

October 17, 2011

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES  
OCTOBER 17, 2011**

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

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

**Joint Meeting with Sturbridge School Committee**

S. Suhoski informed the Board that the members present in joint session will elect an individual to fill the vacancy resulting from the resignation of Karin Rokicki. Both boards were provided with information received from one applicant, Mary M. Bellezza, who has two children enrolled at Burgess Elementary. She has an MBA from Boston College and works as a financial analyst. He noted that under the law, the boards are not limited to candidates that submit credentials per the requested process.

Katherine Alexander, Patricia Barnicle, Megan Panek and Kristin Toomey of the Sturbridge School Committee were present. Candidate Mary Bellezza appeared before the group.

**MOTION: That the joint committees vote to appoint Mary Bellezza to the Sturbridge School Committee, to serve until the next annual Town election in 2012, by K. Alexander.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Barnicle**  
**Vote: Nine in favor. 0 opposed.**

**Mountain Brook Private Road Association**

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a booklet of information from this private road association. He and the DPW Director had a telephone discussion with the spokesperson on Thursday, and the DPW Director and Conservation Agent have made themselves available to assist in accordance with the private road guidance document. He said that the Town has also agreed to meet with the group in person to review their issues of concern.

Raoul Ricard, spokesman for the Mountain Brook Private Road Association, appeared before the Board and 38 residents who were present at the meeting. R. Ricard asked what the Town would do with respect to planning, engineering

and equipment. It was the consensus of the Board to review the information and make a decision at a subsequent meeting, after the DPW Director, Conservation Agent and Town Administrator have met further with residents.

### **Special Town Meeting Article 48 – Carol Childress**

Carol Childress had requested agenda time to discuss this article. In S. Suhoski's opinion, the article as written presents a clear "yes" or "no" question to the voters that attend the November 7 Special Town Meeting. He noted that the language was drafted by Town Counsel further to a vote of the Board to place just such an article.

Carol Childress appeared before the Board along with Attorney Kathleen O'Donnell. C. Childress made an opening statement, reading from notes transcribed from a Board of Selectmen meeting DVD, indicating that the Board's vote was for Article 97 process. Attorney O'Donnell read her credentials and spoke to Article 97 conversion.

M. Dowling read a statement and requested that it be attached to the minutes. She took issue with the fact that insufficient time was given to have the Town's attorney present at the meeting. T. Creamer reminded the Board that residents and proponents have often appeared with their own counsel or Subject Matter Experts specific to provide input on an issue or concern that they have, and such was their right. He also pointed out that any information provided by same was merely a further representation or extension of the individual's personal position and not binding in any way on the Board or the Town, nor should any member view it that way. A very lengthy discussion followed. It was determined that the Board of Selectmen could not re-open the Special Town Meeting warrant as it was posted on October 4, 2011 for the purpose of removing or adding articles.

### **Certified Free Cash**

S. Suhoski said that the Town received word that its Free Cash was certified at \$1,516,595 as of July 1, 2011. He said that the Town is awaiting further breakdown of the certified amount; however, he and the Finance Director believe that a portion is related to hotel/motel and meals tax revenues coming in above projections. In any event, the amount is timely given the need to advance the tornado debris removal costs in advance of FEMA reimbursement.

### **Debris Removal Cost Estimate**

S. Suhoski said that the Town's FEMA monitoring consultant has estimated the costs of debris removal going forward as \$300,000 to \$500,000. He submitted to the Board the summary email from O'Brien. Based upon those observations, discussion with the DPW Director, Conservation Agent and Tree Warden, and a

conservative approach he recommended that Article 50 of the STM Warrant include spending authorization up to \$415,000 based upon the following:

Route 15 and Route 20 Stockpiles (<15,000 yd3 @ 20/yd3):	\$300,000
Town Barn Fields Access Road / ROW (3,000yd3+/- @ 31/yd3):	\$ 93,000
Town Barn Access Hazard Trees (12 @ 585 = 7,020):	\$ 7,000
Town ROW Stump Inventory / Debris (SAY):	\$ 15,000

**Total Authorization Sought from Free Cash: \$415,000**

**MOTION:** That the Board of Selectmen recommend that the Finance Committee approve the following as the main motion for Article 50 at the November 7, 2011 Special Town Meeting: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of **FOUR HUNDRED FIFTEEN THOUSAND AND 00/100 (\$415,000) DOLLARS** to be used for expenses related to the June 1, 2011 tornado, or take any action in relation thereto, by M. Blanchard.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** P. Gimas  
**Vote:** All in favor.

**MOTION:** That the Board of Selectmen support Article 50, by M. Blanchard.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** P. Gimas  
**Vote:** All in favor.

S. Suhoski said that the summary box could and should explain that these funds are needed to pay for the above-referenced debris removal and that the Town has retained a professional monitoring consultant to ensure maximum Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursement of 75 percent of eligible costs.

### **Special Town Meeting Warrant**

**Article 54: General Bylaw Amendment – Day of Annual Town Meeting**

**MOTION:** That the Board support Article 54, by A. Ellison.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** P. Gimas  
**Vote:** Three in favor; M. Blanchard and M. Dowling opposed.

**Article 55: General Bylaw Amendment – Time of Annual Town Meeting**

**MOTION:** That the Board support Article 55, by A. Ellison.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** P. Gimas  
**Vote:** Three in favor; M. Blanchard and M. Dowling opposed.

**Article 56: General Bylaw Amendment – Warrant Article Timeline**

**MOTION:** That the Board support Article 56, by A. Ellison.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** P. Gimas

**Vote: Three in favor; M. Blanchard and M. Dowling opposed.**

**MOTION: To close the Special Town Meeting Warrant, by M. Blanchard.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**

**Vote: All in favor.**

### **H1972 – An Act Regulating Election Primaries**

T. Creamer informed the Board that William Campbell, Woburn City Clerk, had sent a letter to Lorraine Murawski, Town Clerk, requesting the Board's support of H1972, "An Act Regulating Election Primaries." He stated that adoption of H1972 will ensure that the votes of our troops serving overseas will count on election day, and will save taxpayers at least \$8,000,000.00 by streamlining elections.

**MOTION: That the Board support H1972, by M. Blanchard.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**

**Vote: All in favor.**

### **MMA Small Town Administrator Meeting / Health Insurance**

On behalf of the Town, S. Suhoski hosted 20 town administrators in Veterans' Memorial Hall to the quarterly meeting of STAM. The topic was the process to implement plan design changes to municipal health insurance as presented by Geoffrey Beckwith, Executive Director of the Mass. Municipal Association. All of the attendees were most impressed by the renovated Town Hall and Center Office Building. He said that it was a very informative meeting and it allowed him to present the town in a very positive light.

### **Miscellaneous Items**

**MOTION: That the Board authorize the Town Administrator to execute a \$10,000 DCR Grant for re-planting trees in the tornado impact area, by M. Blanchard.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**

**Vote: All in favor.**

Following were updates on other matters pending and have been updated in the three work days since S. Suhoski's last report.

**Tropical Storm Irene – FEMA Reimbursement:** Still awaiting costs from two departments. Police Dept. incurred just over \$6,000 in overtime which will be submitted. Further discussion with FEMA on this item expected this week.

**FEMA Tornado Reimbursement:** No further action on this item other than scoping the additional debris costs and initiating contact with Ash-Britt relative to

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the state contract for the existing stockpiles. S. Suhoski anticipates receiving further information early next week as to when the Town Barn access road and the existing stockpiles will be cleared.

**Walker Road Drainage:** S. Suhoski and the DPW Director will meet with neighborhood residents on October 25 to discuss engineering costs and approach prior to bringing recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. Engineering costs are estimated at just under \$50,000 with construction anywhere from \$600,000 to \$750,000 for a paved roadway.

**Riverlands Environmental Monitoring:** Tighe & Bond advised that they have received one price proposal and were awaiting the second before making further recommendation. The proposal was expected last week. S. Suhoski requested a further update.

**Personnel Committee:** Next meeting posted for October 26 with revised Tree Warden job description and updated compensation plan on agenda

**MIIA Insurance Matters:** Awaiting payment on all tornado-related claims (submitted at \$59,472.63). Expected coverage is roughly \$25,000 with other items to be submitted to FEMA if coverage not applicable.

**AAB Variance Update:** Specifications, prevailing rates and request for written quotes FAXED to three vendors. Awaiting responses.

**Town Hall and COB Building Project Update:** CAM HVAC was retained by the general contractor to diagnose HVAC issues. The vendor was on site Thursday and Friday and completed the change-over to "heat" mode prior to the October 15 deadline. The vendor is developing proposals for remedial action.

**Farquhar Road Drainage:** Further information and request issued to Town Counsel to complete the required easement and release of liability documentation.

**Ambulance Bid Documents:** Bid documents were issued and advertised with a mid-November deadline. Chief Senecal and his committee undertook an extensive specification process.

**Veterans Services Director:** S. Suhoski completed interviews with two very viable candidates for the position. He anticipated, subject to reference checks, to submit an appointment for the Board's consideration on October 24.

**Solar Power RFQ:** Completed review of seven proposals and scheduled meeting with EAC to further discuss qualifications of three respondents during public meeting on October 26 from 1-4 p.m. After these discussions, the EAC is

anticipated to put forward a recommended vendor to meet with the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Gimas is your liaison to this process.

**Meetings and Other Participation:** Attended meeting and tour of the Center of Hope facilities in Southbridge as they may soon be corporate citizens in Sturbridge; Participated in Burgess School Building Committee meeting; Attended MMA Legislative Breakfast in Phillipston with presentation on various budget matters by MMA and state Sen. Stephen Brewer; met with various department heads concerning workload and priorities.

### **Correspondence**

M. Blanchard asked S. Suhoski to check on the resignations of two Recreation Committee members.

### **Old Business**

A. Ellison suggested a Special Town Meeting outreach by posting signs at the intersection of Routes 148 and 20. She suggested the use of the A-frame sign. M. Blanchard said that flyers had been posted on trash bins at the Harvest Festival, but with the wrong date (November 6<sup>th</sup> instead of 7<sup>th</sup>). T. Creamer said that he had written a letter to the editor (as an individual member of the Board) regarding the importance of attending town meetings. He said that the Police Department's solar sign could be used to advertise the Special Town Meeting. A. Ellison suggested that it be used by the entrance to Old Sturbridge Village. M. Dowling suggested putting a sign on the Town Common. T. Creamer asked S. Suhoski to locate the A-frame signs and put one in front of Town Hall or the Center Office Building, and another one at the intersection of Route 148 and Route 20 at least a week ahead of time. S. Suhoski said that he would prepare a press release, post the Special Town Meeting on the Town's website, put a banner on the website, use the solar sign, A-frame signs and have it posted on the cable access channel.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the complaints regarding Charter Communications. S. Suhoski said that he had forwarded the information to Charter so that they could respond to the complaints individually.

T. Creamer said that he had requested that S. Suhoski raise the air handling system noise issue with the Burgess School Building Committee, and steps toward mitigation to be considered. S. Suhoski said that he had discussed it with the OPM, and he had requested that the noise levels be measured and that night readings be taken as well. He noted that the committee members had not received the complaints.

T. Creamer requested a progress report about the status of the AAB railings for the front of Town Hall and the door handle for the Center Office Building. S.

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Suhoski said that he had the specifications that the architect had put together. He received the prevailing wage rates and put together a bid package, which was FAXed to three vendors for a price.

T. Creamer asked about the status of fencing for the air handling system. S. Suhoski said that the dumpster enclosure is in a bad state of repair, and he asked DPW to look into it. They found a local vendor, and will get a quote.

### **New Business**

M. Dowling noted that the sponsor of Article 48 was not the Recreation Committee, it was the Board of Selectmen. She said that in the future, care should be taken when listing sponsors on warrant articles, because it caused a lot of confusion, resulting in misinformation.

M. Dowling announced her plan to step down as Vice-Chairman, and suggested that the reorganization of the Board be scheduled. She indicated her willingness to remain as Vice-Chairman if necessary, but if another member of the Board would enjoy taking on that role, she would step down.

It was the consensus of the Board to meet at 6:30 p.m. on November 7<sup>th</sup>, prior to the Special Town Meeting.

T. Creamer noted that regarding Article 48, it should be clarified at the Special Town Meeting that the warrant article as posted was incorrect, in terms of the sponsor.

### **Ask the Selectmen**

There were no calls.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

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BOS Clerk \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_