

January 3, 2012

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES  
JANUARY 3, 2012**

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.

**Mass. Interlocal Insurance Association Voting Delegate Form**

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a memorandum from MIIA dated December 20, 2011 together with the nominating report and voting delegate form.

**MOTION: To nominate Mary Blanchard as the Board's official voting delegate, by T. Creamer.**

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

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

S. Suhoski said that he had received a letter from Uno Restaurants requesting a continuance of their alcohol violation hearing to January 17, 2012.

**Joint Pole Relocation Hearing**

Pole #13 near 40 Maple Street: S. Suhoski submitted to the Board the joint petition of Verizon and NGRID to relocate utility pole #13 on the easterly sideline of Maple Street approximately 12-foot northerly from its current location. The DPW Director's memorandum dated December 23 was also provided to the Board, wherein he stated that the pole location should be "at the back of the stick" so as to line up with the true gutter line of the road. If done so, the Director stated that "the installation would be a huge improvement over existing field conditions" because the current pole sits within the pavement.

Paul Schneider of Verizon appeared before the Board. The Board questioned whether all of the abutters had been notified of the hearing date. There were questions as to whether all abutters had been notified and T. Creamer suggested that the Board continue the hearing in order to ensure that all abutters were in notification.

**MOTION: To continue the pole hearing to Monday, January 9, 2012 at 6:31 p.m., by M. Blanchard.**

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

**Central Corridor Rail Coalition Presentation and Resolution**

S. Suhoski submitted information to the Board provided by Blake Lamothe, the project manager/chairman of the Central Corridor Rail Coalition and Palmer Rail Coalition. He requested the Board's written support for restoration of passenger rail service to Palmer. S. Suhoski re-drafted the proposed resolution to reflect "Sturbridge" and included that for the Board's perusal. Mr. Lamothe presented a 15-minute video/PowerPoint presentation to the Board. He discussed the history of rail service from Vermont to Palmer. From S. Suhoski's perspective, increased rail options will only benefit the region-at-large and enhance regional community and economic development as well as transportation choice.

**MOTION: That the Board support restoration of passenger rail service to the town of Palmer and its environs, and sign the presented resolution, deleting paragraph #1, by M. Blanchard.**

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

**Winebuyer's Outlet LLC – Change of Manager**

The Board received the request of The Winebuyer's Outlet LLC, 453 Main Street, Sturbridge, to change their manager from Steven Cole to Richard Beams, of Worcester. Mr. Beams has worked as the Wine Manager at Austin Liquors in Worcester, and as the Bar Manager at Tweed's Pub, in Worcester, during the past 10 years. The state ABCC conducts the CORI check.

No one appeared from the Winebuyer's Outlet. It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on the matter, and reschedule it.

**Economic Development Advisory Committee (name change)**

S. Suhoski informed the Board that the Economic Development Committee voted at its November 16, 2011 meeting to recommend the formal name of the committee be changed to the Economic Development Advisory Committee, as that is more in keeping with the advisory role of the committee itself. He recommended the Board approve the change.

**MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen amend the name of the Economic Development Committee to the Economic Development Advisory Committee; by M. Blanchard.**

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

**MOTION:** That the Board amend the EDAC goal #5 by deleting “Zoning Study Committee,” by M. Blanchard.

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

**Vote:** All in favor.

### **Correspondence**

M. Blanchard read the correspondence list into the record.

T. Creamer noted correspondence regarding abandoned vehicles at Sturbridge Auto. Roxanne Auger, 29 Willard Road, talked about construction and provided photos showing the number of vehicles at the site. S. Suhoski explained the current status of their site plan and Class II license and offered to provide copies of documentation to Ms. Auger.

### **Miscellaneous Items**

- **Riverlands Environmental Monitoring:** S. Suhoski requested status update from Tighe & Bond as to drilling completion and status of sample testing.
- **AAB Variance Update:** S. Suhoski has one valid quote for the work and has extended a final opportunity for a second vendor to submit a quote. In either event, the proposal comes under the \$5,000 threshold for formal bid processes and he will make an award this coming week utilizing sound business practices.
- **Solar Power RFQ:** The EAC, Town Administrator and Selectman Gimas have determined the preferred vendor and will meet again in early to mid-January to finalize a presentation for the Board of Selectmen at an upcoming meeting.
- **FY13 Budget, Capital and Betterment Planning:** (No change.) Capital and betterment requests have been compiled by the Finance Director and provided to S. Suhoski, and he is now reviewing the requests. The Finance Director is continuing her preliminary work on the budget requests. They are committed to having all budget documents provided to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen in a timely and efficient manner with an eye towards the annual budget meeting in mid-February 2012.
- **Group Health Insurance:** Solicited and received school union contact information to reconstitute Insurance Advisory Committee and discuss reasonable plan design modifications that are anticipated to be initiated for FY13. Given that costs increased by over 16 percent last year, S. Suhoski’s goal is to mitigate any such increase to no more than single-digit increases through reasonable reform efforts. The Finance Director will be working with him on this initiative.

- **Town Hall and COB Building Project Update:** (No change. Prior report shown.) The Town continues to hold just over \$15,000 in retainage to encourage completion of all outstanding items. Still remaining on the list are repairs to cracks in plaster on the first floor of Town Hall, repair of a scratch in the flooring on the first floor of Town Hall, and in the spring, completion of remedial actions to the HVAC systems. The main entry doors (rear) of Town Hall continue to require readjustment of hardware relative to proper closing.

- **Library:** Met with Library Director and assisted with procurement and contracting for the roof repairs (lifting HVAC units and repairs to curbing) and signed contract for the carpet replacement project. Both of these items are scheduled for completion in January. Also, met with the Tree Warden and DPW Operations Manager regarding required tree trimming by Library to also facilitate crane access for HVAC units (trimming completed).

- **Department Head Performance Evaluations:** Completed, subject to signatures, all performance evaluations and goal setting with direct-report department heads. Based upon the incredibly high workload of the past year nearly all staff received their full 2 percent merit payment.

- **Veterans Services Director Update:** S. Suhoski had a productive meeting with Tim Hickey, Leicester's Veterans Agent, and Tom Chamberland, to review the position requirements caseload. Mr. Hickey will join Mr. Chamberland during Tuesday's office hours to meet clients and review files. S. Suhoski hopes to finalize an employment arrangement for the January 9 or 16 meeting at latest.

- **Meetings and Other Participation:** Met onsite with Mt. Brook Road Association and DPW Director to view primary problem areas and determine next steps; participated in PJ "story hour" at the Library; conducted bid opening for revaluation services on behalf of Principal Assessor.

### **Old Business**

A. Ellison brought up the safety concerns regarding Burgess School Road. S. Suhoski said that the Traffic Safety Committee will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss the matter. He said that Mr. Travinski brought it forward to the Burgess School Building Committee, and S. Suhoski sent a copy of the meeting notice to the school administration, so they are aware of that meeting. T. Creamer asked that they also discuss McGregory Road, as there are concerns about the speed of vehicles coming down from Fiske Hill Road, as well as the need for a street light and reflective mirror. He suggested that the Street Light Committee and Traffic Safety Committee address it.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the AAB waiver.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the water payment from Holland Road, as the deadline was December 21, 2011. S. Suhoski said that two bills were sent out, the second by certified mail. He said that they will be invoiced as part of their water/sewer bill, which will give the Town the ability to turn it over as a lien, if needed. He noted that payment has not yet been received.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of connect CTY. S. Suhoski said that yes, the Police Chief has gathered information, and it will move forward. T. Creamer said that the Board will be anxious to see some feedback on that.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of staffing needs. S. Suhoski said that he had given the Board an update on that in his self-evaluation, as it was part of his goals from last year. He noted that the data that department heads have compiled and presented to him have some gaps, which will require more time and effort to move forward.

T. Creamer asked the Selectmen if they would like to meet with the Tantasqua Regional School Committee on February 6<sup>th</sup>. He said that the Board had discussed the matter of the appointment process to the Tantasqua Regional School Committee, and there seemed to be a majority viewpoint in terms of an equitable level of representation. He noted that under the current agreement, the Board of Selectmen has sole appointing authority, and as a Board has decided that it should be a joint appointment, which means that the Board is giving the TRSC something it does not already have. M. Dowling and M. Blanchard said that it should be a joint appointment. T. Creamer, P. Gimmas and A. Ellison said that it should be equitable, vote for vote.

**MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen's formal position for discussion with the Tantasqua Regional School Committee be for a joint appointment based upon equity among the number of those individuals in attendance, by T. Creamer.**

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

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

The motion carried.

T. Creamer said that noise at the Wastewater Treatment Plant continues to be an issue. He said that the residents want to meet with the Board. S. Suhoski said that he had emailed them, and they are scheduled to meet with the Board on January 9<sup>th</sup>. He noted that the project engineer and DPW Director will attend as well.

### **New Business**

M. Blanchard asked about the status of Town Administrator goals. S. Suhoski said that he would present the Board with goals at the next meeting.

M. Blanchard noted that the Charter Review Committee letters were ready for the Board to sign.

**Ask the Selectmen/Citizens' Forum**

M. Dowling said that a caller said that the Assessor's Office does a good job, but confirmed that there is an abutter that needs to be notified of the pole relocation on Maple Street.

A. Ellison took a call from a resident who said that the meeting was not being broadcast. He contacted the cable company, and once he had unplugged his cable from the box and put it directly to the TV, the transmission came in. The cable company told him that there was an issue with the Town broadcasting. He left his phone number and requested that someone get in touch with him about the situation.

Don Miller, 501 Leadmine Road, said that Ocean State Job Lot and Tractor Supply have been a good addition to the Town. He asked about their impact on property taxes. Bill Mitchell, Principal Assessor, had prepared a schedule which shows that the effect on the actual tax rate is three cents, with a change in the tax rate to \$17.63. He noted that it made a difference of \$7.80 to the average single family homeowner. Jean Bubon, Town Planner, informed him about the process for attracting businesses to Sturbridge. When vacancies in Town are available, they go into a database, then companies can look at that and if they are interested they meet with J. Bubon. He said that in the meantime, to bring the tax rate down, a petition was created and submitted to the Town Clerk which said: "To see if the Town of Sturbridge will limit the FY13 budget to a sum of \$25,578,124." A lengthy discussion followed.

**MOTION: To convene in executive session under MGL Chapter 30A, §21, Paragraph #1: To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or discuss the discipline or dismissal of or complaints or charges against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual; not to reconvene in open session, by M. Blanchard.**

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

**Roll call vote: M. Dowling in favor; T. Creamer in favor; A. Ellison in favor; P. Gimas in favor; M. Blanchard in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

January 3, 2012

BOS Clerk

Date