BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING

FEBRUARY 28, 2012

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM. Present were Chairman Haughey, Selectwoman Bik, Selectmen Sawyer, Wozniak and Marchand, Administrator Keyes, Patrick Costello, Esq., Town Counsel and John Sullivan, Melanson & Heath.

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Bik made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 10, 2012, January 24, 2012 and January 31, 2012, seconded by Mr. Sawyer. Vote unanimous.

Good & Welfare

Mr. Robert Kluchevitz, of 20 Dawes Street, Chairman, Water & Sewer Commission stated that the Board of Selectmen received a resignation from Bruce Paterson. He expressed his concerns about two requests sent to the Board from interested parties and noticed that they are not on the agenda this evening. He stated that he is disappointed and hoped that they are added to the agenda of March 13, 2012. He stated that members are needed considering the numerous on-going matters with the City of Woonsocket. Mr. Kluchevitz stated that Board members are invited to the Water & Sewer Commission meeting on March 8th @ 6:30 PM.

Correspondence

Conservation Commission - Mr. Sawyer stated that the Greenway Trail is coming to the Town of Blackstone and will be called the Heritage Corridor Bike Path. He stated that the Historical Commission is asking that a letter be sent to the Department of Conservation and Recreation indicating the Board’s support for the acquisition of the land around and leading to the canal mile marker 18 for its protection. He stated that this would create a historic interpretive site off the proposed Greenway. He stated that the cost would not be the Town of Blackstone’s responsibility. Mr. Sawyer made a motion to send the letter to the Department of Conservation and Recreation indicating the Board’s support for the acquisition of the land around and leading to the canal marker 18 for its protection, seconded by Ms. Bik. Vote unanimous.

Old Business

Finance Team Update – Mr. Keyes stated that the omnibus would be presented to the Board of Selectmen on Wednesday, February 29, 2012 at 6:00 PM. He stated that the warrants would not be presented at that time and that the article from the Town Clerk has been removed. He stated that the old Animal Control van is to be repaired and utilized by the Department of Public Works.

Review Operations of the Office of Collector/Treasurer - Ms. Bik asked for the status of reconciliation. Mr. Keyes stated that he would turn the issue over to Patrick Costello, Esq., Town Counsel. Mr. Costello stated that he was asked to investigate issues concerning reconciliation of the cash books for the Town of Blackstone. He stated that this issue has been raised a number of times in the past, including the alleged refusal of the Collector/Treasurer to allow the cash books to be removed from her office. Attorney Costello stated that the charter clearly states that the books are to be made available to the Board. He stated that he issued a letter to the Collector/Treasurer with a definitive description of the responsibility of the Collector/Treasurer’s office. He stated that

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the Collector/Treasurer did not agree with what he had stated and sent an e-mail to the Department of Revenue. He stated that the Department of Revenue responded to the Collector/Treasurer in a timely fashion and agreed with the letter from Town Counsel. Attorney Costello stated that he is here to address any issues or questions in order complete the reconciliation. Mr. Haughey asked if the Board has done everything they could to keep within the law. Mr. Costello stated yes and that it is absolutely necessary that the Town Accountant has the information needed to provide the Board and Town Administrator with the necessary information to reconcile the books. Mr. Costello stated that it is unusual that this has occurred repetitively year after year. He stated that the Department of Revenue is aware of the situation. Mr. John Sullivan, of Melanson & Heath, stated that he has been the audit firm for the Town of Blackstone for past three years and his responsibilities are to oversee the audit. He agreed with Attorney Costello and stated that they audited 100 other towns within Massachusetts and Rhode Island with reconciliation being the most important issue at hand. He stated that reconciliation gives assurance that the financials are accurate. Ms. Bik asked if they have provided the means and training to reconcile the books. Mr. Sullivan stated that they have completed their third cycle audit. He stated that after the first audit the cash was out of balance and the firm spoke with the Town Accountant and Collector/Treasurer. He stated that the second year report indicated that reconciliation had not been accomplished, and it was decided that someone from outside the Town would have to assist in reconciling the books. He stated that after the third year audit they felt that things had deteriorated and saw more problems with reconciliation then in the past. Mr. Sullivan stated that they then wrote a letter to the Board asking them to seek assistance from outside the Town.

Hearings & Meetings

Firehouse Tavern – Chairman Haughey opened the Public Hearing at 8:03 PM in accordance with Chapter 138, MGLA, notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held on February 28, 2012 at 8:00 PM at the Municipal Center on the Application for a Common Victualler All Kinds of Alcoholic Beverages license from Fire House Tavern, d/b/a SJ Seagrave & Associates LLC, Steven J. Seagrave, Manager. Premise is located at 200 Main Street, one dining and lounge area ground floor, restrooms in far corner, two exits/entrances, one door located in right corner dining room and one up flight of stairs to parking area, kitchen at top of stairs and outdoor patio. Mr. Sawyer made a motion to open the public hearing, seconded by Ms. Bik for the purpose of a continuance. Vote unanimous.

Old Business – continued:

Review Operations of the Office of Collector/Treasurer – Attorney Costello stated that the town has set up a separate office for Ms. Cathy Muller for the purpose of working with him to audit the cash books and reconcile the accounts. He stated that he was informed last week that the Treasurer was not going to provide the cash book documents. Attorney Costello stated that it was suggested that the books either be taken down to Ms. Muller’s office or copies are allowed to be made. He stated that it is not common practice to complete the function in the Collector/Treasurer’s office. Ms. Warren stated that she has a problem with that and that if they had left Ms. Muller in the Collector/Treasurer’s office there would be no issues. She stated that when she did allow Ms. Muller to use the books it was understood that no copies were to be made. She stated that

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everything in the binder backs up her cash books and stated that if one is lost she will have to back track to find it. Ms. Warren stated that she had a meeting with the Chairman and Town Administrator regarding the books. She stated that she told Mr. Sullivan that Ms. Muller is welcome to come to her office and she would make the copies for her. Ms. Warren stated that Attorney Costello’s wording is incorrect in stating that she is not working with the auditors and Town Accountant. Attorney Costello stated that the Town Accountant and auditor have the right to inspect the books without her permission. Mr. Sullivan stated that he is hearing something different from Ms. Warren then what was stated on previously. He stated that Ms. Warren was not willing to give him copies of the cash books. . Mr. Sullivan asked if Ms. Warren was willing to make copies of the cash books. Ms. Warren stated “no”. Mr. Marchand stated that two months ago it was stated that the cash books were off by 1.1 million. He stated that they will be going to town meeting soon and the town still does not know what amount of money is available. Ms. Warren stated that she would not release the cash books because she has no trust in the Board. Attorney Costello stated everyone should be working together for the Town of Blackstone and the Board has authorized Mr. Sullivan to audit the books. She stated that if someone wants to remove the books she wants something in writing. Ms. Warren asked what the difference was between an appointed and elected official. Attorney Costello stated that she is not above the law because she is an elected official. Mr. Haughey stated that he wants the books reconciled and stated that it must be completed with a second set of books. Mr. Haughey stated that he expects reconciliation and was clear as the chair that the book must be reconciled. Mr. Wozniak made a motion to authorize Attorney Costello to do what is necessary to reconcile the cash books appropriately, seconded by Ms. Bik. Vote unanimous. Mr. Wozniak amended the motion by adding authorization of Administrator Keyes and Mr. Sullivan to have full access to the cash books in the Collector/Treasurer’s office within the Blackstone Municipal Center, to review and/or copy the cash books, seconded by Ms. Bik. Vote unanimous.

Continuation of Public Hearing at 8:00 PM

Mr. Steven J. Seagrave stated that he is here on the application for a Common Victualler All Kinds of Alcoholic Beverage license for the establishment on 200 Main Street. He stated that his establishment will be a family friendly, comfortable environment. He stated that he would like to utilize the outside dining area during the warmer months. Mr. Seagrave stated that dining services will end at 10:00 PM and that he is also requesting an entertainment license until midnight Friday and Saturday. Ms. Bik asked Mr. Seagrave to finish entering his personal information on the Manager’s form. He stated that he would come in on Wednesday to complete. Chief Atstupenas stated that he met with Mr. Seagrave regarding his application and agreed with the use of the patio; however, he did not want patrons drinking outside. Chief Atstupenas stated that the entertainment will end at 12:00 midnight. Mr. Seagrave stated that he will not exceed the allowed capacity of 67. Chief Atstupenas stated that he does not foresee any problems with parking. Ms. Holbrook, of Summer Street and former owner, stated that she wishes Mr. Seagrave the best of luck and stated that there are good people in town. She expressed her concerns about noise complaints that she received as the previous owner and stated that she wanted to inform Mr. Seagrave of the issues. She wished him the best of luck. Mr. Sawyer made a motion to close the public hearing at 8:45 PM, seconded by Ms. Bik. Vote unanimous. Mr. Sawyer made a motion to approve the application for a Common Victualler All Kinds of Alcoholic Beverages from Firehouse Tavern, d/b/a SJ Seagrave & Associates LLC, Steven J. Seagrave, Manager, for the premise

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located at 200 Main Street, seconded by Mr. Marchand, Vote unanimous. Mr. Sawyer made a motion to approve the application for a Common Victualler license and Entertainment license from Firehouse Tavern, d/b/a SJ Seagrave & Associates LLC, Steven J. Seagrave, Manager, for the premise located at 200 Main Street, seconded by Mr. Marchand. Vote unanimous.

Industrial Commission Appointments – Chairman Haughey stated that the Industrial Commission is seeking one more appointee. Chairman Haughey made a motion to appoint Mr. Geno Carlucci to the Industrial Development Commission, seconded by Mr. Wozniak. Vote unanimous. Mr. Sawyer made a motion to appoint Mr. Hubert Arsenault to the Industrial Development Commission, seconded by Mr. Wozniak. Vote unanimous. Mr Wozniak made a motion to appoint Ms. Jackie Mino to the Industrial Development Commissionr, seconded by Mr. Marchand. Vote unanimous..

Approval of Northern Bus Contract – Mr. Keyes stated that the approval is for the van that is to be purchase through the Friends of Council on Aging and will be received as a gift. Mr. Sawyer made a motion to approve the Northern Bus Contract, seconded by Mr. Wozniak. Vote unanimous.

Municipal Employee Request – Chairman Haughey stated that Ms. Paulette Boyko asked to be considered for special municipal employee status via a February letter received of the Board. Ms. Bik stated that she would like to 6B the request. Mr. Keyes stated that it will be placed on the March 13th meeting.

Annual Vacation Time/Vacation & Personnel Policy - Mr. Keyes stated that he would like to place the 240 hour vacation carry over on hold. He stated that no one should be carrying over their vacation time and is asking that the official policy be changed to use it or lose it. He stated that this issue will be added to the meeting of March 13th.

National Grid Prepayment Approval – Mr. Wozniak made a motion to approve the National Grid Prepayment for Recycling Department proposal providing that a statement be added to the contract to read “the old poles must be removed with thirty days”, seconded by Ms. Bik. Vote unanimous.

Blackstone Public Library – Mr. Keyes stated that the Blackstone Public Library still acts on the confines of the Construction Account because it was initially a grant; there is $15,000 left in the account that cannot be used under any other account.

Payroll Warrant – Ms. Bik made a motion to approve Payroll Warrant #12EWA30, #12PW30, #12EWA31 and #12PW31 as stated, seconded by Mr. Wozniak. Vote unanimous.

Vendor Warrant – Ms. Bik made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #12EW30, #12EW30B, #12EW30C and #12EW31 as stated, seconded by Mr. Wozniak. Vote unanimous.

Good and Welfare – Selectmen

Eagle Scout Project - Mr. Wozniak stated that the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to approve a request from Mr. Andrew Messier to complete an Eagle Scout project by beautifying the gazebo in town commons. .

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Parks & Recreation - Mr. Sawyer expressed his concerns regarding Parks & Recreation grants. He stated the Town has not received grants in the past two years He asked if the Town applied for EDCB grants

Parks & Recreation - Mr. Marchand thanks Michael Suprenant, Director of Public Works for his assistance with Parks & Recreation to dig a large hole to store an irrigation tank for the fields. . He stated that Roland Giguere has assisted in utilizing his equipment to move large items in town and expressed his appreciation.

Council on Aging - Ms. Bik read information from the monthly newsletter for the Council on Aging. She stated that the Friends of the Council on Aging have a table in the atrium with blankets for sale and asked for a donation of yarn. She read a memo from the Blackstone Public Library.

Council on Aging Transportation - Mr. Haughey asked Mr. Keyes to work with Dennis Pimenta, of the Council on Aging Transportation Department, regarding transportation and the Millville van service. He stated that the Board has taken action to sustain the service; however he is asking for review. He stated that we need to work together with other communities.

Mr. Wozniak made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM, seconded by Ms. Bik. Vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Nadeau-Lemoine