

Sturbridge Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 5, 2011  
Town Hall  
7:00 pm

**Amended 4/12/11—motion to approve minutes with amendments made by MR, seconded by MS. Vote 6-0-1(PA).**

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm with the following members present: Kevin Smith (KS), Mary Redetzke (MR), Arnold Wilson (AW), Larry Morrison (LM) and Mike Serio (MS).

Members Absent: Prescott (Scott) Arndt (SA), Patricia Affenito (PA), Richard Volpe (RV) and Robert Williams (RW).

Motion to recess the meeting in conference room 2 and reconvene in Veteran's Hall was made by LM, seconded by AW. Vote 5-0-0.

**RV and SA joined the meeting at 7:04 pm.**

Minutes from March 29 and 30 were approved with amendments.

Invited Guests: Randy Redetzke (RR), Trails Cmte. Chairman and Penny Dumas (PD), Community Preservation Cmte. Chairman.

The guests were asked to discuss ATM Article 5 (**version 4-1-11**). This article requests \$64,235 for the trails cmte to: 1) construct a parking area off Stallion Hill Rd. to access the River Lands parcels; 2) fund trail design, permitting, development, and trail construction within said parcels and 3) to fund design, permitting, development, and construction of additional trails at Leadmine Mountain and the Hein's Farm properties.

RR provided a FY12 budget request and a spending summary spanning the years FY2009-FY2011. RR spoke at length about the work throughout the town that has been accomplished by the trails cmte and many volunteers. He also made a point of explaining that the trails cmte squeezes as much as \$3.64 worth of volunteer effort out of every dollar that the cmte receives from the town. One sticking point is the need to gain an easement from a landowner in order to access the eastern most parcel (51 Holland Rd., 28.63 acres) from the parcel at 55 Holland Rd. (40.28 acres). PD asserts that this work will be a further draw to the local area from a tourism standpoint. Also, will contribute to the economic development of the western end of Route 20 in Sturbridge.

KS asks if the Riverlands is really just the two parcels to the east since the third is not contiguous because of a pipeline easement. RR states that there is some kind of contamination on the NW portion of the western most parcel, near an old mill.

KS asks if funding should wait for the Trails Master Plan to be completed. RR answers that funds are always requested for a specific purpose. The cmte will tailor projects to a specific grant.

KS asks if the Leadmine Mtn land was purchased from OSV. RR answers yes.

RR states that the master plan will paint the larger picture of how to proceed on open space in Sturbridge.

KS asks when it will be completed? RR states that they have six proposals that are considering and hope to choose three to present to the TA. The plan should be completed about one year from this point. PD makes the point that the master plan will tell us how to spend the funds we have (for example, build the Stallion Hill parking lot to allow visitors to enjoy the open space). RR states that further uses will be explained—mountain bike trails may be developed with assistance from an international mountain biking organization. The development of this kind of opportunity may increase the appeal of a weekend stay in Sturbridge, rather than just a day for OSV.

MS asks if the Leadmine Mtn. and Hein's Farm projects are well enough along in order to petition the states for signs on the Mass. Pike? RR replies that property signage is being revisited; Route 20 is being considered but not yet routes 90 or 84. He goes on to say that the cmte received \$5,000 from Saver's Bank for signs for the Hein's Farm property. He highlights information on the spreadsheet.

RR is requesting an amendment to Article 62 of the April 28, 2008 Special Town Meeting that would expand the existing language to allow approximately \$8,000 to be used on other stream crossings at Camp Robinson Crusoe.

KS asks what happens to authorized funds not used? RR answers that they are turned back in to the town; also mentions that the SDPW and ACOE have performed work for the trails cmte that counts as in-kind matching (the matching formula used is from the federal gov't).

MS asks whether it would be possible (advantageous) to obtain the easement on the Grand Trunk Trail by eminent domain. RR explains that if an easement cannot be obtained, then the trail will be re-routed through ACOE property.

RR states the trails cmte will be working on a three-mile stretch of the Grand Trunk Trail. CME is working on the design.

KS asks about the request of \$5,000 from betterment. RR would like to use these monies to extend/update the trail as it crosses Route 84 with better sidewalk access for ADA and better lane striping for bikes. KS makes the comment that these sound somewhat like administrative funds; RR agrees saying that they could be used for any number of things such as surveying.

LM asks if the trails cmte has a relationship with the Opacum Land Trust? RR says yes, we have a good partnership with that organization.

KS asks whether CPA funds are used for high-priority issues or just as requests/ issues come forward? PD answers that CPA's job is to review projects on their respective merit, with an eye to spending less than the town takes in through local taxes. PD feels comfortable with this project because it meets economic development goals as well as open space goals.

KS makes the statement that CPC articles do not spell out for whom the funds are requested. TA is more comfortable with loose language than in past years.

KS asks who oversees spending by the trails cmte? RR answers Barbara Barry/Finance Dept. KS also asks if the CPC report outlines all the funds that it receives? For example, \$62,000 for the trails and the \$10,000 for the Tillyer Papers. PD answered.

**Article 5-CP-Sturbridge Trails Cmte. (pg. 3 of 36):** motion to approve as written made by AW, seconded by MS. Vote 7-0-0.

Discussion opened on Article 6-CP-Historic (Tillyer Papers) (pg. 4 of 36): PD asks for \$10,000 for the preservation of 25% of these historic documents that relate to social welfare. KS would like the language changed to reflect that the historical commission if the requesting party.

MR asks who is doing the work? PD explains that this will go to bid; once awarded, the work will be done at and overseen by OSV staff. Selectwoman Mary Blanchard (in audience) comments that this \$10,000 threshold does not require bids to be sought. KS is fine with the intent of the article but the language needs to be changed; will discuss with Barbara Barry.

**Article 6-CP-Historic (Tillyer Papers) (pg. 4 of 36):** motion to approve as written made by AW, seconded by MS. Vote 7-0-0.

Discussion opened on Article 7-CP-Recreation Fitness Trail (pg. 4 of 36): KS asks how this trail fits in the trails plan? PD explains this trail is designed to fit with the proposed ball fields on the Shepard parcel. AW makes the point that this article has been removed from the warrant by the Rec. cmte.

**Article 7-CP-Recreational Fitness Life Trail (pg. 4 of 36):** motion to recommend no action made by AW, seconded by KS.

General discussion on the motion: this is not a stand-alone article; the trail will be built if the ball fields are constructed. LM reads an e-mail from the Rec. cmte chair, Al Jones that states why the cmte voted to remove the article from the warrant. **Vote 7-0-0.**

**Article 8-CP-Memorial Conference Rooms. (pg. 5 of 36):** KS asks what the \$2,000 request from betterment will fund; AW was not present for this vote but will find out. On hold for now.

Discussion opens Article 9-CP-Trail Bridges (pg. 5 of 36): RR would to amend the wording of article 62 from the April 28, 2008 STM to allow the remaining \$8,101 to be used for other wetland crossings on the same property.

**Article 9-CP-Trail Bridges (pg. 5 of 36):** motion to approve as written made by AW, seconded by MS. Vote 7-0-0.

Discussion opened on Article 4-CP-Administration (pg. 2 of 36): PD explains the funds will be used for coalition dues and for the printing of a trails brochure.

**Article 4-CP-Administration (pg. 2 of 36):** motion to approve as written made by AW, seconded by MS. Vote 7-0-0.

A motion for deficit spending of \$2,750 for ice and snow removal from the roof of the Burgess Elementary School was made by AW, seconded by MR. Vote 7-0-0.

A motion to transfer \$1,050 from the Reserve fund to the Finance Director salaries/wages line (line 25) was made by LM, seconded by RV. Vote 7-0-0.

### **Line Item Budget:**

Board of Health (pg. 9): line items 116-118: motion to approve for \$76,152 made by SA, seconded by RV. Vote 7-0-0. KS will ask Barbara Barry to break out the salary for the Dept. Head.

Landfill/Recycling Center (pg. 9): line items 110-113: KS states that \$600 was removed from line 112. SA explains that there is breach due to excessive water draining through the landfill and that this breach will be studied for repair. SA goes on to say that more money may be needed before the end of the year. **Motion to approve \$246,881 made by SA, seconded by RV. Vote 7-0-0.**

Recreation (pg. 11): line item 146: motion made to approve \$39,476 made by KS, seconded by LM. This reflects a grade change from grade 7 to grade 9 at an hourly rate of \$20.67.

General discussion on motion: KS reads an e-mail from the TA regarding increasing the Dept. Head's weekly hours by five to 25 hours; this is a 25% increase in hours. MR agrees. RV interprets the e-mail as a justification for increasing the hours in the position in spite of the town's fields being in a state of flux. MR asks if MS considered the extra time for just the ball fields or other things, too. MS states the personnel cmte considered other things as the town is growing and there are greater demands on town employees in their positions. AW speaks as a member of the focus group on Recreation and says that

20 hours per week is just not enough; a recommendation has been made to the TA for making the position full-time but there is no correspondence to that effect.

Mary Blanchard (in audience) says that the BOS discussed the Dept. Head but came to no decision. LM states there is no connection between the Rec. cmte and the TA. Mary Blanchard says the BOS voted on the salary increase but not the hours increase because it had not been brought to their attention. LM moves to rescind his second of the existing motion to approve the \$39,476 (line 146).

AW seconds the motion to approve line item 146 at \$39,476. Vote 5-1(SA)-1(MS).

Recreation pg. 11): line item 150: motion made to approve for \$210 by KS, seconded by LM. Vote 7-0-0.

**ATM Warrant (version 4-1-11):**

Article 10-Water Dept.: motion to approve as written made by AW, seconded by MR. Vote 7-0-0.

Article 11-Sewer Dept.: motion to approve as written made by AW, seconded by MR. Vote 7-0-0.

AW says to expect a change in the dollars due to the change in the water and sewer rates.

KS makes a motion to adjourn, vote 7-0-0.  
Meeting adjourned at 10:13 pm.