

March 7, 2016

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES  
MARCH 7, 2016**

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

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

**Public Service Announcements**

M. Blanchard announced that the Water Department will be flushing water mains to remove sediments that can cause brown and black water complaints. The flushing will take place from Tuesday March 8, 2016 until Friday May 6, 2016 beginning at 8:00 a.m. and finishing by 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday each day. All customers should be aware that water main flushing can cause some temporary water discoloration throughout the community. The discoloration comes from small particles of iron and manganese that are removed from the pipe walls. The discoloration is temporary and typically clears in four to five hours. It is recommended that residents check the water before use, especially prior to doing laundry. Do not try to bleach stained clothes, as this will set the stain permanently. Customers can call the Water Department at 508-347-2513 for further assistance.

**Minutes**

**MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 1, 2016 as amended, by P. Gimas.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Moran**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**Presentation of Certificates**

Fire Chief David Zinther appeared before the Board to present certificates to the firefighters from Sturbridge and Southbridge for their assistance in the Publick House fire on January 10, 2016. He noted that it had been a complex fire situation involving the Publick House and several parked cars. The lives of three civilians had been saved. The following firefighters were presented with certificates: from Southbridge - Lt. Jason Cantera, Lt. Keith Nichols, Firefighters Thomas Edwards and Christopher Wilson; from

Sturbridge - Lt. John Marinelli, Firefighters Jon McNamara, Gordon Holstrom, Robert Moynagh, and Jason Kelly.

### **Department Head Reports**

Fire Chief David Zinther reviewed his report with the Board. He said that he had gone to North Attleboro to see the new ambulance, which should be completed by the end of March.

Chief Zinther said that they have been working on phase 3 of the fire hydrant program. He noted that the relay pump tanker could get water from lakes or streams if necessary. He said that they have contacted all of the private hydrant owners to inform them that Veolia will no longer service the private hydrants starting this year.

Shane Moody, Veolia Water North America, reviewed his report with the Board. He said that since this has been a mild winter, they have gotten caught up on a lot of maintenance things. He noted that they will start flushing hydrants on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding the meter program, S. Moody said that there are 93 residential meters left, and 35 commercial meters left to do. He said that the meters will be read in April.

C. Moran asked about the status of broken pipes. S. Moody said that about six houses had some problems. They had to replace two frozen meters.

S. Moody said that under the E1 regulations, they have the right to bill for pumps. They need to establish a billing rate so that everyone gets billed consistently. He noted that the E1 calls are down.

**MOTION: To establish the rates as follows: \$24.84 regular; \$37.26 overtime; \$150 for the pumper truck, by P. Gimás.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in favor.**

M. Suprenant stated that the Annual Statistical Report is a good source of statistical information.

M. Dowling asked whether some of the pipes need to be updated. S. Moody said that the Town would have to borrow money and incur debt to replace pipes, and right now is not the time to raise rates and borrow money. He suggested weighing the cost of repairing a water main break vs. the cost of upgrading the pipes. G. Morse said that there are approximately 13-20 breaks per year, most of them related to sewer lines. M. Dowling requested a copy of the Tighe and Bond report, which would be several years old now, and the Board agreed. S. Moody said that when the report had come out,

there was an upgrade to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. M. Blanchard added that the Board should look at the report before making any decisions.

G. Morse said that the hydraulic study contains detailed information regarding contours, elevations, etc. as well as a section on future upgrades. He said that he could tell the Board which recommendations have already been addressed.

M. Dowling suggested making this an agenda item for a future meeting, and the Board agreed.

S. Moody noted that the pipes that had leaks were due to construction issues, not water quality. DEP had made everyone update their plans in 2006.

M. Dowling asked whether any towns test their water yearly as a cautionary measure. L. Gaumond said that there is no reason not to test more often, and added that there would be a cost associated with that.

M. Suprenant said that DEP sent out questionnaires to all of the schools asking about the status of old water bubblers, as some have lead cores in the cooling unit. S. Moody said that sometimes when there is an issue it is between the school and DEP, not the Town.

C. Moran said that there was an issue with a water meter running backwards the last time the hydrants were flushed. S. Moody said that there might have been a service line break. He said that he has never seen a meter run backwards. He suggested that the person contact him and he would look into it.

### **Review and Award Contract for Roofing Project and Boiler Replacement Project**

Greg Morse, DPW Director, appeared before the Board. He said that the four bids for the Miscellaneous Roofing Repair and Replacement Projects had been opened on February 24, 2016, and recommended that the bid be awarded to P&P General Contractors, Inc. at \$302,805.00.

**MOTION: To accept the bid from P&P General Contractors, Inc. at \$175,130 for the Library, \$21,475 for the Safety Complex, and \$106,200 for the Senior Center, for a total of \$302,805, by C. Moran.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimás**

**Vote: All in favor.**

G. Morse said that the four bids had been opened on February 25, 2016 for the Senior Center Boiler Replacement Project, and recommended that the bid be awarded to Southbridge Tire Company at \$25,259.71.

**MOTION: To accept the bid from Southbridge Tire Company for the Senior Center Boiler Replacement Project at \$25,259.71, by M. Suprenant.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**Annual BB5k Race at Hyland Orchard**

L. Gaumond informed the Board that he had received a request from Steve and Peg Hall for permission to hold their 11<sup>th</sup> Annual BB5k Race at Hyland Orchard on May 28, 2016. He noted that the Police Chief has no problems with the event.

**MOTION: To authorize the BB5k event on May 28, 2016 at Hyland Orchard, and to authorize them to work with the Sturbridge Police Department to plan the event, by P. Gimas.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dowling**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**Northern Bass Alliance: Bass Tournament**

L. Gaumond said that the Northern Bass Alliance would like to hold their annual bass tournament on May 15, 2016 at Big Alum Lake and requested authorization from the Board.

**MOTION: To approve the Special Use Permit for the Northern Bass Alliance on May 15, 2016 from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Big Alum Lake, by P. Gimas.**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dowling**  
**Vote: All in favor.**

**Reorganization of the Sturbridge Tourist Association**

One of the goals that the Selectmen had asked L. Gaumond to review was to look at the Sturbridge Tourist Association and to make recommendations on how to improve the process in Town. In preparation for this goal report he reviewed the Special Act authorizing the STA fund, the Bylaw governing the STA, the reports from the STA working group from 2014, the memo on the STA from Sel. Dowling, and met with a number of town officials including Selectmen Dowling and Gimas, Planner Bubon, FinCom members Light and Morrison, STA Chairman Amedy, OSV President Donahue, and Chamber Executive Director McNitt with members of their Tourism Committee.

***BACKGROUND***

The Town of Sturbridge is at the intersection of Rte. 20, the MassPike and Rte. 84. It is also home to one of the largest tourist attractions in all of Central Massachusetts, Old Sturbridge Village. As a result there are a large number of hotel rooms in the community which bring in a tremendous amount of revenue in hotel/motel taxes. The

revenue generated by these taxes is split in three ways; 67.5% goes to the Town's General Fund, 16.25% goes to the Betterment of the Town and 16.25% goes to the Sturbridge Tourist Association to promote tourism within Sturbridge with the goal of bringing even more revenue to the Town. In principle and in practice, this works extraordinarily well bringing over \$144,000 for FY15 in both the STA and Betterment accounts. This had a two-fold benefit to the Town; it has the benefit of improving the Town of Sturbridge in appearance and safety through the Betterment fund and to help bring more tourists (and therefore money) to the community.

However, things with the STA have not always gone smoothly in recent years. There have been concerns among members of the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee as well as the STA themselves that things could be going better. One of the major issues was that the STA had difficulty getting things done, both because of internal strife within the committee, lack of organizational support from the Town, and because of its inability to achieve a quorum due to its statutory structure. In 2014, the previous Town Administrator formed a working group to identify possible solutions to these issues and approached the task by looking at potential STA Bylaw revisions and by looking at an MOU between the Chamber and the Town. No major changes were made through this process. When L. Gaumond became the Town Administrator, the Selectmen asked him to look at this process with fresh eyes and to recommend any changes which he would deem necessary. This was a major undertaking which became increasingly challenging due to numerous moving parts through the latter part of 2015.

### ***STRUCTURE OF THE STA***

The Structure of the STA is set by the Town Bylaws (Section 1.92). The membership is made up of seven members and is appointed by the Town Administrator as follows:

- 1) A member of the Board of Selectmen
- 2) A member of either the Finance Committee, the Planning Board or the Recreation Committee
- 3) Two members of the hotel/motel trade
- 4) One member of a tourist related business
- 5) Two citizens of the Town

In 2013 and 2014, the STA had several meetings cancelled due to a lack of quorum and L. Gaumond's interviews with stakeholders indicated that even when they did meet the quorum requirements things did not always go easy. Efforts to alter the structure through the STA Working Group's efforts were not successful.

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Upon L. Gaumond's arrival as Town Administrator, he attended nearly all of the meetings of the STA to see how it operates. In his short time here, he saw and even created some changes on the STA Board. The position held by a long-time member of the Finance Committee was opened up for the first time in a long time to members of the other two boards. There was great interest on both boards to participate in the process. A member of the Planning Board was chosen to fill that role and a member of the Recreation Committee was chosen to fill a vacant resident position. A new member of the tourism community was chosen as well. In late 2015, one of the hoteliers resigned her post, leaving one vacancy in that role on the STA. While casting no dispersions against former or current members of the STA, the new STA Board seems to be functioning well, and does not seem to have any quorum issues lately even with the vacancy. However, quorum issues could once again become a problem with the STA, as there hasn't been a large group of people in the hotelier trade coming forward to fill the vacancy and the Chairman, who also fills one of the hotelier positions, is preparing for his eventual retirement from Town service.

In recent years there have been two proposals to change the composition of the STA to 5 member boards. One by the Working Group (2 hotelier representatives, 2 tourist related business representatives, and 1 resident) and one by Selectman Dowling (2 hotelier representatives, 1 tourist related business representative and 2 residents). Both ideas seem well-thought out and reduces the number (and thereby quorum requirements) to five. In L. Gaumond's review he also agrees that the number should be reduced and would like to propose an alternate mix of members to help assure that the Town Administrator will easily be able to keep the business of the STA moving without interruption. He proposed the following makeup: two (2) members of the tourist community which may be a hotelier or tourist related business representative and three (3) residents of the community.

L. Gaumond agreed with both the subcommittee of the STA Working Group as well as Selectman Dowling that the boards of the Town (FinCom, Selectmen, Planning & Recreation) have enough to keep them busy without the added responsibility of attending additional meetings for the STA. As such, he is agreeable to removing these positions from the Bylaw.

Adding three resident positions does two important things in L. Gaumond's opinion. First, it ensures that residents of the community will have the majority of votes on the STA. He said that it is imperative that the residents of Sturbridge maintain voting control of the funds; after all it is their money. Second, it provides a tremendous amount of flexibility which is also needed in filling boards in a smaller community. The make-up

doesn't exclude members of the FinCom, Selectmen, Planning & Recreation committees from participating, it just doesn't require it.

The same thing can be said with the two hotelier and tourist related business representatives. Some years it may be difficult to find one or the other. This structure will allow for flexibility to the Town Administrator during appointments. The Town Administrator may only have two hoteliers willing to be appointed. Similarly the Town Administrator may only have two tourist related business representatives willing to be appointed. Sometimes, they may options in both categories. Either way, flexibility ensures that the Town Administrator will have options in the appointment process.

L. Gaumond recommended a further amendment to the Bylaws, suggesting the addition of a clause that the Town Administrator may fill any vacancy in either category with any willing person in the community, whether it is a resident or a business-person, if the Town Administrator cannot find a willing candidate to fill a particular role. Again, it provides the Town Administrator with flexibility. In times where it may be difficult to find a business person to hold their post, the Town Administrator could fill that role with a resident and vice-versa. Structure could be added that it is only held until the annual appointments when the Town Administrator will once again seek the proper candidates to fill both roles on the committee. This would ensure that there is ample opportunity for the mission of the STA to be fulfilled without interruption.

An alternative recommendation would be to reduce the membership of the committee even further. If the membership were reduced to three members, there could be a committee of one (1) member of the tourist community which may be a hotelier or tourist related business representative and two (2) residents of the community. Some people may feel that it would be easier to gain a quorum with fewer members. As the Town Administrator, L. Gaumond would be comfortable with either option.

### ***USE OF THE FUNDS***

The other aspect of this goal which L. Gaumond was asked to review was to review the purposes of the funds generated. Currently the Bylaws require that the funds generated are spent on the following:

1. Funding for the promotion of tourism with a portion directly for the marketing of all Sturbridge businesses involved in tourism.
2. Funding for multiple tourist related events and activities in Sturbridge
3. Funding for the Route 20 Public Restrooms and the grounds maintenance of the Tourist Information Center.

4. Funding for the operating expenses of the Tourist Information Center, such as the Customer Service Desk staff, telephone and internet.

L. Gaumont had no quarrels with the first two items. Certainly the tourist industry will be improved by promoting tourist related businesses in Sturbridge as well as events & activities in Sturbridge. However, he has concerns about the other two items and would like to recommend major changes in this section.

In late 2015 L. Gaumont became aware of a dynamic which may be problematic with the existing Bylaws. The Tourist Information Center and Route 20 Bathrooms identified in the Bylaws exist on property owned by Old Sturbridge Village and leased to the Town and Chamber for these purposes. Those leases are expiring shortly, as the Chamber's lease for their building expires in March of 2016 and the bathrooms expire in May of 2016. In discussions with the President of Old Sturbridge Village it is clear that OSV has plans for this property moving forward which likely do not include these uses.

Furthermore, with today's technology the need for the idea of a "tourist information center" may be a requirement not worth filling. Today it is more common to use items such as a tablet or even smart phone to find area attractions than it is to seek out 4"x9" pieces of cardboard handed out by a live human being.

L. Gaumont reviewed the suggestions from the STA Working Group and Selectman Dowling on where the Town should be spending these funds. He concurred with the suggestion to use a portion of these funds to pay for (in whole or in part) an Economic Development Coordinator. One of the areas of concern about the viability of the STA is that it relies heavily on the work of volunteers to carry out an important mission. He stressed that it is critically important to use these funds to create a position dedicated to maximizing the effectiveness of these funds. This person would staff STA meetings, be the business conduit for the community and be responsible for implementing aspects of the Master Plan and Commercial Tourist District plan as it relates to economic development. He would also seek to have this person responsible for grant writing to bring other resources to the Town as it relates to promotion of tourism, business development and community activities within the Town. While he was not ready to state how and where this position would fit into the Sturbridge organization, one thing was perfectly clear: each person he spoke to in his research for this goal fully embraced the idea of creating this position for Sturbridge.

L. Gaumont would require that this person be trained in the field of economic development and/or tourism development and have demonstrated success in this field. While he was not sure this would be a full-time position at this time, he sees the value in



the role for the Town and would be an appropriate use of these monies in our community.

L. Gaumond proposed eliminating numbers 3 and 4 above from the areas of required funding in the Bylaws, to be replaced with the following:

3. Funding of an economic development position(s) as established by the Town Administrator and approved by the Board of Selectmen.
4. Funding of any and all activities, as deemed appropriate by the Sturbridge Tourist Association, which aids in the increased revenues to the Town of Sturbridge through the hotel/motel taxes.

These changes will provide the STA with greater flexibility in performing its duties and could include, but not require, funding of 'Tourist Information Centers' in whatever form makes sense at the time.

L. Gaumond thanked all members of the community who have met with him over the last 9 months and who have shared with him their vision for this important committee.

M. Dowling thanked L. Gaumond for his work on this matter. She said that she would be in favor of keeping the STA at five members, rather than three. She questioned whether the wording of the special legislation needed to be changed, as it is limited to tourism and does not include other economic development, and requested that counsel be consulted.

P. Gimas liked the suggestion of an Economic Development Coordinator position. L. Gaumond said that the cost of the salary could be split between the Town and the STA budget.

**MOTION: To approve the recommendations of the Town Administrator with respect to changes to the Sturbridge Tourist Association, and that he work on changes to the special legislation; and also to the funding of an Economic Development Coordinator position for the Town of Sturbridge, a portion of the salary to come from the STA budget, by M. Suprenant.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Moran**

**Vote: All in favor.**

### **Town Administrator's Update**

- **Disclosure by Leon Gaumond**

L. Gaumond informed the Board that he had been asked to join the MIIA Health Trust as a member of their Board of Trustees. While there are no likely conflicts of interest, MIIA had recommended that board members complete and file a disclosure form with the Town Clerk. He requested that the Board vote to acknowledge the disclosure.

**MOTION: To accept the disclosure of the Town Administrator, and authorize the Chairman to sign it, by P. Gimás.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in favor.**

- **Appointment to the Sturbridge Cultural Council**

**MOTION: To concur with the appointment of Angela Zanolli to the Cultural Council, by P. Gimás.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Moran**

**Vote: All in favor.**

- **Riverlands Signs**

L. Gaumond provided the Board with an update on the Riverlands signs. He prepared an alternate sign for the Board's review which includes information about the types of materials in the soils.

P. Gimás suggested the sign say "Usage of this area is prohibited." M. Blanchard commented that disturbing the soils is what is prohibited.

M. Dowling noted that Riverlands is a large property, and the area of contamination is very limited, and should be blocked off. L. Gaumond said that the Board had voted down the proposal to fence the contaminated area. The Board had agreed that it should be posted.

M. Dowling suggested encouraging the use of the clean area and prohibiting the use of the contaminated area. M. Blanchard noted that the trails are not going through the contaminated area, and people should pay attention to the signs. M. Suprenant added that signs can be put up, but they can't keep people out of there. M. Blanchard was in favor of cautioning people about the contaminated area. She noted that passive recreation is allowed.

C. Moran asked if there were any legal ramifications, and suggested consulting Town Counsel. L. Gaumond said that specific to this issue, if the contaminated area is posted properly, it should be fine.

M. Dowling suggested fencing off the contaminated area, and was not in favor of using that portion of the Riverlands. M. Blanchard suggested rewriting the sign to say "Strictly prohibited." P. Gimas suggested "Usage of this area is not advised." L. Gaumond suggested "Usage of this area is strictly prohibited." P. Gimas suggested changing the words "may be" to "is" and to not list all of the contaminants, but indicate that the area is hazardous. L. Gaumond suggested making two signs instead of one, smaller and larger signs showing what the materials are. He was not sure that fencing would be allowed under UAL.

L. Gaumond suggested that the Board read the minutes of the Riverlands discussions. He offered to provide copies to the Board. M. Blanchard suggested that L. Gaumond work on the wording of the signs and bring them back to the Board.

### **Correspondence**

M. Dowling read the correspondence list into the record.

### **Old Business**

- **Town Common Study Committee Recommendation**

L. Gaumond presented the follow up to the Town Common Study Committee report and asked the Board to vote on the matter.

By vote of the Board of Selectmen, the Committee consists of the following members: Jean Bubon, Town Planner; Greg Morse, DPW Director; Tom Chamberland, Tree Warden; Lynne Girouard, Recreation Director; Fire Chief David Zinther; Anthony Celuzza, Resident; Vernon Jackson, Resident; Leon Gaumond, Jr., Town Administrator.

At the suggestion of the Board of Selectmen, the Committee held a public hearing to obtain comments from abutters on January 19, 2016. The notice of the hearing was advertised on the Town's website, on the Town's Twitter feed, through the Town Administrator's blog, and was sent to all abutters within 1000 feet of the Town Common.

After extensive discussion and review of comments from the general public, the Town Common Study Committee offered the following recommendation to the Board of Selectmen:

- To close Morse Street from Route 131 to Chamberlain Street beginning May 1, 2016 and revisiting the issue after the Harvest Festival.

- To make Morse Street one way going down the hill towards the Town Common during this same period of time.
- To revisit the Chamberland suggestions of curbing the corners of the Common at a later date.
- To revisit making Chamberlain Street a permanent one way at a later date.

L. Gaumont noted that the recommendation on the direction of travel in the one way portion of Morse Street has changed from the last time this was presented. At the public hearing, the Committee heard from a school bus driver, Russ Chamberland, that switching the direction of the one way would have a more positive impact on the flow of traffic, particularly for the school buses. On February 11<sup>th</sup> L. Gaumont had the chance to go on a bus ride with Mr. Chamberland to see how the buses would maneuver in both directions of Morse Street. While neither direction is impossible to navigate, it is certainly much easier for the buses to come down the hill and travel the area than it is to come up the hill.

The Committee continues to feel that these would be positive improvements to the users of the Common, the neighbors in the area, as well as Town Departments such as public safety, DPW and Recreation who oversee events on the Common.

**MOTION: To authorize the closure of Morse Street from Route 131 to the Town Common beginning May 1, 2016 and to revisit the issue after the Harvest Festival, by P. Gimas.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dowling**

**Vote: All in favor.**

C. Moran commented that the Board still does not have information from Blue Wave regarding the finance company for the project. L. Gaumont said that he will not bring it back to the Board until he receives that correspondence. C. Moran suggested giving Blue Wave an ultimatum. P. Gimas suggested giving them until the end of the month. M. Dowling was in favor of directing the Town Administrator to look for other opportunities for solar power. M. Suprenant said that he would like to have a discussion with Beth Greenblatt regarding this matter. L. Gaumont said that he could schedule that. He will put money into the operating budget which basically will carry consulting services forward a little longer. He expressed the need for technical assistance in this matter.

**MOTION: On or by March 18, 2016 the Town Administrator is to have a conversation with Eric Graber-Lopez of Blue Wave regarding this**

**project; he will report back to the Board on March 21, 2016, by C. Moran.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**

**Vote: All in favor.**

C. Moran asked about the status of the Holiday Inn on New Boston Road and Route 20. L. Gaumond said that the developer had issues with the quality of the sand, and will need to excavate and bring in new fill. The developer has been out of the country.

C. Moran said that under regional dispatch, Sturbridge will lose the ability to answer 911 calls forever, as there will be one point for all of the participating towns. He noted that if the system proves to be unsatisfactory, Sturbridge will not get the ability back.

C. Moran said that there was misinformation stated on the annual 500 form from Charter Communications, and when questioned about it, Tom Cohan of Charter Communications had said that it was due to a technical glitch. C. Moran suggested asking why there is a technical glitch.

P. Gimas asked about the time of the Legislative Breakfast to be held at Southbridge Town Hall on Friday. L. Gaumond said that the breakfast will begin at 8:00 a.m., and the speaking portion will begin at 8:30 a.m. P. Gimas, M. Dowling and L. Gaumond will attend.

M. Dowling asked about the status of L. Gaumond's evaluation. She requested that it be made an agenda item. M. Blanchard said that she will not be able to attend the March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. It was the consensus of the Board to schedule it for April 4<sup>th</sup>.

M. Blanchard asked C. Moran whether he had attended the Eagle Scout ceremony. C. Moran said that he had, and it was very nice.

### **New Business**

M. Blanchard said that the Board needed to approve the warrant for the upcoming Town Election, and to sign it.

**MOTION: So moved, by P. Gimas.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Moran**

**Vote: All in favor.**

**MOTION: To adjourn, by P. Gimas.**

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**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Blanchard**

**Vote: All in favor.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

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BOS Clerk

Date