



**Board of Selectmen
Strategic Planning Session
Minutes
June 8, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 P.M. by Chair, Peter Warren in the former Library, main meeting room. Peter Warren, Ron Ricci, Marie Sobalvarro and Bill Johnson were all present. Tim Clark entered at 4:14pm.

ACTION ITEMS

On a Ricci/Johnson motion, the board voted unanimously to award the Bare Hill Pond storm water project to the low bidder, JJ Phelan of Tewksbury, Ma in the amount of \$262,483.

On a Warren/Sobalvarro motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize the town administrator to request on behalf of the Selectman a reserve fund transfer in the amount of \$86,000 for the Town Center Sewer Project, and if this request is not approved by the Finance Committee, to authorize short term borrowing necessary to cover the funds already spent on the project.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Board reviewed the updated BOS policies & procedures and made the following suggestions:

- Under Board Policies & Standards of Conduct add a section specific to Legal Counsel outlining email/correspondence policy for Selectmen (Tim B.)
- Under Role of the Town Administrator add update board throughout the year on department head performance and if necessary liaison participation. (Tim B.)
- Under Meeting Procedures add absentee participation policy (Marie)
- Under Hearings before the Board add conduct & format. Consult with the MMA on official procedures to be shared with all committees/boards. (Tim B.)
- A few other items included: incorporating new open meeting law requirements into the policies, agenda procedures review (Peter & Tim B.), clarity on appointment procedures (Ron).

*Changes will be submitted to the Selectmen's office by June 18th.
Final version approval in July.*

COMMUNICATION

The Board members agreed communication with other boards/committees is imperative. The following suggestions were made:

- Coordinate two all board meetings a year.
- Establish fiscal year goals & strategy early with boards/committees input.
- Regular liaison reports.
- Improve goal planning & delegation

- Shift the focus of the Board and its members from short-term tactical issues to longer-term strategic initiatives.

TOWN MEETING DATE

- Finance Committee & School Committee suggest a compromise of April.
- Marie S. & Tim C. request March 26
- Peter W. & Bill J. open to a compromise of April
- Ron R. requests May
- Dates to check school calendar: March 26 or April 9.

SELECTMEN DIRECTED INITIATIVES and COMMITTEE CHARGES

Municipal Buildings Committee

- Charge must include authority to approve expenditures.
- Marie & Peter will work with task force member Ron Ostberg on the charge.
- Ron R. requested the following be included:
 1. Town Hall: Plans and cost estimates sufficient to request funds from ATM and get bids to complete project.
 2. Old Library: Recommended municipal use(s) for property, Conceptual plans for modifications and rough cost estimates for recommended use(s), RFP and responses for non-municipal use with long term lease, Fair market evaluation for sale of property.
 3. Hildreth House: Conceptual plans for additions/modifications and rough cost estimate for expansion of Senior Center, Fair market evaluation for sale of property.

Devens Economic Analysis Team

- Bill J. will work with Steve Finnegan on the skill sets required for committee members.
- Charge and skill sets will be posted to the town website/cable channel to solicit volunteers.
- Board agreed the charge should not include disposition.

Economic Development Committee

- Tim C. & Bill J. will work with two Planning Board members on charge.

Future Land Acquisition

- Tim C. referenced the Great Elms and Catholic Church properties.
- Municipal Land Management to consider land opportunities public or private.

LAST YEAR'S GOALS REVIEWED

(Updates in italic)

Municipal Buildings and Town Center

1. Develop a plan for the use of Town owned buildings along with the article(s) necessary to be acted on by Town Meeting to begin implementing the plan.

2. Develop a plan to improve parking and pedestrian access in the Town Center area.
3. Develop possible use/reuse of non-municipal buildings/properties within the general town center area.

First phase completed next two phases in progress.

Devens/JBOS

1. Seek opportunities for shared resources and service delivery.
2. Develop working economic model of revenues and expenses relative to managing Devens and impact on/opportunities for Harvard.

Devens Economic Analysis Team to be established.

Commercial Development

1. Develop a plan to optimize the commercial area on Ayer Road.(EDAT)

EDAT completed their work.

Necessary zoning changes for Planning Board to consider:

- *accommodate assisted living facility*
- *increase supermarket size*
- *allow office complex*

Continue with Economic Development Committee

Fiscal/Personnel

1. Develop a strategy and complete a total compensation matrix for all town employees. *Tim B. will complete for December 1, 2010.*
2. Resolve the health insurance question (stay with current provider, change groups or move to GIC) and take to Annual Town Meeting if necessary.
Completed

Miscellaneous

1. Strive to improve communication at all levels of the organization.
Ongoing
2. Implement a document management plan for all of town hall that uses electronic storage and improves access to public documents created and received.
Incomplete
3. Improve the processing of financial transactions to allow easier analysis by anyone authorized to view them.
Incomplete

Operational Issues

1. Establish a Harvard Development Authority and eliminate the HHA.
Incomplete

FISCAL ISSUES

- Reduce Structural Deficit
- Regional cost savings (0-3 years)

- Shared services
- Regionalized utilities
- New revenue opportunities (3-5 years)
 - Pursue commercial expansion of the C District – EDC
 - Explore 3-5 year revenue opportunities for old library
 - Explore local income tax initiative
- Institutionalize 3-year financial planning
- Reduce structural dependence on high tuition payments from Devens
- Board members agreed with the concept and instructed Bill J. to work with the Finance Committee & School Committee to craft a goal.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Board members agreed maintenance and upkeep of the town buildings is a major concern.
- Tim B. explained the difficulty in determining work to be completed when the future status of the buildings are in question.
- Julie D. will provide members with the DPW Director’s job description to determine if maintenance of town buildings is included.
- Tim B. & Peter W. revisit idea of a shared facility manager with the school and provide feedback by September.

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

- Do we need all the Housing committees?
Discussion but no decision or action item was made.
- Town Hall Technology – (Should we create a Harvard Technology Advisory Committee?)
Ron R. and Tim C. will work on this.
- Codify performance review process/promotion/termination of department heads and goal setting for increased productivity.
Discussed two updates a year from the Town Administrator on all department heads.
- Internal management audit of town hall by DLS - (Periodic review of systems and processes)
Board agreed this is a good idea and will discuss further at their next regular meeting.
- Transfer Station
Tim C. suggested the Transfer Station become a true enterprise and utilize funds collected to cover the cost of doing business. Tim Bragan reported a cost benefit analysis that was completed did indicate fees collected are not covering the total cost to operate.
- Green Communities
Board members agreed to only pursue if it is a town wide goal. Consult with the Planning Board.
- Protect our natural resources that are at immediate risk & progress on long – term resolution of Devens Disposition were covered earlier in the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.