

December 7, 2015

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
DECEMBER 7, 2015**

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

Mary Dowling was absent.

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

Public Service Announcements

M. Suprenant spoke in remembrance of the people in San Bernardino who had passed away as the result of a terrorist attack.

M. Blanchard announced that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Monday, December 14th, as opposed to the 21st.

Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of November 16, 2015 as amended, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

Wayfinding Forum

Jean Bubon, Town Planner, introduced the members of the Wayfinding Committee: Heather Hart, Brian Amedy, Fran O'Connell, Alix McNitt, Priscilla Gimas and Leon Gaumond, Jr. Missing members were Diane Trapasso and Patrick Sweeney.

J. Bubon explained that the committee had addressed various issues regarding signage in the Town. She introduced Mark Faverman to the Board, who had designed the new proposed signs, and requested the Board's support for the design. She said that the Design Review Committee had approved the design.

Mark Faverman said that he and the Wayfinding Committee had created a brand for the community, which is the essence of the character of the community. He narrated the video presentation to the Board. The signs will be in gold, black and white, and depict a unique weather vane.

M. Suprenant suggested that they obtain the approval of MassDOT, as most of the signs will be located along state highways and will probably require their approval. J. Bubon said that they have not gone back to MassDOT with the color scheme, but they will do so when the entire package is complete. She noted that many of the signs will be located on private property. They plan to develop a map of where the signs are to go.

MOTION: That the Board support the results of the Wayfinding Committee and encourage them to go forward with the mapping, and to get the necessary approvals for the signs, by M. Suprenant.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

Appointment of Full-Time Dispatcher Patricia Lupacchino

Police Chief Thomas Ford introduced Patricia Lupacchino, and informed the Board of her qualifications and experience.

MOTION: To concur with the appointment of Patricia Lupacchino to the position of Full-Time Dispatcher effective December 8, 2015 at a starting rate of \$19.61 per hour, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

Appointment of Part-Time Police Officer Paul Janson

Police Chief Thomas Ford introduced Paul Janson to the Board, and read his credentials and experience. All of his testing had been completed successfully.

MOTION: To concur with the appointment of Paul Janson to the position of Part-Time Police Officer effective on December 8, 2015 at a starting rate of pay of \$24.08 per hour, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

Department Head Report

Fire Chief David Zinther reviewed his report with the Board. He informed the Board that he had signed the contract for the ambulance, which will cost \$213,000 with the trade-in, and he is expecting delivery in March 2016.

M. Blanchard noted that on October 1, 2015 there were two letters of praise for Fire Department services.

Regarding hydrants, Veolia has serviced all of the fire hydrants for the winter. M. Blanchard encouraged people to clear hydrants of snow that are in front of their property following a snowstorm. C. Moran asked if there was a procedure in place to notify the Fire Department regarding hydrants. Chief Zinther said that they would notify Veolia immediately if they have to use any hydrants.

Chief Zinther said that in January 2016 he will be coming in to request appointment of a new full-time Firefighter/Paramedic.

Fire Chief David Zinther: Discussion of Proposed Bylaw

Chief Zinther requested the Board's support for his request for two General Bylaw changes to be included on the next Town Meeting warrant. He said that the Fire Department has no authority to impose fines for individuals who do not obtain a permit, or otherwise violate the rules with respect to open burning. He had spoken with both the Fire Inspector and the Police Chief, and learned that the Town cannot currently invoke any type of fines, but with respect to a violation of the burning rules, they do have the right to revoke the permit in its entirety. To be able to invoke such fines would require the adoption of new language with respect to violations for such activities, and would fall into either Chapter 2 or Chapter 7 of the current Town bylaws. He added that the money collected from the fines would go into the general fund.

Chief Zinther requested consideration for an amendment to Chapter 8 within Section 8.47, as it only references alarms associated with the Police Department. After speaking to Chief Ford, he indicated that false alarms such as burglar, entry, etc. that are deemed as errant can be fined, but alarms associated with the Fire Department cannot. Chief Zinther suggested including language that references false fire alarms in the same manner. He said that one of the issues that can develop, and which this bylaw would help to enforce, is for the property owner to properly maintain the system in order to limit false alarms. If the property owner does not adopt an annual maintenance service, or does not monitor the system components regularly, it can lead to false

alarms. This most usually is the result of poor housekeeping issues, such as dirt, dust, etc. getting into the detectors and sending an alarm. This amendment would also require changes to several of the categories within Chapter 8, which would be as simple as the inclusion of the words "Fire Chief" or "Fire Department."

C. Moran asked whether the Fire Department could inspect alarms to see if they are active. Chief Zinther said that if an errant alarm comes in and the owner can't reset it, it is put on telephone alert. He noted that they have no way of knowing if someone takes their alarm off line. They are checked to make sure they are functioning and are in place. C. Moran asked whether it is required that every business have a fire alarm. Chief Zinther said that if the public is coming in and out of the building they would need a fire alarm, and the Fire Department tests them to make sure they are functioning.

L. Gaumond considered the suggestion for the bylaw to be a good public policy decision for the Town, and suggested that it be put on an upcoming Town Meeting warrant.

Fire Chief David Zinther: Request for a Vehicle

Chief Zinther informed the Board that the 2000 Ford Expedition was recently taken to the state safety lane for its annual inspection and was deemed as unsafe and received a "failed" status. He said that current estimates to repair this vehicle and bring it back to a compliant level are in excess of \$11,000, which far exceeds the current value of this vehicle (which is just over \$1,300). He had originally requested this vehicle to be replaced as part of the FY16 budget process, but it failed to receive support from the Capital Committee. There had been several mechanical issues at the end of calendar year 2014.

Chief Zinther said that the vehicle was originally purchased as the Fire Chief's vehicle in 2000. In 2001, due to age and the concerns of its ability to be considered reliable, it was repurposed to be used primarily for the Fire Inspector, although it was also utilized for other functions, including responding to secondary ambulance calls, transportation to training classes and, if necessary, to serve as an alternate vehicle for the Fire Chief.

Chief Zinther noted that the 1997 Ford pickup utility truck also failed the State Inspection. Cited in the report were similar issues to that of the 2000 Ford, with the most significant issues surrounding corrosion and rot of the body and underside components. Estimates received for just the body work are in excess of \$4,000. The report also cited some issues with the suspension and steering, which although not significant, would probably add an additional \$500 to the overall costs. The value of this vehicle is estimated at about \$3,900.

Chief Zinther said that having lost the use of both of these vehicles has put him in a most desperate situation. There is not another utility type of vehicle in his fleet to carry out the daily needs of the Fire Department. He has been considering and researching various options for a replacement vehicle. He felt that the most appropriate direction to pursue would be to purchase a new Ford Explorer, which is one model size smaller than the 2000 Ford Expedition, but still well capable to providing the same functions as the current vehicle. Preliminary estimates to purchase this vehicle through the State Purchasing program is about \$35,000. He noted that to suggest they look at an even smaller vehicle would limit its ability to serve in multiple capacities. He stressed that in dealing with Emergency Services, there needs to be a certain amount of dependency on equipment, and to not replace this vehicle with something that is capable of performing in a similar capacity causes a loss of their ability to perform their duties and services effectively. He submitted to the Board a list of their current fleet, along with information related to age, mileage and functions.

C. Moran and M. Suprenant supported the addition of a response vehicle for the Fire Department. M. Blanchard expressed reservations based upon the fact that there are other vehicles that could be used, and noted that there is a process of having the Capital Committee review such requests.

MOTION: To support the Chief's request for a new 2016 Ford Explorer with money to be appropriated at the next Town Meeting, by C. Moran.
2nd: M. Suprenant
Vote: C. Moran and M. Suprenant in favor; P. Gimas and M. Blanchard opposed; M. Dowling was absent.

The motion failed.

Updates to Personnel Classification Plan

L. Gaumond presented the Board with the job description for the Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief for their approval.

MOTION: To approve the job description for the Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief at Grade 3, by P. Gimas.
2nd: C. Moran
Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

Department Head Report

Lynne Girouard, Recreation Director, reviewed her report with the Board. She said that the Tree Lighting Ceremony was held on the Town Common last weekend and was well attended. The New York City bus trip had also been well attended.

Regarding the skate park, L. Girouard said that no one had bid on the ramps, so three of the ramps were donated to the Town of Southbridge, and the remaining ones will be disassembled by DPW. They will keep the area open for active play.

L. Girouard said that the Recreation Committee will be going forward with a request for some trash cans and picnic tables to be used by the Recreation Program people.

L. Girouard said that they will be putting up the skating rink on the Town Common for use over the winter months. Trees were decorated on the Heins property.

Recreation Committee: 367 New Boston Road

Lynne Girouard represented the Recreation Committee. L. Gaumont informed the Board about the request from the Recreation Committee to obtain the property at 367 New Boston Road, which has been taken through tax title. Due to the proximity to the Plimpton property, the Recreation Committee is interested in the parcel.

C. Moran asked about the size of the Plimpton property. L. Girouard said that it is 300 acres, and 15 acres could be used for various recreational purposes including bike trails and other sports.

M. Blanchard added that the property at 367 New Boston Road is valued at about \$90,000. She said that she would not support turning it over to the Recreation Committee at this time, without a definite plan in place. She noted that the first decision would be whether or not to keep the property.

M. Suprenant asked whether there was a master plan for recreation to indicate how many fields would be needed in the future. L. Girouard said that there is a master plan for recreation which includes the Town Barn fields which will have a multi-purpose field and a Little League field. She noted that there is acreage at the Recreation Area to have an American Major League baseball field. Turner field could become a softball field. She said that those properties could be revamped for parking and fields.

C. Moran asked about the status of the field between Burgess Elementary School and B.T.'s Smokehouse. L. Girouard said that it is a school field, governed by the School Department.

L. Girouard said that she had toured the building at 8 Brookfield Road, and thought that it would make a great location for the cable access studio and for recreational programs to utilize it for concerts and other programs on rainy days. It could also be used for after school programs, weekend programs, for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts meetings, and for additional meeting rooms for municipal departments. She said that the Library could also make use of the building, as they just have a small room at the Joshua Hyde Library for their activities. It is centrally located, making it convenient for classes and events. P. Gimas asked if there is sufficient parking. L. Girouard said that people could drop off their children there and pick them up afterwards. She said that while the Senior Center is being renovated, activities for seniors could be held there. M. Suprenant said that behind the building there is a substantial area which could be used for parking with room for 60-70 vehicles. He noted that parking should not be an issue at 8 Brookfield Road.

It was the consensus of the Board to keep the matter under advisement. L. Girouard thanked the Selectmen for their consideration.

Old Sturbridge Village – Change of Directors

Renee Chambers, Alexis Conte and Brian Amedy appeared before the Board, to represent Old Sturbridge Village. They requested the Board's approval for a change to their Board of Directors relating to their liquor license.

MOTION: To approve the Change of Directors for Old Sturbridge Village, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

Goal Update for 8 Brookfield Road

L. Gaumond submitted a memo to the Board for review as part of his annual goals for the year. Based upon his review of 8 Brookfield Road, his recommendation was as follows:

- 1) That the Selectmen vote to seek an appropriation of roughly \$4,000 at the Special Town Meeting this winter to perform a hazardous materials analysis for 8

Brookfield Road, and to prepare a cost estimate for abatement of the hazardous materials.

- 2) That the Selectmen vote to retain the property at 8 Brookfield Road and to authorize the Town Administrator to begin to develop a proposal for the renovation of the building for municipal purposes.

L. Gaumond said that the building is structurally sound, and there might be code and mechanical improvements that could be made for less than the estimated amount of money. He noted that it would be unlikely to find a building to purchase for less than \$400,000. C. Moran said that the location of the regional dispatching is unknown, and to try to rebuild that structure would be a waste. P. Gimmas agreed, and expressed the need for a community center. She would rather see the Town invest half a million dollars in something of that nature that could serve more people than this building, which should be knocked down.

M. Suprenant said that the conclusion of the report is that it would be worthwhile to renovate the building, and noted that it would cost less money to renovate the building than to build a new one. He said that additional parking should be included as well.

MOTION: To retain the property at 8 Brookfield Road and seek an appropriation of roughly \$4,000 at the Special Town Meeting this winter to perform a hazardous materials analysis for 8 Brookfield Road, and to prepare a cost estimate for abatement of the hazardous materials, by C. Moran.

2nd: P. Gimmas

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

MOTION: To retain the property at 8 Brookfield Road and to authorize the Town Administrator to begin to develop a proposal for the renovation of the building, by C. Moran.

2nd: P. Gimmas

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

Town Administrator's Update

- **Ten Town Comparison – Goal Update**

L. Gaumond submitted a memo to the Board regarding his review of the 10 town comparisons as part of his annual goals for the year. He requested the Board's feedback.

L. Gaumond noted that communities use comparative data to compare salary data to ensure that the Town is paying its employees fairly; however, that is not the only reason to choose comparative communities. He noted that the ICMA said, "Comparison with others provides an external perspective on your performance and can be the basis for establishing performance benchmarks. Perhaps the greatest value is the opportunity to identify and adopt management practices that have been employed in cities and counties with high levels of performance."

L. Gaumond said that there are some positions which warrant unique reviews for comparison purposes. Some positions which fall into this category are some of the higher salaried positions and the positions that greatly vary from town to town, depending upon each Town's form of government, such as the position of Town Clerk. This position could be elected or appointed, full-time or part-time, and can even be combined with other positions. L. Gaumond once worked in a community where the Town Clerk, Collector and Treasurer were all the same person. He said that the Town Boards and Committees who use this information should recognize that some positions will not easily translate from town to town, and Sturbridge should be open to looking at other different communities as well for those positions. He said that choosing comparative communities should be done to be useful for the majority of the positions in the community.

Sturbridge previously used the following communities for comparative purposes: Ashland, Charlton, Grafton, Millbury, Northbridge, Orleans, Oxford, Plainville, Southborough and Wrentham.

L. Gaumond outreached to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services, and they provided him with an exhaustive analysis using the following factors for comparison: population density, total budget, per capita EQV (Equalized Valuation per Capita), income data, average single family tax bills, bond rating and various commercial and industrial tax base factors.

The DLS provided the Town with the following communities for comparative purposes: Carver, Douglas, Lunenburg, Middleton, Plainville, Sterling, Sutton and Tynsborough.

After reviewing the materials, L. Gaumond proposed a melding of the list of communities provided by the DLS and some of the more nearby communities for the Board's consideration: Carver, Charlton, Douglas, Lunenburg, Middleton, Millbury, Oxford, Plainville, Southborough, Sutton and Wrentham. This grouping should provide the Town with comparative data which should be relevant for most purposes. He requested the Board's feedback which he will bring back to the Personnel Committee.

C. Moran noted that the Town of Plainville now has a casino, so its numbers will change. M. Suprenant noticed that there were no communities on the list from the west. L. Gaumond said that this is more of an art form than a science. C. Moran said that five of the ten towns are in Worcester County.

Peter Zeh, 42 Old Farm Road, said that Sturbridge should be compared to its surrounding towns. M. Blanchard said that the surrounding towns are totally different and not comparable to Sturbridge. She explained that L. Gaumond is trying to change the list by working with the Personnel Committee and Finance Committee.

M. Blanchard said that the Board will review and give feedback to the Town Administrator.

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

MOTION: To concur with the appointment of Arthur Ouimet to the Veterans Municipal Service Program, for work in any department, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

- **Signature Authority**

L. Gaumond said that when he was appointed as the Town Administrator, the Board of Selectmen should have named him as a signatory for payrolls and payables. He requested that the Board move to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the payable and payroll warrants on behalf of the Town and to sign the authorization.

MOTION: So moved, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

- **Reappointments to the Master Plan Implementation Committee**

MOTION: To concur with the appointment of Sandra Gibson-Quigly to the Master Plan Implementation Committee, by P. Gimas.

2nd: M. Suprenant

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

MOTION: To concur with the appointment of Heather Hart to the Master Plan Implementation Committee, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

- Designate Voting Member for MMA and MIIA Annual Meetings

MOTION: That Mary Blanchard be the designated voting member for the MMA and MIIA Annual Meetings, by P. Gimas.

2nd: M. Suprenant

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

- Update to List of Special Municipal Employees

L. Gaumond submitted to the Board a memo and updated list of Special Municipal Employees. He noted that this list has not been reviewed since 2005.

MOTION: To accept the recommendation of the Town Administrator, and approve the list of Special Municipal Employees as follows:

TOWN OF STURBRIDGE
SPECIAL MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES
December 7, 2015

Town Moderator
Board of Selectmen
Finance Committee
Board of Assessors
Planning Board
Zoning Board of Appeals
Board of Health
Council on Aging
Joshua Hyde Library Board of Trustees
Recreation Committee
Conservation Commission
Historical Commission
Sturbridge Housing Partnership
Personnel Policy Committee
Design Review Committee
Street Light Committee
Sturbridge Cultural Council
Sturbridge School Committee

Safety Committee
Insurance Study Committee
Cable Advisory Committee
Local Emergency Planning Committee
Board of Registrars
Betterment Committee
Capital Planning Committee
Constables
Open Space Committee
Community Preservation Committee
Traffic Safety Committee
Tree Warden Advisory Committee

The following part-time employees that do not work over 800 hours per year:

Finance Committee Clerk
Part-Time Police Dispatchers
Call Firemen (that work less than 800 hours)
Electric Inspector
Asst. Electric Inspector
Sealer of Weights & Measures
Tree Warden
Board of Health Clerk
Town Engineer
Barn Inspector
Plumbing Inspector
Veteran Services Director
Part-Time Council on Aging Employees
Part-Time Library Employees
Part-Time Parks/Recreation Employees
Part-Time and Seasonal DPW Employees
Part-Time Recycling Center Employees/Laborers
BoH Temporary Event Inspectors
BoH Special Inspectors
BoH Hazmat Managers
BoH Hazmat Laborers

and remove the Civil Defense Director, by M. Suprenant.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

- Participation in Commonwealth Compact Program

L. Gaumond informed the Board that the Governor has recently unveiled the Commonwealth Compact Program. He said it is important for the Town to be a participant in the program, especially to continue to be able to apply for grants in the future. After discussing this with the Town Department Heads, he presented the following suggestions: **Best practice #1: Parking/trolley planning.** The Town of Sturbridge seeks a feasibility analysis for implementation of seasonal trolley service and to identify a fixed route for this service as well as recommendations on operational strategies, operating costs and funding strategies. The shuttle service could be used to transport tourists and residents through the Commercial Tourist District between Old Sturbridge Village, hotels, restaurants, shops and other local destinations within the community, such as the Historic Commercial District and Town Common area. A properly marketed and branded seasonal shuttle could be an economic stimulus tool. It could reduce congestion, promote the CTD and HCD as destinations and reduce parking demand in these areas. **Best practice #2: Information technology.** The Town of Sturbridge seeks to revamp its Town website, increasing citizen involvement and making the data more easily accessible by the citizens of Sturbridge. If the Selectmen were agreeable with this approach, L. Gaumond will complete the necessary paperwork to schedule the Lt. Governor to come to Sturbridge for the public signing event.

MOTION: So moved, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

- **Resignations from the Council on Aging and Conservation Commission**

MOTION: To accept the resignations of Catherine Coderre and Betty Sigler from the Council on Aging, and Calvin Montigny from the Conservation Commission with regret, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

- **NextSun Agreement Assignment of Financing**

L. Gaumond informed the Board that the final item to be addressed on the NextSun Agreement is to sign the Assignment of Financing to SL MA Solar Inc. to begin the process. He noted that this document has been reviewed by Town Counsel and Beth Greenblatt and is in order.

MOTION: To authorize the Board to sign the Assignment of Financing document, by M. Suprenant.

2nd: P. Gimas

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

- **Estimated Seasonal Population of Sturbridge for the ABCC**

MOTION: To authorize the Board to sign the Estimated Seasonal Population document for the ABCC, to be estimated at 20,000, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

Correspondence

P. Gimas read the correspondence list into the record.

L. Gaumond explained that there had been some technical difficulties with the audio broadcast at the beginning of the meeting, and apologized to the public.

Old Business

C. Moran asked when the Town would see the benefit of reduced energy costs per Blue Wave Capital. L. Gaumond said that the budget has not been done yet. He has been asking some tough questions of the people involved in this project. C. Moran asked whether the Town had any recourse if Blue Wave does not perform. He asked L. Gaumond to find out what is going on with them. P. Gimas said that they had been consistent and had been vetted. C. Moran asked L. Gaumond to check with Town Counsel about what should be done about this situation. L. Gaumond noted that Blue Wave had paid permitting fees to the Town, and negotiations were paid through a grant, not by the Town. M. Suprenant agreed that the Board needs an update on what is going on.

M. Blanchard asked if there was any more information on the Town Common Study Committee regarding a public hearing. L. Gaumond said that he had spoken with Greg Morse, DPW Director, who indicated that a public hearing is not required.

M. Blanchard said that the Town was supposed to get an update on the monies and net metering credits received from Monson, as Sturbridge is the host community. L. Gaumond said that he receives reports every month, and will pass them on to the Board.

New Business

C. Moran expressed the need for another car for the Fire Chief. M. Blanchard said that the Fire Chief had gotten false information about a warrant article; he understands the process now. The Capital Review Committee vets every request.

MOTION: To adjourn, by P. Gimas.

2nd: C. Moran

Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling was absent.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date