

October 18, 2010

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES  
OCTOBER 18, 2010**

Present: Thomas Creamer, Chairman  
Mary Dowling  
Mary Blanchard  
Scott Garieri  
Shaun Suhoski, Town Administrator

Ted Goodwin was absent.

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 July 12, 2010 as amended, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**MOTION: To approve the minutes of August 30, 2010 as submitted, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**Cedar Street Grille – New Liquor License**

S. Suhoski read the legal ad into the record. Dan Gonya and Mike Lyons of Table 3 Restaurant Group appeared before the Board. S. Suhoski said that he had reviewed the application, and it was in order.

**MOTION: To close the public hearing, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**MOTION: That the Board approve a new liquor license for Table 3 Restaurant Group II, LLC d/b/a Cedar Street Grille as outlined in their application dated September 27, 2010, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**Town Administrator's Update**

**DPW – Appointment of Senior Equipment Operator:**

**MOTION:** To ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of Brian L. McRoy to the position of Senior Equipment Operator in the Dept. of Public Works, by M. Blanchard.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** S. Garieri

**Vote:** All in favor.

T. Creamer announced that he and a reporter were recording the meeting.

**Plowing and Sanding Bids:**

**MOTION:** That the Board of Selectmen accept the bids outlined in the DPW Director's October 15, 2010 memorandum; namely, to approve all "Column 1" operators for snow plowing and sanding operations, and to approve all "Column 2" operators to be utilized as needed in the event that an insufficient amount of Column 1 operators are able to respond, by M. Blanchard.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** S. Garieri

**Vote:** All in favor.

**Cremation Plot Pricing Recommendation:**

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board an October 8, 2010 memorandum from the DPW Director requested that the Board establish pricing as \$250 - \$300 for a single 3' X 3' plot for cremated remains.

M. Blanchard asked how the pricing compared to that of other communities. S. Suhoski said that a survey of other towns had not been done; it was based upon knowledge, experience and what seemed right. It was the consensus of the Board to conduct a survey of other communities, and to hold action pending review of the survey.

T. Creamer requested that the Board be provided with a fee schedule for traditional plots. S. Suhoski said that he would obtain more information for the next meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Mass. Municipal Association Legislative Update / Question 3 Impact**

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board copies of material from the MMA update. He said that according to Senate Ways & Means Vice-Chair Stephen Brewer, the Commonwealth continues to face a potential \$2 billion gap in FY12. This could equate to cuts in both Chapter 70 and UGGA local aid accounts of 10 percent unless state revenues continue their recent upward trend.

S. Suhoski noted that more damaging is the potential impact of referendum Question #3, which seeks immediate roll-back of sales tax to 3%, which would create an additional \$2.5 billion budget gap. The MMA has estimated the impact of Question #3 on all municipalities and school districts. If this question passes, the estimated impact on Sturbridge will be:

- Loss of \$906,083 to Tantasqua Regional School District
- Loss of \$271,830 to Sturbridge school aid
- Loss of \$74,729 to Sturbridge general local aid

He noted that the Town and school district would face drastic service reductions if faced with a \$1.25 million cut in state aid. As leaders of the community, the Board and Town Administrator need to educate the public about this very real threat.

M. Dowling suggested that the Board vote on it at the next meeting. She felt that it would hurt municipalities if it passes. M. Blanchard agreed that it would have a drastic impact on all communities, and urged everyone to vote “no” on Question #3. T. Creamer agreed with M. Dowling and M. Blanchard, and said that if it passed, there would be consequences that will impact the Town in a negative way, and the public should be informed of that. S. Garieri noted that Sturbridge borders Connecticut, where the sales tax is lower. He said that lowering the sales tax would allow businesses in this area need to be able to compete with the businesses in Connecticut. T. Creamer pointed out that the Town has worked to improve the business climate by transitioning to a single tax rate, which had reduced the burden on businesses, but simultaneously shifting a larger burden to residents. He stated that he wasn’t convinced that a lower sales tax would benefit the community enough to withstand a projected \$1.5 million dollar reduction in state aid, which may result in service reductions and possible job cuts. He reminded S. Garieri that he could choose to abstain from voting if he was unsure of what to do. S. Garieri noted that the tax free holiday brings a spike in business.

**MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen recommend that the citizens of Sturbridge vote “no” on Question #3 because there would be a drastic financial impact on the Town if it passes, by M. Blanchard.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dowling**

**Vote: Three in favor; S. Garieri abstained.**

### **Committee Appointments**

**MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the Town Administrator’s appointments of Chris Wilson to the Design Review Committee to complete the unexpired term of Aniko**

**Fata (2013); and Joe Brindisi to the Cable Advisory Committee for an indefinite term, to replace Alan Jones, by M. Blanchard.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**

**Vote: All in favor.**

S. Suhoski informed the Board that the new Charter of the Trails Committee allows up to five non-voting associate members to be appointed by the Committee "with the concurrence of the Town Administrator." He said that there are currently four interested applicants (Tom Chamberland, Pam Hoy, Fritz Reeve and Leslie Wong). He noted that Ms. Wong is already employed by the Town as an Administrative Assistant working on trail issues, and as such will serve as an ex officio member of the group, and liaison to the Town Administrator.

T. Creamer did not recall the language in the Trails Committee Charter regarding five associate members being appointed by the Trails Committee. He requested that the Town Administrator provide the Board with the official language. He noted that there has never been a committee that appointed its own associate members.

**MOTION: That the Board ratify the appointments to the Trails Committee as presented by the Town Administrator: Thomas Chamberland, Pam Hoy and Fritz Reeve as Associate Members; and Leslie Wong as an ex officio member, by M. Blanchard.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**

**Vote: All in favor.**

### **Spaho Corp. Land Donation Update**

M. Blanchard recused herself from the Board at 7:20 p.m., as she is an abutter to one of the properties.

S. Suhoski informed the Board that Water Regep of the Spaho Corporation has offered three parcels of land to the Town as required under a 2007 subdivision approval:

221 Main Street (0.054 acres)

5 Regep Lane (0.59 acres)

8 Regep Lane (13.5 acres)

S. Suhoski said that the Conservation Commission has expressed interest in holding title to said parcels and will take up the matter at their meeting later in the week. The Board was asked to approve the action of the Conservation Commission. S. Suhoski noted that the Town Planner had pointed out that these open space and drainage parcels are required by the March 27, 2007 subdivision

approval, and that they should not be accepted until the subdivision is complete and approved by the Planning Board and DPW Director. He said that the property owner is desirous of completing the transfer prior to the end of November, which is a fiscal year for corporate operations. S. Suhoski requested a listing of outstanding subdivision items from the Town Planner and DPW Director. Once the Conservation Commission expresses its official position, this item can be brought forward at the next regular Board of Selectmen meeting, at which time the Board will also know the status of the subdivision close-out.

It was the consensus of the Board to take it up at the November 1, 2010 meeting. T. Creamer said that it was unusual for the Town to accept land associated with a subdivision that hadn't yet been accepted by the Planning Board or at Town Meeting. He said that perhaps it could be approved conditional upon acceptance by the Planning Board and Town Meeting, if such was acceptable to the Planning Board. He requested that the Town Administrator provide the Board with a copy of the surety bond, and to get a recommendation from the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. S. Suhoski noted that the Conservation Commission had discussed it, but had not taken a formal vote.

### **Police Department Reorganization**

M. Blanchard recused herself from the Board and left the table, as her son is a member of the Police Department.

Police Chief Thomas Ford appeared before the Board. S. Suhoski said that he and Chief Ford had discussed it, and the Chief had brought forward good ideas to make the Police Department more efficient, and developed an administrative reorganization plan over the past several months.

Chief Ford reviewed his reorganization with the Board. He proposed the creation of an additional Lieutenant's position, which would eliminate one sergeant position and increase the active patrol force by the equivalent of 1.8 Full Time Equivalent (FTE). He noted that there will also be cost savings through the reduction of overtime and contractual benefits. He reviewed the following points:

- Current Lieutenant FY11 salary: \$70,010
- Recommended starting salary for both new Lieutenants: \$68,500
- Current Sergeant salary: \$62,911
- Average contractual benefits paid to Sergeants per year: \$14,157
- Total Sergeant salary with paid benefits: \$77,068

Chief Ford said that the additional benefit of having a non-union Lieutenant position is lieu of a Sergeant is the acquisition of an additional 17 days of work that would have been days off for a Sergeant currently on the 4&2 schedule. The value of this acquisition is \$4,098. He said that the total cost savings between hiring a new Lieutenant and dissolving the current Sergeant position is \$12,665

(\$62,911 Sergeant salary) + \$14,257 (overtime and union benefits) + 4,098 (17 days gained from the 4&2 schedule) = 81.166 – 68,500 = 12,665).

Chief Ford said that the restructuring would create an Operations Lieutenant and an Administrative Lieutenant. Sergeants would be relieved of all of their administrative duties and return to their primary function as patrol supervisors and their patrol time would be increased accordingly by the percentage reduction of their respective administrative duties. He noted that the figures will increase by 1% when the Police Department becomes re-accredited.

S. Suhoski said that the reorganization of the Police Department is an inherent management right, and Chief Ford has the authority to propose this, and the Board to vote on it; even so, unions can challenge any change to the work environment. He noted that their input had been sought.

**MOTION: To approve the recommendation of the Police Chief and Town Administrator to restructure the Police Department in such a way to create a new Lieutenant position and dissolve one Sergeant position, by M. Dowling.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**

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

M. Blanchard rejoined the Board at 7:55 p.m.

### **Town Administrator Goals and Objectives**

A revised list of Goals and Objectives for the Town Administrator was reviewed by the Board. T. Creamer said that he would send an updated list to the Board and to S. Suhoski, omitting the shaded areas that were up for reconfiguration.

### **Correspondence**

T. Creamer noted that CMRPC has requested that the Board appoint a representative from Sturbridge to attend their meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup> to vote on reorganization. T. Creamer volunteered to serve as the representative from Sturbridge.

### **Old Business**

S. Garieri asked about the status of maintenance of the sidewalks. T. Creamer suggested that the Board discuss it at the November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. S. Garieri suggested that G. Morse be present at that meeting. S. Suhoski suggested that G. Morse also present his monthly report to the Board at that time.

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M. Blanchard asked about the status of the full report from Tighe & Bond on Route 15. S. Suhoski said that he had not received it yet; Dave Prickett of Tighe & Bond had promised to provide it by October 20<sup>th</sup>.

M. Blanchard said that she was happy to see that the Personnel Committee was meeting again.

T. Creamer asked about the status of applications for the Charter Review Committee. S. Suhoski said that he had received five applications to serve on that committee so far.

T. Creamer asked about the status of staff training on the new Fire Department vehicles. S. Suhoski said that most of the full-time employees have been trained, and most of the call firefighters have been trained. Chief Senecal has been working on it. He noted that one of the trucks had to go back to the dealer to address some items. T. Creamer requested a copy of the training list, including numbers and names.

T. Creamer noted that broadcasts of meetings have been cut off before the end of the meetings. S. Suhoski said that sometimes multiple DVDs are required to burn an entire meeting. He said that the new audio-visual equipment has arrived at Town Hall and is in the process of being installed. He noted that once the new equipment is up and running, there will be live broadcasts of meetings, and repeated broadcast problems will be solved.

M. Blanchard said that she had stopped in at Town Hall over the weekend, and the temperature inside the building was like a sauna. She asked whether there was a problem with the programming of the heating system. S. Suhoski said that staff will receive training on the HVAC system and how to program the heat down manually in their individual offices when they leave for the day.

M. Blanchard announced that the Town Hall Open House will be held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

M. Dowling reminded everyone that when they pay their taxes, to please make a contribution (if they are able) on the green card to help to defray the real estate taxes for low income, elderly and disabled people.

T. Creamer said that he had received phone calls expressing concern about seams and what appeared to be wires protruding from seams on the newly paved area of Route 20. He requested a consensus from the Board and it was agreed that the Town Administrator would convey these concerns to the state. He noted that the paving on Route 131 has been moving along well and is remarkably better, even with only a binder coat.

### **Citizens Forum**

Carol Childress asked whether it was possible to post the video broadcasts of meetings on the Town's website, which had previously been done. Judy Knowles explained that it is not possible to post videos of meetings using the camcorder because it burns DVDs, and the Virtual Town Hall system only takes CD Rom format. S. Suhoski noted that the Town has been underutilizing Virtual Town Hall in the interest of cost savings. He said that the new audio visual equipment is in the process of being installed, and when that is operational the video broadcast issues should be resolved.

**Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION: To approve the minutes of July 19, 2010 as amended, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dowling**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

M. Blanchard commented that the minutes have become transcripts of the meetings, with a lot of verbatim dialogue. T. Creamer said that it is important to have an accurate historical record of meetings.

**MOTION: To approve the executive session minutes of July 19, 2010, to remain confidential, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**MOTION: To approve the minutes of August 2, 2010 as amended, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**MOTION: To approve the work session minutes of September 13, 2010 as amended, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**  
**Vote: Three in favor; T. Creamer abstained, as he was not present for the entire meeting.**

**MOTION: To approve the executive session minutes of October 4, 2010, to remain confidential, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**MOTION: To approve the minutes of October 4, 2010 as amended, by M. Blanchard.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Garieri**  
**Vote: All in favor.**



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**MOTION:** To adjourn, by M. Blanchard.  
**2<sup>nd</sup>:** S. Garieri  
**Vote:** All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

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BOS Clerk                      Date