

SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES

September 22, 2011

Members Present: Larry Harrington, Chairman
James J. DeVellis, Vice Chairman
Mark Sullivan, Clerk
Lorraine Brue
Lynda Walsh

Others Present: Kevin Paicos, Town Manager
Marcy Reed, President, National Grid Massachusetts
Other National Grid representatives – Jackie Barry, Joe
Carroll, Tom Coughlin, Bob Russell, Ken Lomax

This Meeting was held at the Burrell School, 16 Morse Street.
The Meeting was brought to order at 7:30 by Larry Harrington, Chairman.

7:30 – Citizens Input – No one present for Citizens Input.

7:35 – Hurricane Irene After-Action Report – Kevin Paicos, Town Manager, made a power point presentation. He talked through the things learned, the events that occurred and the recommendations made by the department heads involved in the storm. He said the Town experienced two disasters – the hurricane and the very poor response by National Grid. Communication was poor and ineffective particularly on the Monday and Tuesday following the storm. Notification of conference calls was made through e-mail; National Grid seemed unaware that e-mail is serviced through electrical power – there was none in Foxborough. On Wednesday, the media was contacted to ask for help getting the message to National Grid. Kevin Paicos said the response from national Grid was to assign Tom Coughlin as liaison to Foxborough. He said after Mr. Coughlin's arrival the situation improved and the Town was able to provide information to residents about when electricity would be restored. Kevin Paicos said the priorities for restoration of electricity as previously submitted to National Grid were ignored. He pointed out that clearly National Grid was unprepared for this storm. He explained that the Stadium and the Invensys Corp. both had electricity restored by Monday night through auxiliary lines but the Town was without power through Tuesday. National Grid brought in crews from the mid-west to help restore power; stand-by crews from other communities were not available. He commended all volunteers who worked to help getting information out to the residents about food, ice and medical supplies available at the Public Safety Building. He thanked Lauren Bitar for organizing the many volunteers. His thanks went out also to the Police, Fire, Water & Sewer, Highway and Foxborough Cable for their immediate response to public needs. He said they were "phenomenal" making sure the needs of the citizens were taken care of as soon as possible. He briefly outlined the recommendations to be implemented in case another storm of this intensity should hit this area. Kevin Paicos said the

Town would file a formal complaint with the Department of Public Utilities as well as with the Attorney General's office concerning the lack appropriate response to the Town of Foxborough.

Marcy Reed, President, National Grid Massachusetts, gave a brief overview of steps taken to prepare for Hurricane Irene – basically no different than for any other storm. On Tuesday before the storm National Grid started calling for mutual aid from other regions. The request was for 11,000 crews from the service territory; from that request 400 were able to respond. The 400 crews were in place when the storm hit – only 7 crews were sent to Foxborough. Marcy Reed explained that for safety reasons no employee is allowed to go up in a bucket when the wind is blowing more than 40 mph. The crews had to attend to the biggest transmission systems – the Union Loop first. All were working on that Loop so that they could then concentrate on the streets in Foxborough. She noted that when the Union Loop was restored, power was passed on to the Patriots. On Wednesday they were able to get 80% of power back; by Thursday about 1700 customers had power and the remainder had power by Friday & Saturday. Marcy agreed that a liaison should be in the Town Hall or at least have “someone on the ground”. She pointed out that if information had been shared through a liaison, it might have made a difference. National Grid will train people for that situation. She said they struggled during the storm to get information out and they need to find a way to get better at that. Marcy also pointed out that National Grid needs to think about how to better arrange for mutual aid. She said every utility company on the East Coast was dealing with a similar situation.

A general discussion was held including questions about who is going to pay for cleanup, the tree trimming program by the Highway Dept. and the power company and the possibility of putting power lines underground and how that would impact the cost to citizens. William Buckley, 6 Garret Spillane Rd., suggested the Town put a certain percentage of funds aside to put the power lines underground. Martha Slattery, whose husband has medical problems that require immediate attention should something go wrong, voiced dissatisfaction at the fact that National Grid did not respond to her calls. She said they never bothered to call her back to give her some indication as to when the power would be back. She said this became a very personal circumstance that could have been avoided with a return telephone call. Steve Udden, 21 Carmine St., thanked all the volunteers who worked tirelessly during the storm. He said the Town needs to look at identifying the vulnerable and infirm people in Town; there needs to be centralization of information for those who might need attention during such an emergency.

Bob Swanson, Highway Superintendent, inquired about the time limitation for reporting the extent of the storm damage. James Mannion of the Mass Emergency Management Agency reported that the three-day time limit had been extended to eleven days to submit a major disaster declaration. Bob Swanson

explained that he could not “even come close” to making an assessment given the number of branches and limbs that are down. He has been unable to get a grinder; he needs more time. Chief Hatfield commented on steps all ready taken. He said there has been approximately \$58,000 all ready spent; 5 generators have been purchased. He said he is down two water pumps; he has purchased five gas and five electrical pumps. He said he would “look” at capital improvement funding for big ticket items as well as all State and Federal grants. Chief Hatfield asked that anyone installing a personal generator that they have it installed professionally as there is a danger of “back fitting” and thereby putting people at risk.

Lorraine Brue asked if there could be a different connection in the Loop in the future, so that the needs of Town could be identified before the Stadium and Invensys. Marcy Reed explained that the line servicing the Patriots and Invensys is not part of the loop that services the Town. Lorraine also asked whether there is a way to make sure that a power outage such as this does not happen again. Marcy said it is just the significance of the storm. Jim DeVellis said most people were pleased about how the Town came together in this storm and it provided an exercise for any future emergency. He is concerned about the small businesses and whether they would get any reimbursement for losses. Mark Sullivan felt that the Town was fortunate this time around but that in the future, things need to be in place and people will know what the priorities are. He said the Town should move forward with the recommendations made in the Hurricane Irene After Action Report.

Larry Harrington pointed out that if one considers climate change, more storms such as this will come along and it would be healthy for the Town to understand how important it is to have plans in place. He said had this storm been in the winter or in the very hot summer it would have been much worse; it is very important that utility companies be prepared for such a crisis. Marcy Reed said National Grid had planned for this event; they take guidance from the meteorologists. She said they could do a lot more with the Town to learn how Fire and Police operate during such a storm. She also said they would be looking at the infrastructure that has so many customers tied into the one loop.

ACTION:

Minutes – The Minutes of the Board of Selectmen’s Meeting of September 6, 2011 were reviewed.

Motion by Mark Sullivan to approve the Minutes of September 6, 2011 as presented. Seconded by Lynda Walsh. **Vote: 5-0-0**

One Day Beer and Wine License – Received from Dan Stapleton on behalf of The Bridge Center, Bridgewater, Ma., an application for a One Day Beer & Wine License for a benefit motorcycle run on October 2, 2011.

Motion by Mark Sullivan to approve the application for a One Day Beer & Wine License as submitted by Dan Stapleton on behalf of The Bridge Center, Bridgewater, MA. Seconded by Lynda Walsh. **Vote: 5-0-0**

Public Event Application – Received from Debbie Giardino, Recreation Director, a request for permission to hold a Halloween parade to be held on October 29 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Motion by Mark Sullivan to approve the Public Event Application as submitted by Debbie Giardino, Recreation Director. Seconded by Lynda Walsh. **Vote: 5-0-0**

Public Event Application – Boot Drive – Received from Keith Hodson, Foxborough Fire Dept. an application to hold a Boot Drive Fundraiser for MDA to be held on October 1, 2011.

Motion by Jim DeVellis to approve the Public Event Application as submitted by Keith Hodson for a MDA fundraiser Boot Drive. Seconded by Lynda Walsh. **Vote: 5-0-0**

Public Event Application – Motorcycle Run – Received from Christine Kelly, on behalf of Chickie Flynn's Restaurant an application to hold a motorcycle run on October 2 to raise money for support of fallen officers.

Motion by Mark Sullivan to approve the application for a motorcycle run on October 2, 2011 as submitted by Christine Kelly on behalf of Chickie Flynn's Restaurant contingent upon approval by Police Chief O'Leary. Seconded by Jim DeVellis. **Vote: 5-0-0**

Kevin Paicos notified the Board that the Rodman Ride for Kids was rescheduled to October 01, 2011. He pointed out that this is an annual event and has been approved by Chief O'Leary.

Motion by Lynda Walsh to approve the rescheduled date to October 01, 2011 for the Rodman Rlide for Kids as requested. Seconded by Mark Sullivan. **Vote: 5-0-0**

Motion by Mark Sullivan to adjourn. Seconded by Jim DeVellis. **Vote: 5-0-0** Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Mark Sullivan, Clerk