

March 21, 2005

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
MARCH 21, 2005**

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

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

A.Wilson offered C. Blanchard best wishes in his new job working for the Town of Paxton, and thanked him for his many years of service to the Town of Sturbridge.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 22, 2005 as corrected, by C. Blanchard.

2nd: H. White

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 28, 2005 as submitted, by C. Blanchard.

2nd: H. White

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of March 7, 2005 as submitted, by H. White.

2nd: D. Sosik

Vote: Three in favor; C. Blanchard abstained.

Community Preservation Committee – Presentation regarding Affordable Housing

Penny Dumas and Anthony Silvestri of the Community Preservation Committee appeared before the Board. P. Dumas said that the Community Preservation Act allows the CPC to spend funds for affordable housing, open space and historic preservation. The CPC worked with people from the Southbridge Savings Bank to develop a proposal to use \$50,000 of CPA funds for affordable housing to provide low interest home improvement loans for eligible homeowners.

Paul and Kathy Harrington; Don Alaire – The Trail Association Abatement Application

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Paul Harrington informed the Board that their attorney is looking into a conservation restriction for the properties, but it may cost about \$2,000 to have it done. The Town will hold the restriction and it would be signed off by the Trail Association. He asked whether that would be adequate for the Board to grant an abatement, based on the arguments given and the fact that they will never develop the properties. Don Alaire said that they have a declaration of restrictive covenants, and there are retaining walls at the site. They are looking into getting a permanent conservation restriction. He asked whether they would be able to continue to maintain the properties, trimming shrubs, working on the retaining wall, etc. with a restriction in place.

A. Wilson said that it should be a perpetual conservation restriction. C. Blanchard said that if the properties were built upon in the future, the Town should be able to assess full betterment on it at that time. J. Malloy said that there should be a legally binding document in place. He said that he will consult Town Counsel.

MOTION: To approve the abatement, conditional upon receiving a permanent conservation restriction on the properties within 120 days of the original abatement (the end of May), by H. White.
2nd: D. Sosik
Vote: All in favor.

J. Malloy suggested that once all of the paperwork is filed with the Registry, a copy should be submitted to him, then he will contact Senator Brewer for his assistance in getting it passed through EOE A.

Tins and Things – Sale of Antiques License

Monique Vadnais, owner of Tins and Things, appeared before the Board.

MOTION: To approve the license to sell antiques at 479 Main Street, by A. Wilson.
2nd: H. Whitej
Vote: All in favor.

Appointments

MOTION: To confirm the Town Administrator's appointment of Darlene Curboy as a part-time dispatcher at the starting rate of \$12.97 per hour, effective 3/22/05, by H. White.
2nd: D. Sosik
Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To confirm the Town Administrator's appointment of Ronald Komar as the Animal Control Officer at a starting rate of \$12.25 per hour, effective 3/22/05, by H. White.

2nd: D. Sosik

Vote: All in favor.

Strategic Plan

J. Malloy submitted to the Board the Strategic Plan schedule of tasks that need to be started or undertaken during 2005 (copy on file). It was the consensus of the Board to send out a memo and schedule to all town boards, committees and departments.

Excess Equipment Sale

MOTION: To declare the following surplus personal property, to be sold as per the Town's General Bylaws: 1986 Mobile Athey Street Sweeper; 1979 International 2524 Catch Basin Cleaner; 1992 John Deere Lawn Tractor; Miscellaneous loader tires; Okidata Microline 393 Printer; Adler Typewriter; 1996, 1997 (2) Ford Crown Victoria; and to authorize the disposal of any equipment that does not receive any bids, by H. White.

2nd: D. Sosik

Vote: All in favor.

Preservation of Historic Documents

MOTION: To award the bid for the preservation of Town Meeting Records from 1738 through 1865 to Robert Arnold Photography as per the bid of \$40,000, by D. Sosik.

2nd: H. White

Vote: All in favor.

Budget/Town Meeting Warrants

12201-51300 – Fire Department Salaries/Wages

At the last meeting, the Fire Chief made an appeal to increase his Secretary's hours. J. Malloy submitted to the Board a cost analysis for wages/benefits which shows the cost increase for going from 20 hours/week to 30 and 40 hours/week (copy on file).

C. Blanchard noted that the Personnel Committee had expressed concern that there was not proper utilization of the existing staff, and that different alternatives should be considered instead of adding more hours to the Secretary's position. It was the consensus of the Board that there be no change in the Secretary's hours.

13002-53200 – Tantasqua

The public hearing for Tantasqua was held on March 9th; the School Committee voted on the FY06 assessment at \$4,241,360, which is a \$556,493 or 15.10% increase. For FY06, Sturbridge will be assessed \$778,463 more under the current assessment practices of the district than under the regional agreement. J. Malloy submitted to the Board the assessment letter and a spreadsheet showing the difference between the two assessment methods (copy on file).

It was the consensus of the Board to wait for Attorney Pat Costello's input, and hold action until Town Meeting.

13002-53210 – Tantasqua Transportation Assessment -- \$12,071

MOTION: To approve the Tantasqua Transportation Assessment at \$12,071, by A. Wilson.

2nd: D. Sosik

Vote: All in favor.

13002-53215 – Tantasqua Debt Assessment

MOTION: To reconsider the Tantasqua Debt Assessment at the new figure of \$1,029,902, by A. Wilson.

2nd: D. Sosik

Vote: All in favor.

Don Mapplebeck, Board of Assessors

D. Mapplebeck said that the cyclical revaluation needs to be done for 2006. A. Wilson said that he was not sure about the state's position. D. Mapplebeck said that it should be done in 2006 for real property, and in 2008 for all personal property.

Town Meeting

Article #7 – Tantasqua Study Committee It was the consensus of the Board that a recommendation should be made at Town Meeting.

Article #9 – Substitute Motions

MOTION: To amend the General Bylaws, Chapter One, Town Government by adding Section 1.06 (b) "That all substitute Motions be submitted in writing to the Town Moderator," by D. Sosik.

2nd: A. Wilson

Vote: D. Sosik in favor; three opposed.

MOTION: That the Board recommend no action on Article #9, by C. Blanchard.

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2nd: A. Wilson

Vote: Three in favor; D. Sosik opposed.

Article #10 – Uplands Bylaw

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action pending input from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission.

Article #13 – OSV Re-zoning

The Planning Board has not issued its recommendation, which will require the Board to maintain its position that the Selectmen's recommendation will be provided at Town Meeting.

Article #14 – Elementary School Design

The Board had asked J. Malloy to develop a debt service and tax impact analysis of the various proposals for replacing the elementary school. J. Malloy submitted to the Board several spreadsheets (copies on file) for Options A through E as presented by the School Building Feasibility Committee. He also sent a copy to Angela Cheng-Cimini.

Article #18 – CPC Affordable Housing

The CPC submitted a proposal to the Board and requested Town Counsel to review it for legal issues. Selectmen's recommendation will be provided at Town Meeting. C. Blanchard suggested that Town Counsel make sure that it complies with the CPA's intent of creating affordable housing.

Article #24 – Capital Planning Committee

MOTION: To recommend approval of the CPC Article #24, by D. Sosik.

2nd: C. Blanchard

Vote: All in favor.

Article #56 – Burgess School HVAC

J. Malloy asked Deb Boyd, Business Manager to let him know whether this will be necessary as per her comments at the Budget Hearing. J. Malloy said that the Board should be able to take action on this at the next meeting.

Old Business

D. Sosik noted that the electrical pole at Arnold Road and Rt. 20 was moved in order to widen Arnold Road. J. Malloy said that Tom Moss had asked him to contact Mass. Highway to have the Mass. Highway permit to widen Arnold Road extended.

A. Wilson said that Charter Communications has indicated that subscribers should contact them directly at charter.com regarding senior discounts.

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A.Wilson reminded everyone that the Annual Town Meeting will be held on Monday, April 25th at 7:00 p.m. at Tantasqua Regional High School.

H. White asked about construction at 548 Main Street.

New Business

It was the consensus of the Board to not meet on April 11th, Town Election day.

D. Sosik asked whether the Town's street sweeper could be used to sweep sand at Burgess Elementary School. J. Malloy said that he would look into it.

A.Wilson noted that J. Malloy had made an analysis of residential, commercial and industrial land use, valuations and split tax rate (copy on file).

Ask the Selectmen

C. Blanchard took a call from Henry Franz, who asked about the Town's policy regarding clearing sidewalks on private property. J. Malloy said that he would talk to G. Morse about it.

MOTION: To convene in executive session under MGL Chapter 39, §23B, Paragraph #3: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, not to reconvene in open session, by D. Sosik.

2nd: H. White

Roll call vote: All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date