

Sturbridge Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 28, 2011  
Town Hall  
7:00 pm

**Amended 5-3-11. Amended again to include additional information on 5-5-11.**

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm with the following members present: Kevin Smith (KS), Arnold Wilson (AW), Prescott (Scott) Arndt (SA), Patricia Affenito (PA), and Mike Serio (MS).

Members Absent: Mary Redetzke (MR), Robert Williams (RW).

Motion to recess in Conference Room 2 and reconvene in Veteran's Memorial Hall made by PA, seconded by AW. Vote 5-0-0. Larry Morrison (LM) and Richard Volpe (RV) joined the meeting at 7:03 pm.

Invited Guests: Brian Amedy (BA), Vice Chair for the Sturbridge Tourist Association (STA); Joni Light (JL), Treasurer, STA; Michael Harrington (MH), STA, and Kevin McConnell (KM), STA.

Motion to approve the 4-26 minutes as amended made by PA, seconded by LM.  
Vote 7-0-0.

KS-Reserve fund balance is \$78,484; the Town Administrator signed off on a Reserve Fund Transfer for \$1050 for the Finance Director's salary for the next three weeks. Motion to transfer made by LM, seconded by SA. Vote 7-0-0.

KS-the Fire Dept. has requested the amount of \$1600 for a new recruit to attend the Fire Academy. Motion to transfer made by PA, seconded by MS. Vote 6-0-1.

**ATM Warrant (version 4-26-11):**

Article 14-Sturbridge Tourist Association: general discussion: KS states that this budget was developed by the TA because STA did not do their work; also KS attended a July or August 2010 meeting of the STA and was reassured that the board was aware of their duties. BA says that regardless of the composition of this board going forward, this is the budget for the upcoming year; he also states that there was no quorum at April's meeting of the STA. KS asks will this budget be adequate for the upcoming year? JL has the records of how the funds were spent last year. MH asks if this fulfills the requirements of the Fin. Comm.? KM makes the point that this committee is only staffed at 50%; asks if the Fin. Comm. would allow some funds to be released until the next Special Town Meeting? AW asks for a formal proposal from the STA for their budget. KS point out that funds from last year's budget were used by the Chamber of Commerce for their administration, rather than the STA. MS asks do we want more detail about the

expenditures of the STA? KS answers yes, the Chamber should be applying for funds (for the Harvest Festival, for example). KS also asks if and how the STA assesses the success of the events they sponsor. KM asks if there is no substitute motion at the ATM, can the STA then petition the BOS for placement on the next Special Town Meeting Warrant?

LM requests that the Executive Summary illustrate six items:

- 1) Unified creative themes portraying Sturbridge and environs invitingly and distinctively to the hospitality marketplace.
- 2) Data substantiating that the creative themes match consumer interest.
- 3) A production calendar: Purpose(s) of each expenditure, sequence of spending, start/end dates of each expenditure, amount per expenditure, target geo/audience per expenditure, and expected yield (in dollars and audience size) per expenditure.
- 4) High, medium, and low expectations for the return on investment (budget).
- 5) Rigorous method for the objective evaluation of the overall plan.
- 6) Procedure(s) for administrative oversight.

BA outlines some ways that STA is reaching a wider audience: advertising on Comcast/Charter cable, and an advertisement/article in the May 21<sup>st</sup> Hartford Courant; BA also mentions the possibility of advertising in the AAA newsletter but that the cost is \$13,000. PA would like to see how the STA views Sturbridge; what is here that is unique and special, and what does the future look like for the Town?

Article 28-Composition of the Sturbridge Tourist Association: general discussion: MH says he will support the article as written. JL says stability is needed but the board is only two years old. JL goes on to say that small business needs a seat at the table but she understands the pool of residents is much larger. KM makes the point that small businesses are just working to grow their businesses and do not have time to attend meetings; he also questions their loyalty to the town since many owners do not live here. RV makes the point that the residents have left the board for a variety of reasons; Tom Creamer (BOS) states that five of seven seats on the board have been vacated by a member of the business community. LM asks what conclusions have been drawn by the board about the withdrawal of OSV? KM says OSV left for budgetary and staffing reasons; however he also feels that OSV is not interested in forging a relationship with the town. LM-it appears that a critical mass has not been reached yet and so the board has not been able to make significant impact in the local area. LM asks whether the members have taken field trips to other areas to see how other entities partner with each other and how they fit into their locale (Historic Deerfield, Plimoth Plantation, Mystic Seaport). KM would like to see OSV and the Town partner for events. PA believes that OSV left the Chamber of Commerce when they left the STA; says she has a lot of information about the Chambers work in their locales (in other areas of the state). KM states that the Town has been and needs to continue to piggyback on OSV events. TC agrees and goes on to say that the Master Plan and the Tourism Revitalization Plan have large sections that deal with tourism. The STA will come back on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Charter Review Committee:**

Heather Hart, representative of the Charter Review Committee is present. KS questions whether the Charter Review Committee has used the official copy of the Town Charter because of a typographical error he found. Discussion centers around how to proceed with regards to the un-voted articles: KS says SS maintains that the version on the town website is the official copy. LM makes the point that the only copy that matters is the one at the State Attorney's Office in Boston.

Article 39-Charter Amendments-Administrative Items: motion to recommend no action made by AW, seconded by RV. Vote 6-0-1.

Article 40-Charter Amendments-Procedural Enhancements: motion to recommend no action made by RV, seconded by AW. Vote 7-0-0.

Article 41-Charter Amendment-Finance Committee Appointments: motion to recommend no action made by AW, seconded by LM. Vote 7-0-0.

Article 43-Charter Amendment-Appointment of Zoning Board of Appeals: motion to recommend no action made by LM, seconded by PA. Vote 7-0-0.

Article 44-Charter Amendment-Appointment of Town Counsel: motion to recommend no action made by LM, seconded by AW. Vote 7-0-0.

Article 45-Charter Amendment-Committee Appointments: motion to recommend no action made by AW, seconded by LM. Vote 7-0-0.

Article 46- Charter Amendment-Consistency of Formatting: motion to recommend no action made by AW, seconded by PA. Vote 7-0-0.

LM makes a motion to reconsider Article 16, RV seconds. Vote 7-0-0. KS did not recuse himself on the first vote. Motion to approve made by LM, seconded by RV. Vote 6-0-1.

Motion to adjourn made by PA at 9:05 pm. Vote 7-0-0.