

Paxton Board of Selectmen

Emergency Meeting Minutes – December 13, 2008

Present: Chairman Frederick Goodrich, Vice Chairman Michael Quinlivan, Clerk John Malone

Also Present: Charles Blanchard, Town Administrator, Jeffery Wentzell, Incident Commander

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm by Chairman Goodrich in response to a question raised by I. C. Wentzell during the 5:00pm Incident Coordination Meeting on the December, 2008, Ice Storm on the extent of the clean-up of trees and brush damaged by the ice storm.

(FG) stated that the Town should clean up whatever material is placed at the side of the road just as it did in the 2002 ice storm since that would help the residents with their clean-up.

(CB) said that we did not believe the Town should be responsible for private property clean-up. It is the Town's responsibility to make the roads safe and passable and to clear trees and branches from utility lines in order that electricity, telephone and cable can be restored. The Town has hired Northern Tree to help clear the roads and wires with tree crews, loaders and logging trucks to remove the debris from the public ways. The cost of this work in the 2002 ice storm was nearly \$60,000 and that storm was not nearly as severe as the present storm. Records from the 2002 storm show we only used one logging truck and three tree crews, we now have three logging trucks and seven tree crews in addition to the MEMA crew. Adding the cost of moving and disposing the trees and branches from private property will add thousands of dollars to the Town's clean-up cost which may not be reimbursed by MEMA.

(FG) said that in a Snow and Ice emergency we can deficit spent and add the cost to next year's tax bill. (CB) said that although this is true since we are already at our levy limit this money would add to the large deficit we are already facing. If the unreimbursed ice storm cost was \$100,000 then that amount would have to be cut from the FY10 operating budget.

(JM) said that on Lincoln Circle which was underground wires so the Town has done no work on it yet people are cutting and stacking their fallen trees and branches at the side of the road expecting the Town to pick it up. He said we have to make a decision to tell them whether the Town will do this or not.

{MQ) said that we are in a state of emergency and we need to concentrate on that, so we don't need to make a decision on this issue yet. Our instructions to residents say not to put tree branches and debris in the road.

(JM) said that tells people not to put debris in the road, it does not instruct them not to place debris on the side of the road for collection.

(CB) suggested we clarify this by telling residents not to place the debris on the side of the road but to stack it in their yards for future disposal.

(FG) said we could not enforce that and people would still do it. (CB) said it would still reduce the amount of debris we have to clear from the sides of the roads and it would stop people from assuming we will pick up and dispose of their debris.

(JM) made a motion for the Board to make a decision on whether the Town will pay for picking up and disposing brush and debris brought to the side of the road by residents – Yes or No.

(MQ) abstains – feels we do not need to address this question now.

(JW) feels this is a safety issue, maybe there can be a compromise on this.

(JM) votes no, says he does not feel the town should be paying for anything brought to the side of the road by residents.

(FG) feels we should allow residents to put their branches and debris on the side of the road and collect and dispose of it along with the material our crews clear from the roads.

Split vote – no decision on motion.

Motion to adjourn (JM), second (MQ) Yes – (JM) and (MQ).

Meeting adjourned 7:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Blanchard
Town administrator