreation Commission regarding the Recreation Budget Article. The Commission is looking for rate increases for their assistant pool managers and co-director positions. It is two dollars per hour increase. The Pool Manager has not seen an increase since the pool was opened in 2010 per an agreement with the Town and Conservation. With the increase in minimum wage and these being supervisory positions and all the responsibilities. They are asking that the budget be accepted with those increases that show these increases.

Mr. Silva asked about the two dollars and Mr. McBride explained that they earn more than the minimum wage now but when it changes it is important to have that increase. The Pool Manager makes sixteen dollars per hour currently and as far as Assistant Pool Manager there are a lot of responsibilities that go along with that, licenses and requirements for keeping the chemical disbursement into the pool water insuring the balances of chlorine is correct. They take a certified pool operators test, and a license to operate a pool so it is a position of responsibility.

Mr. Silva asked about the increase compared to the minimum wage. Mr. McBride explained the Pool Manager did not receive an increase with the minimum wage last town meeting there was an article to automatically increase any pays that would apply with increases in the minimum wage.

Ms. Fernandes asked about the two dollars and if they worked forty hours a week. The assistant Pool Manager is working twelve weeks at forty hours a week. Mr. DeBarge asked how many pool managers there are. Mr. McBride said that they have one assistant Pool manager and Debbie is also licensed for managing the pool and is able to take care of things. Mr. DeBarge asked if there were job descriptions for all of these (there are) and he asked if Mr. McBride went to see the Human Resources Manager. Ms. Villano stated that they are aware of the requests. Mr. Mannix asked about the pool manager. Mr. McBride stated that the Pool manager is designated as Debbie and there is an assistant pool manager. The second request is for the position of the office assistant (Debbie) from permanent part-time (thirty hours a week) to permanent full time (thirty five hours a week). She has been working thirty five hours anyway since the pool opened and working in the capacity as a thirty five hours a week full time person without the benefits of full time. She is invaluable to the Commission and to the Town. Mr. Silva asked if this was merely a five-hour increase since she has benefits now (yes). Ms. Villano stated that in the classification it needs to be changed. Years ago, they would work more in summer and less in winter but now the hours are the same all year long. Debbie is there for the early programs in addition to all her other duties. This is not an article, it is a change in the classification and needs to be approved by the Board to be able to make changes in the budget.

Mr. DeBarge asked if there is actually a written job description for Debbie, Mr. McBride said there is an old one and they will change that.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes that the Board takes Mr. McBride's recommendation for the increases in the Recreation Commission for both position changes as he stated.

Vote: 4-0 in favor.

The Board next met with Mr. Neal Paquette, Chairman, Board of Health to discuss the articles for the warrant. He explained that he was here to present an office change from a Latos II to Latos III position for Francine Reyes. At the previous meeting the Board requested a more refined job description. He passed out to the Board an original job description with lists of duties and a current job description with a new list of duties to show what has increased. Mr. Mannix asked if this was developed with the HR director and he stated that yes it was.

The Chairman asked for any questions. Mr. DeBarge verified that this was after the meeting with Human Resource. Mr. Mannix thanked him for coming back so soon. Mr. Paquette stated that they have given her a lot more responsibility, emergency preparedness, more legwork for the nurses, she listed many items that have changed. She fills in for Carolyn when she is on vacation. Mr. Silva read an email from Carrie Human Resource stating that she does not support the position change after working with them. Ms. Villano stated that Human Resource had met with Francine and there is not a full job description formulated as of yet and being that last year there was an upgrade from a Fifteen hour position to a twenty five hour position to combat the extra work that was necessary. They haven't proved to her yet that she is level III. A full job description and who this person reports to has not been decided as of yet and so at this time Human Resource feels that it is not justified.

Mr. Mannix asked if anyone wanted to say anything for the discussion. Francine Reyes joined them and stated that after meeting with Human Resources she did do a full job description as requested but she had left. Mr. Mannix said that they are taking this under advisement and asked Ms. Villano the date needed to be able to come before the Town Meeting.

Mr. DeBarge asked if there was a description for each step in the Latos. Carolyn (from audience) spoke about the job when it was created in 2000 and that this was just clerical work, filing and doing nursing notes and it just exploded and that was put on Francine. Ms. Villano noted that when the position was reposted and the job description was revamped.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to postpone until they can hear more fully from Human Resources.

Vote: 3-1-0 in favor.

Mr. DeBarge is not in favor

The Board next met with Eric Nelson from WestMass Development; Chairman, Mr. John Mabury, President of Maybury Material Handling, Attorney Tony DosSantos, Mr. Stephen Roberts, retired past president and majority owner of Roberts Co. they are a private not for profit purchasing the Mills in 2011 and made a commitment to the Town based on the need to clean up what the EPA described as the 'largest Brownfield in New England'. With the establishment of Health South and their One hundred and twenty one jobs staying in Ludlow, and more recently Winn Development and their development of seventy five senior independent living apartments; taking four years and eleven months to obtain historical tax credits from the State. More recently working with Representative Petrolati, and Health South to obtain a grant for the Riverwalk for \$429,000 that the Town will manage. This brings us to the purchase of the Clock Tower by Winn Development will be a Fifty-five and Sixty million-dollar, mixed used commercial project. As usual WestMass will carry that building with insurance etc. until financing is set for development while waiting for tax credits which we anticipate will take several years. We have applied for the first round of tax credits in January and expect that to come back in April. Again, that is for Mill #10, a Twenty Four million-dollar project. What is next for WestMass is that we will be submitting our final environmental impact report. A few years back we did the draft report. The Select board will get a copy and presentation of that report. When we get that certificate in June it will enable us to apply for our next project funding which is Riverside Drive. As called for in the local Master Plan that subdivision road (approximately seven million dollars) with full infrastructure to close the 'fire loop' and providing underground utilities. But this will open up eighty acres of which sixty five are developable in the eastern most section (4) of the complex. We are constantly asked about large parcel sized land that is available and we are confident that once this is developed we will see some interest there. There will be a two part ask; there will be a \$3.5 million dollar ask from the US Economic Development Administration (their regional director and grant specialist have been here to inspect the site) and the second part of the ask will be a match of \$3.5 million dollars from Mass Works, the State project that funds infrastructure improvements; we will get that underway and hopefully be breaking ground about a year from now on this.

Mr. Silva asked if Riverside Drive is the old Mill road in back alongside the Riverwalk.

Mr. Nelson stated that it approximates what we called the old mill access road and in places it is wider than twenty five but in others less than twenty five. We are looking here to establish the

second phase of the Riverwalk with some open public space. The entire right of way and Riverwalk will be deeded at once to the Town.

Mr. Silva asked if part of that plan is to clear out the space from the road to the Riverwalk because it is severely overgrown and shady and dark.

Mr. Nelson said that once you see the plan some of that land will be taken for parking to service Mill #8, #9 and the Clock Tower and that pushes the road closer to the Riverwalk in that area.

Mr. Maybury noted that they are only about five and half years into the planned twenty year project so this takes time. We have been very successful in what has been accomplished so far and when completed could create upward of two thousand jobs as well as approximately two million dollars annually in future taxes for the Town. Already Health South is contributing about \$380,000 annually in taxes and with the construction of Riverside Drive we will promote more jobs and available land in this area. If we may mention that this site was pretty "dirty" and now is one hundred percent clean which allows us to put anything there. That of course, is not without the help of this and other Boards, Representative Petrolati and many others who understand the collaborative effort it takes to get this done.

Mr. DeBarge asked as far as the tenants, who ultimately decides who comes and goes into the buildings and apartments.

Mr. Maybury responded saying the goal of WestMass is to promote jobs and taxes, which is in our charter. When we acquired Ludlow Mills it had a variety of tenants in the property and we obviously would like to retain those jobs and retain growth. Keep in mind we have taken buildings down and had to move people from one building to another. It is a difficult decision made by a Board made up of successful businessmen, lawyers, realtors etc. mostly from Western Mass who have quite a bit of knowledge of the area and what is the right thing to do. We try to give new small businesses 'incubator' space and have seen many do well and grow out of that space to a larger one. It comes to the Board monthly and the Board decides if people can be fit into the space that is available.

Mr. Mannix spoke about a meeting with a question of a tenant and feels that the resolution was satisfactory and the WestMass Board did what they could to help. Mr. Mannix spoke to Mr. Nelson regarding the people who are in attendance tonight. But also, it is not the business of the Board of Selectmen or the Town to tell the WestMass Board what decisions to make, that is not our functions. However, if there are things that the Town would like and you can do anything to help, that would be appreciated. We are looking at a parcel now for the Senior Center and anything that you can do would be helpful and if I can stick my neck out a little bit, I think you can do more for the Senior Center. I think we are worthy of it and anything for that purpose is a very successful thing for the Town and for you. Now what you can or can't do for them I don't know but with the assistance the Commonwealth is giving you and the Town has given and the future support I am not asking - I am a seed planter - and hopefully if we can come to a happy conclusion would be appreciated. As a Town we support you and will continually support you. I am expressing my personal opinions in this. Tony DosSantos - you talk about of what WestMass can do for the Town, there are very few ways to reduce the tax rate but one is economic development on the business side. This is one of the few areas that could be developed to increase the tax base.

Mr. Silva noted that on the plan there are quite a few buildings coming down and quite a few added as you go down the property. Are these definite plans?

Mr. Nelson stated that this is a conceptual Master Plan of what could happen in any one scenario. And as time goes on we find that what is applicable in 2011 is not necessarily applicable now. Those buildings could be smaller, could be more of them or it could be one large building. That original Master Plan will change as people request space.

Ms. Fernandes thanked the guests for helping bring this to the Town. She understands their goal is to promote jobs and taxes and as a Board member I see the taxes that have come in from a site that has been cleaned up. But I also have to think about the residents too, the big and the small and when you speak about 'incubator' space I hope when you incubate these people I hope you make it clear that this could be temporary space. It isn't fair to a little business to have to pick up and go because they did not understand that they could not stay there as long as they wanted. I do

understand profits and you guys are a private company, you are not here for the Town it is a profit-making enterprise.

Mr. Nelson no we are a private not for profit.

Ms. Fernandes oh ok sorry but if you could keep in mind that these small businesses need to know that these are temporary. The Town has helped out with grants, streamlining the permitting for Health South and we have promoted the project wherever we could in addition to one tax rate making this a favorable place for commercial business. Sometimes we have to think about the little businesses because it affects them in a large way.

Mr. DeBarge asked the question about the Board because he received many questions thinking the Board of Selectmen has a say in what happens within the project. He is shocked at the timeframe of the cleanup.

Mr. Maybury stated that this is the largest single Mill development in New England.

Mr. Nelson noted that Health South is Gold Certified by the US Green Building Council and the Ludlow Mills and Health South got a National Brownfield Award for Sustainability. We recycled over 300,000 bricks into that building and we would like to keep going with energy efficiency upgrades.

Mr. Mannix thanked everyone who came here tonight, and wanted to instill on both sides that the Board is here to work for the Town and thinks things have improved.

Mr. Nelson noted that Winn Development is targeting June 2017 to occupy Mill Town.

The Board thanked the visitors.

Mr. Mannix thanked the owners of the Iron Duke for the good job that they have done with their business and hoped things go well with their issues. Keep doing what you are doing. They thanked the Town of Ludlow for providing them with a home and to that extent that they are excited to provide more jobs and revenue to the Town.

Mr. DeBarge asked if the atmosphere was better and the owners of Iron Duke said that at this point in time they are making an effort to have a conversation about the situation. To speak to the progress relating to the Mills, they are experiencing an accelerated expansion and excited about the progress with 2 jobs but approximately 10-15 over the next several years. They thank the Town

Chief Mark Babineau and Chief Paul Madera are here to update the Board on the Regional and Central Dispatch. Chief Babineau spoke about the past three and a half years being involved in a Regional Dispatch Study. This was not the first one, prior they were part of a study with Amherst a few years back and then Springfield. But this one involves the towns of Ludlow, Wilbraham, Hampden, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow and the Town of Southwick. With all of the personnel on this Committee hundreds and hundreds of hours were spent looking at this project. Chief Babineau stated that he has never personally been a proponent of this but he went into it with an open mind and after all of this time spent going through this he could not give his support for the Fire Department. Some of his concerns are that operationally with the six fire departments involved who are vastly different. There are three, Ludlow, Wilbraham and Longmeadow that are similar and kind of operate the same way. But when you get to East Longmeadow, Hampden and Southwick they are vastly different from each other and vastly different from us. So that gives four different models that this Rec would have to perform. With dispatching there are two components, the call taking side of it and the dispatching/resource management side of it. That is a side I have real concern with. The call taking is not of concern if all they would do is take the calls, Emergency Medical Department it, EFP it and get the correct information and pass the address off to the resource management. A lot of research done is that this is very successful for very small communities and very large communities that have the resources available. A small community that has fifty or sixty calls a year they dispatch and handle the call and return. A larger department like the Town of Beverly with a population of 45,000 has sixty five full time firefighters and they do not run an ambulance service. So, they have their resources. That can be managed from a REC.

because they have full resources. We operate vastly differently with five to six full time people trying to run three ambulances and fire vehicles, we have each person assigned to more than one vehicle. We rely heavily on people coming in from home (on call). Situational awareness cannot be put into a CAD computer, cannot be managed from somewhere else. It takes people here to know what is going on minute to minute. Another problem looking at the REC is the numbers that Chief Madera will give you later, assume dark stations into the cost (closed stations to the walk-in public). There is no one sitting in the police or fire department and that is not going to happen. Someone has to be there if someone walks up. There is a lot of traffic in both departments every day. I don't think it adequately addresses the business calls, the fire department has 60,000 business calls annually. That is just the Fire Department. One of the meetings they had included members of the District Planning Committee made up of Town Administrators and Chiefs of Fire and Police Departments. Also attending was Kurt Wood, Secretary of Public Safety and Frank Posniak, Executive Director of State 911 and he is reading from the minutes "Important takeaways include that there is uncertainty in the direction of the program." To develop a RECC it is based on Grants and it is a competitive process. The last three or four years there has been eight million dollars available statewide to support this. The RECC as is needed today would be about nine million dollars to build the building, so we do the math and it isn't going to happen. The earliest this thing would ever go online is 2021. Some of the other takeaways "the new grant guidelines would not permit new construction" it was probably brought to your attention that they were looking at a site in the Mills. It became quickly clear that was cost prohibitive, just to renovate the building would be nine million. You can build ground up for less. A big selling part of this is radio improvements and we are all going to have to pay for the radio improvements ourselves until the RECC is up and running and then again maybe there will be money and maybe not. All of this is uncertain. The benefit is by teaming up you get more incentive money but no one is going to tell you for sure how much you will be getting. Every year we are faced with more unfunded mandates, the uncertainty of the money and we have asked but this is not immune from Governors' cuts. Both the Police and Fire have been working together over the last six to eight months and even if we were to do this, which I do not recommend, it is four years away. We need to do something now with our communications. The game is changing with the cell phones, if you dial 911 from a cell phone it is answered in Northampton and there is at least a minute before they transfer you to the right place-police/fire dispatch and they get some basic information and then it goes to us for direction. People shouldn't have to speak to three people before they get some help. And I can give you some tapes where people finally get to us and be frustrated to just get an ambulance. Chief Madera is going to propose a solution that we can get done rather rapidly. To move the EMD portion and call taking to his civilian side of the building and over the course of time start taking the responsibility of our dispatch away. Again, we may not call our person a dispatch person but maybe a watch person. But I think the best option for us is to go with the plan that is going to be presented to you.

Chief Madera stated that from the police side we don't have the logistics concerns that the fire department has. All of the police departments involved run on the same computer system IMC which is the regional computer system so it would not be a problem for police. When we all looked at this we decided that we should go forward to the next level of the process to determine the cost to see if it is going to be beneficial to the departments and to the Town itself. This is where we are running into a lot of obstacles here. We have given numbers multiple times and each time we find that the cost is not reflective of what we really think it should be. I will put it bluntly, the share that is being determined that we would be responsible for is incorporating the fire department's dispatch center. And that is not a good reflection of what dispatch is and the way the calls come in. Which brings our share of the cost of operations at over a million dollars. So, because we are the largest community and no matter how we put this together, they came up with five different plans and how to do cost sharing, none of the communities will pay an equal amount. It will not be split evenly among everybody because some of these communities are very, very small. In call volumes we are averaging about Eighteen thousand a year and some of these communities are maybe four to five thousand. I would say East Longmeadow, Longmeadow and Wilbraham are closer to us. There was a plan with this four with everyone paying about \$ 200,000 per year and then paying for your call volume on top of that.

Even with that scenario, we are still the highest paying agency because of our large call volume. The best plan is one where we pay in about \$725,000 per year if this gets up in 2021 and that is the barest minimum. This does not include dark stations. There is no way I can have no one being there for the public from dispatch and can't see the financial cost of putting a Sergeant in there, or patrol officer to monitor the station at the cost you pay for those positions. So, you would have to have a reception individual out front from morning to about 10-11 pm at night. Our business is constant in

there, once the doors are open at 8:00 a.m. from records etc. people want to speak to an officer. So, we could not be a dark station and that cost is not calculated. And the cost for reception would be from fifteen to twenty dollars per hour so it would not be a benefit. Currently our department expends about \$565,000 per year and that includes (for four- part time, four full time) benefits and also, we receive a \$48,000 grant from the State through the 911 money. We have also four per-diems, who fill in gap hours, they get no benefits. So, you have a total of twelve people on dispatch. At that cost we are looking at an increase to be part of the RECC, it would put us at about thirty three percent of the running costs of the RECC. By their estimate by 2021 the total cost would be about three point three million, less each communities' grant money to run their dispatch centers. Thirty three percent less \$750,000 and the balance split between the communities with Ludlow paying more all the time as you can see on the excel sheets we gave you.

Chief Babineau spoke about the last meeting that went about two and half hours and the bulk of the conversation was arguing about this cost allocation formula. And obviously the small communities are advocating for paying less and the larger communities would like to pay less. The range of where we are at is Seven hundred fifty to Eight Hundred thousand our base cost. And that has yet to be determined and that is based on Two hundred fifty percent reimbursement and that is not guaranteed.

Chief Madera noted that he thinks what bothers him the most is they have a big savings number for Ludlow, but their savings number does not reflect what the real savings number is because they are counting the fire dispatcher in that calculation who are firefighters who also go on the fire calls, who run the ambulance. That cost doesn't go away and we have talked about that not being included but they insist that it should be. It shows a higher savings ratio and it is good for the grant applications but it isn't a real number. We are trying to figure that out now but are our costs going to go up, yes, they are. And the proposal that I have brought before the Board today concerning Central Dispatch will increase but it will be less that going into an RECC and we maintain local control. I don't disagree with the fact that maybe in 2021 or 2025 if this comes to fruition and they do create an RECC that Ludlow can look at becoming part of it. But the fact is that we will always pay the biggest burden of the costs because of our size. Ludlow will continue to grow and our costs will continue to go up. I would see us if we are a part of the RECC in 2021 to be at a million dollars plus. The costs are not going to go down. They are rating their salaries; and the average dispatcher is currently making between twenty dollars and twenty five dollars an hour. In our region alone, they are about Twenty Two per hour. Wilbraham is paying that rate now. The closer you get to central Mass they are in the Twenty Five plus per hour rates. Eastern Mass is even higher. Our costs now are what the market calls for and are very competitive. But to fit into the Seven Hundred fifty thousand Eight Hundred thousand by 2021 I think the costs will go up. We got into this to save money and I don't see that happening. I see it costing more money in the future and we relinquish local control.

My proposal is a Centralized Dispatch which puts the Fire & Police together and in the future; I could see bringing other departments into that as we grow it and make it what it should be. And yes, it isn't something that is going to cost us less money as today but it will be appropriate for what the Town needs and it is local control and we know our resources and how to manage them.

Our communication system can't wait until 2024 that is the timeline that they are talking. Even if they build this we have to come in with what we have right now and make it work with what they have. Eventually they will put it into a grant application. I was a little perturbed at one of the meetings because none of us were aware of a Six hundred thousand dollars caveat in the grant application going forward. It was a little carrot to keep Ludlow in but if you leave you have to pay it back. And no one talked about that it just showed up. And I wasn't pleased with that. There are other conversations going on out there around us, including Chicopee and the State funding 911 there too and we don't know what that is about. And our concern is that it will have an impact on the available funds from the State pot of Nine million for the entire state. And we have to place a competitive application to get some of that money. And our project alone will cost Nine million dollars before we even go for money for technology. Chief Madera sat in on a webinar (statewide) and one of the questions was how do we open up the State monies that are currently earmarked for development and move that over to the current RECC ones that are working now. There is currently a Regional Center located in Northampton that has been there almost Twenty years, but they are for all small little communities that don't have high call volumes or anything like that, so they can sustain that Center. What we are planning here, I think our call volume alone would overwhelm a center like that. And we are not even talking administrative calls. We have 18,000 police dispatch calls, if you include administration it would be triple that. Who is going to answer

that? And how are they going to know where to direct these calls? That hasn't been addressed. I am with Chief Babineau, I am not in support of participating in RECC at this time. I don't have the confidence in it. Our public safety dispatch is very important and I am not ready to hand that off to a Regional Dispatch. That is why we have been working on a proposal for a Central Dispatch. Historically, in 1998 it was proposed before the Board. Today's proposal, I have been having Lt. Medcalf working on the proposal as he is the liaison to the dispatchers, he handles all the training, scheduling, and monitoring of the dispatchers. Our biggest problem right now is that dispatch is costing the department a fortune because it is not adequately staffed, we have enough personnel and it costs a lot of money to maintain due to overtime.

Ms. Villano asked if before they went on to Central Dispatch if we could finish with the RECC because the reason we are coming together to the Board is that the RECC is moving forward and they are going to want the Town's to sign some sort of commitment very soon. The problems and frustrations she has is that there is no site, no assurance of money, although they say that if the first portion of the grant is approved the State will follow through with the project. However, I agree with the Chief's and have some concerns there. The Regional Dispatch Group are planning a joint presentation to all six of the communities in the very near future to present where they are but I thought it was important that you hear our input before you go to that. Personally, I am not prepared to ask the Board to commit to this because there are just not enough answers out there at this point. If we could come to you with a list here is the site, here is the number of dispatchers, here is the cost, here is how it is going to be allocated and then I think you could get to a determination. We are not there yet.

Mr. Mannix asked if the Board would like to take a vote to put off the RECC after hearing what the Chiefs and Town Administrator had to say, and move on to the other proposal.

Ms. Fernandes noted that she attended a few meetings and right from the beginning she had concerns. For example, whoever was awarded that site the other communities would not be too happy. The group presenting tried to be fair in presenting but she got the feeling they were trying 'to sell' something. That it was very one sided. The other concern is the local knowledge that would be lost in RECC and the 'dark-stations', she is not in favor of that.

Mr. DeBarge thinks the conversation is moot, we have the opinion of both Chiefs and he has been against a Regional Dispatch since he first was on the Police Department. He has also spoken with a lot of patrolmen especially midnight shifts, not from our department and overwhelmingly they would rather have dispatchers from their own towns knowing the local area.

Mr. Silva asked if they know we are not in favor of this. Both Chiefs said that there is no doubt that they know we are not happy but they did ask where we did stand and we did not want to say anything until they spoke with the Board. Chief Madera noted that at the last meeting they expressed great concern about the costs.

Mr. Silva also asked that if the other five communities moved forward would we be able to jump onboard if it proved to be a savings and other problems were addressed. Chief Babineau said that that is part of what is unknown. The State of California has three State dispatch stations, where every 911 call gets answered in one of three places and then they send that to the agencies to handle their own resources. That seems like a reasonable model, with professional dispatchers and sending it off to each community to manage their own resources. There are not too many RECCs that have been established and are successful so maybe this model will change down the road. What Chief Madera is proposing is a good fix that we could build upon.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Mr. DeBarge to take the Chiefs recommendation and notify the RECC and let them know that the Town of Ludlow is not at this time going to move forward with it. Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Chief Madera next spoke about the Central Dispatch Proposal. To give you a picture of what we want to do. Dispatch is twenty four seven and requires at least two people there all the time. Ludlow has gone from the days when it started with one person and a pen and pad. Currently it is now high tech and requires specialized training and it costs a lot of funds to maintain the training and keep everyone up to speed. Even now we are lagging in training, both Police & Fire Departments are training and there are costs there. Chief Babineau noted that about four years ago the State changed the 911 regulations requiring the dispatchers become certified and that the

Emergency Medical Department requirement that came in requiring a certification. At the time that happened, Police dispatch was staffed with a mix of civilian dispatchers and Police Officers. It was well over forty and Fire included all of those had to take the Emergency Medical Department training. Now the restrictions only require civilian dispatchers to have training and that would be twelve which is far less than before. Chief Madera also noted that when you are doing that job all the time you get better at it, things are consistent, where if you are doing it sporadically it takes time to get back the skills. 911 will send out tests and test the dispatchers and they will tell you each month how many failures or problems you have. It is a very sophisticated system and will get ever more so because we are going to Skype and Facebook, real time communications with the next gen and it is supposed to be happening sometime in June and after. Currently there is no designated dispatch overtime it comes out of the patrol overtime. When I don't have a dispatcher, I have to put a Patrolman in that place and it is another added expense. It is costing far over what is budgeted for each year. This is one place you must replace one for one, and if there is only one they can become overwhelmed very easily. You have the 911 lines, the regular lines and the computers coming in all at the same time. The call radios system, the Police officers calling in, monitoring the school or any fires.

Lt. Metcalf spoke about how dispatch is structured, cost and where we are going. He noted that we have four full-time dispatchers, we have four part-time dispatchers all of those are benefit eligible. In addition to that we have five per-diem dispatcher who do not receive benefits. The total cost for all employees including benefits is about five hundred sixteen thousand dollars. The proposal we are making now is to have nine full-time dispatchers on a four and two schedule which would allow for two dispatchers for every shift. Currently our midnight shift has one dispatcher. If we take over Emergency Medical Dispatch it would require two dispatchers to be on every shift even if it is full time or part time, we are proposing full time. The balance of the per-diem dispatchers would cover vacancies. Nine full time dispatchers would add one more to the benefit package. Chief Madera said that his plan is to take all the part timers and make them full time and use the grant funds to help pay for that ninth position. And obviously there are contractual agreements that are in the packets you received that allows us to negotiate with the dispatchers to go to a Central Dispatch and the current dispatchers taking over the Emergency Medical Dispatchers on a stipend basis, that has all been worked out in the plan. There will be more negotiations going forward into the future. The first step would be to add the ninth person, bring them all too full time positions. These are very skilled part time personnel and we would have to go out to hire one more person but looking for people to want to stay. The way it is designed it will work for the department, we will have a larger pool of people to pull from to fill those positions and we will still maintain a per-diem staff personnel trained to fill in. If we fill in with a patrolman all they can do is answer the phones, they are not certified/qualified. They can dispatch and fill in data but they cannot answer 911 calls without a forty hour training plus an additional fifteen hours on top of their own training and that is not economically feasible to train these officers. Perhaps in the future we would train supervisors who are in the station and do back up the dispatchers now but we would have to see how this goes. This would help us bring the costs down, especially in the overtime. The offset is that if we take the Emergency Medical Dispatchers the Fire Department should see some cost savings as well and I will let the Fire Chief address that the fact is we are looking at a projected cost of about six hundred thirty thousand dollars around that area and that would be offset by some of the monies coming back from the Fire Department for those who are now paid a stipend for Emergency Medical Department service to every certified firefighter. It won't reduce all of it and we have the State Grant monies to help reduce the cost that we use now to cover overtime. Over the last three years it has cost about \$35,000 per year in overtime to help maintain dispatch. That money has been pulled out of my patrol overtime. You have to backfill these positions one for one as they are essential. We run 1.5 on the night shift which means we have gap hours; hours where there is only one dispatcher. That is the proposal before you, I think it will work, it is well planned out and structured. My proposal would be to work this through for fiscal year 18'with those contract negotiations coming up currently with the dispatch union and I would be addressing that at that time. They are well aware of this, I have talked to them before coming before you (the Board). And in speaking with the Fire Chief he has been supportive of this change, and I will let him address the impact it will have on the fire side.

Chief Babineau noted that as they hire and get their men through the academy and certified as firefighters they learn dispatch. It is a learning experience but they can't touch the 911 phone until they have been trained and those classes don't come along every week so scheduling can become a problem. The cost of maintaining these certifications, it is a 24 hour initial course for EMD and 24-28 hours every two years. That cost plus the stipend will be a savings.

As this develops, once the Police side begins taking the 911 calls for the fire side and dispatching the Emergency Medical Department calls this will free up the 'watch' position in the fire department to go out and will significantly decrease overtime. There would be a savings, I do not know how much at this time but having one additional firefighter on the floor will save in overtime money. That is the goal to get to that point. It may not happen right away but will certainly be seen within a few years.

Chief Madera stated that we have a quality service and it takes a lot of training and dedication to maintain that. He stated that he feels this Central Dispatch is the right way for the Town and where the Town should be spending its money not on the RECC.

Mr. Mannix asked with the nine dispatchers, if they go on vacation or are out what happens then. Chief Madera explained with the four and two schedule there is always a third overlapping and overtime would be offered to the other dispatchers. There would also be training for the dispatchers to cover but we calculated about \$24,000 of overtime coverage.

Mr. Mannix noted that this is about \$110,000 more for dispatch (Chief stated that would include the estimated overtime)

Chief Madera cleared up that the \$630,000 includes the overtime.

Mr. Mannix asked Chief Babineau what the stipend would be saving each year and he state it was about \$27,000 plus any training and certification costs.

Chief Madera stated that we need to move up and within a years' time of this change they could be taking over the Fire EMD dispatch.

Mr. Mannix is looking for more of a commitment for a time line and dollar commitment.

Chief Babineau noted that there is a genuine commitment within both departments to make this happen.

Ms. Fernandes wanted some clarification on Mr. Mannix's questions. This is just for the dispatcher budget, nothing to do with equipment? Chief Madera stated that nothing would change equipment wise except for technology which is about five thousand dollars and he would find either within his budget or go to the regional funds available from the gaming commission and ask them to help us with some of this. We would be starting on this July 18 and the goal would be to have this in place in fiscal 19' being completely operational. He does not want to make this a two-year project, he wants to start now with contract negotiations and move and ready by end of 18'. The Emergency Medical Department training is twenty four hours and we would have to rotate the personnel and bring them up to speed with that. We do get some funds for training from the State and the last request includes money for training and we had to tell them what we would save them is we do this. The most important part of this is getting support from the Board to go forward with this plan for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Fernandes asked for clarification on the cost of \$630,000 if that includes the State Grant and Chief Madera said that it does not include the Grant or the savings you will be getting from the Fire side for stipends. The actual cost to the Town is about \$540,000.

Mr. DeBarge asked if the nine dispatchers would be mainly for the transition of taking over the responsibilities of the Fire Dispatch. Chief Madera noted that they need to do this to cover just for the police but they will absorb the responsibilities of the EMD and take over the Centralized Fire Dispatch in the future. To run the way, we need to be running we need to move on this.

Mr. DeBarge asked if even if the Police dispatch were not taking over the Fire they would still need this change. Chief Madera stated that yes that is the case. He has eight dispatchers and fills in with per-diems who have full time jobs and when they can't backfill he has to fill in with police officers at time and a half from whoever he can get. It could be a supervisor. So, he is basically moving the four twenty one hour people to thirty seven point five hours (full time) and adding a full time ninth position (funded by the grant) so they can have coverage. There is always two people and one to cover any hours needed.

Mr. Silva asked if they have proposed this through the Finance Committee at all and Chief Madera said they have not. Secondly, how, do we move forward, what do we need to do. Do we have to add an article to the warrant?

Ms. Villano stated that last year when the personnel policy bylaws were taken out of Town Meeting hands it included the compensation and classification section so everything is under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen. If the Board feel they need to increase staff in any department it is their decision. Town Meeting's responsibility at this point is budgets.

Mr. Silva asked what does this do to the overall budgets of Police and Fire.

Chief Madera stated that the majority of his current budget has enough funds there (\$330,000) and the reason it is \$630,000 is because they have included all of the benefits. Without benefits it would be \$445,000 salary. With the \$48,000 from the State and \$24,000 (in 19') off the Fire stipend reducing that number to just about \$43,000 over this year's budget.

Mr. Silva noted that we have parameters and if we were to start giving one department something more over the others we may have some issues.

Chief Madera stated that Police and Fire departments is twenty four seven and no other department run like this. To maintain an operation like this within the parameters is difficult, we have been doing it now by using payroll money for officers that are not there yet. Next year we won't be able to do that because we will have those officers in place. We don't even do one for one replacement because we can't afford it. This plan would hopefully put us in better position for next year.

Mr. Mannix understands where Mr. Silva is coming from and it can make decisions difficult sometimes.

Ms. Villano stated that most of this will have to be negotiated with Fire, Police and Dispatcher's unions. She asked both Chiefs that since they have gone before finance with this years' current budget are you going to have to go back to increase this budget for this year. Chief Madera wants to start negotiating in fiscal 18' and if he wants to increase hours he cannot cover that within the parameters of the 18' budget. But he wants to start the training process for EMD and the stipend win the contract now is for if they should ever take on the job of EMD. The next process of negotiating would be the job description with increase in hours and change into the four and two schedules and moving towards Emergency Fire Dispatch.

Mr. Silva asked if being so late is it possible to move towards, keep your budget as is and possibly absorb some of the costs or going back to get a line item transfer from Finance or even October Town Meeting. If everything was aligned the October Meeting would be the time for a change.

Mr. Mannix asked when he would be thinking about starting the four/two schedule.

Chief Madera said it would not be until they were negotiated and they were trained in the EMD.

Mr. Mannix said that from what has been said that November seems to be a reasonable time frame and then getting the \$67,000 from either within the department or perhaps from Finance might be what is necessary. If they don't start until half a year into it then the money would be half of what the yearly estimate would be.

Both Chiefs stated that they are looking for support on this proposal.

Mr. Mannix asked Ms. Villano what the steps were and what the vote would be at this time.

Ms. Villano stated that the Board is going to vote to allow the Police and Fire departments to move forward with the Centralized Dispatch.

This means the EMD will move from the Fire Department to the Police Department allowing the Police Department to increase their staffing from their current levels of staffing to nine full time dispatchers. Further to allow them to accomplish this by having the board to reopen negotiations

with both units to make it happen. And then to try to find the money wither from within or other places.

Ms. Villano noted that the Police Department dispatch area has undergone major rehab and upgrade and this is where the new proposal staff will go. There is also a small equipment upgrade that will either be absorbed from the department or the Regional Gaming Commission. Also, she stated that the Grant money bothers her a bit since they have had discussions in the past about the 911 money possibly disappearing so are you comfortable with this Grant staying with us.

Lt. Metcalf spoke to the Grants, there are two different types of 911 grants. One is support incentive to help offset the staffing. The other grant is EMT grant for training. Now when we are talking about a RECC grant that only goes toward the Regional Dispatch System. Our support and assistance 911 grant has been consistent for the past six years.

Chief Madera stated that if those monies weren't here we would still have to be doing something. It has helped us over the last few years though. We are not the only ones who are in this situation.

Mr. Silva said that he would really like to see the motion move forward but not to have the current budget change and to come back when you see if funds are needed in the fall.

Moved by Ms. Fernandes seconded by Mr. DeBarge that the Board allow the Police and Fire Department to move forward with the Centralized Dispatch System, allowing the Police Department to increase their current staff from four full-time and four part-time to nine full time instead. And keep their five per-diem moving forward. Also, to allow the departments to begin negotiating with the affected employees with the understanding that current budgets would not change until the October Town Meeting where they could present for any additional funds that they might need.

Vote: 4-0 in favor.

52. Letter from Susan Gove requesting to become a member of the Ludlow Cultural Council.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to have Ms. Gove come in for an interview for the Ludlow Cultural Council.

Vote: 3-0 in favor.

53. Letter from Chief Madera requesting the Board call for a Civil Service list to fill three patrolmen's positions as a result of recent retirements.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to have the Board call for a Civil Service list to as requested by Chief Madera.

Vote: 3-0 in favor.

54. Letter from Christine Bassett, District Commander of the VFW, District 7, inviting the Board of Selectmen to the District Awards Ceremony for the Patriot's Pen youth essay and Voice of Democracy audio essay contest to be held on March 28th at 6:30 p.m. at Exit 7 Theatre.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to file item #54.

Vote: 4-0 in favor.

55. Letter from Sheriff Nicholas Cocchi and Former Sheriff Michael Ashe, Jr. thanking the Board for honoring them at their meeting.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to file item #55.

Vote: 4-0 in favor.

56. Approval letter from Mary Pichetti, Director of Capital Planning, MSBA to the Town of Ludlow for the Chapin Street Elementary School, Owner's Project Manager.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to file item #56.

Vote: 4-0 in favor.

57. Letter from the Department of conservation and Recreation regarding inspection for Wade Lake Dam and Harris Pond Dam as per the Dam Safety Order to Conduct a Phase I inspection.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge seconded by Ms. Fernandes to file item #57.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Ms. Villano noted that they were deficiencies in both Dams per the inspection that must be addressed or a fine will be imposed daily of \$5,000. As the purchasing agent for the Town she signed the contract listed in item #58 so that this would begin immediately being a time sensitive issue with the fines.

58. Contract from Antonio DaCruz, Vice President, Tight & Bond for the Phase I Inspection/Evaluation Proposal for MA00549 Harris Pond Dam and MA01269 Wade Lake Dam.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to file item #58.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

59. Letter from Carla Roberts, Ludlow Cultural Council inviting the Board to attend a reception celebrating the Cultural Council and its grants receipt to be held on April 8, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at the Senior Center.

Moved by Mr. Silva second by Ms. Fernandes to file item #59.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

60. Correspondence from Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities with an attachment from Eversource Rate Review and Information. Eversource is requesting a letter of support be sent to the Department of Public Utilities in advance of the Public Hearings which commences on March 22, 2017.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to file item #60.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

61. Letter from Edward Kaczenski, Director, Engineering & Generation Assets informing the Board that MMWEC will be conducting its pipeline inspection between March 17 and March 31, 2017.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to file item #62.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

62. Transmission from Jean Christy, Project Engineer, Tighe & Bond regarding an update on the Post-Closure Use Landfill Quarterly Inspection Report at the Holyoke Street Landfill, Ludlow.

Moved by Mr. Silva, second by Mrs. Fernandes to file item #62.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

63. Letter from Chief Babineau, Fire Department requesting to charge off medical bills and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111f for injuries sustained by a Firefighter on March 16, 2017.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve the Chief's request to charge off medical bills and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111f for injuries sustained by a Firefighter
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

64. Letter from Philip Brodeur, Committee Member, Boy Scout Troop 180, with an invitation to the Board to attend the Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Theodore E. Matayer, III. To be held on April 1, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Parish, St. John the Baptist Pastoral Center.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes for the Board to congratulate Theodore E. Matayer, III and move to file item #64.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

65. Application for a Common Victualler License Application for The Yogurt Mill at 120 East Street, Ludlow.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes to approve the License for The Yogurt Mill at 120 East Street.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

66. Amendment to the Liquor License Application for a change of dba from Mateus Restaurant to Mill's Tavern & Grill.

Moved by Mrs. Fernandes seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve the change of dba from Mateus Restaurant to Mill's Tavern & Grill.
Vote: 3-0-1 in favor, Mr. Silva abstained.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes for the Board to ratify the Chairman signing the contract for the Owners Project Manager for the Chapin Street Feasibility Study.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Moved by Mr. Silva, second by Mrs. Fernandes for the Board to extend the Dog Park Committee from three to six citizens and appoint all six citizens who sent in letters of interest.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Ms. Villano has set up a tentative meeting for next week to appoint all members of the Dog Park Committee and that would include representatives from the Town, Doug Stephansik, Ms. Villano, Paula Dion and representatives from Police, but next time the Board can appoint all.

Board signed the common Victualler application for the Yogurt Mill.

Board signed the change for dba for the Mill's Tavern & Grill

Moved by Mr. DeBarge second by Ms. Fernandes that the Board accept and sign the minutes for the Executive Session of February 21, 2017 with all members present except for Mr. Silva.
Vote: 3-0-1 in favor, Mr. Silva abstained.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge seconded by Ms. Fernandes that the Board accept and sign the Selectmen's minutes for November 28, 2016 with all members present.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes for the Board to table action on the minutes of November 29, 2016.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge seconded by Ms. Fernandes for the Board to approve and the Chairman to sign the DCR voucher for Payment In lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for FY17'.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Moved by Mr. Silva, second by Ms. Fernandes for the Board to move three articles from the Annual Town Meeting to the Special Town Meeting, Police outside detail, Local 98 compensation, and Latos compensation.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes for the Board to add an article for the Special Town Meeting for unpaid bills.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Moved by Mr. Silva seconded by Ms. Fernandes for the Board to close the Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant.
Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Ms. Fernandes wanted to note in closing comments to let the residents know that the WestMass projects are private projects and that the Board has nothing to do with their decision-making

process. I do hope that WestMass continues to nurture the small businesses as they have stated and I am supportive of all the projects that have been found to be successful for the Town. She wanted to also comment on the Lupa Zoo Fundraiser last Saturday. It was a great event.

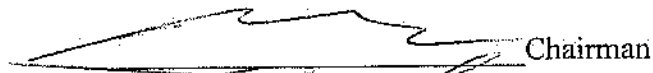
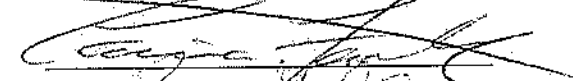

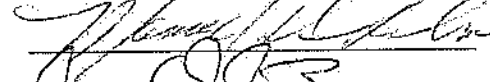
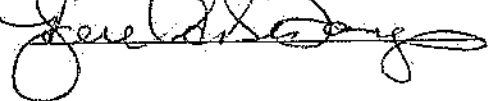
Mr. DeBarge has one comment about the ZBA meeting that they attended and would have liked to see better citizen attendance. But more importantly he was disappointed with the Town Departments, there have been a lot of letters to the Chairman of the ZBA expressing their distain or lack of support of the location where it has been planned and that the one department that should have been there speaking, the School Department. They were noticeably absent, I believe they sent a letter which he does not believe was read. In his opinion someone should have been there speaking especially with the possibility of a new school being directly across the street. He believes that a lot of us are speaking against the location and lack of safety due to the fact that the new school is most likely going to be built there if approved. To say that he is disappointed is an understatement and would like to see the School Department represented at the next meeting whenever that may be and come out and speak out as strongly as the rest of us have.

Mr. Silva has no comments.

Mr. Mannix mentioned Lupa Zoo's Fundraiser being a good time for a great entity and they did a wonderful job. He also agrees with Mr. DeBarge about the lack of representation of the Town Departments. We should all be going in the same direction and that safety is a major concern along with the environment. His concern of children living directly next to a swamp is extremely dangerous. His life experience is directly related to this type of development. In addition to the traffic logistics are a real concern. If HAP would like to try to find another piece of land that would be safer he would be happy to support them on that endeavor.

Moved by Ms. Fernandes seconded by Mr. DeBarge for the Board to enter into Executive Session for land acquisition and labor negotiations with Local 98 and LATOS to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares. And to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body at 8:55 p.m. and not to return to Open Session.

Ms. Fernandes-yes, Mr. Silva-yes, Mr. DeBarge-yes, Mr. Mannix-yes Vote: 4-0 in favor.

 Chairman





All related documents can be viewed at the Board of Selectmen's Office at Town Hall during regular business hours.