**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 1, 2016**

Meeting called to order at 5:00 P.M. by Chairman David E. Wojnar, Selectman Kevin Gaspar, Sr., & Garry L. Rawcliffe - Meeting Minutes Approved November 30, 2015 Regular Session

**MEETING MAIL**

NEW BEDFORD CITY COUNCIL OPIATE CRISIS-received correspondence from the New Bedford City Council requesting information on what the current treatment plans are regarding the utilization of Town properties, or future site plans relative to the opioid crisis; further are there any treatment centers or plans for inpatient or outpatient services in the town. As the resources in New Bedford are being exhausted due to the influx of residents of these surrounding Towns coming to New Bedford and expending our services. Selectman Gaspar motioned to place on file and ask Chief Gallagher to reply, Selectman Rawcliffe seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

BRISTOL COUNTY MOSQUITO CONTROL-received correspondence from Bristol County Mosquito Control asking for the Town’s support for proposed mosquito spraying budget. Please be aware that your indication of support does not require your municipality to raise or appropriate any funds as the DOR assesses each community its proportioned share of our budget as part of the “Cherry Sheet” local aid distribution. Selectman Gaspar motioned to approve, Selectman Rawcliffe seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

ELECTION WARRANT-received the notice to warn the inhabitants of the Town of Acushnet of voting Precincts for the Presidential Primaries for the candidates of the political parties on March 1st 2016. Selectman Rawcliffe motioned to approve, Selectman Gaspar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

**APPOINTMENTS**

FULL-TIME POLICE OFFICER APPOINTMENTS- received correspondence from Chief Alves regarding 2 part-time officers who he recommends to be appointed to full-time status. Ryan Hemphill has earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice and has been a part-time officer since 2014. Selectman Rawcliffe motioned to appoint Ryan Hemphill to full-time status, Selectman Gaspar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

Kraig Pimental also has been on the force since 2014. He has earned an Associates Degree in General Studies from Bristol Community College. Selectman Rawcliffe motioned to appoint Kraig Pimental to full-time status, Selectman Gaspar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

Selectmen gave South Coast Neighbors United (SCNU), which opposes the proposed LNG expansion, almost an hour’s floor time at the board's Feb. 1 meeting. The meeting was held at the Council on Aging because of the expected attendance, which was around 100 people.

The group’s spokesman, Roger Cabral, used most of the time on a presentation explaining why the organization wants to stop the project.

At the end of the presentation, selectmen offered SCNU one at-large seat on a proposed seven-resident advisory committee on the LNG proposal. The committee will be chaired by Fire Chief Kevin Gallagher. Select Board Chairman David Wojnar said two residents from each voting precinct will be picked to serve on the advisory panel. Selectman Rawcliffe motioned to form the Citizens Advisory Group, Selectman Gaspar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

Residents have until March 1 to send resumes and letters of interest to Town Hall to volunteer for the advisory group. Wojnar said he would like “an independent authority," like the town moderator, to pick the members so it doesn’t appear that selectmen are favoring opponents or advocates.

Selectmen have repeatedly indicated that they will need to hire outside technical consultants to review the proposed project, a position that the SCNU is also supporting.

Cabral, a former chairman of the town’s Finance Committee, started his presentation by saying, “My biggest objection… is that this is just the wrong spot for this facility.”

Cabral said the rural neighborhood off Peckham Road where two 3.4 billion cubic foot storage tanks he said another objection is that “about 40 percent of this site is wetlands,” which the utility company is proposing to fill or alter to site the tanks and production facilities. “It could be the biggest LNG facility on the East Coast,” Cabral said. He said the proposed tanks would be 170 feet high and 90 yards wide, six times the size of the colorful natural gas tank standing beside the Southeast Expressway near Boston. Cabral said the tanks would be supplied by project partner Spectra Energy’s proposed 24-inch wide gas pipeline extension from existing Freetown lines, requiring permanent easements along a roughly three-mile route. He pointed out that the site would not just be a storage facility, but also serve as “a production facility” where the natural gas is chilled and compressed for storage, then warmed and moved into trucks for delivery to distant power plants. Gas emissions are emitted in the compression and decompression process, and “this is not the same as what we have now,” which is just a storage facility, he stressed. Cabral submitted three studies of the energy marketplace to selectmen for review, all concluding that the state doesn’t need additional gas storage capacity at this time. One was State Attorney General Maura Healey’s recent report indicating additional gas storage capacity is not needed in Massachusetts, which states that “residential consumers should not be forced to pay for these (proposed new) pipelines.”

Cabral suggested consumers need to be aware that the utility companies will benefit from the pipelines and new storage facilities, but “our money” will be “This project is not about Acushnet in any way,” he added, saying there were more risks than benefits to the community. “Let’s not do this for money” in possible tax revenues, he concluded. The town could get an estimated $9 million to $10 million in tax revenues annually from the projected $600 million project. When Wojnar asked the packed meeting room how many people were opposed to the LNG expansion, a quick show of hands came from the majority of attendees.

Later in the meeting, Eversource Community Relations Manager Dennis Galvam gave selectmen several industry studies and reports indicating there was a need for infrastructure expansion. He also provided written answers to five questions posed by board members back in December. His oral and written responses indicate Eversource and its partners have reached out to New Bedford and Freetown officials to discuss the expansion plans, as requested by Acushnet officials. The companies are keeping both communities in the information loop during the pre-application process. Galvam said the company will not provide requested decommissioning plans for the compression plant and storage tanks because they are not required by the federal regulators overseeing the project. Galvam said a decommissioning plan would be prepared for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) when they decide to stop using the facility. He promised, “There would be no residual hazardous substances” left behind if site use was ever discontinued. The utility rep also said Eversource “can’t guarantee” the new facility would permanently reduce the truck traffic currently coming and going from the site. He also indicated the company has “no intent or desire” at present to ever operate “a local distribution center” at the site.

Town Counsel Jonathan Eichman was on hand for the meeting Monday, giving officials and residents a brief overview of how the FERC review process works. He said the utilities are still in the pre-application phase and are planning to submit a full application to the regulatory board by November 2016.

FERC is currently reviewing preliminary environmental report filings and has opened the case for public input. Wojnar said the FERC public input process officially got under way last week at an open house on possible pipeline routes.

Eichman said because federal siting regulations take precedence over state law and local ordinances, Acushnet’s zoning bylaws and planning regulations will not apply to the project. He said the company’s only official local review would be a Conservation Commission's check of wetlands delineations.

After the SCNU presentation, one supporter asked Wojnar if he was ready to declare his public opposition to the plans. The chairman said he had promised all parties “an objective review” of all the pros and cons before taking a position, and was holding to that promise.

Wojnar said, “I’m going to undertake a very deliberate review of this,” before deciding if he is for or against the expansion plans.

Selectman Kevin Gaspar said it was “very difficult” to study such a large scale project. He said he and other board members have had to do a lot of homework on issues. Gaspar promised he would have “plenty of comments” for FERC officials at upcoming public input sessions, but he said he was still doing research on some concerns.

Selectman Gaspar motioned to send SCNU’s five-page memorandum on the proposed plans to Eversource, so the company can put its responses to SCNU's concerns in writing for selectmen to review, Selectman Rawcliffe seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

**OLD BUSINESS**

SNOW REMOVAL INVOICES- the FY2016 snow removal appropriation of $25,000 has been exhausted. The Finance Department has confirmed that all invoices related to repairs and maintenance has been performed on equipment used for the snow removal process. The current invoices total $34,725.55 and the snow & ice account deficit balance is $49,838.72. Selectman Rawcliffe motioned to approve the invoices, Selectman Gaspar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

**NEW BUSINESS**

EPA CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF HISTORIC ARTIFACTS-received correspondence from the EPA regarding artifacts that were found at the Beech Street Harbor Superfund Site. Mr. Coutinho sent an email to the Historical Commission & Henry Young as they have met with the EPA regarding the matter. The Selectman suggest they wait until we hear back from them to decide if we want to sign the agreement to let the EPA keep the items. Selectman Rawcliffe motioned to table until further notice, Selectman Gaspar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

BUDGET AMENDMENT FIRE DEPT.-received correspondence from the Fire Chief regarding the vacant full-time fire fighter position. This slot is filled by using a combination of full-time firefighters, call fire fighters and when necessary the chief. The decision was made four years ago to fund the coverage of this slot from the funds appropriated for it in the full-time fire fighter salary line item. Last fiscal year, at this time, we transferred a total of $40,000 from this line item to overtime and call salaries with $20,000 going to each account. With $15,000 remaining in the present Call Salary line item no transfer to that line item is requested at this time. I request your approval to transfer from full-time salaries $20,000 to overtime line item. Selectman Rawcliffe motioned to approve the transfer, Selectman Gaspar seconded and all were in favor. Motion Passes.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

**WATER/SEWER SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

**INFORMATION ONLY**

ADJOURNED REGULAR SESSION AT 6:35 P.M.

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David E. Wojnar

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Garry L. Rawcliffe

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Kevin Gaspar, Sr. BOARD OF SELECTMEN