



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Friday, December 20, 2013 at 9:00AM
Town Hall Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair, Marie Sobalvarro in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Stu Sklar, Ron Ricci, Lucy Wallace and Leo Blair were all in attendance as well as the Town Administrator Tim Bragan.

PROSPECT HILL VIEWSHED COMMITTEE

Marie Sobalvarro referred to the committee's recommendation which was included in the BOS packets. Lucy Wallace reported the group did have an opportunity to meet with Bristol Meyers Squid representatives, Peter Lowitt from DEC and Ed Starzec from MassDevelopment. This was an informational meeting prior to the group being sworn in. She said the committee officially meet once and was happy with the color chosen. They recommended the BOS send a letter to MassDevelopment, DEC and Bristol Meyers Squid stating its approval of the following proposed exterior finishes to the Phase II building:

1. Paint: Centria Allusion "769 Zinc Green";
2. Brick façade: same as used on Phase I buildings; and
3. Windows: non-reflective glass, same as used on Phase I buildings.

On Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to send a letter with three recommendations from the Viewshed Committee to MassDevelopment, DEC and Bristol Meyers.

BUDGET REVIEW

Ambulance

Assistant Director of Finance Jason Cotting was present and fielded questions on how the receipts reserve fund is being handled related to operation and expenses. Cotting confirmed the receipts reserve fund will allow the squad to continue self-funded. He was asked about funding for the future purchase of a new Ambulance. Leo Blair suggested the Ambulance squad provide a cash flow projection indicating likely reserves. He said this will allow the Capital Planning and Investment Committee to see how much funds may be available for this future expenditure.

Department of Public Works

DPW Director Rich Nota was present and briefly reviewed his payroll and expense budgets which had minor changes. Nota said he would like to see some increases in highway and construction maintenance line items such as building maintenance, vehicle expenses, Road maintenance materials, painting lines and highway fuel.

He reported the waste collection and disposal has seen savings with construction debris and controlled material costs. He did comment on the reduction in users of the Transfer Station. Nota said we are fortunate to have the addition of a new boom mower to cut back heavy vegetation along roadways. He admitted this would take a lot of effort reducing the ability to cut back the grass and weeds normally cut along the roadsides. He said problem areas may need to

be dealt with on a case by case basis. He requested hiring a seasonal worker to help with this. Leo Blair suggested asking residents the areas in which they feel need the most attention.

The Selectmen gave Nota some suggestions related to signage and road lines.

Solid Waste Tipping contract

Nota said he has been working with Mass Toss to negotiate the solid waste tipping contract for FY15. After reviewing the proposals from our current vendor and investigating other options, he recommended the BOS extend their current contract with Covanta for three years.

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to extend the current contract with Covanta for three years.

DPW Capital Plan

Nota reviewed the items on his capital plan: front end loader, transfer station compost facility, asset management program of infrastructure in town, water storage tank maintenance and scada system upgrades.

COMMUNITY SEPTIC MANAGEMENT

Board of Health member Sharon McCarthy was present to explain the betterment program and answer questions. She directed residents to the town website for more detailed information. Ron Ricci asked if there is a limit on the funding amount granted to the town. McCarthy said the limit is set at \$300,000 now but additional funds can be requested. Blair suggested contacting residents who have failing septic systems about the program. On a Ricci/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to support and sign the community septic loan documents.

OXBOW FIRE SUPPRESSION

Fire Chief Rick Sicard was present to review letters drafted in response to fire suppression at the Oxbow Wildlife Refuge. Marie Sobalvarro invited residents who were interested in speaking on this issue to come forward.

Deborah Skauen-Hinchliffe, 221 Still River Road, suggested the letter include our concern over firefighter's safety. She also commented on how strong the wind was during this fire and how difficult it would be for this area to respond effectively. She is not in favor of using herbicides and recommended the area be mowed at least twice a year.

Peter Warren, 52 Lancaster County Road, suggested including in the fire management plan maintenance of the cart path (located near the parking lot) and unobstructed access to the Nashua River using the boat ramp.

Paul Willard, 218 Still River Road, said the Oxbow must revisit their mowing plan. He strongly advised they mow the former hayfields and pasture at least once a year. He suggested after the birds nest and before the frost.

Lorin Johnson, 20 Still River – Depot Road, told the BOS in the past he had been witness to extensive cutting by heavy duty mowers on the Oxbow land. He is encouraged Harvard's request for additional mowing for safety and security would not be an issue.

Bonnie Chandler, 183 Prospect Hill Road, suggested increased mowing, working around bird nesting times and increase of the buffer zone.

Sobalvarro asked the BOS how they wished to proceed.

Lucy Wallace recommended sending a single letter to the Refuge Manager Libby Herland bearing in mind what we are responding to. Wallace said she was able to speak with Herland who acknowledged mowing has lessened over time due to a decrease in their funding. She also explained they have a narrow window to mow due to their expanding mission in managing their lands. Leo Blair strongly urged the board to demand the lands be maintained appropriately as to not endanger the lives and property of Harvard residents. He requests Harvard be given permission to mow the lands if they are unable.

Key points for letter:

- Mowing of former hayfields and pasture twice a year between June 1st and Nov. 1st
- Maintain a minimum 50' mowed firebreak around said land
- Maintain current dirt road along the Nashua River
- Maintain boat ramp
- Communication with Harvard on their mowing schedule and notification if Fish & Wildlife is unable to meet their schedule
- Harvard respectfully requests permission to do mowing ourselves
- Invite them to come and meet with us.

WELCOME TO HARVARD SIGN

Stu Sklar began the discussion asking the board members for their feedback on the designs and cost estimates provided by resident Tina Allen. The board decided against the signs due to the size, design and resident concerns. Ron Ricci suggested sending the design to MA Highway in the event they need to replace their existing signs and may be interested in using the design proposed.

RESPONSE TO CHOICE (GREAT ELMS) TO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Housing and Community Development has requested a response from the Town to the application by CHOICE for the renovation/expansion of Great Elms to accommodate 9 affordable rentals. As part of this application, CHOICE has asked the MAHT for funds to support this project and as an indication of the Town's support. Leo Blair reported that the MAHT has spent approximately \$14,000 for relocation of residents and has no additional funds available, as they are tied up in the Poor Farm/Littleton Rd project. Lucy Wallace noted the importance of this project and the need for the Town to provide financial support to it. She suggested taking funds from the Rantoul Trust. Leo Blair offered that the MAHT has applied to the CPC for funds and could perhaps use some of them on Great Elms. The Board agreed to send a letter to DHCD expressing our support for this project, and to acknowledge that a financial contribution from the Town was under discussion.

ANNUAL LICENSE RENEWALS

Chief Denmark reported that only one license holder, Fruitlands Museum, had had an incident in the past year of someone drinking excessively. He noted that the Fruitlands staff had handled the patron properly. Otherwise, the year had been incident-free. He also reported that the Fire Chief had inspected the licensees' premises, and all met the requirements for fire suppression. He suggested that premises allowing BYOB make sure to prominently mark those events as such. Finally he reminded the Board that events with more than 100 attendees would require a police detail.

The Board approved the issuance of Entertainment, Common Victualler, Liquor, Class II Use Car and Innholder licenses for 2014 to the applicants listed on December 20, 2013 roster. The liquor licenses were to include the same conditions as previously required, including the need to prominently note BYOB for entertainment events, and for a police detail at events when 100 or more people were expected.

CHANGE OF MANAGER – SHAKER HILLS

The Board approved the application for change of manager at the Shaker Hills Country Club.

TOWN HALL UPDATE

Marie Sobalvarro summarized the results of the two public meetings regarding possible future actions with respect to the Town Hall. She suggested that we ask LLB to cost out 2-3 schemes that would best meet the program needs while staying within the available funds. One interesting suggestion was off-site document storage. Ron Ricci noted that documents can be retrieved from such facilities within 24 hours. Leo Blair noted that we should work within the existing footprint, as that is what he heard the public requesting. The question of phasing had come up at the meetings. Marie Sobalvarro felt phasing would not make good economic or practical/operational sense. She also wondered if the existing addition is structurally sound. Tim Bragan said the engineers investigating access to the basement for asbestos removal would be able to provide some insight on that matter. Marie will draft a request to LLB to "value engineer" renovation of the current building and bring it to our next meeting. She would like a report from LLB in 6-8 weeks so we can formulate a proposal to take to this spring's Annual Town Meeting.

CHAPTER 90 REIMBURSEMENTS

The Board voted to approve the request for Chapter 90 reimbursements.

**** On a Ricci motion, the Board voted unanimously by a roll call vote: (Sobalvarro – Aye, Ricci – Aye, Wallace –AYE, Sklar – Aye, Blair - Aye) to enter into executive session at 12:30pm, as authorized by Chapter 30A, Section 21.3 of the Massachusetts General Laws, at a meeting for which 48-hours' notice has been given, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigating if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. . Following the executive session, the Board will reconvene into open session. ****

The board reconvened into open session.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Town Administrator Tim Bragan reported that the asbestos abatement would begin on the second floor with the removal of the stage curtain on December 30th with set up and actual work being started on December 31st. The contractor expects to have the work on the second floor completed in 3-4 days. The engineer will be coming on Tuesday morning, December 24th, to assess the feasibility of removing a large granite foundation stone for the addition to provide access to the basement for asbestos removal. If that is not possible they will have to put a hole in the floor of the addition in order to enter the basement.

Tim Bragan reported that the contractor has stated that it would be safe for employees to work on the second floor while asbestos was being removed as the area will be totally sealed. He also had offered staff the option to take time off during this period, or he could find a place for them to work elsewhere in town. After some discussion, the Board directed the Town Administrator to close the Town Hall and have those employees not taking time off to work from home. A notice will be put on the town's website and Town Hall doors.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 PM.

Documents referenced:

PROSPECT HILL VIEWSHED COMMITTEE – notes dated 11/25 & 12/9

BUDGET REVIEW – Ambulance & DPW FY 2015 submissions

OXBOW FIRE SUPPRESSION - letter to US Fish & Wildlife dated 12.10.2013

COMMUNITY SEPTIC MANAGEMENT – FAQ & program documents for signature

ANNUAL LICENSE RENEWALS – 2014 annual license renewal list

(All licenses were provided for signature by the BOS)

CHANGE OF MANAGER – SHAKER HILLS – ABCC Form 43 dated 12.17.2013

TOWN HALL UPDATE – summary from town hall forums dated 12.30.2013