



**Board of Selectmen  
Minutes  
Tuesday, December 15, 2015 at 7:00pm  
Hapgood Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Chair, Ron Ricci in the Hapgood Meeting Room. Selectmen Lucy Wallace, Leo Blair, Ken Swanton, Leo Blair and Stu Sklar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

### **Minutes**

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 12/1, as amended.

### **Town Hall and Hildreth House update**

Chair Rick Maiore and member Jack Guswa were present to give the update. They reported the project continues to be on track. The siding and roofing will be fully complete by year end. They are confident all major issues in the Juniper Hill envelope assessment have been addressed. They support implementation of a regularly scheduled maintenance program.

Around 8:30am Friday morning the lantern will be placed atop the Town Hall. Maiore described a Scandinavia tradition called “topping out”. This includes placement of an evergreen on the topmost wood or iron beam often with flags or streamers attached. A representative from GVW will affix the evergreen to the beam. As part of the tradition those involved in the project will sign their names to the banner.

The committee is recommending LLB architects for the Hildreth House project.

Maiore told the board the center traffic committee has been discussing the possibility of creating overflow parking near the lower circle of the driveway to the Hildreth House. He distributed a preliminary design prepared by GPR. They estimate 15 to 20 spaces could be created. He asked the board members to think about this not as a permanent solution but as a good idea for temporary parking. The parking would serve both the Hildreth House and the Town Hall. If the board is supportive of the concept they could include this as an add alternate on the Hildreth House project.

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve invoice for \$1,219,315.19 from GVW.

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to accept proposal from LLB architects for the Hildreth House project.

### **Annual License Renewals**

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve annual licenses as presented subject to completed paperwork from Sorrento’s Pizzeria, Dunkin Donuts, Westward Orchards, and Shaker Hills Country Club.

### **Bare Hill Pond Watershed Management Committee budget review**

Chair Bruce Leicher and committee member Peter Von Loesecke were present. They explained the \$52,000 received through federal grants will be used to protect the watershed pump house and rain gardens. They plan to use this account as a reserve for future capital and maintenance expenses. Ron Ricci brought up the discussions the Water Commissioners have been having with respect to protecting the wells on Pond Road. He wondered if their funds could be used for the water diversion project as the Water Commissioners are requesting \$69,000 to do this. Leicher thought it made sense for them to secure grant funds to do this. He explained this is exactly the type of project which would qualify. He offered to provide them with advice and assistance.

### **Public communication**

Worth Robbins, Mass Ave, summarized an email he sent to the Selectmen about an initial plan to solicit signatures (citizen's petition) to determine if a charter commission should be elected to frame a charter for the Town of Harvard. This came about after word got out the Selectmen were investigating a possible change from Town Administrator to Town Manager. Robbins understood the signatures would need to be collected by the 31<sup>st</sup> of December to be included on the town election ballot. They have decided to slow down the process because there is not enough time to properly inform the public on what this means. They also do not want to be in conflict with the working group set up to investigate town government changes. Robbins has set up a website with more information on the charter commission course. He encouraged the board members to take a look at Hopkinton and Acton as two towns that have successfully enacted a charter. In summary, Robbins is willing to help with informational sessions and attaining signatures if the Selectmen are ready to put this on the ballot. He hopes the Selectmen will consider this favorably.

Ricci said the working group did discuss this at their morning meeting. The Town Manager from Auburn came to speak with them and she indicated how important it is to lay the groundwork on why a charter is necessary. He said the Collins Institute has begun town department operation reviews to determine if any changes are needed. The Department of Public Works is first and then Fire, Ambulance and Police. Ricci offered to put this item on the next agenda for further discussion. Bragan stated the report from the working is expected back by the second meeting January.

Billy Salter, 3 Elm Street, is very concerned with the hasty decision the Selectmen are making by offering to sell the old library building. His perception is this is only to rid the town of its obligation. He believes it is completely inappropriate to sell the building. He understands costs are high to bring the building to code but this is no way to care for the legacy and assets of this town. He said the building should remain under town ownership.

Connie Larrabee, 15 Under Pin Hill Road, urged the Selectmen to not take phase two of the Hildreth House project off the five year plan. She told the Selectmen just this week a generous contribution of \$7,000.00 was made to for replacement of appliances and to assist with the kitchen renovation. It is obvious there is town support for the Hildreth House and the needs of seniors.

Jared Wollaston, 1 Elm Street, said the best use for the old library building is a cultural center based on his professional experience and time served on the Boston Zoning Commission. He suggested the Selectmen enter into lease negotiations with the Harvard Cultural Collaborative. He believes ADA compliance costs can be absorbed by taxpayers with minimal impact. He said it is right for the Selectmen to embrace working together with the collaborative to make this endeavor successful.

Susan Guswa, 8 Old Meadow Lane, asked the Selectmen to please include phase two of the Hildreth House project on the to-do list. With a growing senior population this is not the time to drop the ball on phase two. The seniors need the services.

### **Town Administrator report**

Tim Bragan updated the board on the negotiations with Charter Communications to have them pay a portion of the new fiber that will connect the Town Hall and other town buildings. He expects to finalize an agreement soon with construction beginning in March.

Bragan informed the board the Unitarian Universalist Church has two large events coming up on December 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

Bragan said the tree lighting ceremony which occurred this past weekend went very well. He received many favorable comments on the ceremony and the tree lights. He publically thanked those who helped to get this done with a special thanks to the Fire Department for hanging the lights.

Bragan reviewed the free cash memo shared with the Finance Committee last week. He gave some reasons as to why the number is higher than usual. Further discussion will be necessary to decide how the funds will be used. The certified free cash number is \$1,360,062.00

Bragan reminded the board that Town Hall will close at 12pm on Christmas Eve.

### **Selectmen budgets**

Bragan briefly reviewed the Selectmen expense and personnel budgets.

Expenses are mostly level funded although the copy machine and supplies were increased. He is working with the finance department to combine all Town Hall office supplies into one line item. Within the other items he does expect increases to the town audit, building and liability insurance and the Monty Tech school budget. The building and liability is understandable do to the many weather related or accidents which resulted in damage this past year.

The public buildings and benefit budgets will see the biggest changes.

Public buildings will change do to the new facilities management approach. He also included an increase on electricity expecting National Grid will raise their distribution rates.

On the benefits side there will be increases to workers compensation, Medicare, Worcester Regional Retirement and with health insurance. He said health insurance could see a larger increase this year. He noted health insurance and OPEB costs are areas to focus on.

Bragan's highest priority for the budget this year is to increase the Town Administrator/HR Director hours. He admitted he did not realize how much time the HR piece would require.

The Selectmen discussed their concerns related to OPEB and health insurance.

On a Sklar/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve fiscal 17 Selectmen budgets as presented by Bragan with his edits.

### **Caucus Date**

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to set March 5<sup>th</sup> as the caucus date at 7pm with location to be determined.

### **Fire Department out of state travel**

Bragan informed the board Chief Sicard will need to make a second visit for the new engine being built. On a Blair/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the request from the Fire Chief's out of state travel.

### **Update on use of old library**

Wallace invited members of Harvard Cultural Collaborative (HCC) to participate in the discussion. Mark Mikitarian and Jim Breslaurer came forward.

Wallace began the discussion with a proposal. She pointed out some of the givens about the situation and then proposed to further understand the pros and cons of both options (lease or purchase/sale), a small working group comprised of 2 members of the BOS and 2 members of the HCC board be formed to investigate these options and delineate the issues to be addressed. She really wants to have a viable plan in place for use of the building and at this time the HCC is the most viable option. Either option will require a town meeting vote. The board discussed the procurement process that will be required. Wallace and Sklar expressed their support of the HCC's proposal however Ricci, Blair and Swanton were more reluctant. Blair said it is impossible to negotiate a lease until we have a clear understanding of what ADA requirements will cost and an idea of what market rent would be for this building. Ricci does not want to negotiate with any entity prior to the RFP being issued. He does not want to predispose who may be awarded the lease.

Discussion ensued around other uses for the building such as school administration offices and the necessary repairs for both the old library and Bromfield House. They also debated the idea of the working group. Does this predispose HCC as the chosen lease holder? Will this group be required to post meetings and keep minutes?

Wallace and Sklar expressed their support to work with the HCC. Swanton also expressed his support of their concept but remains uncertain on some of the details. Swanton is happy to continue the dialogue with HCC members. Ricci was adamant working with them predisposes

the outcome which is not right.

They also debated the best approach when meeting with the Architectural Access Board (AAB). Do you go in blind or do you go with a plan? If you go with a plan you need an architect to assist with that which costs money.

Wallace made a motion to form a working group using the proposal she drafted. Sklar seconded the motion. Other members were not receptive of this approach. Blair suggested hiring an architect to determine what is required to make the building handicap accessible and compliant so we would have something to take to the AAB. Wallace withdrew her motion.

On a Blair/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously for the Board of Selectmen to hire an architect at the town's expense to evaluate what changes might have to be made to the building to make it handicapped accessible to all levels. (4 -1, Wallace - abstained)

### **Debt schedule**

The board took a few minutes to review the exempt debt projections and discussed the major capital projects looming.

### **DPW and COA Facility capital requests**

On a Blair/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to move the Hildreth House phase 2 to year 5 (2021) with a cost of \$2,500,000.00.

On a Blair/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to move the DPW building addition to year 7 (2023) with a cost of \$1,500,000.00.

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to extend their meeting past 10:00 to address agenda item 9g.

### **Historical Commission resignation**

On a Blair/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to accept resignation of Wendy Eldredge and send her a letter of thanks.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15pm.

### **Documents referenced:**

Town Hall update – dated 12.10.2015

Hildreth House architect recommendation – 12.1.2015

Annual license listing - 2016

Bare Hill Pond – narrative dated 12.10.2015 & expense budget 11.2.2015

Selectmen narrative & budgets – 12.10.2015

Working group draft – dated 12.10.2015

Capital projects – dated 12.8.2015

Eldredge resignation letter – dated 12.9.2015