



Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, February 7, 2012 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Chair, Marie Sobalvarro in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Marie Sobalvarro, Ron Ricci, Tim Clark, Bill Johnson and Peter Warren were all in attendance as well as the Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

MINUTES

On a Johnson/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 1/4, 1/10, 1/17 and 1/19, as presented.

APPOINTMENTS

Marie Sobalvarro explained the Economic Development Committee (EDC) appointments would need to be postponed due to Planning Board quorum issues. She asked if BOS members would be able to attend a Planning Board meeting on February 13th to handle the appointments. The members agreed.

On a Clark/Johnson motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Joseph Theriault as the Historical Commission representative to the Conservation Commission.

The board members concurred it was good idea to have Duncan Chapman represent Harvard on the Metrowest 495 partnership.

SUPER TOWN MEETING

Marie Sobalvarro began the discussion by stating at the recent JBOS meeting all the communities were agreeable to hold the Super Town Meeting on Wednesday, March 28th. Tim Bragan distributed the proposed changes to the Devens Reuse Plan. Sobalvarro noted once the public hearings are held and the final language is drafted then the date can be officially finalized. Tim Clark asked if the BOS would be submitting testimony for the hearing on March 21st. Sobalvarro said it was not necessary for the BOS to take a position at this time. The members discussed various ways to handle public outreach. Suggestions included asking the Devens Economic Analysis Team to prepare something and to utilize the local papers along with the town website.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Tim Clark asked if the Town Administrator has received anything from the Park and Recreation Commission related to a Park & Recreation Director. Bragan responded no and added they are currently working with their Finance Committee liaison to finalize a budget.

Peter Warren said the Capital Planning & Investment Committee (CPIC) has been meeting frequently and are close to making recommendations. He said they have completed a first round analysis of all FY13 capital funding requests and continue to review requests in context of available funding and the five – year Capital Plan. Warren explained looking at the total picture the committee continues to be concerned over future funding for capital projects considering after next year there will be no funds left in the capital fund. He said the committee recognizes the importance of the ongoing road reconstruction projects (\$250,000 annually) but points out this item line quickly overwhelms the capital fund. The CPIC is requesting the BOS consider placing the remaining three year Littleton County Road reconstruction project on the warrant as excluded debt because there is insufficient funding available for this project in the capital fund. Johnson said this is understandable and would buy us some time but it is not a long term solution. Tim Clark said because two years of the project has already been completed would it make sense to refund the capital fund. Marie Sobalvarro asked if there has been any discussion to having an override for multiple capital items if necessary or handle as non-excluded debt. Warren said at this time the committee is seeking direction from the BOS. Johnson said he understands this is a complex issue but is not comfortable to make recommendations without more knowledge of the options available. Sobalvarro thought it may be helpful to share all the capital requests and project rating scale so residents can understand the process. Warren said the committee is still working on long term funding ideas and will discuss in more detail at their Thursday meeting. The BOS will revisit the CPIC request at a future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Stu Sklar, 39 Scott Road, was present to distribute the results of a recent survey conducted in town. He said the petition simply asked individuals to sign affirming one simple statement: “We, the undersigned, assert that Article 17, as approved by majority vote at the 2011 Annual Town Meeting, establishes a clear directive to the Board of Selectmen to expend funds for the development of schematic plans for the renovation of Town Hall and specifically requires that those schematic designs be developed so as to meet not only the needs of town governance but also to provide for public assembly space including meeting, civic and community space.’ Sklar said the survey was signed by 288 residents and 2 former residents.

SELECTMEN REPORTS cont.

Peter Warren reported the Facility Manager sub-committee is preparing to meet with the Finance Committee.

Ron Ricci said a Mortgage Forbearance Agreement has been established related to the Harvard Inn and Great Elms properties. He added the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund (MAHTF) has been paying the mortgage payments thus far so tenants can be relocated.

Ricci noted the home rule petition requesting the Water Commission be appointed has not yet been approved. He said the current commission member terms will expire which includes him, Selectmen Clark and resident Josh Gould. Gould will not be running again. With the caucus quickly approaching it is apparent the commission will not be filled with elected officials requiring the BOS to appoint individuals. He said after speaking with Tim Bragan he is suggesting approaching the current Sewer Commissioners to serve as Water Commissioners as well. Ricci explained the Water Department is under the DPW Director who handles most of the duties but the commissioners are responsible to set the water rates. The board members were in agreement.

Marie Sobalvarro reminded everyone of the February 29th Quad-Board meeting.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Tim Bragan said the health insurance process is moving forward he is just waiting to hear from the Retired State, County and Municipal Employees Association on who their designee will be. He noted Minuteman Nashoba Health Group has chosen to retain the dental insurance through Fallon for another year with no additional cost to employees.

Bragan said he has drafted a job description for a Planner and will distribute it.

Bragan informed the board he received a memo from the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) regarding Policies for Use of Computers and Electronic Communications and Social Media. He asked the board to review for their input at a future meeting.

ENTERTAINMENT LICENSE

Harvard Schools Trust Annual Gala – Unitarian Church Fellowship Building
Louise Potter and Molly Cutler were present and confirmed the date of the event this year will be Saturday, March 31st. On a Clark/Johnson motion, the board voted unanimously to approve request for an Entertainment License for the Unitarian Church.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION

The board members had different views on this but ultimately decided to allow committees to utilize this option and provide feedback to the BOS.

On a Johnson/Ricci motion, the board voted to try amendments to 940CMR 29.00 that would allow members of public bodies to participate remotely in meetings in certain circumstances.

(Warren – Nay, Sobalvarro – Aye, Ricci – Aye, Clark – Aye, Johnson - Aye)

COMMUTER RAIL CHANGES

Marie Sobalvarro said a resident brought this subject to her attention and subsequently a notice from the MBTA Advisory Committee was received with more details. She explained the MBTA is proposing hefty fare increases as well as serious reductions to train and bus services. She noted all train service on the Fitchburg line on weekends would be eliminated. The board members discussed the issue and agreed requesting a

public hearing to receive more information would be beneficial. Sobalvarro volunteered to draft the request.

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

On a Warren/Johnson motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the warrant.

TOWN CAUCUS

The board finalized the caucus date of Saturday, March 10th.

JESSIE DAY 5K

On a Ricci/Warren motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the Jessie 5k for May 12th.

HOME RULE PETITION – SENIOR CITIZENS PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

The board reviewed the draft and provided some feedback. Peter Warren said the majority of the verbiage was taken from the petition drafted for Hamilton. A spreadsheet was prepared by the Assessing Department indicating the estimated maximum exemption impact based on the criteria for Harvard would be in the \$200,000 range. Marie Sobalvarro thanked the members for their suggestions and said she would bring them back to the committee at their next meeting on February 27th. Warren said in closing the committee is seeking support for the BOS on this concept for proposal at the Annual Town Meeting. On a Ricci/Johnson motion, the board voted unanimously to endorse the work of the committee and encourage them to come forward with something for the Annual Town Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Documents referenced:

APPOINTMENTS – letter from Con Com dated 1.26.2012

EDC volunteer forms from Chris Ashley dated 1.9.2012

Duncan Chapman dated 1.20.2012

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION – Survey results not dated

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT – Memo Polices for Use of Computers and Electronic Communications and Social Media dated 1.19.2012

ENTERTAINMENT LICENSE – License request dated 1.30.2012

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY WARRANT – dated 2.7.2012

JESSIE DAY 5K –email request dated 1.22.2012

HOME RULE PETITION – SENIOR CITIZENS PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Dated 12.9.2011 Impact spreadsheet dated 2.2.2012