

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Francis A. Hegarty, Chairman  
Steven P. Rose, Clerk  
Robert F. Brady, Jr., Associate

# Town of Avon Massachusetts

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Michael McCue, Town Administrator



## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2011 7:30 P.M.

Members present: Francis A. Hegarty, Chairman  
Steven P. Rose  
Robert F. Brady, Jr.

Others present: Michael McCue, Town Administrator  
Fire Chief Robert Spurr  
State Rep. William Galvin  
Joseph A. Cardinal, Manager, National Grid

Not present: Joseph Lalli, Town Counsel (at Conservation Commission hearing)

Chairman Hegarty called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with all members present.

Mr. Rose made a motion to accept the minutes of Thursday, September 1, 2011 (Regular Session) as submitted. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. The motion carried.

There were no public comments during the Open Forum.

A request was received from Joseph Donovan for reappointment to the position of Alternate Plumbing/Gas Inspector for the Town of Avon.

After some discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Rose to reappoint Joseph Donovan as Alternate Plumbing/Gas Inspector for the Town of Avon, term to expire: June 30, 2012. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Mr. Rose made a motion to appoint Landis Hershey to the position of Conservation Commission Agent for the Town of Avon, term to expire: June 30, 2012, with successful completion of Town of Avon hiring policies. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. The motion carried.

A letter of interest was received from Joanne Grenham requesting appointment to the vacant position open on the Avon Cultural Council.

Mr. Brady made a motion to approve the appointment of Joanne Grenham to the Avon Cultural Council, term of expiration: June 30, 2014. Mr. Rose seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Chairman Hegarty announced a vote was needed to renew the street paving contract that was issued on October 5, 2011 to T. L. Edwards, Inc. The Town has the option to extend the contract with two (2) one-year renewals. This information was part of the bid documents.

Mr. Rose made a motion to extend a one (1) year option based on last year's street paving contract for the Town of Avon to T.L. Edwards, Inc. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. The motion carried.

A request for a temporary sign permit was received from Independence Foods, LLC, D/B/A Dunkin Donuts at 20 Memorial Drive to display three (3) signs during a remodel of the location.

Mr. Rose made a motion to approve a temporary sign permit for three (3) 10' x 4' vinyl signs to be displayed from 10/16/11 through 10/31/11 at 20 Memorial Drive for Dunkin Donuts, including flag decorations. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Meeting dates for October were announced as follows:

Thursday, October 6, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday, October 20, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

### **Announcements**

Senator Brian A. Joyce will be holding office hours at the Avon Town Hall on Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup> for all Avon residents, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in the Mary T. McDermott Meeting Room. If anyone has an issue they would like to discuss with the Senator, please feel free to stop by. No appointment is necessary.

Chairman Hegarty read a letter from the Chairman of the Council on Aging informing the Board of Selectmen of the exceptional service given by Jane Hanley, COA Director, the COA staff and volunteers during the recent emergency with Hurricane Irene. Volunteers and staff members Donna McGuirk and Jason Miller cooked food and delivered meals to seniors without power.

The Board thanked the COA staff and volunteers for their efforts during the hurricane.

On a motion made by Mr. Rose, seconded by Mr. Brady, it was unanimously voted to approve all vouchers for the payment of bills as submitted.

### **7:45 p.m.—National Grid—Joseph A. Cardinal**

Joseph A. Cardinal, Manager of Community and Customer Management, appeared before the Board. Also present was State Rep. William Galvin.

Chairman Hegarty thanked Mr. Cardinal and Representative Galvin for coming to the meeting.

Chairman Hegarty stated the Board and Town personnel had concerns with their experiences during the recent storm and afterwards.

Mr. Cardinal passed out several handouts with National Grid's general outage information based on the surrounding towns with the number of customers served and the number of customers out of service. He also charted the customer outages for Avon over a five (5) day period. The number of customers out of power in Avon was between 92-93%.

Fire Chief Spurr presented the Board with a timeline of events beginning on Wednesday, August 24<sup>th</sup> (prior to the storm) and through Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, where initial damage assessment figures were submitted to MEMA. The preliminary amount submitted was \$24,728.31.

Mr. Cardinal reported that the number of power outages came down several days after the storm. About 52% of customers were out of power on the South Shore. He reported approximately 1100 crews were anticipated; crews came here from the Midwest. In reality, only 300 actual crews were available due to the severe flooding in the western part of the state, power outages in Eastern Long Island, Rhode Island and New Jersey. This was a storm that affected the entire East Coast. Crews were prepared on Sunday morning, but once the winds went over 40 miles per hour, utility personnel were unable to work. Crews were assigned to "wires down." Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup> was spent assessing the damage.

Chief Spurr expressed his frustration with a National Grid "wire down appraiser." The Fire Department and Police Department ran all remaining wire down calls with no National Grid response available on Sunday – the day the storm hit. The Highway Department moved trees from roads where no wires were involved. Chief Spurr expressed his concern with the lack of communication between Town officials and National Grid; he had so much difficulty obtaining information when crews would be arriving and the actual number of power outages in Avon. By Monday it was reported that 2000 out of 2158 customers in Avon were without power. He had no idea of the accuracy of those numbers. Fellowship Circle and the Schools were identified as "top priority" areas via a National Grid conference call on Tuesday, August 30.

Chief Spurr reported that people were angry—not because they lost power, but because they couldn't get any information.

Chairman Hegarty stated the poor information flow from National Grid was a problem relative to busy intersections without power. Had the Town officials been given some guidance as to how long it would take for power to be restored, the officials could have planned ahead with the Police Department. The Town doesn't have enough police to staff four (4) busy intersections, but the need for guidance in this matter was of extreme importance.

At 8:10 p.m. Town Counsel Joseph Lalli joined the meeting.

Mr. Brady reported that around 6:30 p.m. Sunday evening he was out and about and both East High Street and East Spring Street was blocked. Mr. Brady was unable to reach anyone at National Grid. The lines were constantly busy. He called his brother, State Representative

Michael Brady, and was able to obtain National Grid cell phone numbers. Mr. Brady observed two utility trucks sitting in Avon and no one was doing anything. They were waiting for trees to be cut. At 10:30 p.m. the crews had to leave. Mr. Brady called Joe Carroll from National Grid. No utility crews showed up that night. At 10:00 a.m. the next morning crews showed up. Mr. Brady stated that there was a lot of miscommunication.

Again Mr. Cardinal repeated that National Grid personnel thought they had more crews coming.

Mr. Rose reported he was disappointed in the length of time it took National Grid to respond and he, quite frankly, was puzzled by the whole thing. He feels it is the responsibility of the utility company to plan ahead. The storm was predicted and forecasted for days. He read that the municipal light plants were up and running a lot quicker than National Grid to restore power. He felt there was a lack of communication and if anyone tried to call the National Grid phone line, one couldn't get through. It was constantly busy. So residents were calling the Board, the Fire Department, the Police Department, etc. for information, which they did not have or it was not accurate.

Mr. Cardinal responded that he believes National Grid planned well for the storm. He reported that they lost crews in other parts of the state. Repairs took longer than anticipated in New York and Rhode Island.

Representative Galvin stated their plan wasn't solid in terms of communication. He listened to the frustration of residents who couldn't understand why they didn't have power, yet a neighbor next door or across the street did. It was difficult to understand where the "legs" of power were coming from.

Mr. Cardinal responded that there were four (4) different feeders affected. They were all knocked out, which made repairs even more difficult.

Mr. Cardinal stated that National Grid is expanding its management staff and there will be request for follow up meetings from National Grid personnel. Comments from Town personnel and residents are important as they reach out to communities to improve their service.

### **Town Administrator's Report**

1. Letter from Old Colony Planning Council—A letter of support for the Council's HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant application was sent from the Town of Avon last year. The application was rejected. OCPC is resubmitting a revised application this year and is asking for our support and our offer of in-kind contributions, with a dollar value attached. Mr. McCue is asking the Board's permission to re-issue a letter of support with our offer of in-kind contributions.

Mr. Rose asked "how do we assess the amount?" Is this a staffing commitment? Chairman Hegarty responded "yes." This is worthwhile. It is good if it comes through.

Mr. Rose made a motion to grant permission for a letter of support to be sent to OCPC. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. All were in favor

2. FEMA relief – 75% match—declaration regarding hurricane. We continue to assess the cost of the damage.
3. Global Design & Publishing has contacted me to produce a Business and Community Guide for the Town. There is no cost to the Town of Avon. The cost is supported by local business advertising.
4. The Council on Aging will be receiving a new van in a few weeks. There is no cost to the Town as the van is funded by a Federal grant from BAT.
5. Mr. McCue is still looking into solar power for Town buildings with a program from Constellation New Energy. It is a good program and we don't have to go out to bid. Mr. McCue will update the Board when additional information becomes available.
6. Mr. McCue is looking into a Peer to Peer Technical Assistance Grant to review the downtown area. The grant would fund \$1000.00 towards hiring an employee from another community.
7. Mr. McCue reported the Community Development Advisory Committee met today. The grant program is coming to an end. 24 units were serviced, totaling \$421,000. 19 units were of an emergency nature. There is a waiting list of 18 more projects. A vote at the next meeting is needed to go forward on reapplying for CDBG FY '12 funding.

Chairman Hegarty thanked Kathleen Kelleher for her oversight on the projects.

At 9:15 p.m. Mr. Rose made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a litigation matter. Mr. Brady seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Rose voted aye  
Mr. Brady voted aye  
Chairman Hegarty voted aye

The Board would not reconvene in Open Session.

Respectfully submitted,



Miriam Rothstein  
Secretary

**Exhibits:**

- Board of Selectmen's Minutes of Thursday, September 1, 2011 (Regular Session)
- National Grid Handouts—P.O.R.T.I.S. and Daily Outages Count Chart
- Letters of Interest for Alternate Plumbing Inspector and appointment to Avon Cultural Council
- Application for temporary sign permit from Independence Foods at 20 Memorial Drive