

September 6, 2011

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 6, 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.

Proclamation for National Preparedness Month

M. Blanchard read the proclamation into the record.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen accept the proclamation for National preparedness Month, by M. Blanchard.
2nd: P. Gimas
Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling absent.

FY12 Tax Classification Hearing

A presentation was made by William Mitchell, Principal Assessor and the Board of Assessors outlining the Town's FY12 tax levy and the recommended tax rate and how it is allocated between the residential and commercial/industrial/personal property (CIP) classes.

M. Dowling arrived at 6:52 p.m.

S. Suhoski noted that the Board of Selectmen, as the Town's executive body, cannot change the total tax levy that will be collected in FY12 as the budget was established by the Town's legislative branch, Town Meeting voters, during the Annual Meeting on June 6, 2011. The Board of Selectmen would, however, make several important votes:

- to determine the percentages of the local tax levy to be borne by each class of real property by adopting a "residential factor" for FY12,
- to determine whether to apply an Open Space Discount for FY12,
- to determine whether to apply a Residential Exemption for FY12, and
- to determine whether to apply a Small Commercial Exemption for FY12.

The vote to adopt the residential factor will determine whether the Town retains a "flat" tax rate for FY12, or whether the Town reverts to a "split" tax rate between residential and CIP property for FY12. The votes for the Open Space Discount, Residential

Exemption and Small Commercial Exemption, if adopted, merely "re-allocate" the tax levy in different fashions amongst taxpayers.

A lengthy discussion followed by the Board. Don Miller stated that town residents need a break from costs.

Marcella Groth and Sandy Cole commented on the split tax rate. David Petrin said that the high tax rate is hurting seniors, as they are on a fixed income.

Charles Blanchard discussed why the Town in 2004 went to the split tax rate, due to valuation. He noted that Sturbridge was always in the mid level regarding tax bills among the towns in Massachusetts. William Mitchell agreed.

T. Creamer requested that William Mitchell come back before the Board to have a discussion on the process.

MOTION: To close the public hearing, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To not adopt the open space discount, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To adopt the single tax rate, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Four in favor; A. Ellison opposed.

MOTION: To not adopt the residential exemption, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Four in favor; P. Gimas opposed.

MOTION: To not adopt the small commercial exemption, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Four in favor; A. Ellison opposed.

Special Circumstance Dock Permit Application

S. Suhoski submitted a copy of the application to the Board. He noted that the application was further to the site visit conducted at 78 South Shore Drive. He recommended that the Board approve the special circumstance application, as it will further remove the subject dock from the sightline of the neighbor and afford better access to the water for the applicant.

T. Creamer felt that the Board's first vote may have been in contradiction to the Town's current regulations, and could not support any further requests specific to this site

without a more detailed review. He requested a review of current regulations as well as the current situation that exists at 78 South Shore Drive from the Sturbridge Lakes Advisory Committee.

M. Dowling said that the Sturbridge Lakes Advisory Committee should review the Harbormaster Regulations, taking into account a situation where the water level changes on a consistent basis, and how that would impact the regulations. She felt that the application was premature. M. Blanchard agreed, and suggested that the Allards apply next year, since the permit isn't needed now anyway. She said that the Board should have information from the SLAC.

Gary and Margaret Allard and Lenny Jalbert, engineer, appeared before the Board. L. Jalbert submitted a document to the Board, and explained riparian rights and bay area.

Gary Allard said that he only needed to utilize the extension to get across the sand bar during certain times. He requested permission to withdraw his application without prejudice.

MOTION: To allow Gary and Margaret Allard to withdraw their special dock permit application without prejudice, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Four in favor; T. Creamer opposed.

It was the consensus of the Board to take it up next spring.

Council on Aging Director Appointment

S. Suhoski said that the appointment of the Town's primary advocate for the senior population was taken very seriously. He said that Melissa Beauchemin has a demonstrated history of service to this population and an obvious passion for her work. She organized events and programming for a large retirement community in Fairfax for nine years before moving to Sturbridge. She has experience in Massachusetts as the former outreach coordinator for the North Brookfield COA, and, after a hiatus to raise her child, has served as the social services director at the Accord Adult Day Health Center in Dudley for the past three years.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of Melissa Beauchemin to the position of Council on Aging Director effective on or after September 12, 2011 at a starting salary of \$46,500 and subject to a six-month probationary period, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: All in favor.

Senior Municipal Service Program Appointment

S. Suhoski informed the Board that there was an approved candidate to fill the final slot in the SMSP. Ms. Louise Martel, of 49 Clarke Road, has qualified for the program. Because she is physically unable to perform the duties, volunteer Heather Hart will complete the hours required under the new legislative and local program amendment sponsored by members of this community. Ms. Hart's efforts will be gladly accepted by the Town Planner.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen appoint Louise Martel to participate in the Senior Municipal Service Program for FY12 and that said volunteer hours will be donated by Heather Hart in the Planning Dept, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas.

Vote: All in favor.

Master Plan Implementation Committee

Further to the approved appointment process, the Planning Board has recommended in an August 25, 2011 correspondence that five individuals be appointed to the MPIC. S. Suhoski concurred with the recommendation.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of the following individuals to the Master Plan Implementation Committee:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Sandra Gibson-Quigley	Planning Board Representative	2015
Penny Dumas	Planning Board Representative	2012
Heather Hart	Former Master Plan Steering Cmte. Member	2015
David Barnicle	Former Focus Group Member	2014
Jennifer Morrison	Former Focus Group Member	2013

By M. Blanchard

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: All in favor.

Subsequent appointments would be for five year terms.

Debris Monitoring Contract Award

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a proposed Agreement to utilize the statewide Disaster Debris Monitoring Services contract to retain O'Brien's Response Management, Inc. to conduct FEMA-required monitoring of debris removal activities, including preparation and filing of required documentation, based upon hourly rates for work requested by the Town. The firm also has experience and will assist the Town in seeking maximum FEMA eligibility for other sites such as the DPW Barn Fields access road and environs. Hourly rates range from \$34 to \$70 all inclusive, but, are only upon request of the Town. The cost of this contract is also eligible for 75 percent FEMA

reimbursement. It was S. Suhoski's intention not-to-exceed \$20,000 in local funding (this would allow up to \$80,000 in contracted services with FEMA contribution). The contract will be managed by the DPW Director and the Town Administrator.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the award of Disaster Debris Monitoring Services to O'Brien's Response Management, Inc. in accordance with state contract No. HLS02 and the Town's Agreement dated September 6, 2011. It is further the Town's intent not-to-exceed \$20,000 in local cost share for these services, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: All in favor.

Route 49 Resurfacing Project (Bike Lane Request)

The Board had a request from Mr. David Barnicle seeking to have the Town officially request that MassDOT include dedicated bicycle lanes as part of its planned resurfacing of Route 49 in 2012. S. Suhoski prepared a DRAFT letter for the Board's signature and recommended that the Board support the request for the reasons therein.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve execution of correspondence dated September 6, 2011 to MassDOT supporting inclusion of dedicated bicycle lanes in the scope-of-work for the 2012 resurfacing of Route 49 from Sturbridge to Spencer, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: All in favor.

Miscellaneous Items

Following are some concise updates on other matters that are pending. The list is not all-inclusive.

- **Tropical Storm Irene Response:** Spent many hours coordinating Town response with Police Chief and Lieutenants, DPW Director, Fire Chief and BOS Chairman. Vocal participant in conference calls with National Grid. Conducted direct advocacy with NGRID staff contacts to enhance response to priority concerns (e.g. large population at retirement community, live wire near Burgess School Rd., neighborhoods previously devastated by tornado, etc.). Engaged state Rep. Todd Smola to interface with state-level counterparts at the utility on Town's behalf. The Town's public safety and public works departments admirably responded to many calls for service throughout and after this event.
- **Land Lease for Solar Power:** Conducted Pre-Submission Conference with interested parties. There was a very good response with over a dozen attendees for the meeting at Town Hall and the tour of the landfill and recycling areas with

the DPW Director and Town Administrator. Deadline for submittals is September 19 after which the Energy Advisory Committee will begin its advisory review.

- **Walker Pond Road Drainage Study:** Participated in meeting with Dave Prickett of Tighe & Bond and DPW Director to review status of information. Scheduled meeting with residents for September 7 at 5pm in Town Hall for preliminary review. Schedule calls for Tighe & Bond to present findings to Board of Selectmen on September 19.
- **Walker Road Drainage:** CME engineers retained by DPW Director to review and recommend options (no progress past week due to storm operations).
- **Debris and FEMA:** Held meeting with DPW Director and Northern Tree concerning contract applicability. Town will need to proceed with separate bid for Route 20 and Route 15 debris stockpiles. Further to discussion with DPW Director, S. Suhoski is making a more concise bid package that he hopes to have published by September 14. The monitoring contract award will greatly assist in furthering a more formalized debris plan. Departments have completed draft reimbursement request to be reviewed by Town Administrator and Finance Director week of September 6 for submission.
- **Water / Sewer Rates:** TA still responding to calls and complaints about water and sewer invoices. He issued the Board a memorandum concerning the initial flurry of calls.
- **Personnel Committee:** Reviewed draft Tree Warden job description and scheduled next meeting scheduled for September 28.
- **Charter Complaints:** Confirmed that prior complaints were all addressed (one could not be resolved) and that Tom Cohan will attend the October 3 BOS meeting.
- **2012 Polling Locations:** The Host hotel received some additional logistical information from the Town Clerk to assist with cost assessment. Also, School Superintendent responded that the decision would rest with the School Committee.
- **Abandoned Motor Vehicles:** No further progress due to vacation schedules. The Police Chief, Finance Director and S. Suhoski met to discuss the “pros” and “cons” of the Town’s process of disposing of abandoned motor vehicles (these primarily result from towing operations by Sturbridge Service Center and, to a lesser extent, Sturbridge Auto Body); Good progress was made at the meeting and Chief Ford is developing some enhancements that should make the processing more consistent and less labor intensive for the Hearings Officer (Finance Director by virtue of role as Parking Clerk).

- **Road Program:** No progress past week, however, previously scheduled paving on Whittemore Road was completed together with the resurfacing of Picker Road through the additional MORE Jobs grant funding.
- **Cable Advisory Committee:** Attended CAC meeting; received applications for the part-time clerk position which are now under review with Bruce Butcher. Plan is to interview two candidates along with CAC chairman for presentment to the CAC for concurrence prior to the Town Administrator proposing an appointment to the Board.
- **Municipal Health Insurance Reform:** Attended seminar sponsored by MMA to review changes to law. During the next two months S. Suhoski anticipates bringing the Insurance Advisory Committee together to discuss plan changes in Sturbridge to bring down costs for both the municipality and the employee.

Correspondence

M. Blanchard read the correspondence list into the record.

Old Business

T. Creamer said that the discussion on the Route 15 municipal water supply should take place during the second meeting in September, and noted that the Board had requested that Tighe & Bond or Greg Morse, DPW Director, provide some information about costs associated with it and what those costs would relate to in terms of assessments and things of that nature. S. Suhoski asked that the discussion take place on Sept. 19th because Tighe & Bond will appear before the Board for their presentation on the Walker Pond drainage issue, and the same engineer will be handling both.

T. Creamer asked about the status of Walker Road. S. Suhoski said that Greg Morse has retained CME to address that issue. T. Creamer said that the Board needed some dollar figures and needed to know if there has been any work toward a USDA grant for the water line, and how the costs would be borne. S. Suhoski said that he and G. Morse met with Dave Prickett of Tighe & Bond to discuss the issue.

New Business

There was no new business.

Ask the Selectmen/Citizens' Forum

P. Gimas said that Mrs. Stuart called to request that someone take a look at the erosion on Mountain Brook Road. M. Blanchard noted that it is a private road.

P. Gimas said that the second caller asked about the status of the variance for the front doors of Town Hall. T. Creamer said that the information had been submitted, and he would call the Mass. Historical Commission to convey the Board's position.

Town Administrator's Evaluation

M. Dowling noted that the Board had a policy that it would not entertain any new business after 10:00 p.m. and the Town Administrator's evaluation will be a lengthy process.

MOTION: To defer the Town Administrator's evaluation to September 12th or 19th subject to full attendance of the Board of Selectmen, by M. Dowling.
2nd: P. Gimas
Vote: All in favor.

MOTION: To adjourn, by M. Blanchard.
2nd: P. Gimas
Vote: All in favor.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk Date