

November 15, 2010

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 15, 2010**

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

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

T. Creamer announced that he and a member of the press were recording the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of August 16, 2010 as amended, by M. Dowling.

2nd: T. Goodwin

Vote: Three in favor; S. Garieri and M. Blanchard abstained.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of October 18, 2010 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: Four in favor; T. Goodwin abstained.

Harriett Lebow – Habitat for Humanity

Harriett Lebow, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Worcester appeared before the Board to discuss the grant agreement. She said that they had conducted several organizational meetings, set up the construction committee, family selection and fund raising committees. She said that on the construction site, they have begun the project according to the Conservation Commission requirements. They have been soliciting bids for site work, to be done in the spring. Regarding family selection, they will go out to the community soliciting interest in qualified home buyers for the selection process, to take place early next year. She noted that some towns waive fees for building permits for Habitat for Humanity projects, and requested that the Board consider that. She said that they will apply for the building permit within the next week or so.

M. Blanchard said that she would like to see the project fees. T. Creamer recommended some additional conversations with the Town Administrator, who would work with the Building Inspector regarding fees. He requested that a

schedule of fees be sent to the Board of Selectmen, and any fees should be held until the Board makes a final determination.

H. Lebow said that the grant agreement would allow Habitat for Humanity to draw down up to the \$30,000 for pre-development and site work expenses. She noted that communities have been generous about donating goods and services, from site work to kitchen cabinets.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the grant agreement between the Town of Sturbridge and Habitat for Humanity dated November 15, 2010, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: T. Goodwin

Vote: All in favor.

Department Head Monthly Reports

Police Chief Thomas Ford reviewed his report with the Board. He said that the Sturbridge Police Department had received \$2,500 in Citizen Corps grant funds, which will be used for equipment.

Chief Ford said that Sgt. Mercier will meet with the Charlton Police Dept. and Fire Dept. regarding CERT classes.

Chief Ford said that the Police Dept. is in the final phases of the traffic enforcement and safety initiative on Fiske Hill Road. There were six patrols on the road, and they stopped about 40 cars to alert residents and all parties utilizing the road regarding traffic concerns. He noted that each shift was required to conduct one full hour on Fiske Hill Road, using mandatory performance standards for stops.

S. Garieri asked about the status of commercial motor vehicle enforcement. Chief Ford said that it has been difficult to accomplish because of staff shortages. He said that Officer Dessert could not be taken off of other patrols to cover the commercial motor vehicle patrol.

M. Dowling noted that on the arrest status report, all of the cases are open. She asked what is required to close a case. Chief Ford said that arrest cases stay open until they go to court.

T. Creamer read a letter from a Sturbridge couple who expressed their gratitude to Officer Dessert for the way that he handled a situation involving their daughter and her friend, who had crossed Route 20 in front of Dunkin Donuts at night wearing dark clothing. Officer Dessert stopped and talked to them about the risk they had taken, and the safer use of the lighted crosswalk by the Stageloft Theater. He made his point with a good balance of compassion and authority. Chief Ford thanked T. Creamer for recognizing Officer Dessert's professionalism.

Fire Chief Leonard Senecal reviewed his report with the Board. M. Blanchard asked about the status of Fire Dept. personnel training on the new vehicles. Chief Senecal said that only a few of his staff have not been trained, but they are not the ones driving the vehicles. S. Suhoski said that the Chief had put together a spreadsheet of full-time employees, and with the exception of one, all have been trained. Chief Senecal said that he would submit an updated spreadsheet to S. Suhoski. He noted that one of the trucks is being repaired. T. Creamer requested that Chief Senecal submit a list and spreadsheet, designating who has been certified on the vehicles.

M. Blanchard congratulated the Fire Department on the two grants it had received in the amounts of \$2,000 and \$1,600.

T. Creamer read a letter from the Southbridge Fire Chief Richard Ciesla Jr. dated October 19, 2010 thanking Chief Senecal and his firefighters for their assistance with a structure fire in Southbridge on October 17th.

Chief Senecal said that he had advertised for a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic last month, resulting in 12 applicants. Chief Senecal, Captain Marinelli and S. Suhoski interviewed the candidates, and they selected Robert A. Johnson Jr. of Sturbridge. M. Blanchard said that the Board of Selectmen should be provided with a copy of the resume, when a candidate is brought before the Board. T. Creamer agreed that the Board should be notified well in advance of a recommended appointment, so that questions relative to same could be addressed prior to a prospective appointee appearing before the Board for appointment.

MOTION: That the Board approve the Town Administrator's appointment of Robert A. Johnson, Jr. of Sturbridge to the position of full-time Firefighter/Paramedic in the Fire Department, effective on November 16, 2010, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: T. Goodwin

Vote: All in favor.

David Lindberg, Building Inspector, reviewed his report with the Board. He said that there will be an informational meeting regarding the Town's sign bylaw on Wednesday, November 17th at Town Hall, and invited the Board to attend. He noted that beginning on January 1, 2011 he will be more forceful in enforcing the sign bylaw.

D. Lindberg said that regarding the proposed changes to the electrical fees, he had conducted a survey of 10-12 towns, and discovered that Sturbridge is within the average range, except for the fee for new homes. M. Dowling said that she would like to see the survey data on the towns. T. Creamer asked where the collected fees go. D. Lindberg said that 86% goes to the inspector, and the rest

to the general fund. T. Creamer suggested that D. Lindberg send the survey data to the Board for review, then the Board could vote on the fees during the first meeting in December.

S. Garieri noted that D. Lindberg meets regularly with the Board, but the other inspectors are not required to do so. D. Lindberg said that the Plumbing Inspector and Electrical Inspector work out of his office. He suggested that they not be required to meet with the Board, but to simply include their information in the Building Inspector's report.

M. Blanchard requested a total on the number of new constructions that are on septic and sewer. D. Lindberg said that he is not at a point where he can generate that information in a report, but is working on it. T. Creamer suggested that the Town invest in a better software program to be able to produce that information in reports.

M. Dowling noted that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is adopting a new building code. D. Lindberg said that there will be a lot of subtle changes, some of which is already in effect; the rest will take effect in February 2011.

M. Dowling asked about the status of Ocean State Job Lot. S. Garieri noted that there had been a real estate transfer for Ocean State, and they will buy a wing of the former Ames building, then they will sublet a section to the tractor supply store. D. Lindberg said that Ocean State will put a new roof on the building.

420 Main Street Group Inc. – Change of Manager on Liquor License

S. Suhoski informed the Board that the 420 Main Street Group Inc. was seeking to change their manager, stock allocation and officers. The applicant filed Form 43 and corrected personal information on the shareholders.

M. Blanchard said that according to Mass. General Law, they would have had to place a legal ad in the newspaper. S. Suhoski said that he had spoken with their attorney, who informed him that this is the initial allocation of their stock; it is not a transfer, which would trigger the necessity of a newspaper ad. M. Blanchard asked whether the manager had been TIPS certified. It was the consensus of the Board to ask the applicant to meet with the Board.

PLAC Appendix A

T. Creamer said that the PLAC was concerned that there wasn't a description of what they wanted to be, so they wrote an appendix to cover that.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen affirm the mission statement paragraph #4, Appendix A, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: T. Goodwin

Vote: All in favor.

Town Hall/Center Office Building Access Update

S. Suhoski initiated a preliminary draft of a variance request. He said that the architect had indicated that he will provide any copies of existing information at no cost; however, any supporting documentation or cost estimates will be at a cost to be determined. He noted that it is a work in progress. T. Creamer noted for the public that everything possible is being done to rectify the situation by the Board.

Charter Review Committee Appointments

M. Dowling commented that all of the 12 applicants were extremely well qualified.

M. Dowling nominated Kirstie Pecci to the Charter Review Committee.

M. Blanchard nominated William Haggerty to the Charter Review Committee.

T. Goodwin nominated Heather Hart to the Charter Review Committee.

S. Garieri nominated Peter Levine to the Charter Review Committee.

T. Creamer nominated John Kittel to the Charter Review Committee.

T. Creamer asked whether there were any further nominations.

M. Blanchard: No

M. Dowling: No

T. Goodwin: No

S. Garieri: No

T. Creamer: No

There being no additional nominations, following parliamentary process, T. Creamer declared that the Charter Review Committee had been formed.

S. Garieri said that the Charter Review Committee would meet with S. Suhoski for his guidance. T. Creamer said that the Town Administrator should be cautious in his dealings with the Committee, as the members of the Charter Review Committee should come up with their own ideas. M. Blanchard noted that the Committee should take suggestions from anyone. T. Creamer said that if recommendations are made to the Charter Review Committee, S. Suhoski should mention them to the Board of Selectmen, but he would prefer that the Committee work on its own. M. Dowling said that the Committee needs to get clear direction from the Board of Selectmen, and it would be advantageous for the Board to agree on the issues to be reviewed. M. Blanchard said that if S. Suhoski has an idea, he should be able to mention it to the Charter Review Committee. She did not believe that the Board of Selectmen should take votes on what they think are priorities. T. Creamer said that if S. Suhoski makes a recommendation, it comes from him as an employee of the Town, not from the

Board of Selectmen. He expressed concern that a suggestion from an official of the Town (Town Administrator) could carry more weight than it should.

T. Creamer suggested inviting the Charter Review Committee to meet with the Board of Selectmen in December. He said that S. Suhoski could meet with the Charter Review Committee to review the Charter with them, discuss the difference between a Committee and a Commission, and to ask them if they could put together a list of questions that the Board of Selectmen could address during the work session on December 13th.

Committee Appointments

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen confirm the Town Administrator's appointment of Michael W. Young to the Zoning Board to fill the unexpired term of Adam Gaudette through 2011, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

T. Creamer explained that this was one of the two appointed positions to the ZBA; if it had been one of the elected positions, the Board of Selectmen and the ZBA would have met jointly on the appointment.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen confirm the Town Administrator's appointment of Carol N. McKinstry to the Cultural Council to fill the unexpired term of Carol Mitchell through 2012, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen confirm the Town Administrator's appointment of Michael D. Stevens to the Cultural Council to fill the unexpired term of Mary Lou Volpe through 2013, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

Senior Municipal Service Appointments

MOTION: To approve the following applications to the Senior Municipal Service Program: (1) Louise Bonnette of Crescent Way to the Board of Health; (2) Susan Foscett of New Boston Road to the Council on Aging; and (3) William Bartolomei of Champeaux Road to the Council on Aging, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

M. Blanchard said that the income level for participants could be too high. T. Creamer suggested that the Board discuss it in December. M. Blanchard asked how much money has been expended, and how many people are participating in the program. T. Creamer asked whether it was necessary to announce the names of participants in the senior service program, or if the Board could simply vote without mentioning the participant's name. He noted that some seniors don't like having their names announced on TV, and that interested individuals could always access the public records regarding appointees, as opposed to publicly identifying seniors. It was the consensus of the Board to agree not to mention participants' names during their votes.

Cedar Street Grille

S. Suhoski noted that the Board had voted to approve a new liquor license for the Cedar Street Grille, but the ABCC had returned the application because there was an existing liquor license on record for that premises, the Cedar Street Restaurant.

MOTION: That the Board rescind the liquor license for the Cedar Street Restaurant, William Nemeroff, Manager, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

Correspondence

S. Suhoski informed the Board that Klaus Hachfeld of the Sturbridge Rotary Club would like to frame a map of Stourbridge, England to display at Town Hall.

MOTION: That the Board accept the gift from the Sturbridge Rotary Club, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: T. Goodwin

Vote: All in favor.

Old Business

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the HVAC system at Town Hall. S. Suhoski said that there were still some issues with the HVAC system which will soon be resolved.

S. Garieri asked whether S. Suhoski had heard back from Mass. Highway regarding the status of Route 20. T. Creamer said that the Town Administrator had sent a letter to Mass. Highway expressing the Board's concerns regarding the quality of work that was done on Route 20. S. Suhoski said that there has been no response yet.

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M. Dowling said that she had attended the East Brimfield Dam celebration, and thanked the Army Corps for their great job.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the sidewalks on Route 131 as to who is responsible for them, since it is still a construction site. S. Suhoski said that he had sent an email to Mass. DOT, but has not received a response yet.

M. Blanchard asked whether instructions would be given regarding how to lock the doors at Town Hall. S. Suhoski said that it would be done soon.

M. Blanchard asked when the live broadcasts of meetings would commence. S. Suhoski said that the audio visual work may be completed by the end of November. He said that training would be provided for the people who will run the cameras.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the vote regarding the Trails Committee's ability to appoint its own associate members. S. Suhoski said that he could not find a specific vote by the Board of Selectmen in the minutes, but it had been discussed during a work session. The language had been revised. He said that he was waiting for the Trails Committee to get the document back to the Board.

M. Blanchard noted that Sgt. Michael Blanchard's resignation was not accepted by the Board.

MOTION: To accept Sgt. Blanchard's resignation with regret, and with well wishes for his future, by T. Goodwin.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

T. Creamer said that the Board had agreed on the Town Administrator's evaluation for six months. He noted that merit increases would be coming up in December. He asked that the Board discuss it at the first December meeting.

New Business

M. Dowling asked about the status of the lights at Shaw's, as they have been much longer than usual. S. Garieri said that the company that regulates the lights has started to install sensors in the road, so the matter is being addressed.

M. Dowling announced that there is a Toys for Tots collection box at Town Hall, where residents can drop off toys.

The Board wished everyone a healthy and happy Thanksgiving.

T. Creamer announced that the Tree Lighting ceremony will take place on Friday, December 3rd at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Common.

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T. Creamer said that Leslie Wong had sent the Board a notice on the tree scavenger hunt at the Heins property and Old Sturbridge Village conservation property. Trees will be decorated on November 18th, and it was the consensus of the Board to pick a tree to decorate on the Heins property.

MOTION: To adjourn, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date