

May 3, 2010

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
MAY 3, 2010**

Present: Ted Goodwin, Chairman
Thomas Creamer
Mary Blanchard
Scott Garieri
Mary Dowling
Shaun Suhoski, 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 work session minutes of April 13, 2010 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: T. Creamer

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of April 20, 2010 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: T. Creamer

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling abstained.

MOTION: To approve the executive session minutes of April 20, 2010, to remain confidential, by T. Creamer.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: Three in favor; M. Dowling and M. Blanchard abstained.

Casino Discussion

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a letter to Senator Brewer regarding Gaming Legislation House Bill #4591 for the Board's signature. He noted that there is a vacancy on the Casino Task Force. T. Creamer thanked S. Suhoski for his well thought out and objective letter.

M. Blanchard said that the letter encompassed all of the concerns raised by the Board during the last discussion. M. Dowling said that there were several factors as to why the Board does not approve of the House Bill, including the failure to conduct a cost analysis and failure to hold a public hearing on the matter and obtain public input.

MOTION: That the Board formally vote to oppose House Bill #4591 and to forward the correspondence dated May 3, 2010 drafted by

May 3, 2010

the Town Administrator on behalf of the Selectmen, and incorporate the amendment made by M. Dowling, by T. Creamer.

2nd: M. Blanchard

Vote: All in favor.

T. Goodwin volunteered to serve on the Casino Task Force. T. Creamer expressed his willingness to serve also.

MOTION: To designate Ted Goodwin as the Board's representative to the Western Mass. Casino Task Force; if he cannot attend a meeting, an alternate designee will attend, appointed by him, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: T. Creamer

Vote: All in favor.

Town Administrator's Update

Temporary DPW Employee (Seasonal):

MOTION: To ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of Michael Riel of Sturbridge, a seasonal maintenance worker at the Dept. of Public Works, at the rate of \$10.25/hour for 40 hours per week, effective May 17, 2010, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

Historical Commission Reappointment:

MOTION: To ratify the Town Administrator's reappointment of Joseph A. Ouellette to the Sturbridge Historical Commission, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: T. Creamer

Vote: All in favor.

Route 131 Reconstruction:

S. Suhoski informed the Board that on April 26th he had met with the DPW Director, Police Chief, project director and resident engineer from MassDOT, as well as the project superintendent from Amorello to discuss the phasing of work and local concerns relative to the road work. He said that Amorello plans to initiate and complete milling and base course pavement beginning at Rt. 20 and working southerly towards Southbridge. It is expected that milling and base course paving from Rt. 20 through the traffic lights at Sturbridge Plaza will be completed this season with the balance of work to the Southbridge town line completed in the next construction season.

May 3, 2010

The project also includes drainage upgrades which will proceed southerly in a continuous manner throughout the project, as well as the installation of a sidewalk with a six-foot width to promote pedestrian safety.

At the request of the town and local business community, the digital signboards will be modified to delete reference to seeking alternate routes. Further, the contractor will advise property owners in advance of any work that would temporarily block access to their property.

The state and contractor agreed to quarterly progress meetings so that information can be provided on the Town's website as the work progresses. Greg Morse has worked with the state's resident engineer in the past and reports a good communication and working relationship. The pavement milling is expected to begin within the new few weeks, and the signboards will advise of particular dates.

S. Suhoski noted that the meeting was very productive, and the Town will greatly benefit when the new infrastructure is complete. He said that businesses have raised concerns about the signboards, which indicated that alternate routes were necessary. Chief Ford has posted notices that Route 131 is currently open. Greg Morse, DPW Director, will be the primary contact for information regarding the project. S. Suhoski said that he would add updates regarding the project on the Town's website. T. Creamer said that a few of the businesses had commended the work that S. Suhoski, Greg Morse and Chief Ford had done on this matter. S. Garieri said that he had a great response with emails from people who are interested in receiving updates on the project.

Southbridge Landfill – Provisional Permit Approved:

S. Suhoski informed the Board that Mass DEP approved a Provisional Permit for the expansion of the Southbridge landfill by Casella. The documentation provides for a 21-day public comment period. He forwarded electronic copies of the Mass DEP notice to the staff for the Board of Health, Conservation Commission and Planning Board for review and comment. He said that many questions remain concerning this project, and he expects to have a comment letter prepared for the May 10th work session in order to meet the deadline.

S. Suhoski noted that there is a separate citizens' lawsuit regarding concerns with the potential for leachate, proximity to the airport, impact on the bird population and odors. He requested feedback from the Board. T. Creamer asked whether the Board would be comfortable directing the Town Administrator to address and review the citizens' concerns, and to discuss the matter with the Health Agent and draft a response from the Town that the Board could support. It was the consensus of the Board to direct the Town Administrator to draft an appropriate response for the Board's review.

May 3, 2010

M. Dowling informed the Board that she is one member of the citizens' lawsuit, and asked whether it would be considered a conflict of interest. T. Goodwin disclosed that he is also in the same situation as M. Dowling. S. Suhoski suggested consulting the Ethics Commission, not necessarily Town Counsel. T. Creamer said that Town Counsel participated in the original agreement between the Town of Sturbridge and the Town of Southbridge, so special counsel should be consulted, or state Ethics.

Miscellaneous:

S. Suhoski informed the Board that Conservation Commissioner Edward Goodwin received a Certificate of Achievement for completing the "Fundamentals for Conservation Commissioners" training program offered by the Mass. Association of Conservation Commissions. M. Blanchard suggested sending him a congratulatory letter. The Board agreed.

S. Suhoski said that whereas May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month, Trish McCLeary, a local resident and founder of the "Ribbons Across America" effort, has adorned the Town Common with lime green ribbons to bring awareness of Chronic Lyme Disease and those who have lost their battle with the tick-borne disease. The ribbons will remain up until May 28.

S. Suhoski listed various meetings he attended over the past few weeks.

Correspondence:

S. Garieri noted the response from Mass DOT regarding the Registry of Motor Vehicles' site. S. Suhoski said that it was a cordial response, and they would like to find rent free space. S. Garieri said that he had thought that Southbridge offered them a space at their senior center. T. Creamer said that he was supportive of Southbridge's efforts to return the Registry to their town. T. Goodwin agreed with T. Creamer, and noted that the Registry's present location is inconvenient. He said that it should be in the tri-community, preferably in Southbridge. M. Dowling said that she would support returning the Registry to Southbridge.

T. Creamer expressed his appreciation of the concise and detailed letter sent by S. Suhoski regarding 484 Main Street.

Old Business

M. Blanchard announced that the Board had been invited to the Cultural Council reception last week, at which time awards were distributed.

May 3, 2010

T. Goodwin thanked Chief Ford for sending an officer to the Lake Advisory Committee meeting to answer questions from the participants.

New Business

M. Dowling noted that there is a lot of leftover equipment and machine parts creating an eyesore on the way to the athletic fields, DPW and dog pound. She suggested that it be moved so that it is not visible. S. Suhoski said that he would talk to Greg Morse, DPW Director, about it.

T. Creamer said that last year the Board had not taken the time to review the Finance Committee report. He said that the Finance Committee would like to meet with the Board of Selectmen to discuss recommendations. He suggested doing it during a work session. It was the consensus of the Board to agree to that. M. Dowling, speaking as a former member of the Finance Committee, suggested having a joint meeting between the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen in late summer or early fall. She said that they could explain their position on the articles.

T. Creamer announced that the Recreation Committee, Merchants of Sturbridge and REAS Foundation are sponsoring the Summer Feast and Fire event at Turner's Field on July 3rd.

M. Blanchard said that the Board had not decided upon goals for the Town Administrator last year, but now that the Town has a permanent Town Administrator, the Selectmen should submit their suggestions for goals to T. Goodwin.

M. Blanchard said that now that the Town Meeting has been changed to June, the Board needs to look at when the warrant articles need to be done. She suggested that it be done at a Special Town Meeting in the fall.

T. Goodwin said that he had received a complaint from a resident about his driveway being blocked by participants at events at the Town Common. He said that he would forward the complaint to Chief Ford and S. Suhoski.

T. Goodwin suggested creating a google calendar to update the Town calendar to allow people to add their meeting dates. T. Creamer said that they could sync their own personal calendar with the Town calendar, and noted that it is simple technology and is free. T. Goodwin suggested consulting Virtual Town Hall.

Citizens' Forum

No one appeared.

May 3, 2010

MOTION: To convene in executive session under MGL Chapter 39, §23B, Paragraph #3: To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining; not to reconvene in open session, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: T. Creamer

Roll call vote: M. Dowling in favor; T. Creamer in favor; T. Goodwin in favor; S. Garieri in favor; M. Blanchard in favor.

The Board convened in executive session at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date