

**MINUTES  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
November 9, 2010**

Present at the meeting that was held at the Town Building were Selectmen Stephen Dungan, Charles Kern, Thomas Ryan, James Salvie, and Laura Spear.

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

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

**Public Input**

None.

**Chairman's Comments**

Ms. Spear welcomed newly elected Selectman Tom Ryan to the Board.

**Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Wrigley reported that he had sent a memo to the Harvard Acres residents, taking names for later follow-up. With the state, he is still waiting for the final form of the loan agreement and regulatory agreement.

In his memo, he explained the process and general requirements, basically, "You provide us proof of reasonable costs for a certified well and we will pay."

He asked the Board to appoint a member as a Co-Loan Officer, should it be helpful to have two Town officials working on an issue together. Mr. Salvie volunteered and Mr. Dungan offered to be his backup.

Regarding Assabet Water Co, he said a Memo of Agreement would hopefully delay the shut down of operations, until residents could drill their wells. To date, 120 wells are in the ground with only one failure.

Mr. Wrigley does not expect any impact on the Town's operational budget, as he has included the administrative costs of the program, such as recording liens. These hard costs are estimated at \$20,000. Possible defaults have been factored in, as well; however, it is still possible for the Town to lose money depending on the amount of the defaults.

Mr. Wrigley briefly mentioned that he had distributed his FY 2012 budget message to the departments, requesting a level services (and as close to possible level funded) budget with a 1-percent COLA for all employees. Of the 1-percent COLA, he cited several economic indicators, including a 1.1-percent CPI this month. The 1-percent COLA translates into only two-tenths of 1 percent of the Town's total annual budget. He said that it is through the departments' efforts that the Town is in good financial and he believes the employees are deserving of the COLA increase.

On a related note, Mr. Salvie noted that the NRSD budgeted with "one-time only" funds this year, e.g., the way they handled out-of-district tuitions, so expenses were low, relative to income. However, that will not be true next year or again.

Mr. Wrigley closed his report by saying he had executed a contract with PAST, Inc., an historical consulting firm, to perform the historic properties inventory for the town.

### **Meeting Minutes**

None.

### **Public Hearing on the FY 2011 Tax Classification**

Ms. Spear introduced the hearing by reading a summary of the intent and process.

Mr. Dungan moved to open the hearing; Mr. Ryan seconded; and all voted in favor. Mr. Salvie moved to waive the reading of the hearing notice; Mr. Dungan seconded; and all voted in favor.

Board of Assessors chair Dominick Pugliese, Board member John Smith, and Principal Assessor Dorothy Wilbur visited the Board to present the various categories that municipalities can use to tax properties. These are Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Open Space, and Personal property types. As in past years, the Stow Assessors recommended continuing with a single tax rate across the five types.

Mr. Pugliese explained that this is because, with so little business and industrial property in town, shifting more of the tax burden to them will do little to help residential taxpayers and be an undue burden on the commercial taxpayers. The Commercial/Industrial classification is less than 7 percent of the tax base.

Mr. Wrigley added that Stow's problem of the tax weight on residential payers is compounded by having such an undiversified tax base combined with continuing decreases in receipts, such as local aid.

Hearing no input from the Board members or the public, Mr. Dungan moved to close the public hearing on the FY 2011 tax classification; Mr. Salvie seconded; and all voted in favor.

Mr. Dungan moved, pursuant to MGL C40 s56, to adopt a single tax rate for all property classes for FY 2011; Mr. Ryan seconded; and all voted in favor. The Board then signed the DOR classification sheet for Stow.

### **Priorities Review**

Ms. Spear led a review of the priorities chart that was updated at the October 26 meeting.

The Board agreed to the following:

- Having "Economic Development" (5) on a future agenda for further discussion and focus.
- Putting "Senior/Community Center" (7) under "Pompo Use" category (6).
- Adding Town Hall parking in place of Senior/Community Center. The parking shortage at Town Building and Town Hall needs attention. Mr. Wrigley said Town Meeting had already allocated funds and parking expansion could be done within the next construction season, if desired.

Other potential priority items for consideration are:

- Adding the Green Communities Program, despite issues with municipal light utility requirements.
- Looking at the Town's long-term debt, e.g., from 2014-2019, debt service goes up by \$2.0M.

**Mr. Ryan's Committee and Liaison Assignments**

Mr. Ryan agreed to serve the following committee and liaison roles for the Board:

- Public Safety Study Committee, with Town Administrator
- Fire, Police, and Highway departments
- Board of Health
- Recreation Commission

**Liaison Reports**

None.

At 8:20 p.m., Mr. Dungan moved to adjourn; Mr. Salvie seconded; and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McLaughlin  
Administrative Assistant

Approved as amended, November 23, 2010