

TOWN OF STURBRIDGE
Government Services Study Committee (GSSC)
Minutes of November 2, 2012

Meeting was called to order at 2:30 PM. A. Smith was absent. Also present was Mr. Skinner.

Motion was made to accept the amended minutes of October 19, 2012 by M. Redetzke, seconded by P. Levine. Vote was 2 – 0 –2 (S. Arndt & P. Levine).

Discussion of Fire Department Report: P. Levine and M. Redetzke met with Chief Senecal and Captain Marinelli on October 19, 2012. Chief Senecal was going out on medical leave and Captain Marinelli will be the contact person while the Chief is out. P. Levine was impressed with the amount of public service the Fire Department does. M. Redetzke went over their findings:

- Safe Program – This program is a State initiative to provide resources to local fire departments to conduct fire and life safety education programs in grades K-12. The mission is to enable students to recognize the dangers of fire, and, more specifically, the fire hazards tobacco products pose. The program is partly funded by a grant, and there is no charge for the program. This program is run by Fireman Volpe, during the day shift. Captain Marinelli and Chief Senecal would like to see this program in the junior and senior schools.
- Inspections - The department is responsible for enforcing the Fire Prevention Laws (M.G.L. Chapter 148), Fire Prevention Regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (527 C.M.R.'s) and local bylaws that relate to Public Safety. They inspect smoke alarms in all new homes (M.G.L. Chapter 148, s.26B) and in all homes being resold (M.G.L. Chapter 148, s26F). Since 2006, they also inspect carbon monoxide detectors on home resale. The Fire Department is also responsible for inspections of oil burners and oil tank installations, underground storage tanks that hold flammable liquids, LPG storage, and commercial fire alarm and sprinkler installations. Inspections are required for commercial, industrial, residential and schools. Captain Marinelli is the primary inspector with backup from Chief Senecal. There is no certification requirement for Fire Inspector but, going forward, it may be required. Captain Marinelli has taken some classes.
- FPO-Level I Training Launched – Upon successful completion of this 40-hour blended program (three days in the classroom combined with 16 hours of on-line study and testing), participants receive the State Fire Marshal credential to the level of Fire Prevention Officer – Level I.

- EMS – total of 9 paramedics
- Dive Team – still in force – need more equipment
- A lot of service calls are duplication with the electrical, wiring or building inspectors because some State Codes are duplicated in those areas.
- The state of the Public Safety complex is so poor that the Chief feels a Facilities Manager is needed. The Chief is and has been the Building Manager for many years.
- School Fire Drills – Fire person visits the schools at least four times a year for the purpose of conducting fire drills. The Fire Department keeps all records on file of all fire drills.
- Emergency Management - the Chief does not see an issue with the Police being in charge – when the decision was made years ago, it was due to the fact that the Fire Department did not have the manpower to oversee it

The Committee had the following questions, comments and concerns:

- Fire Drills are regulated by the State as to how many, but not when
- How much power does the Chief have to regulate salaries
- Mr. Skinner (a resident) suggested making the Emergency Management it's own separate department – some towns have it set up that way
- The efficiency and professionalism of the Police and Fire Departments are very different
- How do we get both departments on the same page
- Need to make a site visit to the Mendon and see how they combined both departments and how it works.

The Committee tentatively set a date of Friday, November 30, 2012 at 9:00 AM to meet and travel to the Town of Mendon and talk to their Police Chief.

Discussion of Town Planner Report: The Committee would like to see the Conservation Agent and all Inspectorial personnel report to the Town Planner. The Administrative Assistant needs to be full time. Look at the Town of Spencer, and how they organized their Land Use Department.

Report for the BOS Meeting, November 5, 2012: The Committee will report the following:

- Their mission statement
- The outcome of the employee meeting
- Consolidation of Fire and Police departments
- Re-organizing of the Planning Department
- Regional conference attended by P. Levine and A. Smith

Old Business: Why Police and Fire being done first – they have the largest budget

New Business: The Committee decided that they should concentrate on Fire, Police and Planning, and have a time line to bring forth to the BOS and to Town Meeting.

The Committee agreed that progress is being made, and they are headed in the right direction.

Next meeting will be Friday, December 14, 2012 at 2:30 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Trapasso, Secretary