



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
February 19, 2010
Town Hall Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by Chair, Ron Ricci in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Ron Ricci, Lucy Wallace, Marie Sobalvarro and Peter Warren were all in attendance. Tim Clark was absent.

COUNCIL ON AGING BUDGET – Council on Aging Director Ginger Quarrels was present to review her budget for FY2011. Quarrels explained the level funded budget reduced by the benefit share would mean a reduction from 7 hours per week to 6 for the program coordinator and a reduction in the expense line item. The total savings is \$1,283.00. She stated the reduction in hours would be a challenge for the coordinator and the expense reduction would result in an increase of ongoing requests from the public for donations and perhaps elimination of one COA sponsored event. Quarrels then reviewed the proposed budget with an additional 5% reduction. She explained this would mean the program coordinator would be cut from 7 hours to 4 per week and the outreach coordinator position would be cut from 16 hours per week to 14 hours. Also, the expense budget would be cut resulting in a total reduction of \$4,657.00. She said the reductions would reverse the progress made in recent years in providing comprehensive services to seniors in Harvard. Quarrels said with the reduction in hours to the outreach coordinator less home visits would be made as well as less follow up calls further limiting the department's ability to reach out to those seniors who are the most vulnerable and isolated. Lucy Wallace asked for a sense of how many seniors are utilizing the COA. Quarrels said they have a case load of about 60 to 80 residents who they work with on a variety of issues. Wallace also wondered if families in town seek guidance from the COA regarding their own aging families and she said yes. Marie Sobalvarro commended Quarrels on seeking additional volunteers from the community and Peter Warren suggests possibly instituting user fees as well as accessing the revolving fund to offset any reductions. Quarrels said there are limitations to accessing the revolving fund and expressed concern with charging user fees to seniors.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET – DPW Director Rich Nota was present to review his FY2011 budget. Nota said fortunately with the level funded budget he was able to absorb the cost of employee benefit increases with new hires compensated at a lower rate. The total reduced amount is \$10,695.00. In regards to the 5% budget, Nota said the total amount to be reduced is \$51,990. In developing his 5% reduction budget, he said he has tried to utilize the substantial savings from the transfer station by transitioning them to areas in need of improvement on the highway budget. Nota referenced the Finance Committee survey as a resource in determining road side maintenance as a concern of the public. Nota said this has prompted him to analyze the possibility of privatizing street sweeping and conservation field mowing. He provided the board members the cost analysis which included the cost now to the town of \$36,764.80 and cost with privatized sweeping service reduced to \$12,000.00 He explained with the street sweeping the entire town can be done in two weeks which would greatly improve the process. He reviewed the line items in the expense budget where adjustments were made. Lucy Wallace suggested contacting DEP to determine how long park groundwater

monitoring is required if levels have been maintained. Nota said he would look into this. Wallace also asked for clarity on the reduction of a truck driver/laborer position. Nota explained if the 5% budget was implemented a snow plow contractor may have to be hired to compensate for the reduction in staff. Wallace felt it important for the public to understand the impact of the reduced budgets on services. Nota also provided the cost analysis for conservation field mowing indicating a total cost now of \$26,028.00 and cost with privatized mowing service reduced to \$12,000. Marie Sobalvarro asked of the impact on the personnel with this change and Nota explained he would shift responsibilities to accommodate this adjustment. Ron Ricci complimented Rich on his innovative ways of doing the job better with the resources provided and Peter Warren recommends he hire an administrative assistant as soon as possible.

Rich Nota asked the board to approve overspending on the storm and ice budget by approximately \$30,000.00. On a Wallace/Warren motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize the deficit spending.

Peter Warren asked the Town Administrator for a status on the Finance Committee's decision to go with the level funded budgets or the 5% reduced budgets. Tim Bragan said the decision will depend on how successful negotiations with health insurance are.

FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET - Fire Chief Robert Mignard was present to review his budget for FY2011. Mignard said to meet the healthcare cost increase of \$1,711.00 in the level funded budget he will deduct from the general expense budget. He indicated this is getting lean but it can be accomplished. In reviewing the 5% reduction budget, Mignard said it is significantly more difficult because wages and salary account for 86% of the budget. He said after reviewing the wage expenses from previous years he decided to reduce the firefighter's stipend by \$5,000.00. He explained this will greatly reduce the department's ability to compensate for training or other departmental courses and occasional compensation for volunteer's time given to maintaining and repairing equipment. Mignard also reduced the radio and protective equipment line items to zero. He explained the gear is only a few years old and has been well maintained and a new radio system will be installed in winter/spring of 2010. As far as the new radio system, he stated grant funds would pay for that. Mignard also spoke about other grant funds the department receives through the SAFE (Student Awareness of Fire Education) program and fire equipment grants but said he does not want to depend on these as funding is not guaranteed. His concern with the 5% reduced budget is the department will only be able to deliver core functions and may not be able to continue with the SAFE program which is recognized across the Commonwealth for excellence and effectiveness. He explained he has been able to support it in a modest fashion by purchasing some teaching supplies, educational materials and by supplementing the program wage budget but under this budget such support will not be possible. Mignard suggested a possible new source of revenue could be to charge a one time fee of \$10.00 for burning permits. Peter Warren expressed concern with the reduction of the expense account and Lucy Wallace asked if there was a schedule in place for capital improvements.

POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET - Police Chief Ed Denmark was present to review his budget for FY2011. Chief Denmark explained in order to comply with this year's budget preparation guidelines he subtracted \$8,128 from the FY2010 budget to cover the increase in health insurance. He explained this amount was taken from the overtime

budget and would result in 240 single coverage shifts per year which equates to 4.5 shifts per week with a single officer covering the town. Denmark stated to meet the 5% reduction budget (\$37,730.00) a position would need to be eliminated. He explained a patrol officer salary is \$52,669. The difference between that salary and the proposed cut is \$14,939, which would be put into the overtime account to fund 45 additional overtime shifts. He said the net loss in shift coverage would be 165 shifts per year and with the addition of our existing shift deficit of 240, the department would have 405 shifts per year covered by a single officer. This would be a significant reduction in service to the town. Peter Warren wondered if other communities of equal size are utilizing single shift coverage and the Chief said Harvard is one of the only. Denmark next spoke about the communications budget stating to cover the \$3,636 reduction the overtime budget would be reduced. He explained this is feasible but not practical considering the increase to part-time dispatchers from 89 shifts per year to 185. Peter Warren commented stating another reason for the town to consider regional dispatch. Chief Denmark gave an update explaining he has been working with the Chiefs from Devens, Shirley and Lancaster to develop a common model and understanding with the intention to eventually bring back to each community for further feedback. He confirmed Ayer has not been involved and Lunenburg may be interested. Marie Sobalvarro asked about the reduction in operating costs for the department which the Chief said is somewhat of a result of the ongoing HVAC factor.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION - Worth Robbins, 115 Mass. Avenue attended the meeting to speak to the Selectmen about an announcement made by Google to launch an experiment aimed at making Internet access better and faster for everyone. He explained they plan to build ultra-high speed broadband networks in one or more trial locations across the country, delivering speeds more than 100 times faster than what most Americans have access to today. Robbins said HarvardDSL (a group formed 10 years ago to bring high-speed internet to town) decided to meet to discuss this and organize a Harvard response. He explained Google's process allows for a formal government response by a municipality or a community group response. Robbins and the Selectmen agreed a government response including multiple communities especially Devens considering the commercial development there as the best approach. Lucy Wallace was skeptical of the town's ability to meet the March 26th deadline to respond. Robbins provided an RFI from Google for the Selectmen to view. He said the response requires mostly factual details and is optimistic it can be accomplished. Peter Warren suggested contacting Meg Delorie at MassDevelopment to assist in contacting businesses in Devens. Robbins said the opportunity will be reviewed at the JBOS meeting on Thursday, February 24th to enlist formal participation from Harvard and to alert other town's to the opportunity and enlist their participation as well. Lucy Wallace suggested contacting Verizon and National Grid because they own the poles. The Selectmen expressed support of the idea and made a formal vote. On a Wallace/ motion, the Board voted unanimously to endorse moving forward with this proposal and will cooperate in anyway possible to facilitate the response.

UNITARIAN CHURCH LICENSE REQUEST- Town Administrator Tim Bragan introduced Rick High who was present on behalf of the church. Bragan explained access to the telephone pole on the eastside of the church near the shaker stone on the common is required to provide power to the new church hall. High stated he was assured by National Grid in July that everything was in order but now National Grid claims they are

unable to locate the appropriate paperwork allowing them to cross this portion of town land. He said they can not find an easement or license allowing them to cross the town land even though the pole and wires have been there for years. Bragan said the best and easiest course of action is for the BOS to sign a new license to approve the connection. He confirmed Town Counsel Mark Lanza has reviewed and approved the license. High said basically the license allows the addition of one new guide wire to the existing pole and the aerial right to cross the portion of town land that exists on the other side of Elm Street located between Pole 5 and Pole 4-1.

On a Wallace/Warren motion, the Board voted unanimously to execute license as described by Mr. High.

MINUTES – On a Wallace/Warren motion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 2/2, as presented.

LIQUOR LICENSE POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND APPLICATION – Marie Sobalvarro said the noticeable changes from the last meeting review are the removal of the one day license, Town Administrator is the designated Licensing Agent for the BOS, manager required age of 21, and for renewals all expected sign offs from initial application must be reprocessed. The board reviewed each page and made the following changes.

Page 2: Peter Warren amended #9 to say the members of the LLA, Zoning Enforcement officer, the Public Safety officers, and LLA duly authorized agents.

Lucy Wallace asked about the filing fee on #3 and suggested the fee be the same for a new license or renewal. On a Sobalvarro/Warren motion, the board voted unanimously to approve a \$50.00 filing fee. Also on #3 Wallace asked to add up to date on all appropriate permits.

Page 3: add filing fee.

Page 5: Step V add unless otherwise arranged to be picked up.

Under Enforcement change calendar months to 12

Page 8: BYOB (Carry-in) add fee included in filing fee

Marie Sobalvarro will make the necessary amendments for the board to make final approval at the March 2nd meeting.

SELECTMEN REPORTS – Peter Warren said EDAT will be attending the March 2nd meeting to give a status report. He also said the Capital Committee is nearing completion on recommendations for this year and is concerned with the condition of all the town buildings. The committee feels capital improvements could be avoided if ongoing maintenance was established and suggest the BOS appoint a member to work with the School Committee to obtain a facilities manager funded by both the town and school. Warren said the current School Department Facilities Director Mark Force would be an excellent candidate. Lucy Wallace also suggested establishing building maintenance accounts.

Marie Sobalvarro said she is working on contacting Steve Miller regarding the volunteers interested. She said the Energy Advisory Committee is requesting inclusion of approximately \$1,000.00 from the public building account to go toward continued evaluation to reduce energy costs. Peter Warren said programmable thermostats have been installed in all municipal buildings. Sobalvarro stated the committee members have been using some personal funds. Tim Bragan did confirm the town has paid for the use of

a thermal imaging camera and would be happy to review their out of pocket costs with Marie.

Lucy Wallace said the Municipal Buildings Task Force will be holding another workshop on February 27th from 8:30am to 12:00pm to test ideas with the public.

Ron Ricci stated at 6:45pm on February 23rd the DEC hearing regarding the Evergreen Solar will be held.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT – Tim Bragan informed the board that at their March 16th meeting a public hearing will be held to address the request from Fruitlands Museum to amend the conditions of their Liquor and Entertainment licenses.

Bragan said Central Mass. Municipal Recycling Council has recognized Harvard for their efforts to recycle and outstanding recycling program.

Bragan reported the MMA recently sent out an alert requesting support for house bill #2509 providing cities and towns with the same ability for plan design as the state relating to health insurance. This would save Harvard approximately \$230,000 a year. He provided the board members with a draft letter.

On a Wallace/Warren motion, the board voted unanimously to sign the letter in support of house bill#2509.

Bragan informed the board that Harvard along with Townsend, Devens, Groton, Littleton, Lancaster and Lunenburg are working toward regionalizing removal of household hazardous waste products. He explained the cost would be greatly reduced from the \$8,000 it costs the town every two years to hold a hazardous waste day. He said each community would pay an initial set up cost of \$11,000.00 and an annual service amount of \$2,300.00. The hazardous waste area would be open the first Saturday and Wednesday for 10 months a year. Bragan said this plan would be less expensive for the town and more convenient for residents. He also stated the annual cost could go down in the future if other communities or businesses participate. Bragan suggests the board add as a small warrant article for annual town meeting.

On a Sobalvarro/ motion, the board voted unanimously to approve a small warrant article in the amount of \$13,300.00 to cover both start up costs and annual maintenance space for hazardous waste consortium.

BROMFIELD CLASS OF 2012 5K RUN – Bragan confirmed the Police Chief has reviewed the request and approved it. Peter Warren asked who would be paying for the police detail. On a Wallace/Warren motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the race to be held on May 22nd.

RESIGNATIONS – Resignation letters were submitted by Curtis Howes Warner Free Lecture member and Lisa Daigle from the Cultural Council.

On a Warren/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to accept letters of resignation and letters of thank you are sent.

CHAPTER 498 CHANGES – Ron Ricci explained he was informed by Peter Lowitt of the Devens Enterprise Commission there are proposed amendments for Chapter 498. He

highlighted the major change as replacing the chair, who is appointed by the Governor, with the Secretary of Housing and Community Development. Lucy Wallace suggests to the DEC review their own policies on how they operate especially with the idea of rotating chairmanship. Wallace and Ricci expressed their concern on why the towns were not informed of this. Ricci recommended the board draft a letter in response to Representative Benson and Senator Eldridge. The board members agreed and were all extremely concerned

On a Wallace/Warren motion, the board voted unanimously to send a letter and authorize the chair to sign to Senator Eldridge, Representatives Benson and Hargraves copying chairman of the committee holding the hearing Tuesday, February 23rd strongly stating our objection to these proposed amendments to Chapter 498.

**** On a Warren motion, the Board voted unanimously by a roll call vote (Sobalvarro– AYE, Wallace – AYE, Ricci – AYE, Warren – AYE) to enter into executive session at 1:30pm, as authorized by Chapter 39, Section 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws, at a meeting for which 48-hours notice has been given, to discuss on-going union negotiations. Following the executive session, the Board will reconvene into open session, for the sole purpose of adjourning. ***

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45pm.