

March 21, 2016

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
MARCH 21, 2016**

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

Mary Blanchard was absent.

P. Gimas, Vice-Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. following the Pledge of Allegiance.

P. Gimas called for a moment of silence for State Trooper Thomas Clardy, who passed away in the line of duty.

Public Service Announcements

M. Suprenant reminded residents about the Democratic Town Committee brunch meeting on April 3rd at 11:00 a.m. at the Publick House. If anyone would like to attend, please contact one of the Democratic Town Committee members.

Robin Lataille – New England Organ Bank

Robin Lataille, an organ recipient, appeared before the Board. L. Gaumond read the proclamation into the record declaring April 2016 as Donate Life Month in the Town of Sturbridge.

MOTION: That the Board sign the proclamation for Donate Life Month, by M. Suprenant.

2nd: C. Moran

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

R. Lataille announced that on March 31st there will be a Donate Life flag raising on the Town Common at 3:00 p.m.

Lions Club Proclamation

L. Gaumont read the proclamation into the record.

MOTION: That the Board sign the proclamation for the 50th Anniversary of the Sturbridge Lions Club, by C. Moran.

2nd: M. Suprenant

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

Fire Chief David Zinther: Request for Employment Approval

Fire Chief David Zinther appeared before the Board. He requested concurrence on the reclassification of Patrick Normandin from part-time to full-time firefighter/paramedic, to fill the vacancy in the department.

MOTION: To appoint Patrick Normandin as a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic at a starting rate of \$21.57/hour effective March 22, 2016, by C. Moran.

2nd: M. Dowling

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

Patrick Normandin expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Board for his appointment.

Request for Support for the SAFER Grant

Fire Chief David Zinther and Firefighter MaryLou Volpe appeared before the Board. Chief Zinther said that M. Volpe prepared the necessary information to apply for a grant to the United States Fire Administration's Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) program. This program provides funding to employ personnel in order to augment staffing for departments that are operating with less than the recognized four personnel per shift that is recommended by several fire service organizations. He said that the grant will provide all associated personnel costs for a period of two years, excluding uniforms and their fire safety gear (helmets, coats, etc.). The only requirement placed on the receiving organization is that they will maintain these positions for the entire two year period. If after the two year period the organization does not wish to, or cannot afford to maintain these personnel, the Fire Department is under no obligation to retain them. Should a member be found undesirable during the two year period, the Fire Dept. would be required to replace that member until the end of the two year period. If a current member were to create a vacancy, the Fire Dept. would not be under any obligation to replace that member with another; it would only be required to replace those that are hired under the grant.

Chief Zinther said that part of the grant package requires a letter of support from the Town, stating that if awarded, they will adhere to the requirements of the grant as stipulated. He asked the Board to endorse the request. He stressed that outside of the costs of uniforms and protective gear, which would probably not exceed \$5,000 per member, that all costs associated with salaries and benefits would be funded exclusively by the grant for a period of two years.

Chief Zinther noted that within the next three to five years, the Fire Dept. will be seeing the required retirement of two to three members. By having these personnel already in place and trained (at no cost to the Town), will lessen the impact of those retirements. Also, because calls for service will only continue to increase, there will be a point where having 10 to 12 full time personnel will be a necessity in order to provide effective and efficient services to residents. Getting these people in now will put them in a much better position for the future. He said that there will be a \$20,000 savings with hiring a 9th person, which would eliminate some of the required overtime costs.

Chief Zinther said that the grant application has a deadline of March 25th. MaryLou Volpe said that this year the Sturbridge Fire Dept. will be compared with like towns, instead of cities like Boston or Springfield. M. Dowling thanked M. Volpe for her work on this grant application.

Chief Zinther said that awards for the grant will start in July; they will know by the end of September whether they have been successful. If so, they will have 180 days to hire the personnel. P. Gimas asked what would happen if the 180 days have been reached and only one person has been hired. M. Volpe said that it cannot be extended, so they would have to reapply.

MOTION: That the Board provide a letter indicating support of the Sturbridge Fire Department's application for a SAFER grant to assist the Town in hiring firefighters, by C. Moran.

2nd: M. Dowling

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

Nelson Burlingame, Building Inspector, reviewed his report with the Board. He said that one of the things his department will be doing differently will be to check the generator load tests at the schools.

N. Burlingame said that at 478 Main Street, the Express Inn, the outside of the building will be changed, as they are becoming a franchise of LaQuinta Inn and Suites. They

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have redone the plumbing and electrical on the second and third floors, and will change the lobby area by adding a continental breakfast bar.

N. Burlingame said that at 208 Charlton Road, Seven Hills there have been interior renovations, and Mole Hollow Candle is operating out of the lower back section.

At Hobbs Brook, 100 Charlton Road, Petco and Olympia Sports are new stores going in there.

Taco Bell will be coming to 195 Charlton Road.

New homes are being built at 170 Cedar, 6-12 Acorn, 226 Brookfield and 610 Skyline.

N. Burlingame attended the BOWM Meeting – Introduction to Engineered Lumber for Residential Construction in West Springfield; and the Mass. Commercial Energy Code seminar in Westborough.

Police Chief Thomas Ford reviewed his report with the Board. He said that Officer DaDalt has been conducting a Student Police Academy at Tantasqua Junior High School, which began on February 23rd. Nine students have enrolled in the first class.

A Kids Fair event was held at the Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center.

Liberty Utilities: Natural Gas Franchise Proposal

James Sweeney, President; Michael Petit, Director of Business Development; and Gary Munroe, Director of Operations of Liberty Utilities appeared before the Board.

J. Sweeney explained that Liberty Utilities (New England Natural Gas Company) Corp., whose parent company is Algonquin Power and Utilities Corp., is seeking to expand its natural gas distribution franchise territory and provide the benefits of natural gas to communities that currently do not have access to natural gas service which are close to the interstate pipeline system. They requested the Board's support for the possible expansion to Sturbridge.

M. Petit said that there is a demand for natural gas, and this would offer a consumer choice for the community. He noted that the building of the infrastructure requires a sizeable capital investment from Liberty Utilities, and they will become large taxpayers in town. He said that they still need to do a fair amount of work, such as target marketing to find out the amount of interest for natural gas in the town. He indicated

that the Sturbridge Host Hotel and OFS Fitel would be the anchors as two of the largest businesses in town. They will make a filing with the Mass. Dept. of Public Utilities, and they requested a letter of support from the Board of Selectmen to accompany that filing.

M. Dowling asked whether they had approached OFS Fitel and the Sturbridge Host Hotel to determine if they had any interest. J. Sweeney said that they had met with Leon Gaumont, Town Administrator and Jean Bubon, Town Planner in the Planning Office in September and October, at which time they had identified the Sturbridge Host Hotel and OFS Fitel as potential large users of natural gas that they would approach first. They have had some conversations with those two businesses. He added that they have more marketing to do with the smaller commercial, industrial and residential customers. He said that they would like to start a preliminary distribution system route along Route 131, Hall Road and Route 20. They have reviewed potential meter station sites to connect to the Tennessee Gas Pipeline.

C. Moran asked whether they would put stubs along the way. J. Sweeney said that they would not put a stub at every house, but to tap off of a gas main to serve a house is easy and non-intrusive to do. They will be making it available to everyone along the way. He noted that utility rates are designed to cover the cost of the infrastructure. Their plan is to build it along centers of commerce, then expand it later, as long as there is a good number of customers seeking to be added onto it.

C. Moran asked where the substation would be located. J. Sweeney said that as the customer base and system grow, they would need a local operation. They will monitor the system 24/7 and will have someone ready to respond to any issues.

M. Suprenant said that it has been his experience with DPU that it takes a long time to get extensions, and approvals can go on for years. He asked whether they anticipate delays with DPU. J. Sweeney said that the current administration at DPU as indicated recently an effort to turn dockets around more quickly. There could be an eight month turnaround; within a year they could get an answer from DPU.

M. Suprenant said that there are laws that restrict how much a municipality can charge for permits, inspections and reviewing plans for the permit. J. Sweeney said that they would be glad to discuss what a reasonable fee would be.

J. Sweeney said that if there are any questions that the Board has, they will be glad to respond back to facilitate the process.

C. Moran said that the Board needs to vet this matter before moving forward. M. Dowling suggested having Town Counsel review it before issuing a letter of support. She stressed the need to hear from businesses and residents to make sure that there is an interest in the community. She suggested making it an agenda item or holding a public hearing. P. Gimas asked the Board to consider having Liberty Utilities come back in May with more information regarding potential customers.

L. Gaumond suggested having a story in a local newspaper, asking for comments from businesses and residents. He could also include it in the Town Administrator's blog and Twitter pages. P. Gimas suggested having a deadline date of May 1st for public input.

MOTION: To hold a public hearing to determine whether or not there is public support for Liberty Utilities to lay a pipeline for natural gas, and to allow the Town Administrator to set a date as soon as possible within the timelines for posting, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

Scott Gerrish – Logging Permit for Cedar Street

Scott Gerrish and landowner Robert Waraika appeared before the Board. M. Dowling read the legal ad into the record.

MOTION: To open the public hearing, by M. Dowling.

2nd: M. Suprenant

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

S. Gerrish informed the Board that Randy Vilandre will be the log runner for the project.

MOTION: To close the public hearing, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

MOTION: To approve the logging permit request for Scott Gerrish on behalf of Robert Waraika with the following conditions: Logging operations shall be allowed Monday through Friday (with no harvesting on recognized Massachusetts legal holidays) from 7:00 a.m. to dusk; and on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Noon; no Sunday or holiday hours; the applicant shall coordinate transportation with the Town's school bus schedule to avoid conflict between logging

operations and school bus operations; work shall not commence when the ground is soft; a \$5,000 road maintenance bond shall be submitted to the Town before starting work; a licensed timber harvester shall be identified prior to commencement; and the DPW Director should be notified before starting work, by C. Moran.

2nd: M. Suprenant

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

Craig Masterman – Logging Permit for Ladd Road

Craig Masterman appeared before the Board. M. Dowling read the legal ad into the record.

MOTION: To open the public hearing, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

C. Masterman said that this application had been reviewed by the Board in February 2015, but at that time David Barnicle, the property owner, had requested that the matter be postponed. He now wishes to move forward with it. It has been re-advertised and abutters have been notified of the public hearing.

MOTION: To close the public hearing, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

MOTION: To approve the logging permit request from Craig Masterman of Yankee Woodlands on behalf of David and Patricia Barnicle with the following conditions: Logging operations shall be allowed Monday through Friday (with no harvesting on recognized Massachusetts legal holidays) from 7:00 a.m. to dusk; and on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Noon; no Sunday or holiday hours; the applicant shall coordinate transportation with the Town's school bus schedule to avoid conflict between logging operations and school bus operations; work shall not commence when the ground is soft; a \$5,000 road maintenance bond shall be submitted to the Town before starting work; and the DPW Director should be notified before starting work, by M. Dowling.

2nd: M. Suprenant

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

American Legion: Change of Manager on Liquor License

Roberta Courville and Philip Courville, Commander of American Legion Post 109 appeared before the Board.

P. Gimas noted that this license has had the wrong manager's name on it for about a year, and it had been requested that the former manager's name be removed several times. She said that for future reference, when there is a change to their liquor license, the American Legion should contact the Town Administrator's office to file for the change when it occurs. She noted that to delay taking action is not fair to the person who has asked to have his/her name removed from the license. M. Dowling said that if a person is no longer the manager, it is the duty of the American Legion to take that name off of their license.

MOTION: To approve the Change of Manager application for Roberta Courville on behalf of the American Legion, by M. Dowling.

2nd: M. Suprenant

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

Updates to the Personnel Classification Plan

L. Gaumond informed the Board that he has been working with the Personnel Committee to piece together the personnel processes and their recent actions. He read the latest updates into the record.

MOTION: To approve the job description and grade for the Council on Aging Director (Grade 10), Council on Aging Administrative Assistant (Grade 2), Council on Aging Fitness Instructor (Grade 2), Council on Aging Outreach Coordinator (Grade 4), Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator (Grade 5), and Administrative Assistant to the Board of Health (Grade 4), by C. Moran.

2nd: M. Suprenant

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

Develop a New Selectman Orientation Policy and Exit Interview Policy

L. Gaumond presented to the Board two policies for review: a New Selectman Orientation Policy designed to provide some structure for new Selectmen as they

prepare to begin their service to the Town. The second was an Exit Interview Policy design to assist the Town Administrator in improving the organization upon the departure of a town employee.

C. Moran suggested adding “alarm codes” to #2 of the New Selectman Orientation Policy. L. Gaumond agreed to amend it.

MOTION: To accept both of the new policies: Policy on Incoming Selectmen Orientation Process and the Policy on Exit Interviews by the Town Administrator, as amended, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

Sturbridge Tourist Association Bylaw Changes

At the last meeting of the Board of Selectmen, L. Gaumond had presented to the Board his thoughts about revisions to the Sturbridge Tourist Association. Among the recommendations were some proposed bylaw changes to be considered at the upcoming Town Meeting. He had taken the comments from the Board and prepared a draft bylaw change for the Board’s consideration. He asked that the Board approve the article and include it in the 2016 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The article is as follows:

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws, Chapter 1.91(c) by removing the clauses *“Funding for the Route 20 Public Restrooms and the grounds maintenance of the Tourist Information Center”* and *“Funding for the operating expenses of the Tourist Information Center, such as the Customer Service Desk staff, telephone and internet”* and adding the following clauses: *“Funding of an economic development/tourism position(s) as established by the Town Administrator and approved by the Board of Selectmen”* and *“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”* and to further amend the General Bylaws by deleting Chapter 1.92 and replacing it with the following language:

1.92 CREATION AND ESTABLISHMENT

There is hereby created and established a Sturbridge Tourist Association (STA) which shall consist of five (5) voting members. Upon the effective date of this Bylaw, said five (5) members shall replace the current members. After the initial terms of the new members, each member shall be appointed for a three-year term. The Town

Administrator shall appoint all members, subject to the confirmation by the majority vote of the Board of Selectmen, as follows:

- Two (2) members which either may be owners (or their representatives) of a Hotel/Motel/Inn/B&B located within the geographic boundary of Sturbridge, or an owner or representative of a tourist related business (retail, restaurant or similar tourist related activity) located within the geographic boundary of Sturbridge. One of the appointees shall be appointed for an initial term of one year, and one to be appointed for an initial term of two years.
- Three (3) Sturbridge residents at large, one to be appointed for an initial term of three years, one to be appointed for an initial term of two years and one to be appointed for an initial term of one year.

In the event that a vacancy exists for more than sixty (60) days without finding a qualified person to fill a particular category (resident or hotelier/tourist business), the Town Administrator may fill that vacancy with a qualified person from the other category until the next annual appointments are made.

Or take any action in relation thereto.

M. Suprenant asked if there was a regulation that a Selectman cannot serve on other boards or committees. L. Gaumond did not think that it would be prohibited. P. Gimás said that Selectmen serve as liaisons.

MOTION: To approve the article altering the STA as presented by the Town Administrator, and to include it on the Town Meeting Warrant, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

Town Administrator's Update

- **Vote to Authorize the Town Administrator to Commence the Sewer Expansion Study and Sign Agreement with Tighe & Bond**

MOTION: Subject to the amendment that the Town Accountant confirms that there is an appropriation for this contract, and Town Counsel approves the form of the contract, that the Board of Selectmen

authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract, by M. Suprenant.

2nd: C. Moran

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

- **Alternate Members of the Conservation Commission**

L. Gaumond had a Special Act of the Legislature that he asked the Board to consider proposing at the Annual Town Meeting: To create two alternate members of the Conservation Commission in the event that members need to recuse themselves or are away for a meeting. It would also assist in having a couple of knowledgeable members in case of a vacancy. He requested that the Board vote to include this as an article on the upcoming Town Meeting.

MOTION: To accept the proposed Special Act of the Legislature as presented by the Town Administrator, and include it as an article on the Town Meeting Warrant, by C. Moran.

2nd: M. Dowling

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

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

MOTION: To approve the Senior Municipal Service Program application for Robert Richardson, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

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

MOTION: To approve the Veterans Municipal Service Program application for Robert Christiansen, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

- **Vote to Accept Resignation of Jonathan McNamara**

MOTION: To accept the resignation of Jonathan McNamara from the Fire Department, by M. Dowling.

2nd: C. Moran

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

- **Town Meeting Warrants**

L. Gaumond reviewed the draft Warrants for the Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting to be held in June. P. Gimas requested a hard copy.

Correspondence

M. Dowling read the correspondence list into the record.

Old Business

C. Moran asked about the status of Blue Wave. L. Gaumond said that he had sent the Board an update in email form. He said that Blue Wave will provide an answer for the Board shortly.

P. Gimas asked about the report from Greg Morse, DPW Director. L. Gaumond said that it was difficult to reproduce; he said that she could borrow it.

New Business

M. Suprenant requested a copy of the annual statistical report from the Water Department.

M. Dowling wished everyone a blessed and happy Easter.

MOTION: To adjourn, by M. Dowling.

2nd: P. Gimas

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk

Date

March 21, 2016