

**Minutes
Town of Lexington Appropriation Committee
August 26, 2010**

Place and time: Town Office Building, Room 111, 7:30 p.m.

Members present: Glenn Parker (Chair), John Bartenstein (Vice Chair and Secretary), Joe Pato (Vice Chair), Mollie Garberg, Alan Levine, Eric Michelson

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m.

1. Announcements. The Selectmen have scheduled a Budget Collaboration/Summit meeting for Wednesday, October 6, 2010, at 7:30 p.m. in the Selectmen’s Meeting Room. This will be the first summit for the FY2012 budget process and will focus on an overview of the Town’s financial condition.

2. Proposed Street Light Replacement. Glenn Parker reported on the latest developments involving the pending proposal to replace the bulbs and related fixtures in virtually all of the Town’s street lights with energy-efficient bulbs and better-shielded fixtures. Rob Addelson will present a draft financial report on the lighting replacement proposal at the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen to be held Monday, August 30. Rob also hopes to meet with NSTAR representatives on Friday, August 27 and to discuss with them the December 1 completion deadline that NSTAR had imposed as a condition of participating in a rebate program for a substantial portion of the costs of the project. Committee members reiterated the concern expressed at their August 9 meeting that it would be desirable to have some flexibility in this deadline to avoid the potential for rushing the implementation or requiring overtime shifts.

3. Health Benefits. Joe Pato and Alan Levine reported that they will need to schedule a session with Denise Casey to obtain updated utilization data. They also reported that they had received from Patrick Mehr a copy of a report prepared for the Town by Group Benefit Strategies, a health benefits consultant, for use in coalition bargaining negotiations that Mr. Mehr had recently obtained from the Town Manager.

4. Enterprise Funds. John Bartenstein reported briefly on the status of the water and wastewater enterprise funds and upcoming rate proceedings. He has spoken with Robin Fullford, who recently replaced Barbara Stevens as the Utility Enterprise Business Manager and has also reviewed consumption data supplied by the MWRA. He noted that the dry summer will likely lead to an increase in receipts and “profits” to the water enterprise fund in FY2011 due to an increase in the use of water for irrigation, which is billed by the Town at the highest rate. According to data provided by the MWRA, Lexington’s July water consumption in 2010 was running at 50% over the previous year. John also noted that, as a result of a significant reduction in demand for water in the MWRA system over the past two decades – attributable to changes in the state plumbing code, repair of water leaks, and other MWRA conservation policies, as well as to the significant increase in the price of water following the Boston harbor cleanup – the annual draw on the Quabbin reservoir has fallen to levels well below that facility’s “maximum safe yield.” Even with increased consumption throughout the system due to the dry weather, reservoirs in the MWRA system are at 95% of capacity.

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5. Minutes and Record-Keeping. John Bartenstein reviewed his updated system for maintaining the Committee's minutes and records, including copies of documents and other materials presented or otherwise "used" at meetings, to comply with amendments to the state's Open Meeting Law that became effective July 1, 2010. Minutes of the meetings held on May 10, 2010 and August 9, 2010 were approved with minor editorial changes. Draft minutes of the August 23, 2010 meeting will be revised and submitted for approval at the next meeting.

6. Community Preservation Act Summit. A summit will be held with the Community Preservation Committee, the Board of Selectmen, the Appropriation Committee, and the Capital Expenditures Committee on September 14 to discuss a number of issues relating to the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Alan Levine is preparing a presentation that he plans to make available prior to the summit outlining this Committee's concerns about the CPA process. He proposes to structure it as a set of discussion points rather than recommended solutions. The Committee discussed a number of issues that might be addressed in Alan's memo.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

A list of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Pato

Approved December 6, 2010

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**Exhibits
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1. Agenda circulated by Glenn Parker, Chair, on August 24, 2010