

Sturbridge Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2011
Town Hall
7:00 pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm with the following members present: Kevin Smith (KS), Mary Redetzke (MR), Arnold Wilson (AW), Prescott (Scott) Arndt (SA), Patricia Affenito (PA), Larry Morrison (LM) and Mike Serio (MS). Members Absent: Robert Williams (RW).

Motion to approve April 5 minutes with amendments made by MR, seconded by MS.
Vote 6-0-1.

ATM Warrant (version 4-12-11):

Article 33-Finance Committee Membership: LM refers to his April 8, 2011 e-mail; says it gets to the heart of the matter about language and starting there and see what survives. MS clarifies that the Fin. Comm. can make people available when it wants to. LM says former Fin. Comm. members can be appointed. MS asks if the BOS is the sole appointing authority, LM and AW answer no. MS makes the point that Fin. Comm. members typically abstain on an issue when that issue is being voted by the Fin. Comm. KS suggests making this point in the text box on the warrant. PA says this works if you are a *voting* member on the other cmte.

Motion made to approve as written made by MR, seconded by MS. Vote 8-0-0. See text below:

“To see if the Town will amend Chapter One, Section 1.21 of the General Bylaws by deleting the sentence: “No elected or appointed town officer or town employee shall be eligible to serve on said Committee,” and replacing it with the following: “No Town employee or special employee may serve on the Finance Committee during the term of such employment. At its initiative, the Finance Committee may nominate one or more of its members for appointment(s) to a specific committee, with out such appointment(s) jeopardizing the status of the nominee (s’) membership on the Finance Committee, if so appointed.”

Article 16-STA: LM asks how we construct the text box for this amount? KS replies that there are so many reasons for recommending no action on this article; the board is dysfunctional, there are no audit functions in place to oversee the spending. KS also suggests that maybe a substitute motion should be made to vote the funds but not to authorize the disbursement of any funds until the board implements spending audits.

Town Moderator Mike Caplette (MC) joins the meeting at 7:44 pm.

KS asks the question of whether a substitute motion can be made to authorize the funds but not the spending of said funds. MC answers it would not be appropriate. LM gives a brief synopsis of the STA's recent history. AW asks MC what if we recommend no action? MC answers then a substitute motion can be made by the Fin. Comm. MC suggests having Barbara Barry and the BOS watch the STA more closely for a period or making the substitute motion at the ATM.

MC leaves the meeting at 7:55 pm.

General discussion about Article 16: PA suggests moving a motion up in the order in the ATM Warrant to seat a new committee before this article (16) comes up for a vote. PA also makes two points: 1) she knows the requests for a budget were not acknowledged but says the Treasurer should have the records Fin. Comm. may need; and 2) the chair of the committee did not know the STA was a town body. KS agrees that the board was never given proper guidance. MS thought STA had a clear idea of how it wanted to function. PA answers no, STA never had a clear idea of how to operate with regards to the checks and balances. LM says that money was going to the Brookfields rather than staying in Sturbridge; KS makes the point that money had gone to the Chamber of Commerce and that it was spent on Chamber business, not Sturbridge tourism activities. PA suggests that with different members, perhaps the board will function more efficiently. AW says the new board will be seated immediately after the ATM. KS makes two points: 1) The BOS can change the order of the articles, and, 2) can petition to consider an article out of order. PA states she believes the status of the chairman of the STA is unclear.

Motion to approve as written made by AW, seconded by MR. Vote 7-0-1.

Article 18-Capital Improvement Plan: PA makes the point that the HVAC quote is from last year. On hold.

Article 22-Tantasqua RJHS: motion to approve as written made by MR, seconded by MS. Vote 8-0-0.

Article 24-Water Dept. Capital Request: on hold. MR makes a motion to reconsider this article, it is seconded by RV. Vote 7-0-1. KS will speak with Barbara Barry about the language of this article to make it more in keeping with past articles of this type.

Article 30-General Bylaw Amendment-Composition of STA: KS suggests amending the second bullet point to read annually by the BOS. Motion made to amend and approve as written made by AW, seconded by MR. Vote 7-0-1.

Article 31-Snow and Ice Removal: motion to amend (a) by deleting 'for sidewalks located within a state highway layout in the event of extraordinary conditions.' Motion to approve as amended made by MS, seconded by RV. Vote 8-0-0.

Article 36-Town Meeting Requirements-Date and Language Clarification: motion to approve as written made by MR, seconded by MS. Vote 8-0-0.

Article 37-Grant Of Easement-Burgess School: AW makes the point that this town-owned land that is overseen by BOS and the Burgess School Bldg. Committee. AW says a pole has already been installed at the backside of the school. MS thinks an easement implies a continuity of use. LM will investigate for Thursday—on hold.

Article 38-Authorize Lease of Landfill Land-Solar Power Agreement: KS recommends no action since it seems as though a blank check is being offered to the BOS; that a use may be granted without a vote at ATM. RV agrees with KS; believes that the 30 year window for the use may be a 'pay back' window on the investment. Motion to recommend no action made by KS, seconded by RV. Vote 7-1-0.

Article 44-Citizen Petition-General Bylaw Amendment: motion to recommend no action made by AW, seconded by RV. Vote 8-0-0.

Special Town Meeting Warrant (version 4-12-11):

Article 32-Transfer of Funds-Burgess School Roof Removal: motion to approve as written made by MR, seconded by LM. Vote 8-0-0.

Article 33-Transfer of Funds-Recreational Trails Master Plans: AW states this money will be combined with CPC funds and that the CPC cannot fully pay for this plan. Motion to approve as written made by AW, seconded by MR. Vote 8-0-0.

Article 34-Transfer of Funds-Landfill/Recycling Center Purchase of Services: SA says a bid for a peer-review of the design for amelioration of the leaching is pending. Motion to approve as amended made by MR, seconded by SA.

Discussion on the existing motion: PA asks three things: 1) if the money is for this year only, answer is yes; 2) is this required, answer is yes; and 3) is this quote based on the number of gallons that need removal, answer is yes. Vote 8-0-0.

Article 35-Transfer of Funds-Purchase of Police Cruiser: motion to approve as written made By MR, seconded by LM. Vote 6-2-0.

Article 37-Transfer of Funds-Purchase of Backhoe/Loader: motion to approve as written made by MR, seconded by LM. Vote 7-1-0.

Motion to adjourn made by KS. Vote 8-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm.