

November 2, 2015

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 2, 2015**

Present: Mary Blanchard, Chairman
Priscilla Gimas
Mary Dowling
Craig Moran
Michael Suprenant
Leon Gaumont, Jr., Town Administrator

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. following the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MOTION: To convene in executive session under MGL Chapter 30A, §21(a), #6:
To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property;
to reconvene in open session, by M. Dowling.**

2nd: C. Moran

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

The Board convened in executive session at 6:01 p.m.

The Board reconvened in open session at 6:45 p.m.

Public Service Announcements

M. Blanchard read the proclamation for World Pancreatic Cancer Day into the record.

MOTION: To recognize World Pancreatic Cancer Day, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

M. Blanchard announced Holiday Homespun Bazaar at the Senior Center on Saturday, December 5th 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

M. Blanchard thanked the Fire Department and Lions Club for sponsoring the Horribles Parade on the Town Common on Halloween.

Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes regarding the regional dispatch discussion on October 19, 2015 submitted by L. Gaumond, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

The Board decided to hold the minutes of October 19, 2015 pending some additional information regarding the discussion about the shortfall.

Request for Abatement of 2015 Liquor License Fee for the Barn at Wight Farm

Dan Gonya, General Manager of Table 3 Restaurant Group appeared before the Board. He requested that the Board pro rate the fee paid to the Town for the 2015 liquor license for the Barn at Wight Farm, as there are only two months left in the year. He noted that the \$2,000 fee for their 2016 license will be paid shortly.

M. Blanchard said that the license fee breaks down to \$500 per quarter, and suggested that he pay \$500 for the 2015 license.

MOTION: To grant the request for the Barn at Wight Farm for a pro-rated license fee of \$500 for their 2015 liquor license, by P. Gimas.

2nd: M. Suprenant

Vote: All in favor.

Review of the Role of the Trails Committee

L. Gaumond said that this issue is in response to the Town Administrator's Goal #7. He submitted to the Board a written recommendation regarding the oversight of the Trails Committee. He had spent some time meeting with Glenn Colburn, Tom Chamberland, Brandon Goodwin, David Barnicle, Ed Goodwin and Gary Staub over the past few months. He noted that the Trails Committee has the need to operate with the assistance and support of the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Department of Public Works and the Conservation Commission. He said that most of the properties which house the trails are under the care and custody of the Conservation Commission. David Barnicle is currently the Conservation Commission's liaison to the Trails Committee.

L. Gaumond said that he is comfortable with maintaining his involvement with the Trails Committee. M. Dowling said that she had been in favor of the Conservation Agent

overseeing the Trails Committee, but she would accept the recommendation of L. Gaumond, given his commitment to provide them with guidance and support. L. Gaumond said that the trails in the Town of Sturbridge should be marketed better, as they are a great attraction and resource for hiking. M. Blanchard agreed. It was the consensus of the Board that L. Gaumond continues his involvement with the Trails Committee.

Town Administrator's Update

- **RFP for Leadmine Road Communications Tower**

L. Gaumond informed the Board that the Request For Proposals has been advertised in the Central Register and the local newspaper. A pre-bid meeting will be held on November 20th at 2:00 p.m. at Town Hall. The bid opening will be held on December 17th, and he will bring the responses and a recommendation to the Board at that time.

- **Agreement with the Sturbridge Police Association**

L. Gaumond said that there was a Memorandum of Understanding, but it had not been incorporated into a master contract. He has completed it for final ratification, with three originals for the Board to sign. One will be kept in the Town Administrator's office, one will be given to the Town Accountant, and one will be sent to the union.

MOTION: That the Board sign the agreement with the Police Association as previously voted upon, by P. Gimas.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: Four in favor; M. Suprenant abstained.

- **Declare Surplus Equipment**

L. Gaumond read the list of items to be declared as surplus equipment by the Board of Selectmen.

C. Moran asked about the status of police cruisers. L. Gaumond said that he would look into it.

M. Suprenant asked whether the used tires were within the date range specified by MassDOT, and said that if they are older than the limit, they should be scrapped. He expressed concern about liability if an older tire is sold, and then something happened. C. Moran noted that everything on the surplus list is sold "as is."

MOTION: To declare these items as surplus, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

- **Adoption of Updated Fiscal Policies**

L. Gaumond said that one of the goals that he assigned to the Finance Director was to review and recommend updates to the Town's fiscal policies which have not been updated in a few years. Barbara Barry, Finance Director, appeared before the Board.

M. Dowling requested an explanation of the changes. L. Gaumond said that a lot of the changes are basically clarifications and corrections of things that are not being done in the Town, with guidelines and recommendations.

L. Gaumond said that a new clause had been added to the first page: "recognizing that Town Meeting may vote as it determines in the best interest of the Town and outside of the goals stated in these policies."

On page 2, a few changes were made to clarify the wording and make it technically accurate.

On page 3, B. Barry said that the reserves have been changed from 10% to 15%; L. Gaumond added that under section 4.2 they changed the stabilization fund balance from 3%-7% to 7%-10%. M. Dowling felt that 15% was high, and suggested giving residents more tax relief before increasing the fiscal policy to 15%. She noted that the Town's bond rating is very good, and the Town has invested in a lot of infrastructure. She asked why it was necessary to go up 5% on the reserves. L. Gaumond said that they are not talking necessarily about free cash; of the \$3 million, a third of it is left over cash from the previous year. M. Dowling did not think it should go that high in the policy. P. Gimás agreed.

B. Barry said that it was the Finance Committee that highlighted that we should look at increasing the reserves. She said that the more money that can be set aside in the stabilization fund the better, as it benefits the taxpayers. She said that when there needs to be an equipment purchase or when new vehicles are needed, it would then be possible to tap into this fund, instead of having to raise taxes or borrow the money to pay for them. It provides an opportunity to buy something outright. She stressed that it is another mechanism to offer relief to the taxpayers.

M. Dowling noted that the Board had never taken a vote on the increase, and when Suzanne Kennedy had recommended an increase, M. Dowling was not aware that it was going to be a 50% increase. B. Barry said that in years when it is possible, they

could take that money and set it aside in stabilization. She said that in one year they could meet the goal.

M. Dowling said that it also affects what is given for tax relief. She noted that the 15% will be met before giving tax relief. She said that the Town's bond rating is very good and the Town is doing very well.

L. Gaumond said that many of the progressive towns are using a higher number. C. Moran said that the Town has picked up a lot of assets which must be taken care of, and these assets have been accumulated because of the growth of the Town. He said that while 15% is a little high, it is necessary to keep the reserves going.

M. Suprenant said that at the Mass. Selectmen's Association seminar he had attended, they said that many towns are increasing their stabilization funds up to 10%. He said that the cost of the capital items that are needed have increased faster than the general budgets of communities, so they have increased their maximum stabilization.

P. Gimas said that residents understand the situation, but want to know how they will be helped. She suggested reducing it to 11% or 12%. M. Dowling said that as the general fund gets bigger, even maintaining the current fiscal policy the percentage grows with the budget. She recommended 10% - 12%.

L. Gaumond said that he and B. Barry have presented their recommendations, and it is up to the Board.

MOTION: That the proposed Comprehensive Fiscal Management Policies being recommended by the Town Administrator and Finance Director contain the following changes: in Section #2 to decrease at the upper range to 12% and which recommends a 2% increase, by M. Dowling

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Three in favor; M. Blanchard and M. Suprenant opposed.

The Board further reviewed and discussed numerous proposed changes in wording and clarifications in the Comprehensive Fiscal Management Policies.

M. Suprenant requested a reasonable estimate on how much is being spent each year on capital. L. Gaumond said that \$390,619 was spent in the past year just in the capital article alone. L. Gaumond said that he and B. Barry have identified a deficiency in the operation in that they have not been following the policy of 1 ½%. Currently they have

been funding most of the capital items through free cash. M. Suprenant said that 1.5% for capital would be a sounder policy than ½ %. He stressed the importance of having some money dedicated to capital. M. Dowling noted that there has never been a capital projects fund.

L. Gaumond said that he would submit a revised version of the policies to the Board, and the Board could vote on it at the next meeting.

- **Adoption of Computer/Electronic Equipment Policy**

L. Gaumond informed the Board that one of the policy deficiencies in Sturbridge is the lack of a computer usage/electronic device policy. The Town had been looking at it last year but had not moved forward on it. He and B. Barry prepared and reviewed a draft policy for the Board to consider.

L. Gaumond said that no one who uses the Town equipment should expect any level of privacy. Emails that are sent on Town emails are public records. The policy states what is prohibited. It is standard and follows a MIIA approved policy, with language that they recommend. It will be given to every employee, and they will be asked to sign the confirmation of receipt for it.

C. Moran noticed that there is nothing mentioned in it about thumb drives that are not authorized by the Town. He said that they could corrupt the system, and information could be downloaded onto them. L. Gaumond said that the use of thumb drives is not stated in the policy, but he will consider it. He said that some people utilize thumb drives to take work home.

M. Dowling said that it is great to have a policy, and stressed the need to clearly explain that users should not have any expectation that their emails will remain private. L. Gaumond said that this could be put in bold and underlined for emphasis.

L. Gaumond said that he will see about how MIIA and other towns allow the use of thumb drives. M. Suprenant said that there should be something about deleting things that could be useful to the Town. P. Gimas suggested a reference to the use of social media. C. Moran suggested putting a hold on this matter until the Town Administrator explores these issues further.

- **Appointment to the Historical Commission**

L. Gaumond requested the Board's concurrence with the appointment of Penny McCreary to the Historical Commission.

MOTION: To concur with the appointment of Penny McCreary to the Historical Commission, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

- **Appointment to the Senior Municipal Service Program**

MOTION: To appoint Modestina Galati to the Senior Municipal Service Program, to work at the Senior Center, by P. Gimas.

2nd: M. Suprenant

Vote: All in favor.

M. Blanchard requested a summary of how many people are working at the Senior Center under this program and what they are doing.

- **Resignation of Christopher Mattioli from the ZBA**

MOTION: To accept the resignation of Christopher Mattioli from the ZBA, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

L. Gaumont encouraged residents who are interested in serving on the ZBA to submit a letter to him to fill the position until the April election.

- **BOS Retreat**

L. Gaumont asked the Board if they would be interested in having a retreat to talk about goal setting and things to be focused on next year. The Board agreed. L. Gaumont said that it will be posted as a Board of Selectmen meeting.

- **Appointment to the Conservation Commission**

MOTION: To concur with the appointment of Steven Chidester to the Conservation Commission, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: All in favor.

Correspondence

M. Dowling read the correspondence list into the record.

Old Business

P. Gimás suggested that the Board meet on December 7th and 14th instead of during Christmas week. It was the consensus of the Board to meet on the suggested dates.

New Business

M. Dowling thanked L. Gaumond for finishing the goal regarding the Trails Committee so quickly, and for coming up with an email policy.

L. Gaumond said that the Collins Center is conducting the review of the Personnel Policy and has interviewed department heads. They will be coming forward with their recommendations for changes in the policy. L. Gaumond will bring it to the Personnel Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

M. Dowling commented that people have told her how pleased they are with L. Gaumond as Town Administrator.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date