

March 23, 2015

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
MARCH 23, 2015**

Present: Mary Blanchard, Chairman
Priscilla Gimas
Mary Dowling
Craig Moran
Suzanne Kennedy, Interim Town Administrator

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

M. Blanchard offered sympathy and prayers on behalf of the Board of Selectmen to the family of Don Fairbrother, who passed away the previous week. She said that Don had served on the Zoning Board of Appeals, Charter Review Committee, Personnel Committee, Town Administrator Search Committee and Cable Advisory Committee. He was always hard working and fair, and was a gentleman. He will be missed.

Donate Life Month Proclamation

Robin Lataille and Lisa Kaminski appeared before the Board. R. Lataille informed the Board that after she had received a kidney transplant that saved her life, she started promoting organ donations. She encourages people to sign an organ donor card at the Registry of Motor Vehicles. She noted that many people die who are waiting for organs.

M. Blanchard read the proclamation into the record, declaring April 2015 as Donate Life Month in Sturbridge.

MOTION: That the Board sign the proclamation for Donate Life Month, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

M. Blanchard said that the Donate Life flag will be raised on April 1st.

Contract Approval – Town Administrator

MOTION: To approve the Town Administrator’s contract as discussed in executive session, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran
Vote: All in favor.

Vote on Summer Population for ABCC

M. Blanchard said that the Board needs to vote on the summer population for Sturbridge, to be submitted to the ABCC.

MOTION: To approve the estimated summer resident population of Sturbridge at 20,000, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran
Vote: All in favor.

Review of Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Article 28: Poll Vacancies

Lorraine Murawski, Town Clerk, appeared before the Board. M. Blanchard asked whether there have been any problems with people not showing up to work at the polls, or whether this article is preventative. L. Murawski said that it has not been a big issue, but the situation has happened. She said that accepting this provision would cover the Town legally in the event that it does happen.

MOTION: To place and support Article #28, by P. Gimas.

2nd: M. Dowling
Vote: All in favor.

C. Moran asked who appoints the poll workers. M. Blanchard said that traditionally the Town Clerk makes the poll worker appointments. L. Murawski said that there is a statute that covers that process.

Article 7: Community Preservation – Town Records Restoration

L. Murawski said that the town records were digitized, not preserved, and CDs were made of them, and now that the Town has a state-of-the-art climate controlled vault, taking remedial action on the records will preserve them for a very long time. She noted that some pages have faded to the point where they are almost unreadable. She stressed the importance of preserving these books. She has taken classes on archiving and preserving documents using acid free paper. The Community Preservation Committee told her that they would set aside \$40,000, which has been reduced to \$25,000 toward records restoration. She said that it would cost about \$160,000 to restore all of the records, of which there would be reimbursement of money.

M. Dowling thought it was a fantastic idea, and asked whether money would be appropriated from the undesignated fund balance. S. Kennedy said that there is no money that could be appropriated toward the records, as it is being used for debt service.

C. Moran asked whether \$25,000 would cover the cost of preserving the documents that are in danger. L. Murawski said that all of them are endangered, but it is necessary to start somewhere. She added that the money will take care of those that are in the worst condition. She will be making a request for money every year.

MOTION: To place and support Article #7 for Town record restoration, by P. Gimás.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #1: Town Reports

MOTION: To place and support Article #1, by P. Gimás.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #2: Community Preservation Committee Report

MOTION: To place and support Article #2, by P. Gimás.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #3: Community Preservation – Administration

MOTION: To place and support Article #3, by P. Gimás.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #4: Community Preservation – LED Light Fixtures

MOTION: To place and support Article #4, by P. Gimás.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #5: Community Preservation – Trail Assessment Software

MOTION: To place and support Article #5, by P. Gimás.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #6: Community Preservation – Old Burial Ground

MOTION: To place and support Article #6, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #8: Community Preservation – Plimpton Community Forest (purchase of 16+ acres of the Plimpton property to be used for the purpose of active recreation playing fields)

Article #9: Community Preservation – Plimpton Community Forest (purchase of 267 acres of the Plimpton property to establish a community forest)

M. Dowling felt that it would be useful for these bigger items if members of the Community Preservation Committee could be present to explain these articles. She noted that Articles #8 and #9 need more detail regarding finances and reasoning. S. Kennedy suggested a meeting with the relevant parties to clarify these articles.

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Articles #8 and #9.

Article #10: Town Budget

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Article #10 pending further information.

Article #11: Water Department

Article #12: Sewer Department

Greg Morse, DPW Director and Barbara Barry, Finance Director, appeared before the Board. B. Barry stated that there needs to be a public hearing on the water and sewer rates at the April 6th meeting which must be advertised in the newspaper.

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Articles #11 and #12 until after the public hearing on the water and sewer rates.

Article #13: Sewer Project Debt

MOTION: To place and support Article #13, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #14: Community Preservation Debt Service

MOTION: To place and support Article #14, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

M. Dowling asked about the status of debt service on projects. B. Barry said that she would get the information for the Board, to be discussed at a future meeting.

Article #15: Revolving Funds

MOTION: To place and support Article #15, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #16: Sturbridge Tourist Association

B. Barry informed the Board that the STA has not voted on this yet, and they will not have a quorum until April 15th. M. Dowling noted that they need to vote on a budget.

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Article #16.

Article #17: Betterment Committee

P. Gimas asked about the status of upgrades on the cardiac monitors. Fire Chief David Zinther said that he would find out what types of upgrades are available.

B. Barry said that the water trough account had been for watering horses, and the Town is able to spend some of that money for tree maintenance and the cemetery.

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Article #17 until April 6th.

Article #18: Capital Improvement Plan

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Article #18 pending more information.

Article #19: Capital Expenditure – (18) Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) – Debt Issuance

Chief Zinther said that the Fire Department may be the recipient of a grant to cover this.

MOTION: To place and support Article #19, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #20: Capital Expenditure – Street Sweeper – Debt Issuance

MOTION: To place and support Article #20, by P. Gimas.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: All in favor.

Article #21: Ambulance Stabilization Fund

MOTION: To place and support Article #21, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #22: Water Meter Replacement Program

MOTION: To place and support Article #22, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #23: OPEB Trust Fund

MOTION: To place and support Article #23, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Article #24: Tax Rate Relief

M. Dowling requested a breakdown of free cash, stabilization fund and reserve fund. She suggested that there be more of an explanation in the summary box.

B. Barry said that there are issues that need to be addressed at the Senior Center, including their roof. M. Dowling said that more information is needed as to why a bigger balance is needed.

S. Kennedy said that the boiler system at the Senior Center doesn't work right, and hasn't for years. She noted that this is something that the new Town Administrator will have to address. B. Barry said that taxes have been high because of all of the major projects in the Town, and she is sensitive to that.

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Article #24.

Article #25: Vehicle Replacement

M. Blanchard did not think that this was the proper procedure, and said that it is not good to set a precedent. She said that it had gone through the Capital Improvement Committee and had been rejected; now it is coming forward as an article, which is not the policy of the Town.

B. Barry said that the Fire Chief asked her if he could place an article on the warrant, and she would never tell a department head not to do it.

MOTION: Not to place Article #25 on the warrant, by P. Gimas.

2nd: M. Blanchard

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

MOTION: To place Article #25 on the warrant, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

The motion failed. Article #25 was not placed on the warrant.

C. Moran asked about the status of the new brush truck. Chief Zinther said that hopefully it will arrive by the end of April.

M. Blanchard said that the Board needs the number to be transferred to the Public Safety Complex Purchase of Services account for an engineering firm to remedy the drainage problems. S. Kennedy suggested contacting the Town Engineer to provide a number. She noted that she would provide the Special Town Meeting warrant to the Board by April 15th. B. Barry suggested putting it on the Special Town Meeting warrant so that the work could begin right after July 1, 2015. She could transfer money from free cash to the capital improvement account to cover it. The Board agreed.

Article 26: Transfer of Funds – Purchase of Ambulance

Chief Zinther explained that the new ambulance will cost between \$220,000 - \$230,000 less the trade-in for the 2005 vehicle. He did not have the number of the trade-in value. C. Moran noted that there is money in the stabilization fund that could be used. B. Barry said that there is \$90,000 in the stabilization fund, plus \$50,000 from another article. Chief Zinther said that the 2005 ambulance is two years past replacement.

MOTION: To place and support Article #26, by M. Dowling.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: All in favor.

Article #29: Community Preservation – Flag Restoration

S. Kennedy said that the CPC may not know until April 8th whether they will go ahead with this article. She suggested that the Board wait to hear back from the CPC. It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Article #29.

Article #30: 8 Brookfield Road – Code Compliance Renovation

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Article #30.

Article #31: Town Owned Buildings – Roof Renovations

It was the consensus of the Board to hold action on Article #31.

Article #32: Petition for Article for Annual Town Meeting: Charter Change – Date of Town Meeting

M. Blanchard suggested that S. Kennedy talk to Arnold Wilson of the Finance Committee regarding this process.

M. Dowling noted that the date of the Town Meeting had been changed to June because the budget would be completed by then. She said that Town Meeting attendance would be better in April; also, the new Selectmen would start in April.

MOTION: To place and support Article #32, by M. Dowling.

2nd: M. Blanchard

Vote: All in favor.

Article #33: Petition for Article for Annual Town Meeting: Acceptance of MGL Ch. 41, Section 19K

MOTION: To place and support Article #33, by M. Dowling

There was no second.

MOTION: To place Article #33, by M. Dowling

2nd: P. Gimás

Vote: All in favor.

M. Dowling noted that “2/3 vote required” should be added to the article heading.

Article #34: Petition for Article for Annual Town Meeting: General Bylaw Amendment – Town Meeting

M. Blanchard said that she was not in support of this article. P. Gimás agreed, and said that this article would prevent making bylaw and charter changes at a Special Town Meeting. M. Dowling said that policy matters should be handled on a case by case basis.

MOTION: To place Article #34, by M. Dowling.

2nd: P. Gimás

Vote: All in favor.

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S. Kennedy asked what the next step would be. M. Blanchard said that the Finance Committee will go through the warrant and provide their recommendations, then the Town will vote on it. M. Dowling added that making a motion to place an article on the warrant (or not) is the biggest power that the Board of Selectmen has.

M. Blanchard said that at the meeting of April 6th the Board will start going through the budget line items.

MOTION: To adjourn, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date