

**MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING
JUNE 18, 2012**

PRESENT: Gregory M. Hanley (Chairman), Lewis W. Stone (Vice Chairman), Willard J. Boulter, Jr. (Clerk), Arthur P. Boyle, Jr. (Selectman), Daniel W. Trabucco (Selectman), Kathleen McCarthy (Treasurer/Collector), Matthew McNeilly (Advisory Committee), Elizabeth Bates (Assessor), James Neenan (Fire Chief), Michael Buckley (Town Accountant), Mary Ann Smith (Town Clerk), Deborah Wall (Library Director), Mark Ames (Conservation Chairman), Carey Day (Conservation), Walter Thompson, Sabrina Chilcott (Executive Assistant), Dave Antoine (PACTV Cable), Dave Palana (Pembroke Mariner Express), Charlie Mathewson (WATD) and others.

**7:00 ROBERT MACDONALD: EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT REQUEST, BRYANTVILLE
MEETING HOUSE FIREPIT**

Mr. MacDonald, Eagle Scout candidate, was present before the Board; he has received approval from the Board of the Bryantville Meeting House and the Fire Chief and now he seeks permission from the BOS. He would like to build a cooking fire pit in approved space behind the Meeting House at 32 School Street. He showed photos and drawings. Mr. Boyle moved to approve Robert MacDonald's project to build a cooking fire pit behind the Bryantville Meeting House at 32 School Street; Mr. Stone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Charlotte Skolnick and Jessica Merritt of the Girl Scouts were present before the Board; at their 100th Girl Scout Jamboree, the 300th Anniversary Committee gave approval to use the 300th seal on their crafted swap item. The girls presented Mr. Boulter with an honorary swap as a token of thanks and appreciation. Photos were taken.

CONSIDER VOTE OF SHORT TERM BORROWING IN ANTICIPATION OF STATE AID

Kathleen McCarthy, Treasurer/Collector, was present before the Board to explain that a vote is not necessary, just signatures. Signatures were obtained.

MINUTES OF JUNE 4, 2012

Mr. Trabucco made the motion to amend the minutes of June 4th as there was a statement omitted; Mr. Trabucco would like the minutes amend to include "Mr. Trabucco stated that the Wage and Personnel Board does not negotiate union contracts". Discussion ensued on whether the language was a statement or a reflection or a change to the by-law. Mr. McNeilly asked if Wage and Personnel by-laws allow for union negotiations. Mr. Hanley stated Selectman and W&P member on each negotiating team. Ms. Bates stated she doesn't recall W&P negotiating with unions. Mr. Hanley requested Mr. Thorne receive clarification from Kopelman and Paige regarding W&P by-laws. Mr. Trabucco restated his motion to amend the minutes; Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. The vote to amend was unanimously in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Stone Water Safety Awareness Day is Saturday June 23, 2012 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Town Landing, 186 Wampatuck Street. Water Safety, CPR demonstration, swimming lesson signups and more. For more information, contact Jess at 781-294-0829 or email pembrokewatersafety@gmail.com.

Mr. Boulter announced Public Safety Night at Pembroke High School, Tuesday, June 19 from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm where representatives from the Police, Fire, K9 and Sheriffs Department will be all be present; free food, safety and more. Mr. Hanley announced that the Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority, GATRA, will conduct a public hearing to obtain testimony for the proposed elimination of the Pembroke Shuttle service serving the Town of Pembroke due to lack of funding and poor ridership. The public hearing will be Thursday, June 21, 2012 at 7:00 pm in the Veteran's Hall at 100 Center Street. For more information contact GATRA at: 508-823-8828 x: 220 address: 10 Oak Street 2nd Floor, Taunton, MA 02780.

7:30 PUBLIC FORUM: OVERRIDE BALLOT QUESTIONS FOR SPECIAL ELECTION ON
JUNE 23, 2012

Mr. Hanley opened the public forum for residents with an introduction of the three questions that will be on the ballot on Saturday, June 23, 2012: #1. Shall the Town of Pembroke be allowed to assess an additional \$343,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of hiring four (4) additional full-time firefighter/paramedics for the Fire Department? #2. Shall the Town of Pembroke be allowed to assess an additional \$686,992 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of hiring eight (8) additional full-time firefighter/paramedics for the Fire Department? #3. Shall the Town of Pembroke be allowed to assess an additional \$61,074 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding a line item for a Generalist Reference Librarian salary in the Library's FY13 budget? Chief Neenan opened discussion by clarifying question number #1: \$343,000 includes salaries, equipment and benefits and will add four full time firefighter paramedics, or one person per shift at headquarters station. The Chief stated her operates four shifts with six per shift now; evening shifts drop to five people per shift. This allows for two to two and a half calls to be answered simultaneously. This would allow the Chief to operate with seven per shift and drop to six at night. The Chief explained #2 is completely separate and would allow for the hiring of eight firefighter paramedics to reopen Station 3 at the corner of Routes 14 and 53 and allow for two paramedics to be on shift around the clock. The Chief stated the station would reopen by January 1 if passed and the Chief would apply for a Class 5 ambulance license for that station. The Chief stated the average home value in Pembroke is approximately \$326,000 and the tax impact to each homeowner on question #1 is approximately \$50 per year if approved, on question #2 is approximately \$100 per year and is about \$150 per year for both questions. The Chief states his current manpower is the same as it was in 1988. The Chief states the population has gone up 70% and the fire departments "run volume" has gone up 100%. Mr. Stone asked if Station 3 needed work to reopen. The Chief stated yes but at minimal cost. Mr. Hanley opened the floor to people to speak in favor. Mr. Walter Thompson stated the Chief is undermanned and has been lucky so far. Another resident questioned why this is an override as the total is less than two percent; Mr. Buckley explained the tax levy is already at 2½% so additional assessments require an override vote and will have additional impact. Ms. Bates explained that every year the Town assesses a tax levy, amount raised on property taxes. Under proposition 2½ the amount of the next year's taxes is last year's taxes multiplied by 2½%. On top of that is added new growth; revenue from new construction. The presumption is that this revenue will offset the tax revenue, or this portion of the increase. Overrides would be added on top of that; they are permanent. Debt exclusions are not permanent; once they are paid for, they are removed. Ms. Bates states personally she would like to see Station 3 reopened but an override is a permanent increase added to the levy and can be reallocated by a vote at Town Meeting at any time. The prior resident questioned the override and asked what the long range plan is for funding; also inquired about the Towns revenue stream. Mr. Hanley stated the firefighters are undermanned. The Chief stated the Towns ISO rating is 5 out of 9. Mr. Hanley stated the public forum is to both discuss financing and need and the need is there. The resident asked the Selectmen why an override is necessary with new growth and increased tax revenues. Ms. Bates explained assessments have not gone up; they've gone down for four years which is why the tax rate has gone up to reach the 2½%. Mr. Boyle explained to absorb this request in the budget would require commensurate cuts in other departments and balancing the budget is a difficult balancing act. Ms. Bates pointed out that the Towns budget is funded with both the tax levy and state aid and state aid has been cut for several years; there is finally relief in aid forthcoming. Town Meeting can spend what the Town takes in. Mr. Trabucco pointed out that state aid is 25% of the budget and has been level funded for three years while all costs have gone up; health insurance alone is 11-12% of the budget and goes up 8-10% per year. Mr. Buckley stated that the Town has passed four debt exclusions in the past; the Hobomock School loan has just been paid off and the library will be paid off after sixteen years on January 1. The tax rate will go down by \$.11 combined through these two exclusions being relieved. Mr. Walter Thompson reiterated his support for the Fire Department and the two articles. Mr. Hanley asked if anyone wanted to speak in opposition; Mr. Carey Day stated that the Towns total pension liability is \$48m, the unfunded portion is \$19.5m, the health insurance has an annual \$45m liability with approximately \$18m unfunded. He states that adding personnel will increase the overall Town liability which the Town cannot afford. Mr. Day

states that the Fire Department is well led, well trained and functions well as it is today. Mr. Buckley provided a point of clarification on the questions; he provided question 1 as an example. The amount in the question is \$343,000 but only \$221,000 is for salaries with the remaining as provisions for benefits. Mr. Boyle questioned the \$48m pension liability; Mr. Buckley explained that this is for all past and present employees and not an annual number. Mr. Thorne explained that the \$55m budget is balanced with the cooperation of all departments and is a struggle. Mr. Thorne stated the only way to afford these additional firefighters was a proposition 2½ override as there is no wiggle room in the budget. Mr. Day asked about the Class 5 license and the expense; Chief Neenan stated the cost of the license is \$200 and is the same ambulance. Mr. Day inquired about the expense of rehabilitating Station 3; Chief Neenan stated there is the potential to offset costs of renovating the station. Mr. Trabucco stated that Chief Neenan may be referring to the fact that the real estate value of that property in such a prime location has potential for future offsets. Ms. Bates stated the property is too small for development; she also stated that new employees contribute to the pension fund at a higher rate than older employees and they will fully fund their own retirement according to Treasurer Tom O'Brien, so pension fund will fund itself at a higher rate with newer employees in the system. Mr. Hanley asked for any comments from neutral parties. Mr. Mark Ames inquired as to whether there is a rule that Pembroke firefighters have to be EMTs. Chief Neenan stated that he made a pledge to the Town that he would only hire firefighter/EMTs in 1998. Mr. Ames asked how much does being a qualified paramedic add to a salary; Chief replied that it is \$10,000 and there are 24 ff. Mr. Ames asked about \$240k expense and if it was time to evaluate a private ambulance option. The Chief stated that \$650-700k per year achieved in ambulance revenue and more than offsets costs. Mr. Ames asked if this is returned to general fund; Chief Neenan stated there is a revolving ambulance fund where proceeds are directed by acceptance of state law into the Town by-laws and are dedicated funds for ambulance related costs. Mr. Buckley stated \$225,000 goes back to the general fund at Town Meeting in a transfer so the annual balance in the revolving ambulance fund is approximately \$400k. Mr. Ames inquired about fixed costs of private ambulance service. Chief Neenan stated the towns he is aware of currently using private ambulance services (Plymouth, Brockton, Weymouth) are in high traffic area towns with hospitals in them for transport. Mr. Ames asked how much it costs now to transport resident; Chief Neenan stated it is approximately \$1200 but you aren't paying salaries on top of it so private should be higher. Mr. Ames stated he supports the fire department but not an override. Ms. Mary Ann Smith asked where a private ambulance would be stationed; Mr. Ames stated that a private contractor could lease out an unused station. Mr. Boyle stated a cost figure can be obtained from a private ambulance company for comparison sake and he will get back to Mr. Ames. Mr. Hanley asked the Town Clerk about voting hours; Ms. Smith stated on Saturday the polls are open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at all five precincts. She also stated Friday at noon is the deadline for absentee voting. Ms. Bates asked Mr. Buckley if the money transferred from the revolving ambulance fund to the general fund represented the firefighters who man the ambulance. Chief Neenan stated it covers half of Ms. Damon's salary as billing clerk and contract training comes out of these monies as well. The previous resident asked where the remaining \$425,000 went; Chief Neenan stated it buys ambulances and equips and maintains them. The resident asked when the last ambulance was purchased; the Chief stated two weeks ago and prior to that it was 2008 when the Town bought two. The next one will be purchased in the fall at a cost of \$170-180k each. Maintenance includes defibrillators, radios, tires, fuel and all related costs.

Ms. Deborah Wall was present to speak to question #3 by stating that the library was built in 1998 with reference librarian desk and was never staffed. The library has grown significantly in usage, particularly in reference to technological needs in the last two years. The patrons needs encompass ipads, laptops, ereaders, various types of basic software needs and the current staff cannot meet these demands or train residents as requested. Unadvertised technology classes that the library offers have a waiting list of one hundred residents. The employee that question three would fund would be the person to address the unfilled needs and train others and Town Meeting agreed. Ms. Wall explained that \$61k includes salary and all benefits and the tax impact to a \$400k homeowner is \$12 per year. The total library budget of the Town is 1.1% and they serve over 130,000 per year with 12,000 residents holding library cards. Mr. Ames inquired if the library charter states the librarian is in business to teach classes. He stated that many local colleges and community colleges offer continuing education classes for the residents to pay to take

classes instead of the public library offering them to residents at no charge. Ms. Wall stated that the educational component is not primary; this person assists people locate information and information sourcing, assist in programming all departments particularly adult programming; Ms. Wall stated there is not a need to direct a resident to a college course when they are unemployed and need to upload a resume in a Word document. Ms. Wall stated some basic software skills that the librarian can assist with do not require turning the patrons away. Mr. Ames asked if the current staff can assist; Ms. Wall stated the other staff was hired with other tasks and their jobs have all grown; skill levels additionally vary person to person. Ms. Wall additionally mentioned a teen tech squad of volunteers; Mr. Ames suggested recruiting more from them. Ms. Wall pointed out the library is open 54 hours per week and this is not realistic. Mr. Hanley asked if there were any additional questions; he thanked all participants and then closed the public forum.

UPCOMING ISSUES

Mr. Trabucco would like the Comcast service discussion rescheduled; Mr. Hanley stated the item is pending.

Mr. Hanley stated that PACTV has taken over the broadcast of channels 13, 14 and 15 on June 15, 2012. Since that time, the BOS have been working with the PACTV Board of Directors, their attorneys and the Towns attorneys to keep local studio access for the foreseeable future and a tentative agreement has been reached; all of the attorneys are preparing a final agreement for ratification by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Stone moved, seconded by Mr. Boulter, to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body - Center Preschool, and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position on the public body and the chair so declares.

Roll call vote: Boulter, yes - Boyle, yes - Stone, yes - Trabucco, yes – Hanley, yes.