TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 9, 2014
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall

Present: Brenda Q. Aldrich, Ronald E. Aponte, George D. Archible, William R. Barnett
Absent: Kenneth E. Elstein

1) Call to Order: Chairman Aldrich called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the
   Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Sign Documents:
   a) Warrant #1450 was signed for $366,305.69
   b) Routine documents
   c) Approval of Minutes: None.

3) Additions to the Agenda:

4) Appearances Before the Board:
   7:33 p.m., Pole Hearing #2014-3, Boardman Street: Mr. Aponte as the Acting Clerk of
   the Board read the Pole Hearing Notice and opened the Pole Hearing #2014-3. It is to
   place one jointly owned pole numbered T.6S/E.6S on the southeasterly side of Boardman
   Street at a point approximately 1,150 feet southwesterly from the centerline of George
   Hannum Street. It is to provide for the distribution of intelligence and
   telecommunications and for the transmission of high and low voltage electric current.

   Paul Davis and engineer for Verizon spoke in support of the pole. There are two
   objectives to this placement. The first is to support pole #6 which is across the street. It
   is to replace an existing pole with push braces and there is currently a push pole in the
   middle of #44 front yard. This pole placement will take the place of that support system
   and take the push pole out of #44’s front yard.

   Mr. Aponte noted that the Board is in receipt of a memorandum from the Director of the
   Department of Public Works who is in support of the placement but has requested that the
   pole be placed at least 6 ft from the existing pavement edge. A National Grid
   representative was also present for the hearing.

   Mr. Dickey, of 44 Boardman Street and stated that he is in support of this pole placement.
   He questioned why there wasn’t a pole hearing previous to this hearing when the pole
   was placed in the middle of his yard. Mr. Aponte stated he honestly does not know when
   that original pole was placed. The Town Administrator stated there had been an existing
   pole on their property but then one day they came home and there was this one which was
   twice a big and long. Mr. Brougham stated that he has been working with Mr. Dickey on
   trying to get this straightened out. He stated that he supports moving the push pole to the
   other side of the road and utilizing a cabling system as planned. Mr. Dickey asked if he
can be present when the push pole is replaced because their heavy equipment almost took out their well the last time. Mr. Aponte asked the Town Administrator to follow-up with Mr. Bressette to see if it's possible to notify the homeowner when the push pole will be moved and to follow-up with regards as to why no pole hearing was held for the previous change.

With no further comments, Mr. Aponte moved to close the Pole Hearing. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.

Mr. Aponte moved to endorse the pole placement as discussed in petition #2014-3. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.

7:40 p.m. Doug Albertson, Zoning Amendments: Mr. Albertson presented the Board with a synopsis that he had prepared for this discussion. He stated that 14 years ago there was an effort to put together some kind of zoning to make things happen at the former State School grounds. The underlying zoning is light industrial which was placed there well over 20 years ago and is going to be useless under the current zoning by-law. EDIC members at the time came up with the Business and Technology Park which was good enough at that point in time. Mass Development is now involved and is the lead agent for this property and a few months ago they said something needed to be done about the zoning. So the process began of drafting new zoning. It is based off the Business and Technology Park but with some changes and then when the public hearing was held it was decided that a new zoning by-law was needed which would make it easier and cleaner all around.

The current proposal is to withdraw the Business and Technology Park Special Permit from all of parcel B that is still owned by the Belchertown Economic Industrial Corporation, the two parcels that the citizens of Belchertown own on Berkshire Avenue which is occupied by the doggie daycare and Great Threads, the other is vacant and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts field out front which he believes the State will give to the Town. Mr. Aponte stated that in principal it has been agreed upon to have that title transferred from the State of Massachusetts to the EDIC augmenting the parcel. Its very attractive because of the frontage involved. The Recreation Department and Recreation Committee has been notified as they utilize the front fields. Mr. Albertson indicated that the above mentioned property would be the boundary for the new zoning. He stated that there had been some discussion as to whether or not to include the parcels that had already been sold by the EDIC but for simplicity sake it was decided not to include that property. For the time being the Business and Technology Park Special Permit will be left alone because those properties were committed under that zoning.

It will be a new district, he has drafted it and gone through it a few times making improvements. He also just got comments back from Mass Development so he will continue to make changes up until the language is what everyone wants. The title will be Business Neighborhood Center. The thinking has changed, the market that has changed and the community has expressed certain ideas that they want it to be more of a center for people to go to. It will have some retail, some restaurants, maybe a pub, maybe some
civic amenities. The big thing is that we are actively working to get an assisted living or continuing care facility there as well as maybe some residential services such as an apartment over a work place or a live/work space. Ms. Aldrich stated that this will open it up to more possibilities then what people originally thought, it won’t just be an assisted living. Mr. Albertson stated that Mass Development has said that a developer wants to know what it is that he can go in and put in there. This will allow for the developer to know what is allowed or not allowed. Mass Development will be actively marketing the site to developers and will be able to actively recruit developers according to what we are looking for.

Ms. Aldrich questioned if this model is in use somewhere else in the State. Mr. Albertson stated there are similar models in different places. He said that one famous one that has been going for about 20 years or so is Mashpee Commons that was a dead shopping mall that was redesigned into an actual community with streets and mixed businesses and it seems quite successful. Other places are trying to do these things. Mr. Albertson stated there is an increasing market for smaller living units and if you have people living in an area they will also spend their money there – they step out of their apartment and walk to the neighborhood store.

Mr. Barnett questioned if this were to become a fact and the zoning is changed would it have any effect on the $2 million dollars the State owes the Town for the reimbursement of that property. Mr. Albertson stated he doesn’t have a crystal ball but indicated that Mass Development has stated the reason this is on a somewhat fast schedule is that if we can show by the end of this fiscal year that we are taking real, tangible action to redevelop the site and not just talking about it, it put a little more weight into getting the $2 million or so at least for initial cleanup.

Mr. Aponte stated he wanted to augment what Mr. Albertson had stated. He stated that a couple of years ago at town meeting the Town authorized the borrowing of up to 2.5 million that showed the Town was committed to cleaning up this property. He further stated that because of this and with the help of our legislators, particularly Senator Candaras the Town was able to get approximately $200,000 through Mass Development to be utilized for soft costs such as engineering, surveys, and etcetera. As Mr. Albertson indicated this is another show by the Town of its commitment and beyond that as Mass Development has indicated this shows the development community that Belchertown means business. This makes it easier for the developer because they will know what they can and cannot do. It is a clear sign to the State and the development community that Belchertown means business.

Ms. Aldrich asked Mr. Albertson what we need to do as a Board short of a Town Meeting because she stated he has said before the end of the fiscal year which is in 21 days. Mr. Albertson stated that obviously there would not be a town meeting by then so it would be up to the Board to decide when it would be a good time to hold a special town meeting. In the meantime look through the material he presented and get comments back to him and come to the public hearing tomorrow if its possible.
The Town Administrator stated that Mass Development is anxious to have the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board and the EDIC endorse this concept. There is a posted public hearing for tomorrow night. Mass Development was going to attend the hearing tomorrow night and they were going to come to our meeting tonight. He didn’t feel it was right to ask them to come from Boston for both meetings which is why Mr. Albertson is here tonight. There is a meeting posted for tomorrow night for the Board of Selectmen in case they attend and have a quorum. As a contingency he was asking that the Board vote to embrace this concept so that at least the Board of Selectmen would have voted to go along with the votes from the Planning Board and the EDIC. The Board agreed to hold off the vote tonight and will have a quorum attend tomorrow night’s public hearing at which time they will vote to embrace this concept.

8:00 p.m. LeeAnne Connolly, conservation Administrator – Wenzel APR and Crestview Acres Subdivision: Ms. Connolly indicated that she has four documents that she needs signed and notarized tonight. Ms. Aldrich interrupted Ms. Connolly asking about the late addition to the agenda. Ms. Connolly indicated that it was set to be discussed. It’s the conservation restriction.

Ms. Aldrich stated that there is one addition to the agenda and that a motion had not yet been made on it and that it was in the Board’s packets this evening for Jabish Brook conservation. Ms. Connolly indicated that she had just gotten the paperwork today for this.

Ms. Aldrich indicated Ms. Connolly should begin with her first property. Ms. Connolly indicated that Mr. Albertson was there and would speak about Crestview so she should go first and not have to listen to the information regarding the other properties.

Mr. Albertson, Town Planner began by stating Crestview Subdivision, Crestview Drive, Ray Authier Crestwood Drive Associates, off of Barton Avenue are getting very close to finishing their subdivision. They have the final disposition of their neighborhood open space. The Conservation Commission has agreed to accept it and apparently the Board of Selectmen need to endorse it as well. Ms. Connolly stated her Commission had voted back in April to accept that land but then the deed was not drawn up. She now has the deed and the Conservation Commission signed it this evening. Ms. Aldrich stated it was a little piece of land if she remembered correctly. Ms. Connolly stated it was 12.5 acres. Mr. Albertson stated at first he thought this was just going to be a small patch of woods. He stated he walked around it and was surprised it was actually a pretty nice piece of upland with some substantial oaks. He stated there is a path into it already and it could make a nice little neighborhood spot. Ms. Connolly stated as part of the open space and the Planning Board subdivision planning process they have to designate open space. The Conservation Commission looks at each parcel to decide if they want to manage it or not. She needs the Board’s signatures on the acceptance of the deed for that parcel. Mr. Aponte moved that the Board accept the deed for the so called Crestview Acres land and endorse the said acceptance. Mr. Barnett questioned if this was the property that the Town paid a dollar for? It was confirmed that he was correct. He then questioned if that should be part of the motion. Mr. Aponte amended the motion to add in for the amount
of §1. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0. Mr. Aponte questioned if it needed to be notarizd. Ms. Connolly stated she was not sure about it as she didn’t see any place to notarize it. She stated the Conservation Commission has to have it notarized. Ms. Connolly had the Board sign and she then notarized it.

Ms. Connolly then brought out the paperwork for the Wenzel APR. She stated some of the Board may remember it. She said there was a Town Meeting vote and $40,000 was allocated from CPA funds and it sat there for two years. She was told that it was held up because of the farm bill, so what happens in Washington, DC does affect what happens here. She received a phone call on Thursday telling her they were ready to move on the Wenzel APR. Now they need an amended APR because the one that was signed is two years old and she has the changes to the amendment. She indicated there are formatting changes. On page five there is a formatting alignment change. On page six and seven there is an insertion of federal language required under the new farm bill. On page ten the word United States was inserted. On page 14 the word fully was deleted from section five and it written in whole or part. This is the document that the State has now modified for us to sign. She has her commission’s signature but now she needs the Board of Selectmen to sign and then she will notarize it. Mr. Aponte moved the Board of Selectmen accept and endorse the APR for Wenzel Farm as amended. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.

Ms. Connolly informed that the Board that she had received the draft document today for the conservation restriction for the Jabish Brook Conservation Area. Ms. Aldrich confirmed that information was in their packet. Ms. Connolly indicated that this document will not be finalized until the closing which is anticipated to be June 23rd. The book and page have been left out of the document because nothing is recorded. She doesn’t have a final deed but is going to show the Board a draft deed. The Conservation Restriction has been reviewed and that it’s the standard language that was used for the Meade Farm and the Pelham Country Club. Every time CPA funds are used we are required to do a conservation restriction and it needs a third party holder so the Kestrel Trust is going to be the holder of the Conservation Restriction. This is how its been formatted, this is grant #9, so that’s how we did the last eight of them.

Mr. Aponte stated the question he has if what’s before the Board is draft and she believes that they are closing on the 23rd or there about. Ms. Connolly interrupted and stated it has to close by June 30th. Mr. Aponte stated what he’s looking at has to be ready for the 23rd for their meeting. He questioned if she needs the Board’s endorsement. She stated she would like it tonight because there’s very little to change in it. Kestrel Land Trust has reviewed it today and they are fine with it. Ms. Connolly has reviewed it, Irene Delbono from the Department of Conservation and Recreation has reviewed it and she is fine with it but she is always allowed the last signature. This isn’t necessarily needed for the closing; this is needed for the reimbursement. Mr. Aponte stated it needs to be done by the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Connolly stated she would do it as soon as she can because the turn around can be as quick as two weeks and she doesn’t want Lisa Banner knocking on her door saying I didn’t borrow this money for the Town, give me the money for this property. Mr. Aponte stated his concern is signing a document that hasn’t been finalized,
that it's a little scary personally for him and then what is the legal standing of a signed document stamped draft. Ms. Connolly stated she didn't know. She stated the Town Attorney drew up this draft document today with signature pages. Her commission signed it and then she needs the Board of Selectmen to sign it to accept the conservation restriction when it actually completed. It won't be completed until the property is sold, transferred by ownership and the deed, book and page are recorded at the Registry of Deeds. She stated its about 95% completed. Mr. Aponte stated he thinks he sees where town counsel is going and he's not sure he's comfortable doing this, that she wants the Board to sign the signature page, then she's going to make corrections of the body of the document and then insert the signature page. Ms. Connolly stated the State always has the final say. We send the document to them signed and then the State will modify it making any changes.

Mr. Aponte stated he would throw something out for the Board. He suggested putting two signatures on it so its not binding and authorize the chair upon final review to endorse and give it the third and final signature. Ms. Aldrich stated she could do that. Ms. Connolly stated while they are having that conversation she also has a deed that is a draft deed. Mr. Aponte stated he is personally not 100% comfortable signing a document stamped draft and we know is going to be amended and then having a signature page thrown in there after the fact. Mr. Barnett questioned if it would be done by the 23rd. Ms. Connolly stated she hoped so. Mr. Barnett confirmed it has to be done by the 30th. Ms. Connolly stated they want to close. Mr. Barnett questioned why the Board can't just wait until their meeting on the 23rd. Mr. Aponte stated the Board could use it as a fall back. If they haven't closed on the 23rd then two members will sign and then the third signature would be at the discretion of the Chairman. Mr. Barnett wants to wait until the 23rd. Ms. Connolly doesn't want to cut it so close. Mr. Barnett understands why Mr. Aponte doesn't want to sign it. Ms. Connolly indicated that Town Counsel wants it signed. Mr. Barnett stated they work for the Town. Ms. Connolly stated she doesn't have the deed; the Town Attorney has not prepared the deed so she asked Ms. Connolly to ask the Board of Selectmen to sign the draft copy.

The Board agreed that they would wait until the 23rd with the understanding if it isn't complete they will place two signatures on the documents and authorize the chair to be the third signature at her discretion when it is finalized. The Board has a posted meeting for tomorrow night so if the deed is complete by then the Board can sign it at tomorrow's meeting. Ms. Connolly indicated that would work but that the conservation restriction document will not be complete until it closes. She is trying to get the documents out as soon as possible so the Town can get reimbursement procedure started.

Ms. Aldrich thanked Mr. Albertson and Ms. Connolly for being prepared at Town Meeting answering questions on taxes and what the land would be used for.

5) Discussion/Action Items:
   a. Discuss Liaison Responsibilities: Following a brief discussion it was determined that the liaison duties would remain the same with the exception of the Police Department and Ex-Officio Member of the Library Board of Trustees and Liaison to the Clapp
b. Appoint Member to Skate Park Committee: Per the recommendation of Michelle Ricker, Chairman, Skate Park Committee, Mr. Aponte moved the Board appoint Dunstan McNutt to the Skate Park Committee, term to expire June 30, 2015. Seconded by Mr. Barnett. Mr. Archible asked the Town Administrator for confirmation that the Skate Park Committee would be on the agenda for the June 23rd meeting. Mr. Brougham indicated that he has made contact with the Chairman of the Skate Park Committee but they have not confirmed and our Chairman may not be in Town that night. It’s up in the air. Mr. Aponte mentioned that the Recreation Committee as well is interested. He asked Mr. Brougham to contact the Recreation Committee as well as the Skate Park Committee when it becomes finalized. Motion passes 4 – 0.

c. Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Housatonic Solar 1, LLC, Springfield Road: Mr. Aponte presented the details. Before the Board now are the Special Permit and Site Plan Review. They are looking for comments, concerns, and questions from the Board of Selectmen and they can be forwarded through the Town Administrator. He indicated he doesn’t have any comments. Mr. Brougham described the project to the Board in a great amount of detail. It is very similar to the Greene Solar Project. He stated it’s a win-win situation for the land owner as well as the Town.

The Town Administrator stated it’s a great proposal. Its consistent with what the Board approved with the Greene property over on Ware Road. It’s a little smaller. It will be nearly out of sight of the Springfield Road corridor. It will be bordered on one side by New England Central Railroad, Northeast Treaters and the property owners have all the adjacent property. He feels the property owners are probably the stiffest review that the applicant will face.

Mr. Archible moved the Board forward the Special Permit and Site Plan Review back to the Planning Board. They ask that the Planning Board consider all comments, concerns or questions from other departments.

d. Sewer Rate Increase: Mr. Archible indicated that the Board has a memo from Steve Williams, the Director of Public Works, who recommends the Board approves an increase of $40.00 per EDU/year to the FY’15 sewer rates, effective July 1st. The current rate for the south end of Town is $656.00 and would go to $696.00 and the Central District current at $749.00 goes to $789.00. This would be a $10 per quarter increase.

Mr. Aponte indicated that the consensus of the previous Boards has been that the sewer district shall be self-sustaining. He thinks everyone agrees it should be subsidized to a certain extent because there are town buildings that are obviously on the sewer district and it makes sense for there to be commercial properties on the sewer district. He thinks a small amount of subsidies is called for and is warranted; however the sewer district should be more or less self sustaining. He thinks that is exactly what Mr. Williams is attempting to do with the increase, balancing expenses with revenues. He can support this increase.
Mr. Archible moved the Board accept Mr. Williams’ recommendation regarding the sewer rate increases. Seconded by Mr. Aponte. Ms. Aldrich questioned if she could vote as she is on the sewer line. The Board agreed that it was appropriate for Ms. Aldrich to vote. Motion passes 4 – 0.

e. Annual Appointments – Inspection Services: Mr. Barnett stated that Paul Adzima has asked the Selectmen to re-appoint to these positions:

* Mr. Michael Henry to the position of Assistant Inspector of Buildings, term to expire June 30, 2015

* Mr. Arthur Lawler to the position of Assistant Inspector of Buildings, term to expire June 30, 2015

* Mr. Mitch Staszko to the position of Electrical Inspector, term to expire June 30, 2015

* Mr. Douglas Rae to the position of Electrical Inspector, term to expire June 30, 2015

Per the recommendation of Paul Adzima, Director of Inspection Services, Mr. Barnett moved to appoint those individuals listed above, terms to expire June 30, 2015. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.

f. Fire – EMS: Mr. Aponte stated that there is a proposal from Fire Chief Bock regarding personnel moves of some paramedics and the reorganization of Fire/EMS Departments. Chief Bock stated that he sent a memo outlining to the Board how and when Fire /EMS operation began moving forward when the study was completed in 2006. The Fire Department received the Safer Grant in 2008 although the Town actually didn’t implement it until 2010. Since then the departments have continued to move forward as a fire based ambulance department building the strength of the fire department and the paramedics. With that in mind and moving forward we ran into some slight complications this past year when the department went to standard rotating shifts for the firefighters under the Fair Labor Standard Act. The paramedics themselves can only work 40 hours out of a week, the firefighters can work 48 hours. The Town for budget purposes wasn’t going to pay overtime if it wasn’t necessary so the paramedics were held at 40. Going through that rotating schedule all the way through the year there’s actually a reduction in hours as well as some complications with job classifications and stuff. Obviously we want to move forward with our fire based EMS, its been an operational goal for some time moving forward with this and it’s an unfortunate thing with the paramedics. Chief Bock stated they have taken direction from Town Counsel who has steered us through this process that’s before you this evening for your consideration.

Mr. Barnett asked Chief Bock to describe the process of bringing this before the Board for their consideration. Chief Bock asked him to repeat the question. Mr. Barnett repeated his question - he asked the Chief to describe the process of bringing this forward for the Board’s consideration. Mr. Barnett stated this is the first time that he knows anything about this. Chief Bock indicated that everything is outlined in the memo that was presented to the Board and that basically as of July 1st with his plan he is asking the Board of Selectmen for their consideration to lay off four paramedics
and just continue moving forward as a fire based ems ambulance with firefighter/paramedics.

Mr. Archible stated that was the Town’s goal from 2008 and asked for confirmation on the date. Chief Bock stated it was 2006. Mr. Aponte stated that 2006 was when the study was done. Chief Bock acknowledged that was the study and then the Town received the grant which was awarded in 2008 but the department wasn’t quite ready to implement it and we were given a grace period of a year to allow us to implement it. During the process some firefighters became paramedics and one or two of the paramedics became firefighters. Chief Bock stated that we never said we would force any of the paramedics to become firefighters if they didn’t want to and that’s where we stand now with four paramedics that are left as just paramedics.

Ms. Aldrich stated that she knows the Board has discussed this, the bringing together of the two departments. Chief Bock stated that when this process started the ambulance service had seven paramedics and some part-time staff. Currently even as we have built up the firefighter/paramedics he will still maintain ten firefighter/paramedics with a couple of part-time staff if we let the paramedics go.

Mr. Aponte asked if the Town runs three ambulances. Chief Bock confirmed that we do. Mr. Aponte asked if two of those are run at the paramedic level. Chief Bock stated that any of the three can actually be at the ALS level or paramedic level so if one is taken out of service the equipment that is required on an ALS ambulance can be moved over to the other ambulance and still maintain the two ambulances. Chief Bock stated Monday through Friday that between 95 – 97% of the time there is almost always two ALS ambulances available at least during the daytime hours. The weekend there is always one as there was before and a firefighter or two is maintained in the station for fire protection as well.

Mr. Aponte questioned with the proposed reorganization, with eliminating the standalone paramedic positions, if the Town would be able to keep that same level of service. Chief Bock stated that we would.

Mr. Archible asked how things would be financially. Chief Bock stated that potentially there is a cost savings. It will depend on if we hire back four firefighter/paramedics and bring it back to a 12 person staff or if we just operate with eight on with two per shift 7/24 with two floaters. There could potentially be some cost savings but eventually by next fiscal year he would like to be back up to a full four. Mr. Archible asked if it would be a 4 and 2 base? Chief Bock stated one on/one off/one on/five off. Mr. Archible stated he understood.

Mr. Barnett questioned if these four individuals have refused to become firefighters? Chief Bock stated there has been four fire academies since we started this, a notice is always put out. He stated that there would have been five paramedics but that one of them this past December, when they went to the other shifts, expressed interest in becoming a firefighter/paramedic because he believes he realized there would be a
reduction in the work week with the rotating schedule. So that person enrolled in the academy. The academy put out an open enrollment in March and closed their enrollment June 2nd and he only knows of the one person who is enrolled. Mr. Archibe clarified that out of the five paramedics only one took the incentive to be a firefighter. Chief Bock stated yes at this particular time. He stated that over the four years several have done it.

Mr. Barnett asked Chief Bock if he had spoken to these four about doing this, if he found out why they are not doing it. Chief Bock stated that in the beginning they expressed that they didn’t want to become firefighters so he just put out the information. Mr. Barnett further questioned if they knew it was Chief Bock’s intention that if they did not do this they would be laid off? Chief Bock stated he was not sure. Mr. Barnett stated “you didn’t ask them”. He’s concerned about suddenly these people finding themselves to be laid off. From looking at this it looks like you are going to lay them off immediately. Chief Bock stated that was what town counsel had advised. Mr. Barnett stated they are going to be laid off immediately and they haven’t had the time because they didn’t know this was going to happen that they haven’t had the time to find another job. Chief Bock stated that he’s pretty sure they all work second jobs, most of them work for other ambulance services. Mr. Archibe stated that if there is a layoff then the layoff is known immediately and he understands the logic behind when you have a layoff everybody goes immediately. Ms. Aldrich indicated that when she was doing budgets with the schools the same thing happened. She said especially this year there have been layoffs at the schools. Mr. Barnett stated that they at least know that it will happen when the school year is over but that is not the case here.

Mr. Aponte asked the Chief to correct him if he’s wrong but aren’t the four paramedics in question using benefit time right now. Chief Bock stated this was correct. Mr. Aponte stated so its not like that’s it their paycheck is ended, they will be paid whatever accrued benefit time they have. Chief Bock stated until the end of the month and if there is any accrued time left they will be paid that extra amount. Mr. Barnett asked if they were being paid until the end of the month regular pay, he’s not talking about vacation pay. Chief Bock corrected him and said they are using their benefited pay. Mr. Barnett questioned if that was their choice. Chief Bock stated its town counsel’s direction. Mr. Barnett stated that wasn’t what he asked him, he asked again if it was their choice or is it something they were told they had to do. Chief Bock said it was probably not their choice but it was town counsel’s direction to do it that way. Mr. Barnett stated he is very concerned that suddenly somebody is being laid off and not given a month or two months or anything like that – that this is what’s going to happen. That’s not the way people should be treating other people. He went on to say that he found out about this only about three or four hours ago because he was away this weekend and when he read it he said he couldn’t believe that they didn’t have more time and it’s really disturbing him. He stated he would think that if you’re going to lay off people, he understands that its probably been in the making but a time should be set, it should be a fair time to give them enough time to make up the difference and they shouldn’t have to make it up with their vacation time or other
time they have coming to them. That’s not the way I was brought up and that’s not the way he thinks he wants to see Belchertown operate.

Ms. Aldrich stated that she does like that Chief Bock told them what he was doing, that there have been people who have taken the opportunity to advance. She does see that there have been chances for that to happen.

Mr. Barnett stated we are not even giving them pay to the end of the month. The pay to the end of the month is going to be from their vacation time. It seems that they have a solid reason to file formal complaints against the Town. He doesn’t want to see the Town getting into trouble. Ms. Aldrich stated that she trusts Chief Bock said this was done on the advice of counsel.

Mr. Aponte asked to clarify as far as the academy, he questioned if there is another academy on the horizon. Chief Bock stated probably in a year. Mr. Barnett asked if they were giving the opportunity this morning, when they found out, he assumes they found out unless they are watching it on TV and found out for the first time, but did you give them the opportunity that this is your last time, you need to do this. Did you do anything like that today? Chief Bock responded that there is no enrollment open right now. Mr. Barnett stated he didn’t ask about enrollment, he asked about if they were giving the opportunity that when the next enrollment comes they need to do this. Chief Bock responded he did not. Mr. Aponte stated that was exactly what he was asking for and it sounds like if we gave them the opportunity its not like it could be next month, it would be literally next year. He continued that the Town would have to keep an almost untenable organizational structure, costing the Town money, isn’t actually increasing the service to the Town and we would have to continue that for another year. Mr. Aponte stated he can agree with the chief in not wanting to have a department staffed or organized in that way. Mr. Barnett stated they were hired as EMT’s and not hired as firefighters so this is a change, I realize they knew about this for awhile but this is a change put upon them. Mr. Aponte that that he thinks one of the things that everyone has to keep at is the fact that opportunities were forwarded.

Mr. Aponte confirmed with the Chief that there were at least four fire academies, Ms. Aldrich stated they had a timeline on the memo, Mr. Aponte continued four academies in which to do this, this is a policy the Town adopted informally back in 2006 and certainly officially in 2008 when we applied for and were granted the SAFER grant. We certainly had a model that said we wanted to go to a firefighter/ems combined service. He continued that it sounds like some firefighters were able to take that opportunity to expand their skill set – that they became paramedics and on the flip side at least one paramedic is now pursuing the firefighter angle. For whatever reason these four chose not to do that and he doesn’t feel its necessarily the Chief’s job to find out what their career aspirations are or the Board of Selectmen to find out what their career aspirations are. If they wanted to do it, it sounds like the opportunity was there; its pretty clear to anyone in the department that it was the direction the department was going in. He understands the Chief’s decision in wanting to reorganize the department.
Ms. Aldrich asked the Town Administrator if he had anything he wanted to add to this, if there was anything he sees from the Town’s side. He stated as the Chief has been voted a strong chief he has the authority to make these decisions without the Board’s approval.

Ms. Aldrich asked if there was any other discussion. Mr. Aponte stated it was important to note, because he thinks the most important thing for the Board to consider, for everyone to consider because it’s the safety and level of service that will be provided to the Town and from what he’s hearing with the reorganization and even with the elimination of the four paramedics and subsequent personnel moves that the Town will be able to keep that level.

Mr. Barnett stated the memo says there will be two less paramedics. Chief Bock stated they have 14 and maintain ten. When the Town stated the whole process there was only seven and we are up to ten full time. The only difference is that during the day time we will still maintain a firefighter on duty, it may not be a paramedic but there will still be two paramedics on call for an ambulance 7/24 and Monday through Friday there will be two additional people that will probably be able to run with the second ambulance if needed or run with the fire department.

Ms. Aldrich stated that she appreciated the memo that Chief Bock prepared because it gave them all the information. That this is something the Board has talked about as a possibility. Mr. Barnett questioned if the Board had talked about it in a Board of Selectmen meeting. Ms. Aldrich stated that in different things here and there it has absolutely been discussed. Mr. Barnett stated it’s a surprise to him. Ms. Aldrich stated it wasn’t to her. Mr. Aponte stated that certainly when the Town accepted the Safer Grant and that he thinks he might have been the one that asked the question of the Chief and Mr. Brougham if that was the direction the department was heading with the merger and the combining. Mr. Barnett stated its about the way its being done, this fast to these people. He doesn’t think its fair to do it.

Mr. Archible stated he can understand how and why he wants to do it this way and Town Counsel is strongly advising the Town to do it that way then he is going to take that advice. He has to do what’s right for the Town and not what’s right for an individual.

Mr. Archible moved to support Chief Bock’s recommendation. Seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 3 – 1 (Barnett).

At this time several members of the audience opposed the vote. She stated that he didn’t tell the truth. Mr. Archible informed her that the Board had taken a vote and that she wasn’t taking a vote. She apologized and stated that she was told this morning not to come to work. She stated she asked the Chief months ago, in April, if she could go to the academy she was told that he could not afford to send all the firefighters at one time. She stated she was not given the opportunity to go. She
stated this is not cost effective and she has all the documentation to say it. Someone still has to be on the ambulance no matter what.

Ms. Aldrich informed Gary Brougham, the Town Administrator that the vote was 3 - 1 (Barnett). As she left the room she told the Town Administrator that she trusted him twice and that she never trusted the Chief. Information was left with the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen.

g. Accept Resignation – Library Technician: Mr. Barnett stated that Nina Mulligan, Library Technician, resigned her position effective June 30, 2014. She is resigning from the position to concentrate on completing her undergraduate school work, preparatory to student teaching this fall and embarking on a new career in education. Mr. Barnett moved the Board accept her resignation. He then amended his statement as the Board does not have to accept the resignation. Mr. Aldrich confirmed that Gary Brougham will send out a letter to Ms. Mulligan thanking her for her service.

h. Appoint Library Technician: Mr. Barnett indicated that Sheila McCormick, Library Director, recommends appointing Keri Warfield of Lenox, MA to the position of Library Technician, effective July 1, 2014. This is a 20 hour per week position, grade 5, step 1, with an hourly pay rate of $20.33. Mr. Barnett moved the Board approve the recommendation. Seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 4 – 0.

i. Endorse State House Note #988 – Old Town Hall: Mr. Archible moved the Board endorse State House Note #988 for the windows at Old Town Hall in the amount of $105,000 for one year at a rate of 0.50%, Certificate of Town Clerk, Material Events Disclosure and Certificate and Designation. Seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 4 - 0.

j. Endorse State House Note #987 – Lawrence Memorial Hall: Mr. Archible moved the Board endorse State House Note #987 for windows at Lawrence Memorial Hall in the amount of $100,000.00 for one year at a rate of 0.50%, Certificate of Town Clerk, Material Events Disclosure and Certificate and Designation. Seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 4 – 0.

k. Endorse Invoice #19 – Services Rendered to Administer FY12 Belchertown Regional Community Assistance Program: Mr. Aponte stated this is invoice #19 for the Belchertown Regional Community Assistance Program. This particular invoice is for labor and some direct cost to the amount of $11,942.97. He moved the Board endorse the invoice. Seconded by Mr. Barnett.

l. Miscellaneous Matters: None.

6) Town Administrator's Report: None.

7) Review of Weekly Mail: Mail reviewed, no discussion held.

8) Individual Board Members' Reports:
   Mr. Aponte: Indicated that he along with Selectman Aldrich attended the Belchertown High School Graduation ceremonies but he was not there as Selectman Aponte but as Dad Aponte. He wants to congratulate Dr. Houle and Ms. Vigneux for once again a wonderful job in coordinating the activities. Very well done and very professional. Ms.
Aldrich represented the Board tremendously. He extends his thanks to Dr. Houle, Ms. Vigneux and the rest of the staff at Belchertown High School.

Ms. Aldrich: Congratulated Mr. Aponte’s daughter on graduating. It’s always a wonderful ceremony that the school does. Ms. Vigneux puts her heart into it. The class had two students who passed away and they were honored. She thought it was a wonderful tribute, it was very emotional. Each student was given a watch, she said it was on behalf of the Town but it was on behalf of the 250th Anniversary Committee.

Tomorrow night besides the Planning Board the School Committee will be meeting down at Swift River School. The interim school superintendent will be starting. The search committee will begin meeting again beginning next week to find a new superintendent. She thanked Dr. Houle again for her service to the Town.

9) **Questions from the Press:** Jim Russell from the *Republican* questioned the meeting tomorrow evening with the Planning Board. He confirmed that the Board of Selectmen would vote tomorrow and that the Planning Board may or may not vote at that time. He also questioned the Board if they had a sense of when a Special Town Meeting might be called. Mr. Aponte stated that any Special Town Meeting this close to the Annual Town Meeting is difficult and any Special Town Meeting during the summer months is especially difficult. He thinks getting a quorum of 75 people in the summer is going to be difficult. Mr. Russell stated that the votes from the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board are what Mass Development is looking for. It was decided after having a discussion with Mass Development that the votes of the Boards would be a reasonable substitute.

Mr. Russell also stated that a little more controversial, the four people that were laid off, he knows that the Chief represented that none of the four were interested in going to the academy and at the end when the Board voted there were two other people that voted and the one individual stated she wanted to go to the academy and the chief told her he couldn’t afford it. His question is that given those two versions of events that they may be a little conflicted and he’s wondering if what the chief represented about the four not being interested in going to the academy and it turns out to be not true is there any action that the Board would take to look at that because clearly there was someone here who made some strong statements before they left the room. Mr. Barnett stated he doesn’t think the Board should be making statements about something that they don’t know is or isn’t true. Mr. Russell questioned if it is something the Board may be investigating. A member in the audience asked the Board to please look into it. Ms. Aldrich stated that with Chief Bock having given the Board the facts, that what he outlined he did very well. She trusts what he had outlined for the Board. Mr. Russell confirmed that he relied on Town Counsel. Ms. Aldrich stated exactly.

Mr. Russell questioned if there was any statement on whether or not there would be any fact finding on it. Mr. Barnett stated it would be premature.
A member of the audience stated that he wasn’t familiar with how the meeting was held. He didn’t know if anyone could speak. (He was there for the Fire/EMS Discussion). Ms. Aldrich stated it wasn’t a public hearing for that topic. He questioned that the Chief had an internal memo that was submitted to the Board, and asked if that was true. Ms. Aldrich stated it was a memo but not internal. He questioned if it was available to him and/or the press. Mr. Aponte stated it is part of the public record so yes it is available. He was told to go to the Board of Selectmen’s Office to get a copy. The gentlemen stated that the Board was given a lot of false information tonight and that he tried to steer it in the right direction and it didn’t work so let the chips fall where they may. He doesn’t understand how hiring people that are more expensive can be tax saving to the Town.

10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed: 7/14/14

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:

Brenda Q. Aldrich, Chairman

Ronald E. Aponte

Kenneth E. Elstein

William R. Barnett

George D. Archible