Town of Needham
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for January 11, 2011
Needham Public Services Administration Building

6:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: No Activity.

7:00 p.m. Call to Order:
A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman John A. Bulian. Those present were Daniel P. Matthews, Gerald A. Wasserman, Denise C. Garlick, Maurice P. Handel, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, and Recording Secretary Mary Hunt.

Mr. Bulian congratulated Ms. Garlick who was sworn in last week as the Town's new State Representative.

7:00 p.m. FY 2011 Snow & Ice Program Update:
Richard P. Merson, DPW Director, Robert A. Lewis, Assistant DPW Director, and Rhain Hoyland, Highway Superintendent appeared before the Board to discuss how the Town handles preparation for a major snow event.

Mr. Merson said planning, preparation, and people are the three key pieces for handling a snowstorm. Mr. Merson said the staff at the DPW continually watch the weather forecasts and receive updates in the morning and afternoon. He said as a weather event begins to evolve discussion begins. Mr. Merson said the Town started planning for tonight's storm late last week. Mr. Merson said planning for snow events really begins during the summer with a review of equipment and lining up plowing contractors.

Mr. Bulian asked if the Town does any pre-treatment of the roadways. Mr. Merson said an anti-icing treatment process containing snowmelt is spread on major roadways around Town and the goal is to provide a first melting when snow reaches the ground, then sanding and salting can start. Mr. Merson said snow is plowed when there are two or more inches of snow.

Mr. Bulian announced the Needham School Superintendent has cancelled school for tomorrow, and asked Mr. Merson how the Town will handle the morning and evening rush hour when it is snowing heavily. Mr. Merson commented the DPW is one crew, unlike the police and fire department who have multiple shifts. He said it is the job of the DPW to provide safe public conditions, but workers must be given time to rest. Mr. Merson commented the storm coming tonight will begin around midnight and end in the late afternoon on Wednesday. He said when the storm does end it will take four to six hours to plow and push back all of the snow.

Mr. Wasserman said he was surprised to hear the contractors needed to be called and asked if routes needed to be assigned with each snow event. Mr. Merson said contractors are assigned a route for the season. He said the purpose of calling each contractor is to make sure drivers are not sick and that equipment is fully functioning.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said in recent years, the public has been concerned with the issue of snow pack and keeping it off some of the arterial roads. She said the Town decided to begin plowing at two inches of snow, instead of three inches. She said the Town also began a pretreatment program of spreading calcium chloride on roads seven to eight hours before the storm arrives to prevent the initial snowfall from bonding to the roadway. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented the Town will remove snow from the downtown area, and asked Mr. Merson to explain why it must be a full 24 hours to 48 hours after the snow event to begin removal. Mr. Merson said it is most effective and efficient to remove snow during the overnight hours, and that the Town allots time for shop owners to clear the sidewalk in front of their shop before beginning the snow removal process.

Mr. Bulian asked what the role is of DPW, during a snow event, with respect to medical emergencies and downed power lines, and how does the DPW interact with the police and fire departments. Mr. Merson said the DPW has the ability to communicate with both police and fire and is ready to assist and help get their vehicles to any location.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said she receives many calls about clearing residential sidewalks and asked Mr. Merson to comment. He stated there are approximately 160 miles of sidewalks in Needham, but only plow about 52 miles in order to provide safe passage of children to get to school.

Mr. Handel asked if there is anything the public can do to help the DPW. Mr. Merson said the best thing to do is to stay off roadways to allow the DPW crews to get their job done.

Ms. Fitzpatrick mentioned the density of the community is what really drives expenditures in the Capital Plan. She said in comparing the Town to other communities (Millis, Ashland, Medway, Westwood) Needham has significantly more roads to maintain and clear of snow and ice. In addition, she said it is hard to find places to put the snow.

7:35 p.m. Consent Agenda:

Motion by Mr. Wasserman that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the Consent Agenda and Appointments as presented.
Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

1.	Approve amended minutes from February 9, 2010, which now reflect the approved Board of Appeals fee of $500 for Special Permit/All others
2.	Accept the following donation to the Needham Fire Department to help fund its Student Awareness of Fire Education program: Ms. Sara Romer & Mr. Andrew Kaplan - $100
3.	Accept donations made to the Needham Revitalization Trust Fund from the following residents: Anita P. Olson - $50; Daniel P. Matthews - $100.
4.	Accept the following donations received to the Needham Health Department's Gift of Warmth Fund: Congregational Church of Needham- Outreach Committee - $2,000; Shahin S. Sagafi - $200; Mary Clare Siegal- $100; Saint Joseph's Guild- $350; Christ Episcopal Church- $750; Carter Memorial Methodist Church- $2,500; First Church of Christ, Scientist- $100.00; and Rabbi Carl M. Perkins of Temple Aliyah- $180
5.	Accept the following donations received to the Council on Aging: First Baptist Church- $500; the Andrews family- $25; the Cruickshank family- $50; the Gesner family- $100; the Burbank family- $275; Low Vision Group- $60; the Aronson family- $100; the DeLemos family- $100; Wingate- $50; the Hicks family- $200; the Gilbert family- $50; and a $125 miscellaneous donation. Also accept the amount of $1,556.60 in miscellaneous donations for Transportation for the Council on Aging.
6.	Water & Sewer Abatement Order No. 1117
7.	Accept the following donations made to the Needham Park and Recreation Commission for the planting of a tree at Perry Park in memory of Davis Johnson: Richard Fernandez- $100, Brian Dies- $50, Roger Cunningham- $100, George Megaloudis- $30, Nancy C. Smith- $100, Johnathan Fox- $50, Betsy Harris- $50, Tina Souza- $50, Larissa Drayer- $45, Kristine Sullivan- $50, Adam Dephoure- $50, Michael Mockus- $25, Paul Flack- $25, and Parent Talk- $100.
8.	Accept donation of $50.00 made to the Police Department for a child safety seat installation from Maile Naylor of 226 Fuller Street, Newton, MA 02465.

7:35 p.m. Town Manager:
Ms. Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager appeared before the Board with 4 items to discuss:

1. Open Annual Town Meeting Warrant:
   Ms. Fitzpatrick asked the Board to open the warrant for the 2011 Annual Town Meeting to be held at the Newman School. She stated requests for warrant articles are due by Monday, February 7, 2011.

   Motion by Mr. Wasserman that the Board vote to open the warrant for the 2011 Annual Town Meeting.
   Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.

2. Call for Special Town Meeting:
   Ms. Fitzpatrick told the Board the School Committee and Permanent Public Building Committee have continued to evaluate options for access, traffic and parking at the Pollard School during the relocation of children from the Newman School for the 2011/2012 school year. She commented, as noted at the November 2010 Special Town Meeting, funding for the project would have to occur in the winter of 2011 in order for work to be completed by September, 2011. Ms. Fitzpatrick suggested the Board call for a Special Town Meeting to be held on Monday, March 14, 2011.

   Motion by Mr. Wasserman that the Board call for a Special Town Meeting to be held on March 14, 2011 at the Pollard School.
   Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.

3. On-going Project Update:
   Ms. Fitzpatrick provided the Board with an update on several projects. She stated that the Town continues to work with MBTA on the parcel transfer. She stated the Town is aiming for February 1st, 2011 as the date for transfer. Ms. Fitzpatrick updated the Board on the property at 174 Charles River Street which the Town purchased for the expansion of the Walker Gordon playing field. She said demolition of the house will begin within weeks. Ms. Fitzpatrick also told the Board the project at Carol-Brewster is progressing. She said the Committee, appointed by the Board, developed a plan and permits have been received. She said a path has been installed and planting will occur in the spring.

4. Capital Facility Update:
   Ms. Fitzpatrick provided the Board with an update on the on-going facility projects, including: Newman relocation to Pollard, Pollard Roof, Pollard Condition Assessment, Town Hall, and the Senior Center. She reminded the Board the Newman project will include work on the auditorium, cafeteria, and gymnasium, with modular classrooms being installed during the summer 2011. In addition, she reminded the Board the roof at the Pollard School is being replaced during the summer 2011. She said an RFP for the new senior center has been issued, and the PPBC and two user representatives will be interviewing proposed designers in mid-February. Ms. Fitzpatrick updated the Board on the status of the renovation of Town Hall. Slides of various spaces in the building were shown.

8:05 p.m. Discussion of Regional Agreement – Minuteman School:
Dr. Ed Bouquillon, Superintendent Minuteman Regional Vocational & Technical High School, Ernie Houle, Director of Community Education, and Jeff Stulin, Minuteman School Representative appeared before the Board to discuss the status of the Regional Agreement Task Force and proposed action that the School District will request of the 16 towns in the Minuteman School District.

Dr. Bouquillon stated 16 out of 16 member district towns approved Minuteman moving ahead with the MSBA on a feasibility study, with approval to borrow $724,000. Dr. Bouquillon said Minuteman agreed to several items prior to the hiring of an Owners Project Manager and a design architect firm. He stated Minutemen agreed not to spend any of the $724,000 until completion of an Enrollment Study, a Strategic Plan for the MSBA outlining educational programs, a Utilization Study, and changes to the Regional Agreement as recommended by the Regional Agreement Task Force. Dr. Bouquillon said the studies are in various stages of completion. He stated Minuteman experienced a 60% increase in its freshman class this year, and anticipates a similar increase next year. He said enrollment from Needham jumped from 16 to 26 students in one year. Dr. Bouquillon gave an overview of the Regional Agreement Task Force, and told the Board the Task Force agreed upon five recommendations as listed in the Draft Executive Summary. He stated four of the five recommendations have been agreed to unanimously by the Regional Agreement Task Force, but the Minuteman School Committee has not yet voted on the recommendations. Dr. Bouquillon said the Task Force was considering a change in the Apportionment of Capital Costs formula and have looked at 15 different models. Dr. Bouquillon told the Board components of each model cannot be vetted in time to ask the Towns to consider an Article change this year. He stated the Minuteman School Committee voted to remove the Article and have asked the Task Force to continue to meet to analyze models and deliver a recommendation no later than June 1, 2011 so the School Committee can prepare for next year's Town Meeting season. He stated the MSBA is supportive of the action. Dr. Bouquillon said the MSBA is reviewing the Enrollment Study draft, as well as the work done on the Strategic Planning and Educational Program Planning and expect to endorse the project. Dr. Bouquillon said communities have asked for more detail. He said a year from now more will be known about the project scope.

Jeff Stulin commented on the part of the Regional Task Force Agreement that has not been completed yet, and wanted the members to know that during the process of making revisions to the Regional Agreement, there has been amazing agreement. He said the amount of progress has been very encouraging, and that it is unfortunate the last piece cannot be put in place before Town Meeting.

Dr. Bouquillon said there is agreement to a three year rolling average of enrollment for operating as well as capital, and a five pupil minimum for operating and capital. He said two additional changes to the Regional Agreement include charging post graduate students a tuition. He said all post graduate programs are now eligible for the G.I. bill and Pell Grants. Dr. Bouquillon also commented on the recommendation to set aside 10% of all out of district tuition revenue for capital projects.

Mr. Wasserman said he is concerned the current wealth factors the State uses need to be fixed. He said if they are broken there are some issues about using them for the formula that need to be discussed. Dr. Bouquillon agreed and said the Task Force agrees as well.

Dr. Bouquillon commented on the budget and spreadsheets that were handed out to the Board. He said Minuteman is facing some significant financial challenges. He said health insurance, Medicare costs, utility costs, have all increased. Dr. Bouquillon said he has reduced administration, support, teachers, and eliminated programs. He stated he eliminated the last Assistant Superintendent position in the district, and other cuts representing 17 staff positions. Dr. Bouquillon pointed out Needham sends 24 students to Minuteman, representing 6.4% of the operating budget for a total assessment of $562,000.

Mr. Handel asked what portion of students come from member communities? Dr. Bouquillon said approximately 2/3 are from member communities, and said there are 754 total students (445 are from member towns, 309 are from non-member towns). Mr. Handel asked what the estimated cost for a student from a non-member town is. Dr. Bouquillon said the base tuition for non-member students for FY11 is $16,800, however the School Committee voted on December 18, 2010 to charge the maximum amount of $18,000. Dr. Bouqillon said on average, tuition for students from non-member towns is higher.

Mr. Wasserman noted there were no changes in the recommendations as to how a town gets in or out of the system, and asked about "liberalizing" the requirements. Dr. Bouquillon said it was discussed at Task Force meetings and it was decided not to change the requirements for entering and exiting the system due to the lack of detail surrounding the capital project, and the work being done to recruit member towns. Mr. Wasserman asked once the capital project is formalized, would the School Committee consider reviewing the requirements? Jeff Stulin commented the Regional Task Force was charged with looking at the issue and if they wanted to revisit it they would have to discuss with all of the member towns.

Mr. Stulin commented he is very pleased with Dr. Bouquillon and the work he has done thus far, as well as the rate of progress on the Regional Agreement and the building project. Mr. Matthews echoed the sentiment and thanked Dr. Bouquillon for his effort. Mr. Bulian thanked Mr. Stulin for his effort.

8:35 p.m. Board Discussion:
MMA Resolutions:

The Board discussed the resolutions to be discussed at the MMA Annual Business Meeting to be held on January 22, 2011 relative to transportation finance and administration and health insurance plan design authority.

Mr. Bulian stated there are two resolutions. He said the resolution calling for health insurance plan design authority for cities and towns has previously been approved by the Board. Mr. Bulian asked for discussion on the second resolution, Proposed Resolution on Transportation Finance and Administration. Mr. Wasserman gave a brief overview of the Resolution.

Motion by Mr. Matthews that the Board vote to authorize the Chairman to vote in favor of the Proposed Resolution on Transportation Finance and Administration.
Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.

8:40 p.m. Adjourn:
Motion by Mr. Matthews that the Board vote to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting of January 11, 2011.
Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 5-0.