

**MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
February 2, 2010**

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

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

Chairman Dungan called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Public Input

Ms. Sturgis complimented the organizers of the 1st Annual Stow Story Slam on a successful and fun event.

Chairman's Comments

Mr. Dungan reminded Board members that their performance appraisals for the Town Administrator and Administrative Assistant are due to him on February 12.

He also announced that there are still vacancies on the Pompo School Study Committee, which will examine future uses of the building, and encouraged people to apply.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Wrigley reported the following:

- He requested that the Board vote tonight to increase the charges for Advanced Life Support Services, as discussed at the January 20 meeting.
- He also requested the Board to vote to allow deficit spending for the FY 2010 Snow and Ice account, a necessary request in certain winters. The Finance Committee must vote to approve this as well, after which the spending will be permitted.
- His Energy Savings working group continues its efforts to reduce Town energy costs. This includes energy audits of the major town facilities and seeking technical assistance from professionals, including public utilities and residents in the field. A volunteer community group – Sharon Brownfield, Arnold Epstein, Marie Guiles, David Korn, Margie Lynch, and Len Rakowsky – have completed audits of the Town Building, are close to complete at the Police Station, with the Highway Building and Fire Station to follow.

Generally, funds already existing in department expense accounts are being used for energy efficient lights, fixtures, and thermostats, energy improvements at the Highway Department, and replacement lights for traffic and school-zone lights, all at a considerable savings to the Town.

Stemming from his study group's work, Will O'Brien, a Clark University professor who is also a Stow resident, has proposed that his Green Business Management class work with the Town to develop a municipal energy savings Sustainability Plan. He will report more as the project takes shape.

Chapter 61 Land Evaluation Procedure “Dry Run”

Mr. Dungan said he supported Ms. McLaughlin’s suggestion that the Chapter 61 Study/Evaluation Group meet to conduct a dry run of the process by which the group will make recommendations on Town purchases of land through Chapter 61 sales. The first meeting will be scheduled of the various department and committee representatives. Ms. McLaughlin agreed to be the Board of Selectmen’s representative.

Green Communities Program

Kelly Brown, Regional Coordinator for the Green Communities Program within the Mass Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Department of Energy Resources, visited the Board to introduce the program and solicit comments. Resident Ed Brown, Stow’s representative on the Hudson Light & Power Board of Directors, provided HL&P’s perspective on the program.

Ms. Brown’s office’s role, which grew out of the July 2008 Green Communities Act, is to share information with communities and help them find resources, such as grants. To participate in the program, towns must opt in to a Renewable Energy Trust, which is funded through surcharges to customers’ utilities bills.

Hudson Light & Power does not choose to join the Trust, Mr. Brown explained, for two reasons: 1) once one joins, one cannot get out, and 2) the cost to HL&P customers, especially industrial ones, would be too high. There was some discussion of Stow’s past efforts and present options on renewable energy.

Stow resident and Clark University professor Will O’Brien explained his proposal for his students to work with the Town on an energy audit and the development of an energy savings sustainability plan, as referenced earlier by Mr. Wrigley.

FY 2011 Budget – Department Requests

Mr. Wrigley reviewed the initial Town operating budget for FY 2011, which contains the requests made by the Town departments. This will change during the budget process as adjustments are made to both expenses and receipts. At this time in the process, he is using a 5-percent reduction in receipts and \$200k of Free Cash toward Capital. At present, he is using the Governor’s budget. This draft of the budget shows a 1.1-percent increase over FY 2010.

He will continue to refine the budget as information becomes available. Upcoming milestones are his Joint Boards meeting at the second meeting in February and his budget recommendation to the Board at the second meeting in March.

Deficit Spending on Snow and Ice

Ms. Farrell moved that the Board approve deficit spending for the FY 2010 Snow and Ice account, per MGL Chapter 44, section 31D; Ms. Sturgis seconded; and all voted in favor.

Banner Policy

Following several iterations of a Town policy to display banners over public roadways, the Board reviewed the most recent draft and discussed the remaining question of whether to require Certificates of Insurance from permit applicants. Pros and cons were raised by members and considered. Mr. Ruggiero expressed his concern about the Town’s liability exposure, should a banner be unsafe. Others said the risk was small and they did not want to possibly exclude charities and non-profits that did not carry their own insurance.

Following discussion, Ms. Spear moved to approve a banner policy for the Town, as amended at the February 2, 2010 Selectmen's meeting to remove the requirement for Certificates of Insurance, and subject to review and any changes made by Town Counsel. Ms. Sturgis seconded. Four members voted in favor (Dungan, Farrell, Spear, and Sturgis); one member voted opposed (Ruggiero). The motion carried.

Interim Advanced Life Support Coverage

Upon the recommendation of Mr. Wrigley and Fire Chief McLaughlin, Ms. Spear moved that the Board allow the Fire-Rescue department to charge a rate for ALS services of Medicare plus 200 percent, as recommended by Chief McLaughlin; Ms. Farrell seconded; and all voted in favor.

Board of Selectmen's 2009 Report

After reviewing the most recent revision of the report, Ms. Spear moved that the Board approve the Selectmen's 2009 annual report, as amended at the February 2, 2010 Selectmen's meeting; Ms. Sturgis seconded; and all voted in favor.

Letter of Support for Proposed Plantation Apts and Pilot Grove Housing Projects

Following up on the January 20 discussion on support for the Stow Community Housing Corporation affordable housing additions, the Board reviewed a letter of support to the state agency that is financing the projects.

Ms. Sturgis moved that the Board approve a letter to the Department of Housing and Community Development in support of the Stow Community Housing Corporation's housing projects at Plantation Apartments and Pilot Grove, as amended at the February 2, 2010 Selectmen's meeting; Ms. Farrell seconded; and all voted in favor. Mr. Dungan will sign the letter on behalf of the Board.

Letter of Concern for Proposed Highgrove Estates Housing Project

Several boards cooperated to draft a letter of concern to the state financing agency about a housing project on West Acton Road, being proposed under MGL Chapter 40B. The current revision of the letter, co-authored by the Planning Board, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, and Board of Selectmen, was discussed.

In conclusion, Ms. Spear moved that the Board approve a letter to MassHousing regarding the Highgrove Estates housing project, currently amended at the February 2, 2010 Selectmen's meeting, and to be finalized by the Planning Board; Ms. Farrell seconded.

Four members voted in favor (Dungan, Farrell, Ruggiero, and Spear). Ms. Sturgis recused herself, as an abutter to the project. The motion carried.

SpringFest Organizing Committee Voter Requirement

Ms. Sturgis moved to allow the requirement for the SpringFest Committee to be a Town resident and not a registered voter; Ms. Spear seconded; and all voted in favor.

Priorities Update

Mr. Dungan introduced the topic, saying that he would like the Board to review the progress on its stated priorities at the first meeting of every month. Members briefly touched on the current priorities of Lower Village water, affordable housing, school building project, economic development, future use of Pompo, and senior/community center, agreeing that there had been progress in all areas.

Meeting Minutes

January 5, 2010: Ms. Sturgis moved to accept the January 5 minutes, as amended; Ms. Spear seconded; and all voted in favor.

January 20, 2010: Ms. Sturgis moved to accept the January 20 minutes, as amended; Ms. Spear seconded; and all voted in favor.

Selectmen's Master Planning

No updates.

Liaison Reports:

Public Walkways Subcommittee: Mr. Ruggiero said that the committee had met with the Planning Board and was coming to the Board of Selectmen next.

Public Safety: Mr. Ruggiero said that the newly hired police officer was working out very well – “a very professional person.”

Planning Board: Ms. Spear said the Board is working on a zoning amendment for FEMA regulations.

Community Preservation Committee: Ms. Spear said the committee is currently taking proposals for FY 2011 projects.

Mass Municipal Association: Ms. Spear attended the annual conference and submitted a report to the Board.

Elementary School Building Committee: Ms. Sturgis said the Mass Historical Commission replied that no historical resources would be affected by the building plans.

At 8:50 p.m., Ms. Sturgis moved to adjourn; Ms. Spear seconded; and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McLaughlin
Administrative Assistant

Approved as submitted, March 2, 2010