

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

**Minutes amended 5-10-11.**

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

Members Absent: Mary Redetzke (MR), Rich Volpe (RV), and Robert Williams (RW).

Invited guests: Members of the Sturbridge Tourist Association: Kevin McConnell (KM), Brian Amedy (BA), vice chair, Michael Harrington (MH), Joni Light (JL). Audience members: Mike Caplette, Town Moderator.

Motion to recess in Conference Room 2 and reconvene in Veteran's Memorial Hall made by AW, seconded by LM. Vote 5-0-0. Patricia Affenito (PA) joined the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Motion to approve the 5-3 minutes as amended made by PA, seconded by MS. Vote 6-0-0.

General discussion about the STA: JL answers PA's question about snow removal at the Information Center restrooms by saying that the STA debited the most logical account. KS asks what is the STA's portion of the Chamber's budget for the Information Center in Sturbridge? BA answers saying that it is 35%. LM asks for what services did the STA pay? JL says that the Chamber duties include upkeep and staffing of the Information Center. KM makes the point that hours of operation were expanded in an attempt to serve visitors that arrived later in the day. A question was asked about why there are two line items for salaries; BA/JL did not answer. KS asks about a \$1000 line item for Chamber administration; BA answers it paid for the Chamber to keep various information sources current and other administrative duties. SA asks whether the percentage paid to the Chamber will be reduced this year? BA answers that STA does not need to approve the percentage that is requested. PA says it appears that utilities are debited from several accounts. KS asks about the process for organizations to request funds. MH says that requests are received but that he does not think that the STA should solicit requests for funding. KS says that the STA is a funding mechanism. SA asks whether advertising agencies have been solicited? JL states that the Hartford Courant marketing contact has been helpful but perhaps an agency should be considered. LM believes that STA would advantage Sturbridge by working with an agency, not just a vendor; thereby the agency would essentially be the staff. KM makes the point that since 2/3 of the STA budget went to the Chamber and occupancy rates have fallen, perhaps this is not a good policy. KM goes on to ask if the funds should be kept in STA? KM does say that the STA is still

young and growing. PA states the Chamber of Commerce hired Smith and Jones; then asks if feedback is received on the success of the events so decisions can be about the effective use of funds in the future. JL states that Chamber personnel did provide feedback about the Harvest Festival and there were consumers from outside the local area present at the festival. PA says that she has contact with local businesses and feedback from them makes the case that STA is not well-known in the community as a funding mechanism.

Discussion moves to the FY12 budget:

KS asks why the administration line is gone. JL answers that the STA members were not clear on how to use these funds and they decided to use them in the advertising line item instead. Motion to reconsider Article 14-Sturbridge Tourist Association is made by AW, seconded MS. Vote 4-1-1. Motion to approve the budget as written made by AW, seconded by MS. Vote 4-1-1.

**ATM Warrant (version 5-3-11 #2):**

Discussion took place regarding the summary boxes for the warrant.

Motion to adjourn at 9:45 pm made by KS. Vote 6-0-0.