

March 17, 2014

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
MARCH 17, 2014**

Present: Priscilla Gimas, Chairman
Mary Blanchard
Mary Dowling
Shaun Suhoski, Town Administrator

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

Selectman Mary Redetzke was absent due to illness.

Public Service Announcements

M. Dowling wished everyone a happy St. Patrick's Day.

Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of November 18, 2013 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 28, 2014 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 3, 2014 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of March 3, 2014 as amended, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

6:45 p.m. – Pole Hearing Continuation (NOTE: Verizon's Request to Withdraw Petition)

S. Suhoski informed the Board that although representatives of Verizon appeared at the March 3rd meeting to discuss their petition to relocate Pole T.181/E.88 on Main Street, Verizon's Right-of-Way Manager, Albert E. Bessette, Jr., has submitted a clarification

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dated March 4, 2014, stating that the pole in question was a replacement in kind and not in fact a relocation.

The DPW Director has visited the site and advised S. Suhoski that he concurs and that the replacement pole is in the ground. This replacement was associated with the construction of the new Cumberland Farms at this location; therefore, S. Suhoski felt that it would be appropriate for the Board to vote leave to withdraw the petition so as to clear the item from the agenda.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen grant Verizon leave to withdraw the petition for relocation of Pole No. T.181/E.88 on Main Street as the pole was replaced in-kind, by M. Blanchard.
2nd: P. Gimas
Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

Department Head Reports

P. Gimas read the following statement into the record:

“As a resident of Sturbridge and one representative of the community, I want to extend my thanks to your department and to the police department for becoming part of Tyler’s Troops. As we all know, Tyler Seddon of Rhode Island is a 7 year old boy battling for his life as he endures his second round of cancer. Tyler’s life depends on a bone marrow match which has not yet been found.

Tyler’s mom requested birthday cards for him for his 7th birthday from his heroes – first responders. Police, fire and EMTs came from across the country and cards/videos from around the world, even from our troops in Afghanistan. It’s wonderful to know that Sturbridge was a part of this special day for this young boy. My thanks to Lt. Robert Johnson, Firefighter Jason Kelly, Firefighter/EMT Mary Lou Volpe, Police Sgt. Larry Bateman and Officer Jeffrey Forcier for helping to brighten a day in the life of a little boy fighting for his life.

Please extend my appreciation to these individuals. I also spoke with Chief Ford this morning and expressed the same to him.”

Fire Chief David Zinther said that it was great to be able to be a part of the large entourage for Tyler Seddon, and everyone had enjoyed it. He reviewed his report with the Board.

M. Blanchard asked about the CMRPC meeting regarding grant money and shared regional procurement of emergency supplies. Chief Zinther said that one of his staff had attended the meeting, which was a preliminary meeting on the idea; questions had been raised regarding the ease of access to the supplies.

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Chief Zinther also included a Fire Department Responsibilities Chart which identifies the members of his staff who have been assigned various departmental responsibilities, based on their expertise and interest. He said that the use of the chart will help to ensure that when an issue arises, it can be immediately addressed using the chain of command to the proper member, and that proper follow up or necessary documentation will be handled accordingly.

Chief Zinther also submitted to the Board a Five Year Capital Plan Worksheet, which outlines the projected year, specific project and estimated costs for the capital items. He said that the intent of the worksheet is to help keep necessary purchases on a time line that will maintain consistency in the operations of the Fire Department and to assist the Town with the fiscal planning necessary to achieve these needs. It will keep the department's fleet, equipment and building in a ready state.

Chief Zinther announced that he is actively seeking new on-call firefighters, and will hold an open house on April 19th at 9:00 a.m. in conjunction with the hiring process. He invited the Selectmen to take part.

Building Inspector Robert Camacho reviewed his report with the Board. He said that during the last two weeks there has been a large surge of inspections. He has checked on Town buildings, with the primary concern of snow loads on the roofs of the buildings. He noted that they were all doing very well. He said that there was also the danger of snow and ice falling off the roofs. People using the Senior Center were warned to stay away from the outside perimeter of the building.

R. Camacho said that he had inspected the assembly areas in the schools with the State Inspector, Fire Chief and John Marinelli and posted occupancy loads. He put a package together for the Facilities Manager at the high schools instructing him to keep an eye on the buildings, and outlined certain things that could surface if snow and ice become too heavy for the buildings. He provided a copy to the Board.

Regarding BYOB, R. Camacho recommended that the Board require establishments to get a 110 safety inspection.

Apple New England, LLC (Applebee's) – Change of Manager Application

Apple New England, LLC applied for a change in manager from James Serewicz to Anthony Quartarone for its Applebee's location at 120 Charlton Road (in Hobbs Brook plaza). No abutter notifications were required. S. Suhoski reviewed the application materials and find them complete. It appears that Mr. Quartarone will spend approximately 55 hours per week on premises. His 10-year employment history shows nearly two years of service with Applebee's in Sturbridge, a short stint with Panera Bread, and over seven years of experience with a Friendly's restaurant in Worcester.

Since the applicant was not present, it was the consensus of the Board to postpone the matter to the next meeting on March 31st.

Sturbridge Tourist Association – Board Discussion

As requested by the Board of Selectmen, S. Suhoski reviewed the bylaw that establishes the composition and general function of the Sturbridge Tourist Association.

After extensive consideration and discussion with individuals with varying points of view, he came to the conclusion that the present composition and assumed function of the STA is not an efficient use of volunteer or financial resources. He also believes that the STA's mission should be to promote tourism as a component of the Town's economic development agenda. To accomplish this he proposed two options:

- A. Amend the composition of the committee and re-focus its role as: (1) a decision-making entity for funding proposals to market and promote Sturbridge as a tourist destination under a common theme with local and regional tourist-related entities, (2) to fund externally-managed events (preferably quarterly by season) designed to draw regional visitors to Sturbridge, and (3) to support the public restrooms on Route 20 and a Visitor Information Center,

OR

- B. Bifurcate the STA's budget into two parts: (1) \$65,000+/- for a part-time "Economic Development / Tourism Coordinator" position that would promote tourism and economic development initiatives in the community and provide technical guidance and support to the STA, and (2) \$65,000+/- (the remainder of the formula funds) to be administered by the STA for the purposes described in paragraph A above.

S. Suhoski said that in either scenario, the STA is not intended to be an implementing body, but, rather it would revert to its traditional role as an approving authority for proposals that are deemed to be beneficial to the economic tourism base in Sturbridge.

S. Suhoski's preference was option "B" as it would allow the STA to function as intended while improving the capacity of the Town, through the Tourism Coordinator, to enhance its economic base through tourism promotion, events and coordination of effort with other local and regional tourist-related entities.

S. Suhoski said that it is foolhardy to simply ignore the importance of tourism – even to this day – on the economic base in Sturbridge. First, the hotel/motel and meals tax revenue are projected at \$780,000 in general fund revenue for FY15. Put another way, the property tax levy would need to increase by nearly four percent to make up loss of these local revenues.

The simple math also does not account for the more substantial "multiplier effect" from these service businesses through employment, payroll being recirculated in the community and region, and patrons visiting other businesses (e.g. antique store, candle

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shop, museum, etc.). Most recently, the work of McCabe Associates in assessing the Commercial Tourist District illustrated that the great majority of our hotel and motel visitors have come from the region and beyond.

S. Suhoski said that in other words, the local population of Sturbridge is not sufficient to carry the various hotels, motels and restaurants that grace the community. We need to realize that other destinations in the region can and do “put heads in beds.”

S. Suhoski learned that a quietly promoted maple sugaring excursion to a farm in a nearby town has resulted in at least 20 room reservations in Sturbridge in the coming weeks. This is from but one business. Imagine that 20 rooms are serving 30 people that will enjoy maple sugaring and then exploring the amenities in Sturbridge.

Economic development – and tourism success – is the sum of all parts and we must engage all of the attractions from the region while providing lodging right here in Sturbridge.

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board the current General Bylaw Chapter 1.90 that outlines the purpose and composition of the STA as well as a marked-up version which he would propose as a DRAFT bylaw to implement option “B.”

M. Blanchard considered \$65,000 for a part-time position to be quite steep, and added that most of the money should go toward events. She said that it had never been the intent of the committee to come up with ideas and put events together. She agreed with having five members.

M. Dowling agreed with M. Blanchard’s comments. She asked how much the maintenance of the public rest rooms cost. S. Suhoski said that it came to \$7,000. M. Dowling said that she did not think that the STA has ever been able to come up with four events per year, and one of the problems was that entities were not coming forward to have their functions financed. She noted that one of the only ones that did was the Chamber of Commerce.

S. Suhoski said that the part-time person’s role would be to initiate requests for proposals.

M. Dowling said that there was nothing in the proposal about advertising. S. Suhoski said that advertising would be included under #1 “To market and promote.”

M. Dowling said that the better approach would be to revert to some type of Chamber oversight, with small businesses advertising on the Chamber’s website.

S. Suhoski said that the \$65,000 is not a salary number; he will do further study for a market rate to determine what the numbers should be.

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M. Dowling said that some of the concerns need to be negotiated. She noted that SATA has always embraced regional tourism. P. Gimás said that Brian Amedy supports Option B. She attended the meeting the previous week when they discussed the matter, and they don't want it reverted to the Chamber. She suggested that they be invited to participate in a dialogue with the Board of Selectmen.

S. Suhoski said that for the next meeting, he could have a job description or description of duties and market rates to provide to the Board.

P. Gimás said that the STA had discussed the Bluegrass Festival, and both of the hotel people said that there was no way that they could do anything for this function because it had been scheduled during flea market week, which was also a great wedding weekend. They said that their jobs come first, and they didn't have time to participate in that event. She stressed the importance of having the person who is booking events be aware of how it will impact the members of the STA.

M. Dowling said that she supported having a coordinator as opposed to reducing it to a five member board. M. Blanchard said that all of the parties should get together again.

M. Dowling said that she supports Option B. She did not see any reason why a member of the Board of Selectmen or the Finance Committee needs to be on the committee.

P. Gimás said that for the next meeting, the Board should be provided with a budget and a breakdown to look at, then schedule a dialogue day.

S. Suhoski said that on the composition, the number of members was reduced from seven to five; the citizen at large was reduced from two to one; and a business representative was added. M. Blanchard said that a change to Charter language would have to be approved by 2/3 vote of the Town Meeting, then go on the Town Election.

It was the consensus of the Board to further discuss the matter on March 31st, and schedule a public hearing on April 7th.

BYOB Policy – Board Discussion

S. Suhoski submitted two sample policies for consideration by the Board of Selectmen in its capacity as the Local Licensing Authority with respect to enhanced monitoring and registration or permitting of "bring your own bottle" (BYOB) establishments.

Town Counsel found that the town of Winchendon regulates its BYOB establishments through a policy adopted by the Board of Selectmen which is substantially repeated in the document noted "Permit". S. Suhoski also developed a shorter form policy labeled "Registration."

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Based upon discussion that S. Suhoski had with a local restaurant owner and the Chamber of Commerce, he suggested that the Board invite public comment from potentially impacted businesses before voting any policy with respect to this issue.

Finally, S. Suhoski noted that there have been no complaints brought forward to his office with respect to any local BYOB establishments.

M. Dowling said that Chief Ford had indicated that there have been no issues with businesses with BYOB, but she noted that the Police Department doesn't make random annual visits to BYOB establishments (as they do to liquor license establishments) to determine whether there are any problems. She expressed a preference for the short form.

M. Blanchard said that it would be imposing a lot on the few establishments that have BYOB, and noted that the state has no stipulations on BYOB. She said that she would like input from the businesses that have done this. She noted that police can always walk into any establishment at any time.

M. Dowling suggested that the Board should receive notification of BYOB at a minimum, and that a sting operation should be done at an annual basis, the same as for liquor license establishments.

P. Gimás expressed concern about underage employees being put in a position of monitoring customers at a BYOB establishment. M. Dowling said that in a restaurant, underage employees cannot take drink orders. In a BYOB situation, there should be someone on the premises who is age 21 or older.

It was the consensus of the Board to discuss the matter further at the April 28th meeting. P. Gimás suggested that the Police Chief be present.

Discussion of Railroad Service and Future Plans

Selectman Redetzke requested this agenda item, and since she was absent, it was the consensus of the Board to take it up at a future meeting in May.

Bond Anticipation Note

A memorandum and documents were prepared by the Finance Director for an additional bond anticipation note in the amount of \$2,530,000 to close-out the Burgess School project.

Because of a few remaining warranty items, the project has not been formally closed-out through the MSBA and the additional BAN is required. No further votes are needed as all borrowing remains fully within the authority previously granted by Town Meeting.

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MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen execute the Anticipation of Serial Loan in the amount of \$2,530,000 and bearing an issue date of March 27, 2014, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

Fire Dept. Surplus Equipment

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a memorandum from Chief Zinther concerning obsolete radio equipment that he would like declared as surplus property. He discussed this with the Chief, and they concur the items have no monetary value to the Town as they are obsolete.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the surplus property declaration and disposition as requested in memorandum of the Fire Chief dated March 13, 2014, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

Northern Bass Alliance – Special Use Permit

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board a copy of the request from the Northern Bass Alliance to hold a bass tournament on June 1, 2014 between 6:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Big Alum. This is a members' only event with an estimated attendance of ten boats. The applicant was requested to be present as per the Board's policy.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the special use permit for the Northern Bass Alliance for a members only tournament on June 1, 2014 between 6:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Big Alum, with one week advance notice of the number of boats to the Police Department, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

Resignation and Reappointment – Melissa Palmer, Part-time Dispatcher

S. Suhoski submitted to the Board Chief Ford's memorandum dated March 6, 2014 advising of the resignation of Melissa Palmer as a full-time dispatcher. Ms. Palmer had previously served as a part-time dispatcher in Sturbridge and both she and Chief Ford are seeking to extend that arrangement which dates back 12 years.

S. Suhoski recommended a motion to accept her resignation; but to also appoint her to the position of part-time dispatcher at an hourly rate of \$22.11 per the union contract.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen accept the resignation of Melissa Palmer from the position of full-time Dispatcher with regret and

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approve her appointment as a part-time Dispatcher in the Police Dept. at an hourly rate of \$22.11 effective March 21, 2014, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

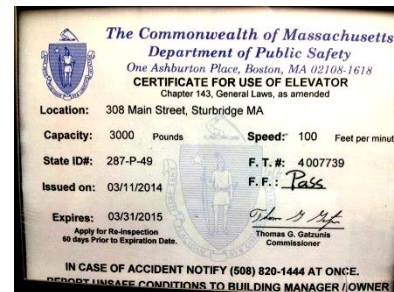
Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

Other Matters: Following are brief updates on other pending matters.

- **Municipal Buildings:**

- **Library (updated 2/27)** – The Town's insurer has elected to secure tarps over the skylight system to abate any leaks over the winter. Funding for the replacement has been submitted for the FY15 capital plan. The Library Director, Building Inspector and S. Suhoski have met together on several occasions – including with outside vendors – to review the exterior needs of the Library including the gutter replacement and projected needs for slate roof repair, exterior painting and cupola repair. A recommended action plan is complete and will be put before the Capital Planning Committee this month.

- **Town Hall / Center Office Building (updated 3/14)** – The elevators for Town Hall and COB were re-certified by the state through March 2015. Also, on March 17th S. Suhoski will tour the building with a licensed electrician that also has experience with installing generators in municipal buildings. This will determine appropriate loading requirements for a generator and will allow development of the cost estimate for preparing Town Hall's wiring for same. Lt. Saloio and S. Suhoski have identified two separate pools of modest grant funding that may assist with this endeavor.



- **Public Safety Complex (updated 2/28)** – CME Associates has provided a revised timeline for completion of the bid documents and actual construction of the floor replacement. We anticipate receiving bids on or about May 12th with construction occurring between June 1st \ and August 1st.

- **Infrastructure Projects:**

- **Mountainbrook Road Betterment / Drainage Project (updated 3/14):** The DPW Director met with the Conservation Commission last week; however, it was left undetermined as to whether the Town should file an NOI specific to the culvert replacement, or whether the existing DPW generic Order of Conditions would suffice as with most maintenance projects. S. Suhoski anticipates this issue to be resolved in the next two weeks and for bids to issue and be received by the end of April. The original target date of April 7th for bid award will be deferred pending the outcome of conservation matters.

- ***Champeaux Road Bridge (updated 3/14)***: The state Senate has included the \$1.45 million authorization for funds in the transportation bond bill; matching the House language. If the project survives the final approval process, the Town will need to convince the Governor's office of the importance of releasing funds. Fortunately, as outlined in the report in the FY15 budget books, there is sufficient state Chapter 90 allocations available to complete the work. The DPW Director will bring this project back before the Board of Selectmen prior to any construction.
- **Other Meetings / Miscellaneous**: Other items include: S. Suhoski met with Recreation Director re: Town Barn field development; participated in initial bargaining session with teacher's union; conducted department head meeting; extensive review and discussion of electricity contract and bid climate with energy consultant; met with member of Finance Committee; met with Chief Zinther and Charter vendor re: fiber optic easement at PSC; participated CDBG project start-up meeting with SRCC executive director, PVPC grant administrator, BETA engineering and Town Accountant; met with Finance Director, MIIA health representative and Blue Cross / Blue Shield representative concerning proposed plan changes.

Correspondence

P. Gimas read the correspondence list into the record.

Old Business

M. Blanchard asked whether Kevin Smith had spoken to S. Suhoski regarding the status of the Finance Committee Clerk. S. Suhoski said that Kevin Smith had not contacted him, but he will follow up.

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the health insurance Memorandum of Understanding. S. Suhoski said that he had provided a response on the proposed MOU that had been discussed by the Insurance Advisory Committee. M. Blanchard requested a copy.

M. Dowling asked whether invitations had been sent to the State Senator candidates. S. Suhoski said that he would send the invitations out.

M. Dowling said that the Stipend Study Committee had made a presentation to the Finance Committee, but no votes were taken. There were questions about the wording of the warrant.

New Business

M. Blanchard asked about the status of the dangerous dog hearing. S. Suhoski said that he had sent a letter to the owners of the dog. It was the consensus of the Board to schedule the hearing for April 7, 2014.

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M. Dowling requested an agenda item for a meeting in May regarding the utility lines on Route 20.

M. Dowling asked that the Board come up with goals for the Town Administrator. It was the consensus of the Board to provide their suggestions to P. Gimas by March 31st and discuss them at the April 7th meeting.

MOTION: To adjourn, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Three in favor; M. Redetzke was absent.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date