



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, April 12, 2016 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 and Stu Sklar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan.

Minutes

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the regular and executive session minutes from 3/15, as amended.

Department of Public Works – Five Year Roadway Management Program

Director Rich Nota reviewed his plan for roadway management activities over the next five years. He admitted the plan is not ideal but is a balanced approach to maintenance and preservation of the roadway infrastructure. The budget for this year is \$340,137. Littleton Road (Pinnacle – Whitney) and Bolton Road (Sough to Bolton) will be paved. They will also tackle the drainage system on Ayer Road by uncovering and rehabilitate basins. Nota expects reconstruction of this road to be very costly. The board suggested Nota add this to his capital plan.

Hildreth House update

Committee Chair Rick Maiore announced a walk through will be held next Tuesday at 8:30am. Members of the press have been invited. He also mentioned the weathervane is being placed on the lantern tomorrow.

Maiore was pleased to report the estimated cost of the project from Fogarty came in within the appropriated funds due to the design changes. The changes will allow for direct access to the second floor lift instead of having to use the main entrance. He explained their process was similar to what was done when the Town Hall project required modifications to come within budget.

They have identified three alternatives to eliminate from the project if bids come in high:

1. Roof on new extended porch
2. Extended porch
3. Leveling the porch

They are requesting the BoS endorse these changes. They have instructed the architects to move forward with the bid documents and asked the OPM to address protocol to get on the central register. The Council on Aging board will review the changes at their meeting next week.

On a Swanton/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously in favor of the changes.

Site Plan review is scheduled with the Planning Board on April 25th. Lucy Wallace reported architects are sending a letter to the Architectural Access Board to gain a waiver on making the kitchen handicapped accessible. The basis for the waiver is the improvements will be made during phase 2.

GVW application for payment

On a Blair/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 11th application for payment from GVW.

Public communication

Paul Green, 288 Old Littleton Road, had two issues to briefly follow up on from the annual town meeting. The first item was he suggested using cloud based services instead of purchasing new servers. He has done some research on this and believes it is not necessary for the town to own servers. He explained time can be rented from cloud providers and this would include professional management. It would also eliminate the need for hardware upgrades. Green also pointed out weather condition would not affect employees' ability to access data and they could even work from home if necessary. He strongly advocated for an ad hoc committee to be formed who can investigate procurement of web based services. He believes this could save a lot of money.

Green announced a town wide cleanup effort will take place on April 28th – May 1st. Event organizers have spoken with the DPW, who have agreed to assist with picking bags up. Ron Ricci suggested they coordinate specific locations so the DPW does not have to drive all around town.

Peter Warren, 52 Lancaster County Road, said he was driving down Gebo Lane and noticed a tree which looked as if it may be ready to fall down. When he was returning he was surprised to see the tree had fallen. He contacted the DPW who came down to remove the tree from the roadway. Warren asked how dead trees are removed and was shocked to hear the DPW does not have the authority to cut or take down dead trees without permission. DPW Director Nota showed Warren pictures of a number of trees in town he is concerned about. Warren is concerned with so many dead trees along the roadways a fatality could occur. This is a very serious situation which needs to be addressed. The board members agreed and asked the Town Administrator to work with the Tree Warden and Town Counsel to determine how this authority can be delegated.

Teresa Jardon, 80 Bolton Road, began by telling everyone she is a full time employee, mother, and has been fighting breast cancer for the past two years. She is also a community volunteer with the cub scouts, barn school and most recently on the Capital Planning and Investment Committee. Part of why she volunteers is to instill in her children the importance of community involvement and to set the stage about an audience larger than us. She commented on the many volunteer positions that remain vacant and the feeling from many in town that volunteering is unwelcoming and inhospitable. Unfortunately she feels now she has been anointed with this environment. At town meeting it was implied that CPIC was unreliable and untrustworthy. She said the Selectmen set the tone and she expects more than what occurred.

Heidi Frank, 76 East Bare Hill Road, has not been in front of the Selectmen since she was appointed to the Finance Committee eight years ago. She admitted it was difficult to get up and speak. She was honored when her fellow Finance Committee members voted for her to serve as their representative on CPIC. She feels the committee has brilliant members and is a committee that really makes sense. She described the committee's main tasks to begin with asking questions and to then make recommendations at the annual town meeting. The capital account is used to fund capital items to lessen the burden to taxpayers. Frank commented on the committee's diversity and with the new addition of Jardon she felt this was a really wonderful working group. They have set guidelines and a rating process they must follow. Then they vote on the projects and make their recommendations. She found the process to be very objective. Last Tuesday (annual town meeting) she left feeling very frustrated as a volunteer and a taxpayer. She questioned the validity of time she spent on CPIC taking time out of her workday to be present when necessary. She was always very enthusiastic about the committee and felt a strong sense of purpose. Frank does not want to point fingers but she feels strongly the Selectmen need to support their boards/committees. Last week was so frustrating she has decided to end her volunteering. She may be willing to come back when the Selectmen really take a look as a group at how they work together and how best to support their committees. She felt like a deer in the headlights and was completely shocked at what happened.

Alice von Loesecke, 84 Warren Avenue, expressed her deep disappointment in the fact of Heidi Frank leaving. She is an incredible member of the Finance and Capital Committees. Alice's comment was more of a nuts/bolts item. With respect to free cash, von Loesecke pointed out other agencies look at our process for example the Department of Revenue. In a management review from 2011, they gave us a positive review and areas to improve upon which we have done. She noted the review specifically stated a strong culture of conservative and sound financial management practices demonstrated by formal financial policies and procedures. She said maintaining these policies and procedures for multi-year funding is imperative. We do not want to sideline these efforts. She said our AAA bonding rating is also something to be keep in mind. The difference between AA and AAA is .50%.

Debbie Ricci, 19 East Bare Hill Road, as CPIC member she was also troubled with what happened at the annual town meeting with the debate around article 22 (transfer of \$295,599 from free cash to the capital stabilization and investment fund). She did not understand why CPIC was not approached prior to the meeting to work something out or to come up with a better solution. She said not funding the capital stabilization account regularly is a dangerous precedent to set. She was also troubled by the lack of trust shown toward CPIC. She encouraged people to attend their meetings and observe the process. Ricci followed on from what previous speakers said about the Selectmen setting an example of working together not against each other. She said a letter has been sent to the Selectmen.

Ron Ricci expressed his concern for those who spoke and suggested the board add this as a discussion item on their next agenda.

Town administrator report

Bragan announced the Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) hearing for this week will be rescheduled.

Bragan told the board about the May 27th dedication of the Bill Ashe Visitor Center Facility at the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge.

Bragan asked the board to begin thinking about town email addresses for all committee/board members. He was able to provide some statistics from other communities. He quoted \$5,000 annually to add an additional 100 email addresses. Blair suggested adopting a policy requiring volunteers to set up a Gmail address specifically for town government business.

Bragan asked the board to consider revising their one-day liquor license policy to only require a public hearing for the initial request. If the applicant applies each year for the same event with no changes they will only be required to submit the application and pay the fee. The board could then approve the license at a regular meeting. The board will consider this change at an upcoming meeting.

Bragan informed the board the Town Hall will be closed May 18th for the move back to the newly renovated building. He expects Town Hall to reopen for business on May 26th. He is requesting the board maintain the current traffic pattern only allowing traffic to exit onto Ayer Road by way of the front of the building.

Resignation

On a Blair/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to accept resignation from Bruce Nickerson and to send a letter of thanks.

Energy Advisory Committee appointment

Committee member Eric Broadbent was present to recommend Paul Green as associate member. On a Blair/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Paul Green as associate member on the Energy Advisory Committee.

Security camera policy

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to adopt the Town of Harvard security camera policy.

Transfer station rules & regulations

Bragan asked the board to carefully review the current rules and regulations. He would like them to consider making some changes. The board will review and take action at their first meeting in May.

Sustainable Energy Policy in Massachusetts

Energy Advisory Committee member Eric Broadbent explained the letter was drafted in response to recent legislative proposals imposing new charges on existing solar installations and retroactively reducing the net metering credit that host customers receive. Fortunately, Broadbent reported the Governor has signed into law a compromising bill which addresses the concerns raised. However, he indicated concerns still exist therefore the committee is asking the board to sign the letter of support. On a Sklar/Wallace motion, the board voted to sign letter as presented by HEAC. (4-1, Ricci – Nay)

Town Hall move

Bragan reported the Town Hall will begin preparations to move on Tuesday, May 17th and will close for business on Wednesday, May 18th. He expects to reopen on Thursday, May 26th.

Selectmen Reports

Wallace reported she and Ricci have met with Planning Board Chair Kara Minar and member Michele Catalina to discuss bylaw ideas with respect to zoning at the Hildreth House.

Swanton and Wallace will work on the Town Hall Use Policy with Bragan.

Sklar reported the process to replace Finance Director Lorraine Leonard is underway and two candidates will attend the May 3rd meeting. He said the hiring committee will have a recommendation.

Sklar said the HEAC is interested in being involved with investigation into electric aggregation and are interested having their charge reviewed.

Ricci said a JBOS meeting is scheduled for April 21st. He can attend. The board will discuss JBOS participation at their Strategic Planning Session in June.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Documents referenced:

DPW Roadway plan – dated 03.30.2016

Nickerson resignation letter – dated 03.28.2016

Green volunteer form – dated 02.24.2016

Security Camera Policy – dated 04.12.2016

HEAC letter – dated 04.12.2016