

March 16, 2015

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
MARCH 16, 2015**

Present: Mary Blanchard, Chairman
Priscilla Gimas
Mary Dowling
Craig Moran

Suzanne Kennedy, Interim Town Administrator, was absent.

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

On behalf of the Board, M. Blanchard expressed condolences to the family of Steve Warner, who had served on the Planning Board and Recreation Committee.

M. Blanchard asked if the Selectmen would be able to meet on Monday, March 23rd to discuss the budget. It was the consensus of the Board to schedule a meeting on that date at 6:30 p.m.

Public Service Announcements

M. Blanchard reminded the Board that the Tantasqua public hearing on the budget will take place on March 17th at 6:00 p.m. in the Junior High School cafeteria.

9th Annual BB5K Charity Run/Walk – May 23 at Hyland Orchard

S. Kennedy had submitted to the Board an email from Steve and Peg Hall seeking permission to run their tenth annual charity road race between roughly 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 23 from the Hyland Orchard facility. The event raises awareness and funding for melanoma research.

Chief Ford's email approving the race from the Police Department perspective was also submitted to the Board.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the 9th Annual BB5K Charity Run/Walk on Saturday, May 23, at Hyland Orchard, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Appointment of Full-time Dispatcher: Taylor Plumley

Police Chief Thomas Ford and Taylor Plumley appeared before the Board. Chief Ford completed the recruitment process to fill a vacant full-time dispatch position occasioned

by the resignation of Toniah Maloney, and recommended the appointment of part-time dispatcher Taylor Plumley. Ms. Plumley has been with the Town since July 2014 and, Chief Ford reports, she has demonstrated an exceptional level of competence. A copy of Ms. Plumley's resume was submitted to the Board.

MOTION: That the Board ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of Ms. Taylor Plumley as a full time Dispatcher at an hourly rate of \$19.09, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

M. Dowling thanked Chief Ford for providing the information she had requested regarding the alcohol violations previously reviewed by the Board. She noted that charges had not been dismissed by the court; they had been continued, and there had not been any wrong doing in police procedures.

Contract Approval- Aquatic Control Technology

Lynne Girouard, Recreation Director, appeared before the Board. The Recreation Committee was seeking approval of the Aquatic Control Technology Water Treatment Contract for the 2015 spring-summer season. This service is for water maintenance of the Town Beach located at the Cedar Lake Recreation Area on Cedar Pond Road. The application was for the management of algae at Cedar Lake Town Beach (cove area).

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the contract by and between the Town of Sturbridge and Aquatic Control Technology for \$1,700 and further, to authorize the Chairman to execute the contract on behalf of the Board, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

M. Blanchard announced that the meeting was being recorded by a reporter from the Worcester Telegram and Gazette.

Contract Approval - Leachate Transportation and Disposal

Greg Morse, DPW Director, appeared before the Board. He explained that the Town of Sturbridge re-bid the existing Leachate Hauling contract as a result of the contract term having concluded. Unfortunately, the price has increased over the previous contract. Two (2) contractors responded to the bid and, D.P.W. believes the low bidder, Wall Trucking Inc. is better equipped to handle the work as the company has more resources (tankers) at their disposal verses the competition.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the contract by and between the Town of Sturbridge and Wall Trucking, Inc. and further, authorize the Chairman to sign the contract on behalf of the Board, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Contract Approval - 8 Brookfield Road

Special Town Meeting approved the funding needed to conduct a code compliance study with respect to 8 Brookfield Road. A placeholder article has been included in the draft 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant pending conclusion of the study and attendant cost estimates.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectman approve the contract by and between the Town of Sturbridge and CME Associates, Inc. in the amount of \$14,000 and further, authorize the Chairman to execute the contract on behalf of the Board, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Contract Approval - Joshua Hyde Library Gutter Installation

This project will remove approximately 300 feet of wood gutters and replace them with fiber glass gutters at the Joshua Hyde Library. A copy of the project manual was available in the Administrative Assistant's office. \$54,001 was appropriated to complete this project.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the contract by and between the Town of Sturbridge and La Roche Builders, Inc. in the amount of \$29,000 and further, authorize the Chairman to execute the contract on behalf of the Board, by P. Gimas.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: All in favor.

Contract Approval – Joshua Hyde Library Gutter Design

This contract covers the architectural costs associated with the design of the library gutters as well as administrative services including advertising and bid development.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the contract by and between the Town of Sturbridge and Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$3,800 and further, authorize the Chairman to execute the contract on behalf of the Board, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Request for Water Bill Relief- Ryan Murphy 48 Clarke Road

Ryan Murphy requested reimbursement for a water bill dating back to 2012 resulting from the Town's practice of issuing a minimum bill (less than 1000 cubic feet) for final water readings when a property changes hands. The Town's practice has been to send to both the previous and new owners of a property a minimum quarterly water charge when their ownership overlaps in any given quarter. In addition, if the actual use by an owner exceeds the minimum use, then that owner is billed for their use. The total amount in dispute is \$123.80.

S. Kennedy had submitted to the Board Town Counsel's opinion with respect to this matter.

MOTION: That the Board deny the relief requested by Ryan Murphy for his water bill in the amount of \$123.80, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Department Head Reports

Fire Chief David Zinther reviewed his report with the Board. He noted that there had not been any significant issues resulting from the recent snow events. He said that having extra manpower on duty was essential during the storms. All of the hydrants in Town had been cleared of snow, 90% of which were cleared by Sturbridge Fire Department personnel. They asked residents to keep the hydrants cleared.

Chief Zinther noted that there had been a serious accident on the Mass Pike involving one of C. Moran's employees. He offered to set up a meeting to help his employees deal with the tragedy.

Regarding the hiring process, Chief Zinther informed the Board that he had gone through three separate application rounds, and each of which had netted no positive results for a fully qualified Firefighter/Paramedic. He suggested the possibility of looking within his own department, and taking a look at some of the applications that may show some promise, and invest in those individuals. He noted that three people will be forced to retire because of age.

Chief Zinther said that he would like to bring the staff up to nine; currently it is down to seven, with only three paramedics. One of his staff was injured recently, and may be out for four to six months.

Chief Zinther said that this winter has taken a toll on the Town buildings, with a great potential for mold. There are mold odors at the Public Safety Complex, and frost

heaves have caused significant damage to the steel rails on the door, with water draining back into the building, which is contributing to the mold problem. He said that the windows on the second floor have been holding snow, causing them to rot.

M. Blanchard said that Lamoureux-Pagano had done a report on the Town buildings, and the Master Plan Committee had also done a study. She said that the Board should ask the new Town Administrator to address the matter.

C. Moran noted that there had been a fire at Outdoor World. Chief Zinther said that another road had to be opened due to deep snow. Mutual Aid was there to provide assistance.

M. Dowling read a letter into the record thanking Mary Lou Volpe for her high quality of professionalism and compassion. There was another letter of thanks for the kindness and consideration shown to seniors.

Nelson Burlingame, Building Inspector, reviewed his report with the Board. He noted that S. Kennedy had sent Robert Cassim a letter following his suitability hearing.

N. Burlingame informed the Board that a construction assessment will be done regarding 8 Brookfield Road. Lyn Smith of CME Associates and an architect will evaluate the building and provide an estimate on the cost of any necessary repairs.

N. Burlingame said that Cindy Forgit is his new clerk, and things have been going well.

N. Burlingame said that Wal-Mart will begin remodeling the store shortly.

N. Burlingame noted that fees need to be adjusted. M. Blanchard suggested that he submit a proposal to the Board.

Presentation by Darci Schofield, Trust for Public Land Project Manager

Darci Schofield appeared before the Board to present information regarding acquisition of the Plimpton Community Forest. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has recommended two articles for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant with respect to this matter.

D. Schofield reviewed her update dated February 12, 2015. She said that the Trust for Public Land is working in partnership with the Town of Sturbridge, the U.S. Forest Service, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Opacum Land Trust, and the Hamilton Rod & Gun Club on the acquisition of a 320 acre property located on New Boston and Allen Roads in Sturbridge and Brookfield, known as the Plimpton Community Forest. Working with Sturbridge town staff, board and commissions, they have identified various assets for the community that the project will provide. The project proposes 15 acres for sports fields, including four regulation-sized multi-purpose

fields, a reserved area for a new drinking water well for the economic and residential growth of the community, and 282 acres of conservation land with over two miles of trails, for water quality protection, historic preservation and wildlife habitat. Two-thirds of the Plimpton Forest is BioMap2 Core Habitat and Areas for Species of Conservation Concern. It is also an important connector to existing conservation lands that are used to protect water quality, support wildlife habitat and promote recreation. Its conservation would create an almost 2,704 acre tract of contiguous open space. In addition, continued management of the high quality forest can provide revenue to the Town.

D. Schofield said that the Trust for Public Land secured an agreement with the landowner to provide the opportunity for the Town and the State to acquire it for these community purposes. The purchase price for 295 acres of land in Sturbridge is \$1,590,000 as confirmed by an appraisal, with a closing date of July 30, 2015. There is nearly \$820,000 secured in public and private funding. This includes a \$400,000 LAND Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a \$343,950 USDA Federal Community Forest Grant, the first ever awarded in Massachusetts, and \$75,000 in committed private funds. The Massachusetts Dept. of Fish and Game intends to acquire the 25 acres in Brookfield. They are seeking to secure approximately \$650,000 in existing Sturbridge Community Preservation Act Funds at the Annual Town Meeting in June for the remainder of the purchase price.

D. Schofield said that preserving the Plimpton Community Forest aligns with many of the goals and objectives stated in the Sturbridge Master Plan. The property is also identified as a land of conservation interest in the Sturbridge Open Space and Recreation Plan and meets 12 of the community's goals and objectives.

M. Dowling asked about how they had determined the breakdown of the uses for the 295 acres, with 95% for passive recreation and 5% for active recreation. D. Schofield said that she had worked with the Recreation Department to identify the needs, with eight acres to be used for active recreation, including sports, parking lots, rest rooms, locker rooms and bleachers.

M. Blanchard noted that a study had been done years ago testing the water sources, and it was determined that the site was not a good source, as it would lower the water in South Pond. D. Schofield said that they will be sure it is viable.

Ed Goodwin asked about the status of hunting on the property. D. Schofield said that the Community Forest Grant encourages hunting, fishing and forestry, but does not state that there has to be such a use. C. Moran said that if it is going to be Town land, it will have to be harvested. M. Dowling requested a definition of passive and active uses.

Letter to Mass DOT regarding a Curb Cut

S. Kennedy submitted to the Board copies of letters authored respectively by the Charlton Board of Selectmen and Planning Board. M. Dowling had requested that it be

placed on the agenda. She expressed disappointment that no one from Charlton had sent copies to the Board as a matter of professional courtesy. She suggested asking MassDOT to copy the Board on any future correspondence. She noted that the Town has concerns about traffic and quality of life.

M. Blanchard said that she was not of the opinion that the Board should respond to MassDOT. She said that it is a curb cut for a project that has not been applied for yet. P. Gimas agreed. C. Moran noted that checking with the Town of Sturbridge would have been the courteous thing for Charlton to do.

M. Dowling said that this is a question of protecting the Town. It will have an impact on Sturbridge residents and traffic. She felt that the Board has a duty to address the letter.

P. Gimas said that when the new Town Administrator starts, he could work toward an amicable solution with the Town of Charlton.

MOTION: That the Board direct the Town Administrator to draft a letter to MassDOT regarding the letters from the Planning Board and Economic Development Commission of Charlton, requesting that all future correspondence regarding the Sunset City Motorcross proposal be shared with the Sturbridge Board of Selectmen; and to express the Board's concerns regarding its impact on quality of life and traffic issues; and that the Board be notified prior to issuing the permit, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: M. Dowling and C. Moran in favor; M. Blanchard and P. Gimas opposed.

The motion failed.

M. Blanchard stressed the fact that the Selectmen are concerned. She will not vote for things that have not happened yet.

P. Gimas said that the new Town Administrator should build a relationship with the Town of Charlton.

Correspondence

M. Dowling read the correspondence list into the record.

Old Business

P. Gimas said that she was at a meeting the other night, when it was mentioned that the Board has never discussed the Sturbridge Tourist Association. She noted that last year the Board had discussed the STA five times, and had talked about bringing it down to

five members. There have been quorum issues with the STA. She would like to see the Memorandum of Understanding ready for the Town Meeting. M. Dowling said that there is support for doing it through a bylaw rather than a Memorandum of Understanding. P. Gimas said that a Memorandum of Understanding is necessary to outline the expectations for the Chamber. She added that if it does not change, she will not want to be the liaison. M. Blanchard suggested moving forward with the MOU.

New Business

P. Gimas informed the Board that the Council on Aging has put together a Steering Committee of 10 people to look at ways to either renovate the Senior Center or build a new one. She noted that one town had received a grant for their Senior Center, which she felt would be a great option and a proactive approach.

M. Blanchard said that the Board should vote to approve and post the election warrant.

MOTION: To approve and post the election warrant, by P. Gimas.
2nd: M. Dowling
Vote: All in favor.

M. Blanchard reminded the Selectmen that they need to sign the warrants every week.

Citizens' Forum

Ann Geyer, Podunk Road, appeared before the Board. She agreed with M. Dowling's approach regarding the curb cut and Charlton's need to inform Sturbridge of their plans as a matter of professional courtesy toward Sturbridge. She said that there are over 200 residents in the part of town that will be directly impacted by the proposed Sunset City Motorcross in Charlton. She noted that there had been a ZBA review on this matter, but she did not think that proper procedure had been followed as one member had missed the first meeting, and they had not talked about the Mullin Rule. They will meet again on March 31st. She commented that the noise study was very basic, and they had not looked at Route 49 regarding traffic impact. She said that none of the environmental concerns had been covered yet.

Michael Suprenant said that regarding an access permit to Route 49, a project like this would require a filing under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act. He said that MEPA could review the noise impacts, etc. M. Dowling noted that the Board does not support the curb cut. M. Suprenant said that the Town will have ample opportunity to make all of the comments that they wish to MEPA. Ann Geyer said that the Planning Board in Charlton has said that they do not need MEPA review for this project.

MOTION: To convene in executive session under MGL Chapter 30A, §18-25, Paragraph #2: To conduct strategy session in preparation for

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negotiations with non-union personnel, not to reconvene in open session, by M. Dowling.

2nd: P. Gimas

Roll call vote: C. Moran in favor; P. Gimas in favor; M. Dowling in favor; M. Blanchard in favor.

The Board convened in executive session at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date