

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
February 28, 2011
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229
900 Main Street, Millis, MA 02054**

CALL TO ORDER: Chm. Vecchi called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The following persons were present: Chairman Charles Vecchi, Vice Chair Andrea Wagner, Clerk Donald Hendon, Administrative Assistant Jennifer Cederberg and Town Administrator Charles Aspinwall.

STATEWIDE MUTUAL AID LEGISLATION: Police Chief Peter McGowan addressed the Board. He summarized that in January, the Town was notified that the State created two new statewide mutual aid laws. Mutual aid legislation was developed based on the existing Fire Department mutual aid legislation and gives the Town the choice to opt in with written notification to MEMA if the Town chooses to participate. Likewise, the Town can opt out with 10 day notice if they find it is not beneficial to continue participation: the participation remains completely under the control of the Town. The requests for assistance can be made directly to the other agency or to MEMA.

Chm. Vecchi stated that he is considering the negatives of such an agreement. Chief McGowan reminded him that the Town can decline to participate in any particular activation. Sel. Hendon asked what would happen if the state declares the episode an emergency. Mr. Aspinwall noted that the Town would be reimbursed 75%. He also stated that the Chief is not looking for a vote tonight because participation from other departments first needs to be assessed. The Board agreed to take it into consideration after the necessary paperwork is assembled.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW POLICE OFFICERS: Chief McGowan reminded the Town that Officer Acerra retired from the Town in November and through the civil service process, he provided Mr. Aspinwall with the necessary information to appoint a permanent Police Officer. Mr. Aspinwall reviewed Dale Bickord's credentials and recommended his appointment.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to approve the Town Administrator's appointment of Dale Bickford as a permanent Police Officer for the Town of Millis effective 5/9/11 subject to the successful completion of a physical, psychological, and drug screening as well as the Physical Agility Test. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief McGowan went on to review the need to replace two part-time officers.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to approve the Town Administrator's appointment of Kathleen McAvoy as a Permanent Intermittent Officer for the Town of Millis effective 3/9/11 subject to the successful completion of a physical, psychological, and drug screening as well as a Physical Agility Test and attending the Permanent Intermittent Academy in Foxborough. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to approve the Town Administrator's appointment of Paul Lesbirel as a Permanent Intermittent Officer for the Town of Millis effective 2/28/11 subject to the successful completion of a physical, psychological, and drug screening in addition to the PAT test. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to approve the Town Administrator's appointment of Craig Thompson as a Permanent Intermittent Officer for the Town of Millis effective 3/2/11 subject to the successful completion of a physical, psychological, and drug screening in addition to the PAT test. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to approve the Town Administrator's appointment of Brian Greenwood as a Permanent Intermittent Officer for the Town of Millis effective 3/3/11 subject to attending the Permanent Intermittent Academy in March, the successful completion of a physical, psychological and drug screening as well as the Physical Agility Test. The motion passed unanimously.

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Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to approve the Town Administrator's appointment of Alberto Romoli as a Permanent Intermittent Officer for the Town of Millis effective 3/4/11 subject to attending the Permanent Intermittent Academy in March, the successful completion of a physical, psychological and drug screening as well as the Physical Agility Test. The motion passed unanimously.

STRATEGIC BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE: Sel. Wagner reviewed the purpose of the Strategic Budget Planning Committee which was established in the Fall of 2010. She noted that the Committee was charged at looking at the future of the finances of the Town and FY12 in particular. She stated that the Committee reviewed whether or not any type of significant action, such as an override, needed to be taken to continue to level fund Town services.

Christopher Smith gave a Powerpoint presentation to the BOS. He stated that shortly after they began to meet, all indications had the Committee planning on a 10% reduction in Local Aid and Chapter 70 funds along with a 12% increase in health insurance costs. He informed the Board that the Governor's budget came in better than expected though the process of proceeding through the state house still needs to take place. Mr. Smith stated that the Committee is estimating that even with this information, the recommendation is to consider a proposition 2 ½ override by the Town on the Spring 2011 ballot as a structural deficit of nearly \$760,000 exists.

Mr. Smith reviewed how the Town budgets and estimated what the FY12 level service budget will look like. He stated that the estimated capital items in his presentation are not included in the projected structural deficit. He estimated that the FY12 budget, with a 2% increase on the municipal side and a 4% increase on the school side, will be approximately \$22,677,051.

Mr. Smith stated that the Committee wanted to find a way to address recurring fixed costs and capital needs. He stated that they came up with the suggestion to create a Recurring Costs Stabilization Fund which would be funded through the tax levy. He also suggested that the following items be included in this new fund: DPW road repair, municipal vehicle replenishment, municipal building maintenance, school curriculum, school building maintenance, school building replenishment and 10-year revaluation of property. Mr. Smith also informed the Board that two articles will be presented at Town Meeting which would provide tax relief to eligible senior citizens and estimated that the cost of these articles over current abatement allocations is \$50,000. He noted that these solutions will only work if an operational override is passed.

Mr. Smith stated that the Committee put together 4 funding models and a 5-year strategic budget plan. He informed the Board that no additions to staff are reflected in the models. He highlighted that since 2009, the average single family home value in Millis has decreased by 13% with the average taxes being \$5,085.

Mr. Smith reviewed the revenue and expense assumptions highlighting the hope that Chapter 70 funds will continue to increase. He went on to review Funding Model #1 which only addresses the current (FY12) structural deficit and would have an impact of approximately \$252/year to the average taxpayer. He then reviewed Funding Model #2 which would fix the structural deficit and carry the Town through the next 5 years. The impact on the average tax payer would be approximately \$391/year. Funding Model #3 is designed to fix the current structural deficit and address the strategic option to bring the total override cost to \$1.1 million and an average increase to the tax payer of \$359. Lastly, Funding Model #4 would address the structural deficit and address the strategic option for the next 5 years. He stated this total override amount would be \$1,501,669 which would cost the average taxpayer \$498/year. He reminded the Board that these are only 5-year plans and in FY17, a deficit would again begin to appear.

Mr. Smith presented a chart of how Millis compares to surrounding towns in terms of the average tax bill. He noted that Millis' tax bill decreased from 2009 to 2010. He illustrated where the Town's tax rate would fall if you take the

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different Financial Models into consideration. He stated that many of the towns listed are also considering prop. 2 ½ overrides for next fiscal year and that these numbers are not included in the charts presented.

Mr. Smith went on to review other considerations such as the Library project and the possibility for large capital projects in the short-term. He noted that other large potential expenses include replacement of equipment for the Fire Department and DPW. He stated that additional staff have been requested during this budget cycle. He reminded the Board that we are “thin” already, and that further staff cuts would be catastrophic.

Mr. Smith stated that the Committee met its mission by presenting information to the Board on options to consider and gave them an itemized list of what the next steps are that need to be taken including decision points, timeline, recommendations, and a final report. He suggested that the Board schedule time at their next meeting on 3/14 to have further discussion and come to a conclusion on how to proceed. Mr. Smith gave a brief overview of the cost of the Library project and the impact of approximately \$154/year on the average taxpayer. Lastly, he presented a slide on school spending and noted that the Town continues to rate very high in this area.

Mr. Vecchi thanked the Committee for their hard work and compilation of much needed data. Mr. Aspinwall stated that it was important to come out with detailed information on what the Town is doing with local taxpayers’ money. He stated that there is a track record that shows the Town uses the money effectively. Mr. Smith reminded the Board that the option of doing nothing for next fiscal year and cutting services further would not solve anything.

Mr. Smith reminded the Board that simply raising the levy does not require the Town to collect it. The Board agreed to discuss this topic again at their meeting on March 14th.

CHANGE IN COMMON VICTUALLER LICENSE/SUBWAY:

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, that we change the owner on the Common Victualler license for the current Subway of Millis to Eat Fresh Boston Holdings, LLC, located at 1060 Main Street in Millis. The motion passed unanimously.

ONE-DAY ALCOHOL PERMIT REQUEST:

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to grant a one-day special alcohol license for all alcohol to the Fin, Fur and Feather Club on March 5, 2011, from 5-12 a.m. for their annual game dinner. The motion passed unanimously.

REQUEST FROM SCHOOL DEPT.: Mr. Baker explained the reasons for the School Committee’s request to extend the warrant. Mr. Aspinwall suggested that because the warrant has already closed, that the School Committee submit their articles and the Board can then vote to open the warrant, include the articles, and then close the warrant.

REQUEST TO WAIVE GYM RENTAL FEES: Sel. Hendon read the request from Kathleen Brophy.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, that we waive the gym rental fee for use of the Veterans Memorial Gym on March 26th and 27th for the KidSafe Program from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. with the stipulation that a member of the Recreation Committee be present to supervise the building. The motion passed unanimously.

OVERWEIGHT VEHICLE PERMIT APPLICATION: Mr. Aspinwall reviewed the request from Edwards Moving and Rigging to move an overweight vehicle through the Town of Millis on 3/13/11. He noted that the company has submitted an insurance certificate and contacted the Police Department for a detail officer. He stated that

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the permit fee would be \$250 and almost everything is already in order. He reviewed the weight and dimensions of the vehicle and the load. He recommended the Board approve the permit.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to approve an Overweight Vehicle Permit for Edwards Moving and Rigging to move a transformer on 3/13/11 on Route 109 subject to payment of a \$250 permit fee, Edwards providing a pre-move video to the Town and a copy of their state permit and subject to coordination with the Police Department. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES:

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to approve the regular session meeting minutes of the Board of Selectmen's meeting from 2/14/11. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURN: At 9:00 p.m.,

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer G. Cederberg, Administrative Assistant