

February 22, 2011

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 22, 2011**

Present: Thomas Creamer, Chairman
Mary Dowling
Mary Blanchard
Scott Garieri
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 was recording the meeting.

Police Officer Appointments

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a memorandum from Chief Ford outlining the process and credentials of two candidates for superior officer promotions within the department. The most recent available resumes of the candidates were included. S. Suhoski was very pleased with the results of the promotional processes and that there were such strong internal candidates. Chief Ford requested that the Board ratify the promotion of Acting Det. Sergeant Mark G. Saloio to the position of Lieutenant, and the promotion of Officer Earl J. Dessert to the permanent position of Sergeant.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of Mark G. Saloio to the non-union position of Lieutenant in the Sturbridge Police Dept. effective February 23, 2011, at a base annual salary of \$68,500, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

S. Suhoski noted that as an existing member of the agency and per past practice, Mr. Saloio will continue to receive the applicable educational incentive (f/k/a Quinn Bill).

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of Earl J. Dessert to the position of Sergeant in the Sturbridge Police Dept. effective February 23, 2011, at the rate of \$27.84 per hour, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 3, 2011 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 18, 2011 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 7, 2011 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To approve the work session minutes of February 14, 2011 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: Three in favor; M. Dowling abstained.

MOTION: To approve the executive session minutes of February 14, 2011, to remain confidential, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: Three in favor; M. Dowling abstained.

FY12 Budget and Town Meeting Schedule

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a memorandum and proposed schedule for budget and Town Meeting warrant development. He noted that the Finance Committee reviewed this schedule on February 17. The annual budget meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 5 beginning at 8:30 a.m. He said that a schedule will be distributed closer to the meeting date by the Finance Director. He said that the budget books will be ready for retrieval by end-of business on Friday.

M. Blanchard asked whether there would be a road program in the budget book this year. S. Suhoski said that he and Greg Morse, DPW Director, had discussed it and determined that the road program will not be included in the budget book. M. Blanchard noted that money had been appropriated at Town Meeting for the road program, along with Chapter 90 funds. T. Creamer asked whether it would be possible to get at least some preliminary information. M. Blanchard said that it had always been very detailed, and asked for expense account numbers. S. Suhoski said that he would meet with G. Morse.

Zoning Bylaw Revision – Referrals to Planning Board

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board correspondence from the Planning Board identifying two proposed zoning bylaw revisions (updated flood zones and parking requirements in Commercial Tourist District). He said that at this point, under MGL c. 40A, sec. 5, the role of the Board of Selectmen is to formally vote to refer these proposals to the Planning Board within 14 days of receipt.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen refer the following proposed zoning bylaw revisions to the Planning Board for hearing and report pursuant to MGL c. 40A, sec. 5: 1) Proposed modifications to Chapter Three Establishment of Districts, Section 3.12 (Flood Plain Boundaries) necessitated by the updating of the flood maps by FEMA; and 2) Proposed modifications to Chapter 20 – General Regulations, Section 20.21 Off Street Parking and Loading Regulations, and Section 20.22 Parking spaces Required, both as further discussed in correspondence dated February 18, 2011 from Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chairman of the Sturbridge Planning Board, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

Senior Municipal Service Program

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a spreadsheet indicating updated participation numbers for the Senior Municipal Service Program. He said that following the four appointments made at the February 14 meeting, the program now has 15 participants. He also submitted for the Board's review and comment proposed revisions to the structure of the SMSP to improve administration. He noted that one area for review was the income qualifications, which should be adjusted upward for inflation. He attached the most recent HUD income limits and suggested that the "Low Income" limit (less than 80 percent of the Sturbridge median) might be worth consideration.

S. Suhoski read the following additions into the record:

- (E) Deadline for Applications – Applications to participate shall be first-come, first-served but must be received no later than March 31 for the next coming fiscal year.
- (I) Abatements are limited to one per household. Where two qualifying persons reside in the same household, the maximum abatement shall be \$750.

S. Garieri said that he had brought it to the attention of the people that in 2010 there was \$6,112 left in the budget that could have been used for this program, but was not used. He noted that in 2011 there is \$4,200 still in the budget that

has not been used or applied for. He thought that it was encouraging that this program is being used more than it had been previously.

M. Blanchard asked whether the overlay account is expended at the end of the fiscal year. S. Suhoski said that it is carried over.

T. Creamer asked whether the Board would be amenable to extend the date to April, which would give the Assessor more time. M. Dowling asked about the rationale of the March 31st date. S. Suhoski said that he had discussed the matter with Bill Mitchell, and March 31st had seemed an appropriate date. M. Dowling asked him to check back with Bill Mitchell and ask why he had arrived at that date.

T. Creamer asked whether it would be better to get more people to use the program at \$500, and not be so concerned about scheduling people back for an additional \$250, or would the Board want to keep the current process. M. Blanchard suggested keeping the current process for the present time, and then revisiting the matter next year.

It was the consensus of the Board to get additional information from Bill Mitchell, Principal Assessor. The Board indicated that it would be comfortable making a decision, without holding a public hearing.

2010 Census – Need for Third Voting Precinct

S. Suhoski said that he had seen the email traffic from Chairman Creamer, and the Town Clerk has also alluded to him about the likely need to add a third voting precinct in the Town due to population growth. He raised this issue to determine whether or how the Town Administrator's office can be of assistance, and whether the Board of Selectmen wished to schedule time at an upcoming meeting or work session to include the Town Clerk and public discussion.

T. Creamer said that he had met with L. Murawski, and by law the Town is mandated to establish a third precinct by vote of the Board of Selectmen. He noted that the Burgess School gym currently used for elections would not be able to accommodate a third precinct. He said that the voting machine used by people with disabilities is a significant cost. L. Murawski had asked him whether the Board would support designating the north gym for all precincts, and she is putting together specifics. He noted that it needs to be done by March of next year. L. Murawski has asked the state to lend the Town some of its resources.

M. Blanchard said that most towns are getting away from holding the polls at schools, and suggested that the Board consider other places other than the school. She noted that in 2012 construction will be going on at Burgess. She said that the Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center has sufficient room and plenty of parking available.

M. Dowling said that she would not be in favor of splitting up the voting areas. M. Blanchard said that the new section at Burgess will contain a gym; the north gym will remain the north gym, and the south gym will be taken down.

T. Creamer asked whether there should be a public hearing regarding the issue of re-precincting. It was the consensus of the Board to hold a public discussion on it, and to take it up at the April work session.

Chapter 90 Submittal

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a memorandum from the DPW Director seeking the Board's execution of the request for state funding for the Rt. 131 sidewalk project.

M. Dowling noted that the Publick House was willing to submit the remainder of the funds, up to \$25,000. M. Blanchard said that she thought that the original vote had been frivolous. She noted that the bill must be paid; the other option is to wait and go to Town Meeting for an appropriation. She said that if Town Meeting rejected it, there would be a problem.

S. Garieri said that from the start he did not support the brick sidewalks, or having the taxpayers pay for it. He added that he did not support the use of Chapter 90 funds to pay for it either.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen execute the Chapter 90 project request as recommended by the DPW Director in the amount of \$145,325.73, by T. Creamer.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: Three in favor; S. Garieri opposed.

Town Hall AAB Variance

S. Suhoski said that there had been no further action on this item since his last report. He said that this matter is now being handled by Atty. Gregg Corbo of Kopelman & Paige. He and Mr. Corbo have corresponded and have each conducted research to document the inclusion of Sturbridge Town Hall on the National and State Registers of Historic Places by virtue of its inclusion in the Town Common Historic District. Mr. Corbo has requested additional detail for the narrative and is exploring the best option.

T. Creamer asked whether any member of the Board would be opposed to a motion supportive of having the front doors of Town Hall open. M. Dowling said that she would not be in favor of opening the front doors without the AAB variance if it violated state law.

T. Creamer noted that Town Hall has been occupied since August 2010, and no one had directed the Town not to open its front doors. He said that there was a certain level of failure to perform on the architect's part, in not making information available to the Board.

M. Dowling said that time had been wasted, in not consulting Town Counsel. She asked whether it would violate any applicable laws if the front door was to be opened as secondary egress. She said that Town Counsel should indicate that to the Board, and whether it is ADA compliant.

T. Creamer said that people have to walk in the street in order to enter Town Hall at its rear entrance, which promotes unsafe pedestrian traffic. S. Garieri pointed out that there are no crosswalks alongside Town Hall either. He suggested getting the Building Inspector's opinion. It was the consensus of the Board to discuss the matter at the March 7th meeting.

MassDEP Grant Forms

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board copies of the award letters and grant documentation from MassDEP to provide technical assistance to the Board of Health to develop a potential Pay As You Throw (PAYT) program in the community.

M. Dowling noted that it does not bind the Town to adopt the PAYT program, it is just a necessary step to getting a grant. T. Creamer said that public hearings will dictate what its costs will be.

MOTION: That the Town Administrator sign the documents for the technical assistance project PAYT grant, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: That the Town Administrator sign the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Municipal Grant, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

Correspondence

M. Blanchard said that regarding the 2/4/11 correspondence from CMRPC, S. Suhoski had mentioned having them help with a block grant for the retirement home. S. Suhoski said that CMRPC had indicated that they would be willing to sponsor the grant writing for that project. M. Blanchard asked what the cost would be. S. Suhoski said that the agreement would be that they would get administrative funds as part of their service to member communities.

T. Creamer said that the memo to the Finance Committee was informational based on the meeting held that night. He said that the February 17th letter from Mr. Curboy asks for the Board's support to rezone his property behind Long Pond. T. Creamer did not think that the Planning Board had taken a vote on it yet. S. Suhoski said that the property is zoned suburban residential. He said that he and Jean Bubon had contacted the petitioner to have him correct that.

Old Business

M. Dowling asked whether the state contractor had provided anything in writing that the Town is not responsible for the partially constructed sidewalks. S. Suhoski said that he had not received anything from them, but would pursue it.

M. Blanchard asked whether there had been any progress on the sidewalk plowing warrant article. S. Suhoski said that he and Greg Morse, DPW Director, have not had time to initiate it yet.

M. Blanchard asked about the availability of the merit pay folder. S. Suhoski said that he had scheduled to meet with department heads to finish performance evaluations. He said that the results will be made available to the Board when they have been completed. T. Creamer suggested that as a matter of practice this information should be reviewed with the employees, and the process completed, prior to giving them their stipends. He suggested that the Board give consideration to make sure that the Town Administrator is aware of the Personnel Policy Handbook and that the process is completely implemented prior to bonuses being issued. He read Section 7.2 of the Personnel Policy Handbook into the record.

MOTION: That Section 7.2 of the Personnel Policy Handbook be adhered to in its fullest prior to conveyance of year end merit bonuses in December 2011, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

Vote: All in favor.

M. Blanchard asked whether a meeting had been scheduled regarding the re-naming of Main Street. S. Suhoski said that David Barnicle has asked that it be scheduled, and it will be done soon.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the breakdown on Chapter 90 funds. S. Suhoski said that there is \$1.5 million, less the allocation that was just approved.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of bridge repairs. S. Suhoski said that G. Morse had mentioned work to be done on Champeaux Road.

T. Creamer said that it had been brought to his attention by a resident that the slate roofs may require annual inspections. He said that it should be inspected

by someone with expertise, and there will be a cost associated with it. S. Suhoski said that it may be necessary to make a change to the maintenance item in the budget after the warranty period.

T. Creamer said that there had been talk about having a part-time facilities manager for the Town Hall and Center Office Building, or to utilize the Tantasqua facilities manager via a joint agreement. He said that maybe it would be better to invest in a part-time facilities manager, rather than wait for things to get really bad, then have to come up with a lot of money to fix it. S. Garieri agreed, and noted that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. M. Blanchard said that the Board had agreed to have S. Suhoski look into it.

T. Creamer asked whether S. Suhoski had had any conversations regarding the clearing of snow from fire hydrants. S. Suhoski said that he had talked to the Fire Chief about it, and he had a productive meeting with his staff.

T. Creamer said that he had sent the Board copies of the draft of the Design Review Committee Handbook. He said that they were conducting a public hearing on it.

New Business

M. Blanchard asked whether S. Suhoski had received the request from the Finance Committee for a clerk. S. Suhoski said that they had approved funding for the recording clerk, and he will post it.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the fire hydrants. S. Suhoski said that there had been one out of order.

M. Blanchard requested a written report on the cost of the wells. S. Suhoski said that he and Greg Morse, DPW Director, had talked about getting an update to the Board. He noted that Well #4 is nearing completion.

M. Blanchard mentioned that Shane Moody, Veolia Water North America, had promised a written report on the pipe situation on Route 20 and Fairgrounds Road. T. Creamer asked whether DPW could provide a written report on how construction is progressing. He suggested getting periodic updates in the form of a short report. S. Suhoski said that they had discussed quarterly updates on projects.

S. Garieri asked why the flag in front of the Center Office Building is at half mast, and why the flag does not have a light illuminating it at night. M. Blanchard said that it looks like the clip that was holding the flag has broken. T. Creamer said that if the flag is not illuminated, it is not being properly flown. He suggested taking the flag down until a light has been installed for it.

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T. Creamer said that there were some historic benches that had been part of the original Town Hall building that had been given away. He asked whether the Board would be amenable to the Town repurchasing the benches at a nominal cost. It was the consensus of the Board that it would be worthwhile to explore it. T. Creamer said that he would put the individual who now has the benches in touch with S. Suhoski.

M. Blanchard said that Klaus Hachfeld of the Rotary Club was looking forward to meeting with the Board regarding the hanging of their map. S. Suhoski said that he would scout out a location for it. M. Blanchard suggested that the Board meet with K. Hachfeld during the last meeting in March.

T. Creamer said that he had received a phone call from the Council on Aging Director regarding the Sturbridge afghan that the Friends of Sturbridge/Fiskdale Seniors want to donate to the Town. He said that Barbara Search will provide the Board with information.

Ask the Selectmen

M. Blanchard said that Don Miller had called to say that he is thrilled with the new audio/visual system, and enjoys watching the meetings. D. Miller said that property owners are responsible for clearing their sidewalks. He asked how each member of the Board responds to emails from constituents. M. Blanchard noted that when she gets an email, she responds as an individual member of the Board of Selectmen. S. Garieri said that he always responds, unless it is a confidential issue. T. Creamer said that he responds to each email that he receives, and makes sure that everyone gets an immediate reply. M. Dowling said that she responds to emails, unless S. Suhoski has responded in a comprehensive way.

T. Creamer noted that one call was not answered.

MOTION: To convene in executive session under MGL Chapter 30A, §21, Paragraph #3: To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation; and Paragraph #6: To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate; not to reconvene in open session, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: S. Garieri

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

The Board convened in executive session at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

February 22, 2011

BOS Clerk

Date