

Town of Royalston
Board of Selectmen's Meeting
Tuesday, December 4, 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 7:02 p.m.
2. The minutes of the 11/20/07 meeting were read. Mr. Hardie moved to accept the minutes as read. Mr. West seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.
3. Acknowledgements/Announcements/Correspondence:
 - a) The Board is in receipt of a letter from Fire Chief Wayne Newton requesting retirement due to disability effective 11/28/07.
 - b) The Royalston Historical Commission has reviewed the Route 32 project and found no impediments, but noted some areas of concern. Their report was forwarded to Keith Newton.
 - c) Mr. West moved to pay a bill from Kopelman & Paige in the amount of \$1,927.23. Mr. Hardie seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.
 - d) The Athol-Royalston Regional School District's Strategic Plan will be presented on 12/12/07.
 - e) The Boards of Selectmen from Athol and Royalston will hold a combined meeting on 12/5/07 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. School Committee members have been invited.
4. Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Grant: Aaron Ellison reported that he attended a meeting in Barre with the Department of Conservation & Recreation and Senator Brewer to introduce the Mass. Heritage Landscape Inventory process. This is the sixth round of heritage inventories conducted by DCR, and this one covers the North Quabbin and Upper Quabog regions. Six municipalities have been pre-selected and ten more will be chosen to participate. A state-hired landscape consultant will work with the towns to identify heritage landscapes such as cemeteries, commons, farms, historic schools, etc. The consultant will investigate what people feel are important areas and will help to provide what needs to be done to preserve them. The goal is to develop one or two priority plans. Mr. Ellison has prepared a letter identifying areas of importance. Mr. Hardie moved to approve the letter, which serves as the grant application. Mr. West seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor. The Board thanked Mr. Ellison for writing the letter and felt that it was a great document.
5. Tax Classification Hearing: The Hearing was called to order at 7:24 p.m. Assessor James Richardson recommended a tax classification of one. Mr. Hardie moved to approve the tax classification of one. Mr. West seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor. Mr. Hardie asked how likely are we to get the tax bills out since we have had to borrow \$150,000 recently to cover expenses. Mr. Richardson said they are hoping to get estimated bills out in January. They are currently waiting for forms from the Accountant, and then they will submit them to the state. Mr. Hardie emphasized the importance to getting the estimated bills out on time.
6. #1 School Street: Jim Hamilton is working on purchasing the property. He will absorb the cost of demolition. Ms. Alger has spoken with Atty. Fitzgerald, who stated that Mr. Hamilton could set up a payment plan for the back taxes with the Treasurer over a two to three year period. The Board has the authority to waive the interest. Also, there is a way for the Assessors to file with the Department of Revenue for abatement because the building is a public safety issue, but there is no guarantee that it would be granted. Mr. Hamilton would be paying on the tax lien in the interim and the Board would make a good faith effort to get the abatement. Mr. Hardie said that he is concerned about exposure as the property is in the middle of a population center where there are many kids. He expressed concern that the job be done right. Ms. Alger said that the Building

Inspector would oversee the demolition. Mr. Hamilton said that he got the building permit and is working on the appropriate insurance paperwork. He is working with all applicable agencies; proper precautions will be addressed. Mr. Hardie asked that Mr. Hamilton update the Board on a monthly basis. Mr. West commended Mr. Hamilton on such an inventive solution. Mr. West recommended that the Assessors wait to file for the abatement upon completion of the project and that the Board base their decision about waiving the interest on Mr. Hamilton's performance.

7. Department Heads Reports:

- a) Treasurer – The Board asked Treasurer Sally Zettel to come in. Several issues were addressed including reconciliation of cash flow, space issues in the Treasurer's Office, her need for a new computer, and the assistant treasurer position. A new computer will be ordered tomorrow. The Board decided to write a letter to Scott Sawyer thanking him for waiving the fee for software maintenance and advising him that the Town will pay him \$1000 in fiscal year 2009.
 - b) Police Department –
 - 1) Chief Deveneau reported that the 2008 cruiser is on line. The old cruiser is currently stored at the DPW. He will work with Keith Newton on putting it out for bid as surplus. The Chief will work on purchasing new studded snow tires and getting the horn fixed.
 - 2) Chief Deveneau requested a key to the Selectmen's Office in order to be able to put turnovers in the Treasurer's safe.
 - 3) Sergeant Hamel and Geoff Newton are working on inspections of Class II License holders.
8. Public Hearing Re: CDBG grant: The Public Hearing was called to order at 9:25 p.m. Phil Delorey reported that on 11/13/07, the Open Space Committee, Planning Board, and Board of Selectmen met to review the Community Development Strategy. The Strategy was submitted to Mr. Delorey electronically, and he made a few minor changes. Discussion was held regarding the Royalston target area and the review of the priority list. Mr. Hardie moved to adopt the Royalston Community Development Strategy as presented and discussed. Mr. West seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Department Heads Reports (continued):

- c) DPW –Keith Newton clarified Chapter 90 amounts to be submitted for reimbursement.
- d) Fire Department:
 - 1) Keith Newton stated that he received a response from the Royalston Community School regarding violations found during inspection. They are in the process of correcting each violation.
 - 2) Mr. Hardie said that he would like to defer a decision on the officers' job descriptions until he meets with them. Discussion was held regarding content of the descriptions and additional documents such as Standard Operating Procedures.
 - 3) Mr. Hardie moved to accept Wayne Newton's request for retirement with regret and deep appreciation for his many years of dedicated service in the various positions he has held. Mr. West seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor. Mr. Hardie suggested that the positions of Fire Chief, Forest Fire Warden, and Emergency Management Director be teased out. After some discussion, Mr. West moved to appoint Keith Newton as Acting Fire Chief until 6/30/08. Mr. Hardie seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor. Mr. West moved to appoint Keith Newton as Forest Fire Warden until 6/30/08. Mr. Hardie seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor. Mr. Hardie moved to appoint James Barclay as Emergency Management Director until 6/30/08 pending his acceptance of the position. Mr. Hardie seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.

9. Old Business:

- a) Mr. Hardie is working on the Asset Audit Forms. He will also distribute budget cover sheets to department heads.
 - b) Mr. West will go forward with ordering the copier for Whitney Hall once the funding source has been verified.
10. Discussion was held regarding holding a fundraiser for Wayne Newton and family.
11. The Treasury Warrant was signed.
12. At 10:51 p.m., Mr. Hardie moved to adjourn. Mr. West seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Minutes recorded by Diana Newton.

Minutes approved by Board of Selectmen on December 18, 2007.