

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
JOINT MEETING
GREAT BARRINGTON SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2011
6:00 P.M. – TOWN HALL - BOARD ROOM**

PRESENT: WALTER ATWOOD
STEPHEN BANNON
ALANA CHERNILA
DEB PHILLIPS
SEAN STANTON
KEVIN O'DONNELL, TOWN MANAGER

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Tom Blauvelt – Chairman
John Breasted
Mark Lefenfeld
Alice Reilly
Jim Stark

- I. **Call to order:** Sean Stanton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.
- II. Approval of Minutes
February 15, 2011

MOTION: Deb Phillips– to approve minutes from February 15, 2011
SECOND: Bud Atwood
VOTE: 4-0 (Alana Chernila not present for vote)

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld– to approve minutes from February 15, 2011
SECOND: Alice Reilly
VOTE: 4-0 (John Breasted not present for vote)

February 16, 2011

MOTION: Deb Phillips– to approve minutes from February 16, 2011
SECOND: Bud Atwood
VOTE: 4-0 (Alana Chernila not present for vote)

MOTION: Alice Reilly– to approve minutes from February 16, 2011
SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld
VOTE: 3-0-1 (John Breasted not present for vote) Jim Stark abstains

February 22, 2011

MOTION: Deb Phillips– to approve minutes from February 22, 2011
SECOND: Bud Atwood
VOTE: 5-0

MOTION: Alice Reilly– to approve minutes from February 22, 2011

SECOND: Mark Lefenfeld

VOTE: 2-0-2 (John Breasted not present for vote) Jim Stark and Mark Lefenfeld abstained

February 23, 2011

MOTION: Deb Phillips– to approve minutes from February 23, 2011

SECOND: Bud Atwood

VOTE: 5-0

MOTION: Mark Lefenfeld– to approve minutes from February 23, 2011

SECOND: Alice Reilly

VOTE: 2-0-2 (John Breasted not present for vote) Jim Stark and Mark Lefenfeld abstained as they were not present at the meeting.

III. Wrap Up FY 12 Budget with School District

IV. CIP- Kevin O'Donnell presented a power point presentation about the details in the CIP.

He stated that the 'swap shack' idea was investigated and that Monterey and Stockbridge do have one. In Monterey, there are no restrictions for use and in Stockbridge, they have one that is run by volunteers and there is a charge of \$25 per year/per person for town residents only. He stated that it is possible to go ahead and do it, but it will have to be volunteer driven.

Stephen Bannon suggested that it be put on the next agenda and that there be a proposal given.

Sean Stanton asked what the monetary impact would be.

Alana Chernila said that there would need to be a structure built to protect items from the weather.

Kevin O'Donnell responded that there is no plan in place.

Alana Chernila said that they don't need people to maintain it. She said that there is someone at the Center currently and they may be all that is needed. She suggested that they look at the models how other towns do it.

Deb Phillips said that they need a plan and need to determine if funding is needed.

Alana Chernila said that this is only a part of a bigger issue of upgrading the Center. She suggested that they consider moving to a sticker system.

Kevin O'Donnell said that they can re-visit the transfer station concept. He said that if there is a cost to the project, there is \$100,000 set aside in a contingency fund that they can take from.

Jim Stark said that he would like to see a comprehensive report since there may be more trash and more truck loads.

Sean Stanton said that they all will make a commitment to talk about this.

It was suggested that it be discussed at the strategic planning meeting on July 6th.

Kevin O'Donnell stated that gas prices have gone up to \$3.00 a gallon, and if it goes up to \$4.00 a gallon, they need to increase the budget by \$68,500. He recommends that they go from \$3.00 to \$4.00.

Deb Phillips suggested that something be scheduled to discuss conservation in this matter.

Bud Atwood said that in the past, they have gone with Lauren's recommendations and if the prices don't go up as much as anticipated, they will have free cash the following year. Stephen Bannon said that they need to have more budget workshops so it doesn't take the time at these meetings to come up with changes.

Mark Lefenfeld asked that they look at other Towns to see how they are doing things.

Kevin O'Donnell agreed and said that they also need to get legislature changed.

Mark Lefenfeld asked if they should come up with a list of legislative priorities.

Kevin O'Donnell replied yes and said that they need to be the leader in the area.

Sean Stanton said that they should create a legislative action committee with members from other Towns' Boards. He said that he and Kevin O'Donnell will meet and strategize.

MOTION: Deb Phillips– to approve a fuel increase of \$68,500.

SECOND: Stephen Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

MOTION: Alice Reilly– to approve a fuel increase of \$68,500.

SECOND: Jim Stark

VOTE: 5-0

Kevin O'Donnell stated that if the roads are completed 100% in 10 years, it would cost \$33 million. Fiscally, we can not afford it.

He stated that the budget is down \$112,000 due to decisions made in the last meetings.

Kevin O'Donnell stated that the operating budget has increased \$107,000 or 1.17%, because of the changes in the fuel costs.

Kevin O'Donnell recapped the following changes to the CIP:

- a one time transfer from the gift account
- no borrowing for the roads
- \$100,000 hitting the levy from Lake Mansfield
- Park Improvements – take \$ out of Dewey School, which is a \$30,500 transfer
- the sale of Searles/Bryant goes to offset the cost of the new fire truck

All the above will slightly reduce the property taxes.

Kevin O'Donnell reported that the State said that the Taconic/Main St. Sewer Project would be an eligible cost. He said, however, that the likelihood is that they won't get outside funding for this project and that it would be 'on our nickel.'

John Breasted suggested that the roads should be part of a Long Range Planning Meeting for the BOS. He feels that they need a strategy on how to deal with this.

Kevin O'Donnell presented the cemetery breakdown. He stated that we are high on non-residents, but low on residents.

Joe Sokul stated that they have 12-13 burials a year.

Bud Atwood asked where the money goes.

Lauren Sartori replied that it goes into the 'sale of plot' account and the opening fee goes to free cash.

There was discussion about the various costs and Sean Stanton stated that the rates need to be adjusted.

Kevin O'Donnell stated that he will bring it to the Cemetery Commission to look at and have them come back with a recommendation.

Kevin O'Donnell spoke about the sewer rate and recapped the 450/500/550/600 rates as requested.

Deb Phillips asked if the rate was raised now, shouldn't it affect the rate later?

Lauren Sartori replied that it will affect the rate later.

Stephen Bannon said that we need to know what the impact will be if we use these rates.

Lauren Sartori replied that she can show the impact, however, it will only show reducing debt services and debt rates. There are many other options to consider.

Sean Stanton stated that the whole idea is to mitigate the ups and downs.

Kevin O'Donnell said that they can still look at it.

Deb Phillips suggested that they reconsider the road improvements and said that she thinks that they need to borrow \$500,000 for the roads, after all.

MOTION: Deb Phillips-- to borrow \$500,000 for road improvements

SECOND: Stephen Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

MOTION: Alice Reilly-- to borrow \$500,000 for road improvements

SECOND: John Breasted

VOTE: 5-0

Lauren Sartori stated that this will impact the tax rate by about \$20 per average home.

Alana Chernila agreed that there needs to be some repairs, but said that the system is flawed.

Sean Stanton agreed and said that the excise tax on cars is how we should pay for roads. He said that this needs to be brought up to the legislators.

Stephen Bannon said that he would rather see the money spent on roads than on Storm Water.

Alana Chernila asked if there was a way to help the level of storm water improvements (Phosphate levels, etc.). She asked if there are more things that can be done.

She said that if the future cost can be affected by the banning of phosphate material being sold, they should ban it.

Lauren Sartori responded that these maintenance issues and conservation ideas are always good, but it is an old system and it needs to be upgraded.

Deb Philips suggested that they raise the sewer rates and conduct a workshop on how to mitigate these problems.

Tim Drumm stated that this will affect the operational cost only.

Jim Stark suggested making an increase based on meter flow.

He also asked for the engineer reports on storm water and the bridges.

Joe Sokul said that he is happy to give it to him.

V. **Adjournment-** On a motion by Alana Chernila, seconded by Deb Phillips, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:15 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cara Becker". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the start of the first name.

Cara Becker
Recording Secretary