

April 12, 2011

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WORK SESSION MINUTES
APRIL 12, 2011**

Present: Thomas Creamer
Mary Dowling
Mary Blanchard
Angeline Ellison
Priscilla Gimas
Shaun Suhoski, Town Administrator

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

Reorganization of the Board of Selectmen

MOTION: To nominate T. Creamer as Chairman, by M. Dowling.
2nd: P. Gimas
Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To nominate M. Dowling as Vice-Chairman, by P. Gimas.
2nd: M. Blanchard
Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To nominate M. Blanchard as Clerk, by T. Creamer.
2nd: M. Dowling
Vote: All in favor.

Appointment of Police Officer

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of Peter J. Mullin to the position of Police Officer in the Town of Sturbridge, effective April 13, 2011, at a starting rate of \$23.17 per hour, by M. Blanchard.
2nd: M. Dowling
Vote: All in favor.

Charter Review Committee

S. Suhoski informed the Board that the Charter Review Committee had completed its recommendations for the Board's consideration. He noted that the Board has the sole discretion on which items to include for Town Meeting review. He was impressed with the level of effort expended by the Charter Review Committee on their very thorough review of the Town's governing document. He said that the rationale for each decision was clear and concise, and the arguments called for thoughtful consideration.

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William Haggerty, Peter Levine, John Kittel and Heather Hart of the Charter Review Committee appeared before the Board. They indicated that they had found some discrepancies between the Town Charter and Town Bylaws.

S. Suhoski concurred with the majority of recommendations, clarifications and corrections offered by the Charter Review Committee; however, the following items called out for careful review:

Appointment of Finance Committee by Moderator – S. Suhoski did not think this should be changed, and said that he found the Finance Committee to be deeply committed, professional and thorough in their examination of financial matters. He said that the appointment by the Moderator historically and currently serves the community well, and should continue.

Appointing Authority of Town Administrator – S. Suhoski suggested that the current system appears to function well. He noted that he has not felt any political pressure to make a particular appointment; and the Board of Selectmen currently has the authority to deny any appointment by any Town Administrator for any reason, so he saw no reason to change the Charter in this respect. He said that the appointment of Town Counsel should remain with the Town Administrator, subject to confirmation by the Board.

Sturbridge Tourist Association – S. Suhoski said that the Board should be prepared with alternate motions at Town Meeting to conform any change to Section 6-1 recommended by the Charter Review Committee to the General Bylaw amendment proposed on the Town Meeting warrant.

It was noted that 6(1)(D) two members of the Zoning Board of Appeals were added.

Town Meeting Warrant and Budget

MOTION: To reopen the Annual Town Meeting warrant, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: Three in favor; A. Ellison and P. Gimas abstained.

S. Suhoski provided a copy of the revised Annual and Special Town Meeting warrants to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. He noted that Town Counsel had updated the language of Articles 10 and 11 (water and sewer) to reflect the use of the reserve fund balances to mitigate the rate increases. He said that several zoning articles are under review.

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a revised index illustrating the respective recommendations of the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee.

Article 30: Composition of Sturbridge Tourist Association (Bylaw Amendment)

MOTION: To place and support Article 30, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: All in favor.

Article 33: Finance Committee Membership (Bylaw Amendment)

MOTION: To place and support Article 33, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: All in favor.

Article 45: Proposed Clarification for Article 44

MOTION: To place Article 45 on the Annual Town Meeting warrant, and place it before the current Article 44, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To close the Annual Town Meeting warrant, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: All in favor.

S. Suhoski requested that the Board support an increase to the Recreation Director's work week of five hours (split: 25 hours Recreation; 15 hours Board of Health) to accommodate the substantial additional workload and expectations of the Recreation Committee and Town Administrator relative to the ongoing recreational fields project proposal and the increase in expected daily duties of the position. His initial thoughts on this increase (which was requested last fall by the Chairman of the Recreation Committee) were to extend the hours if the field proposal advanced. He rethought this logic following the April 4 Board meeting, wherein at least one member suggested that the additional time would be useful even now, while doing the preparation and coordination work for the field proposal.

S. Suhoski said that two other factors had influenced his position. He said that the decision of the Recreation Committee to withdraw the field proposal from the Annual Town Meeting warrant lent credibility to the request for additional hours as the project is further advanced. In addition, the increased estimate for Meals and Occupancy tax revenue helped to alleviate some fiscal concerns.

S. Suhoski said that while he was confident that the Recreation Director will be kept busy at 25 hours per week, he was not able to recommend moving that position to full-time status as requested by the Recreation Committee Chairman. He said that although the department may be busy, a major increase in hours without weighing its priority against other needs (e.g. facilities and maintenance, information technology, additional DPW staff, etc.) or the requests of nearly every department head for more assistance, is not appropriate at this time.

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S. Suhoski noted that the Board of Selectmen had directed him to undertake a staffing review this year (well in advance of the FY13 budget season) to assess the Town's personnel needs. He said that this assessment will then be publicly vetted to ensure the priority needs of the community receive the proper attention. At that time, the needs of the Recreation Department will again be considered in the context of the entire municipal operation.

M. Blanchard objected to the process, and felt that this was not needed.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen increase Line #146 of the FY12 municipal budget by \$5,374 for a new total of \$44,850 to fund an additional five hours per week for the Recreation Director, by M. Dowling.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Three in favor; M. Blanchard and A. Ellison opposed.

MOTION: That the Board vote to accept the number of \$8,800,624 for the Burgess budget, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: All in favor.

Old Business

MOTION: That the performance evaluations be available by May 16th, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: Three in favor; A. Ellison and P. Gimas abstained.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the roads.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the HVAC system for Town Hall and the Center Office Building.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of S. Suhoski's meeting with Arthur Frost.

M. Blanchard said that she had received a resident complaint about the concrete and brick sidewalks.

M. Dowling asked whether Town Counsel had provided input regarding the cost of a variance for Town Hall and the Center Office Building.

New Business

T. Creamer thanked the voters and the democratic process.

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M. Dowling welcomed the new Selectmen, Angeline Ellison and Priscilla Gimas.

M. Blanchard and M. Dowling expressed thanks to Scott Garieri for his years of service on the Board of Selectmen.

M. Blanchard mentioned the Ebenezer Craft.

M. Blanchard mentioned the Habitat for Humanity groundbreaking.

MOTION: To adjourn, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date