

January 21, 2003

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES  
JANUARY 21, 2003**

Present:     Arnold Wilson, Chairman  
              Charles Blanchard  
              Hal White  
              Doris Sosik  
              James Malloy, Town Administrator

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. following the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION:**   To approve the minutes of January 6, 2003 as amended,  
                  by H. White.  
      **2<sup>nd</sup>:**   D. Sosik  
      **Vote:** All in favor.

**MOTION:**   To approve the executive session minutes of January 6,  
                  2003 as submitted, to remain confidential, by C.  
                  Blanchard.  
      **2<sup>nd</sup>:**   H. White  
      **Vote:** All in favor.

**Old Sturbridge Village – Change of Manager on Liquor License**

Beverly Sheppard, President, Richard Loder, new manager, and Tim Holmes, Acting Food Service Director, appeared before the Board. All of their paperwork was in order.

**MOTION:**   To approve the change of manager application for Old  
                  Sturbridge Village, naming Richard Loder as the new  
                  manager of record, by H. White.  
      **2<sup>nd</sup>:**   C. Blanchard  
      **Vote:** All in favor.

**FY04 Budget**

J. Malloy submitted to the Board copies of the FY04 budget packet. It was Mr. Malloy's opinion that the budget provides for continued quality service,

is balanced and is within the Proposition 2 ½ levy limit. The summary will be posted on the Town's website.

Mr. Malloy expressed concern about the news articles relative to recent state legislative authority granted to the Governor to cut local aid unequally among municipalities, based on where the town is relative to foundation budgets for schools and the town's fiscal reserves. He said that this is punitive against communities that have made a dedicated effort to provide excellent schools and have been fiscally conservative and financially well managed. He suggested establishing stronger contacts with other municipalities that are forming coalitions to challenge the inequitable manner that the state has distributed local aid, and to consider taking whatever action is necessary to prevent the state from acting in an arbitrary and discriminatory manner. Mr. Malloy sent a letter to Eric Kriss, Budget Director for the Governor, including a large spreadsheet containing all of the 351 communities in the state with a comparison of the amount of education aid per pupil given to each town. Sturbridge ranks 153<sup>rd</sup> out of 351 towns, and at the very bottom of state aid, the way it is currently apportioned. He said that inequities in the state aid calculations should be considered before making any cuts. The town of Sturbridge receives \$280/person, compared to the next richer town, which receives \$753/person. H. White suggested that the spreadsheet be sent to Lt. Governor Kerry Healey. Mr. Malloy said that he was working with Rep. Reed Hillman to set up a meeting with her at Town Hall, which he would host. Mr. Malloy plans to attend a meeting on Cape Cod to explore the possibility of banding together with other municipalities regarding Ch. 70 funding inequities. C. Blanchard said that Governor Romney has indicated that he will be fair in making necessary cuts.

J. Malloy said that when Barbara Barry, Finance Director, met with the department heads, the initial budget that was presented was a lean budget, but was still \$350,000 over the estimated levy limit. He said that it would be difficult for the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee to review the budget when state aid could be reduced significantly beyond what the budget is predicated on. He asked that the Board consider the budget under the current assumption that state aid will be reduced by 10%, and understand that at some point in the future it may be necessary to revisit expenditures or appropriate funds from reserves to make up whatever additional amounts may be cut from state aid.

### **Personnel Committee Report**

J. Malloy submitted to the Board the full report of the Personnel Committee, which includes revised position descriptions for every position in the town government, revised position classification for every position and recommended wage scale for FY04. The Board will discuss the report at the February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

### **Town Hall/Center School Project Proposal**

J. Malloy submitted to the Board floor plans that were developed by the Building Study Committee, and the following schedule for review of the proposal:

- January 21, 2003 – Town Administrator makes preliminary presentation to the Board of Selectmen.
- February 3, 2003 – The Board of Selectmen provides any specific questions they may have to the initial presentation.
- February 20, 2003 – Gordon Hyde from CPK Design Group (part of CME/CPK, our Town Engineer) will make a presentation including cost estimates for the Board of Selectmen. The Finance Committee will be invited to the meeting.

The Committee put similar departments in each building. The proposal is to move the Conservation Commission, Recreation Department, Building Inspector, Town Planner, Board of Health and ZBA offices to the Center School Building, with a meeting room that will hold approximately 45 people. There will also be an office available for use by the Historic Commission and Historic Society for meetings and storage of artifacts.

The Town Hall would remain as an administration and finance building with the offices of the Town Clerk, Collections, Board of Assessors and Finance Director on the first floor (high traffic departments) and the Town Accountant, Ambulance Collections, Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen's offices on the second floor (lower traffic departments). The proposed improvements to the building include: a new entryway at the rear of the building; expanded vault for the Town Clerk; a larger conference rooms on both the first and second floor; a larger window for the Collections Department; repair of all windows; repointing bricks; repair of two of the pillars; staircase improvements; roof repair/replacement; installation of central air conditioning; new lighting.

J. Malloy said that the Committee decided to move forward with the building project, although this is a time when it is necessary to trim the budget and cut costs. The project needs to be done.

**Spaho Corp. – Water & Sewer Connections for New Development**

C. Blanchard recused himself from the Board at 7:00 p.m. Mike Loin and Michael Lussier appeared before the Board to seek approval for water and sewer connections for Sturbridge Farms. They submitted an alternative plan showing 17 lots without town water and sewer. There were some concerns indicated by Greg Morse regarding different issues such as grading, the Right of Way cross section, reinforcement of the retaining wall, location of the crossing pipes, and detention basin access. The plans were changed to accommodate the concerns, and they are in the process of preparing a traffic assessment. The two means of egress are Main Street and opposite Blueberry Lane. They estimate that there will be 110 vehicle trips per day for the subdivision, resulting in a minimum impact to the existing roadway network. In their opinion, the amount of added flow from the subdivision would not cause a capacity issue for the wastewater treatment plant.

M. Lussier said that they propose to build 21 homes in the \$400,000 - \$500,000 range, which would generate \$125,000 in real estate tax revenue for the town.

A. Wilson asked whether Mass. Highway Dept. has notified the town of the application for the curb cut. J. Malloy said that they have not. M. Loin said that Mass. Highway has officially logged in the curb cut application on January 21<sup>st</sup>. A. Wilson indicated that he was not in favor of the curb cut, since it would aggravate a dangerous situation, and he would be very reluctant to grant the sewer extension unless there is a plan in place to deal with the flow issue. He noted that testing is being done for a new water source, but the Board does not know at this time that it will pass. There is a problem with well #1. D. Sosik said that she would like to compare the two plans. G. Morse said that there should be a gravity design for the subdivision, and recommended that pumps not be allowed.

J. Malloy asked whether perc tests have been done. M. Loin said they have not. He said that there is a cart road through C. Blanchard's land, and they would have to cut trees to cross the seasonal wet area to reach the back. C. Blanchard, speaking as a citizen, said that there isn't a cart road on his property, nor any kind of public access road. M. Loin said that a soil scientist had done soil testing on the site.

C. Blanchard asked whether the project has been reviewed by the Conservation Commission. M. Loin said that he had spoken with them and

explained the situation. They will file a wetland delineation filing. C. Blanchard asked whether it would affect the number of lots on septic systems and wells. M. Loin admitted that it could. A wetlands biologist will be consulted for the delineation.

**MOTION: To deny the request for a sewer extension for Spaho Corp. for the subdivision on Farquhar Road, by D. Sosik.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: H. White**

**Vote: Three in favor; C. Blanchard abstained.**

**MOTION: To deny the request for water connection for Spaho Corp. for the subdivision on Farquhar Road, by D. Sosik.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: H. White**

**Vote: Three in favor; C. Blanchard abstained.**

C. Blanchard returned to the Board at 7:40 p.m.

### **Hearthstone Inn – Change of Manager on Liquor License**

There was no one present from the Hearthstone Inn.

**MOTION: To hold action on this matter and have a representative from the Hearthstone Inn appear before the Board to answer questions, by C. Blanchard.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Sosik**

**Vote: All in favor.**

### **USDA RD**

J. Malloy requested the Board's permission to sign the Water or Waste System Grant Agreement, which is an agreement to accept a grant and fund the remainder through the Rural Utility Service Program; and the Loan Resolution.

**MOTION: To authorize the Town Administrator to execute the Water or Waste System Grant Agreement, by D. Sosik.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Blanchard**

**Vote: All in favor.**

**MOTION: To authorize the Town Administrator to execute the Loan Resolution as per the wording of the resolution (copy on file), by D. Sosik.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: H. White**

**Vote: All in favor.**

**Council on Aging Appointment**

**MOTION: To confirm the Town Administrator's appointment of Dr. David Schwartz to the Council on Aging, by C. Blanchard.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Sosik**

**Vote: Three in favor; H. White had left the room and did not vote.**

**Public Access Board – Special Use Permit**

Classis Bass Anglers submitted an application to hold a fishing tournament on E. Brimfield Reservoir on June 1, 2003 from 5:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**MOTION: To approve the Public Access Board application and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the application, by D. Sosik.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: H. White**

**Vote: All in favor.**

**Miscellaneous/Other**

It was the consensus of the Board to meet in regular session on the second Monday in February to devote the entire meeting to the budget, instead of holding a work session. A memo will be sent to the departments.

Regarding the reduction in state aid for FY03 up to approximately \$200,000, A.Wilson suggested that the Town maintain its normal services, and if there is a budget shortfall to deal with it be use of free cash or the stabilization fund, as opposed to cutting services.

**Old Business**

C. Blanchard announced that Sturbridge has received a Certificate of Achievement from MMA for the Dumas land acquisition, for innovation in balancing development and open space.

**New Business**

A.Wilson submitted a rough draft of the Selectmen's Annual Report to the Board members for their review and comments.

January 21, 2003

**Ask the Selectmen**

There were no calls.

**MOTION:** To enter into executive session under MGL Chapter 39, §23B, Paragraph #7: To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law or federal grant-in-aid requirements, not to reconvene in open session, by H. White.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** C. Blanchard.

**Roll call vote:** All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

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BOS Clerk

Date