BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING – WORKSHOP SESSION

FEBRUARY 28, 2012

The workshop session was called to order at 7:00 PM. Present were Chairman Haughey, Selectwoman Bik, Selectmen Sawyer, Wozniak, and Marchand, Administrator Keyes, and Town Accountant Suzanne Moquin. Patrick Costello, Esq, Town Counsel arrived at 7:04 PM. Mr. John Sullivan, of Melanson & Heath, arrived at 7:05 PM.

Eagle Project Approval - Chairman Haughey introduced Andrew Messier, candidate Eagle Scout from Troop #1, Blackstone. Mr. Messier presented his request to the Board. He stated that he would like to sand, repaint and restore the gazebo and beautify the surrounding area. Mr. Messier stated he would like to begin the project in April. Mr. Sawyer asked if he had the funds to complete the project. Mr. Keyes stated that the Town would provide the funds. Mr. Sawyer made a motion to approve the Eagle Project on the Main Street gazebo complex, by Mr. Andrew Messier, seconded by Mr. Marchand. Vote unanimous. Mr. Keyes stated that he will provide Mr. Messier with the contact information for DPW Director Michael Suprenant. Mr. Messier introduced his father to Board members.

FY2013 Budget – Mr. Keyes stated that the omnibus is ready. He stated that he has been working with the Town Accountant and have managed to come within $50,000 of balancing the budget. He stated that the omnibus would be presented on Wednesday, February 29, 2012. Mr. Wozniak asked if the Board would review the Blackstone/Millville transportation for Council on Aging. Mr. Sawyer stated that Millville will not support the funding for Council on Aging transportation; however, the Town of Blackstone will have enough in the contract for the next 8 months. He stated that he supports leaving the budget as-is. Mr. Sawyer stated that he was not sure if Millville made their last payment. Mr. Keyes stated that the Town utilized free cash in the past to balance the budget. He stated that he will be balancing the budget at less than $50,000.

FY 2013 Assessor’s Budget Review - Mr. Keyes stated that the Assessor’s budget has been approved and will be discussed at the meeting on Wednesday, February 29, 2012.

Pakistan Exchange – Mr. Keyes stated that he has inquired about a Pakistan Government exchange. He stated that two members of their government would spend time here to learn about our government. He stated that he would inform the Board prior to making any decisions.

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Reconciliation - Mr. Costello stated that reconciling of the Town of Blackstone cash books has been an on-going issue for approximately 5-6 years. He stated that Melanson and Heath has been working with the Board and issued a letter in November indicating that much of the problem lies within the Treasurer Department. He stated that he was advised that the Treasurer was not cooperating with the Board. Mr. Costello stated that Mr. Keyes issued a letter to the Treasurer; however, it was discarded and not heeded. Mr. Costello stated that he issued a letter on February 23, 2012 outlining that her unwillingness to cooperate is troublesome and should not be persisted. He stated that she sent an e-mail to the Department of Revenue stating that everything in his letter was false; the Department of Revenue responded with a statement that said she must make the books available. He stated that her elected status makes her an employee of the town and that she is to abide by all laws. He stated that the Town Accountant and Melanson & Heath Auditor have the right to see all books. Mr. Wozniak asked if he needs to recuse himself if the Treasurer decides to obtain the same counsel as in a previous case with the Town. Mr. Costello stated that a disclosure should be submitted and filed with the Town Clerk to protect his interest. Mr. Costello stated that an elected official can be removed from office via a recall or by the Commissioner of Revenue. Mr. Marchand asked if the office of the Collector/Treasurer can be disciplined. Mr. Costello stated no because she holds an elected official position. Mr. Costello stated that the Town Administrator has control over the functions of the office. Mr. Keyes expressed his concerns about the Treasurer having sole access to the cash books. Mr. Costello stated that the Board and Town Administrator have authority over the operations of the office. He stated that the Treasurer is bound as an elected official and can be removed from office and that the town should place a letter of reprimand in her file. Mr. Marchand stated that if she is doing personal taxes in her office it must be noted. Mr. Costello stated that there has been a formal complaint with the ethics commission and that if found guilty she could be fined thousands of dollars.. Mr. Keyes stated that Ms. Warren asked that the veteran’s account be submitted to the Treasurer’s office. He stated that the account was not balancing in October and was turned over to Ms. Cathy Muller. Mr. Marchand stated that in the past the books have actually gone out of this building.

Mr. Wozniak made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM, seconded by Mr. Sawyer. Vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Nadeau-Lemoine