

**MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
February 10, 2009**

Present at the meeting that was held at the Town Building were Chairman Thomas Ruggiero and Selectmen Stephen Dungan, Kathleen Farrell, and Ellen Sturgis.

Also present were Town Administrator William Wrigley and Administrative Assistant Susan McLaughlin.

Selectman Jason Robart was absent.

Chairman Ruggiero called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Public Input

None.

Chairman's Comments

Mr. Ruggiero reminded Board members that the budget season is "spirited" and asked that budget discussions be conducted civilly.

Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2009: Mr. Dungan moved to approve the 1/13 minutes, as submitted; Ms. Farrell seconded; and all voted in favor.

January 27, 2009: Ms. Farrell moved to approve the 1/27 minutes, as submitted; Mr. Dungan seconded; and all voted in favor.

Selectmen's Master Planning

Mr. Dungan reported that the February 4 public session, led by Michelle Ciccolo, was successful. The first part of the session was a presentation by Ms. Ciccolo and the second half featured breakout sessions with residents, which they enjoyed. The Master Plan Committee received useful input from the session.

Liaison Reports

Tri Town Meeting and NRSD: Ms. Sturgis said the February Tri-Town meeting would discuss the FY 2010 NRSD budget, as would the NRSD School Committee the following night.

ESBC: The committee received 12 proposals for its design RFP. Stow and the Owner's Project Manager will review them to provide input but the Mass School Building Authority will ultimately make the selection.

Affordable Housing: Mr. Dungan recapped a presentation on new housing by Greg Jones of the Stow Community Housing Corp to the Affordable Housing Trust and the Community Preservation Committee. An additional 30 units at Plantation Apartments and 37 at Pilot Grove are being proposed, all of which, as rentals, would count toward the state's 10-percent guideline.

Public Safety: Mr. Ruggiero passed on a request from residents to speak directly with the traffic engineers about the proposed Lower Village roundabout. Mr. Dungan will contact Mr. McPherson, Ms. Kelleher, and Ms. Spear to arrange this.

Recreation Projects Update

The purpose of the updates was to see where the committees are and what roadblocks to progress, if any, they are facing.

Assabet River Rail Trail: Don Rising, chair of Stow's ARRT Committee, said the Town has not closed on the Albright easement yet but it is being scheduled now and should happen in two to three weeks. However, the committee is at an impasse securing a route for the trail through Stow.

It was agreed to finish work on the Albright easement and to contact US Fish and Wildlife representative Libby Herland regarding bicycle access to the Assabet Wildlife Refuge.

Snow Property Recreation Project: Bob Wilber, chair of the Community Preservation Committee, and Mike Busch, chair of the Recreation Commission, reported that the project is very active. Coler and Colantonio are managing the project and have subcontracted construction to RAD Sports (did the fields at Gillette Stadium). Test wells for a water source are being drilled now. They expect completion of the fields by mid-summer; heavy use can begin in one year (after turf is established.) The project is on schedule and within budget.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Wilber said that, by terms of purchase, the field should be called Snow Field, but that there had been discussion with Town Counsel about the "recreation area" going by a different name.

The selectmen requested and it was agreed that the Recreation Commission would provide a maintenance plan for all Stow fields by this spring.

Town Administrator's Preliminary FY 2010 Budget Report

Mr. Wrigley gave an overview of the annual budget process and then summarized the preliminary FY 2010 budget figures. He said Stow is not facing any of the tragic choices of neighboring towns. His approach to budget reductions is first to look at capital purchases, then at expenses; and lastly at employees.

He thanked all the departments for honoring his request for level-services budgets

He then presented a detailed account of the town's anticipated revenues and expenses; the Nashoba and Minuteman assessments, the Governor's budget cuts for both FY 2009 and FY 2010, and his plans to balance the budget this year.

He explained the steps that towns need to take to join the Commonwealth's pension system and how he is evaluating the possibility.

He said he added the Board's request for a \$70,000 position of Community Development Director to the budget and asked the Board to decide whether they would go forward with this. Mr. Dungan said the process for deciding will be for the Land Use Task Force and the Master Plan Committee to make recommendations to the Board, after which they would decide by vote.

It was noted that both Lancaster and Bolton wrote to the NRSB School Committee stating that they could not support the size of the current assessments to the towns. The sense of the Board was to support the concerns of the other two towns in requesting a reduction in the proposed assessments. It was agreed that the Board need not write a letter at this stage but would attend the upcoming Tri-Town and School Committee meetings to voice their position.

Deficit Spending of the Town's Snow and Ice Account

Mr. Wrigley said the Snow and Ice account has been depleted by the winter storms and requested that the Board vote to allow overspending until the end of the fiscal year, when the account is balanced.

Mr. Dungan moved to allow the Town to do deficit spending of the Snow and Ice account, in accordance with MGL Chapter 44, section 31d; Ms. Sturgis seconded; and all voted in favor.

At 9:10 p.m.; Ms. Sturgis moved to adjourn; Mr. Dungan seconded; and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McLaughlin
Administrative Assistant

Approved as amended, February 24, 2009