

August 19, 2013

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
AUGUST 19, 2013**

Present: Thomas Creamer, Chairman
Priscilla Gimas
Mary Redetzke
Mary Blanchard
Mary Dowling

Shaun Suhoski, Town Administrator was absent, as he was on vacation.

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

Public Service Announcements

T. Creamer announced that the Sturbridge Tourist Association is inviting residents to a Blue Grass Festival to be held on the Town Common on September 14th. This is a free event sponsored by the STA, with a kids' zone, vendors and artisans. For more information, go to www.sturbridgefest.com.

T. Creamer noted that it is never good to have speculation surrounding anything stated by a member of the Board of Selectmen. He wanted to clarify an issue with respect to the two individuals who were not reappointed to the Fire Department pending information as to whether or not they had met the minimum qualifications established by the NFPA. There had been an article in the Southbridge Evening News reporting that the information had come from a former Lieutenant; in fact, T. Creamer had never made reference to a former Lieutenant.

Susan Brogan, Pan Mass Challenge

Susan Brogan thanked everyone for their support of the Pan Mass Challenge, in particular the Sturbridge Police Department for their impeccable professional handling of the event.

Preliminary Tax Classification Discussion

The Board had established a policy of providing additional information to the public prior to the annual tax classification hearing. Bill Mitchell, Principal Assessor, Bob Lucier and Paul Murphy of the Board of Assessors appeared before the Board to provide background data on the FY14 tax levy and classifications.

Bill Mitchell said that approximately 30% of cities and towns in the Commonwealth have split tax rates. He noted that the Town of Sturbridge is similar to the Town of Shrewsbury with regard to its commercial/industrial base.

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B. Mitchell said that every three years there is an assessment at 100% fair market value, certified and audited by the Dept. of Revenue. Every year Assessors must make interim adjustments to be at 100% fair market value, certified by the Dept. of Revenue. He said that once properties have been classified and certified, the Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing to vote on four issues: selection of a CIP factor, open space discount, residential exemption and small commercial exemption.

B. Mitchell said that a Proposition 2 ½ override is a permanent increase above the 2 ½% allowed under Proposition 2 ½. Debt exclusion is a temporary increase above the 2 ½% allowed under Proposition 2 ½; once that is paid, it comes off of the tax roll.

B. Mitchell said that the FY14 estimated new growth figure is \$419,688. The FY14 estimated actual levy is \$20,857,746. He noted that residential growth appears to be stable over the last four years. Commercial/industrial growth had continued to increase over the same four year period. Personal property equipment shows signs of strong continued growth.

Department Head Reports

Shane Moody, Veolia Water North America, reviewed his report with the Board. M. Blanchard requested a more detailed explanation of service calls in the maintenance report. S. Moody said that they are in the process of switching software, and the new software will provide better detail. He also suggested that the Selectmen email him if they need more information.

T. Creamer noted that the spreadsheet S. Moody had provided is very detailed. He requested that reports be sent to him electronically. S. Moody said that he will send the lengthy maintenance report to the Board of Selectmen's office.

S. Moody informed the Board that the Consumer Confidence Reports have been mailed out to customers, and posted on the Town's website.

S. Moody reported that one of the major gear drives had broken at the Wastewater Treatment Plant; the vendor fixed it for free, and changed them on all of the mixers.

S. Moody announced that they received a Regional Recognition Award from DEP. Don Benz and Melissa Meridian of Veolia Water North America presented a copy of the award to the Board.

Water/Sewer Abatement Request: 12 Hawthorne Road

Greg Morse, DPW Director, Shane Moody, Veolia Water North America and Barbara Barry, Finance Director appeared before the Board.

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The correspondence and supporting documents from Paula Kopacz (on behalf of her mother, Doris Kopacz, owner of the property at 12 Hawthorne Road) were submitted to the Board by S. Suhoski. His notes indicated that the Board had two primary points of clarification requested:

1. Discrepancy between “current reading” (ending read) for Bill No. 48131 and the “previous reading” (starting read) for Bill No. 50319, and
2. Why Bill No. 48131 was at 780 ft³ when the datalog information shows the leaking toilet originated in mid-February and should have resulted in a higher bill.

The starting reading for Bill No. 50319 was different from the ending reading on Bill No. 48131 because it was manually adjusted by the Finance Dept. so as to not double-bill Ms. Kopacz for the difference between 780 ft³ and 1,000 ft³ which is the minimum usage. The amount of adjustment should have been 220 ft³ for that quarter and not the 160 ft³ reflected in the different readings.

Also, after review with the Finance Dept., it was determined that the meter reading for Bill No. 48131 that was electronically imported into the billing system appears to have dropped a “zero” resulting in an artificially low reading. The account was not flagged by the Finance Dept. or the consumer because it conformed with the general account history. The following quarterly read for Bill No. 50319 was correct and was flagged by the Finance Dept. and under review before the consumer initiated her abatement request.

In S. Suhoski’s opinion, the leak in the toilet would have been flagged and discovered on or about April 24th – the date of issuance for Bill No. 48131 – had it issued at the actual usage. In S. Suhoski’s view, the Board would be justified in granting a partial abatement for this account.

Through the data log, the consumer should be billed 20,220 ft³ through the quarter ending March 31, and 9,720 ft³ for the quarter ending June 30 (usage through April 24th when the leak should be discovered). This will result in a 61.2 percent abatement.

S. Moody said that he has warned people numerous times that they should shut off the water in their homes before they leave the premises to avoid this sort of thing from happening. He said that a leaky toilet uses 3,000 gallons of water per day. He said that it is not the Water Department’s fault that the water had been left on and no one had checked the house. He noted that the Town’s responsibility stops at the meter. P. Gimás agreed that there is fault on the part of the homeowner.

B. Barry said that the leak had been discovered part way through the quarter ending June 30th, so the amount to be abated would be based on actual usage for the quarter from April 25th through June 30th. She noted that there is not a system in place to monitor usage on a daily basis. She said that the sewer bill is based on the water bill. B. Barry said that Ms. Kopacz will be charged for 9.720 cubic feet; the minimum is 1000

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cubic feet, and Ms. Kopacz is paying what the bill would have been had the meter been recording correctly. She said that it is not M. Kopacz's fault that the meter had read incorrectly for the period ending March 31st; that problem exacerbated the problem of a huge amount of water being used. She said that the Town shares a large portion of the burden.

G. Morse recommended not going above a 50% abatement, as even though there was a meter error, there is still a cost associated with water usage. P. Gimás agreed, and said that she would not support a 61.2% abatement, as the water should have been shut off before leaving the house unattended.

T. Creamer suggested that in the future when there is a problem such as this, that the information be brought to the attention of the liaison, Mary Blanchard.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve a partial abatement for Account No. 0797 at 12 Hawthorne Street for the time period of April 25th through June 11th in the amount of 50% of the total bill, and that the Board issue no abatement for the actual usage through April 24th; and direct the Finance Department to issue a revised invoice consistent with this motion, by M. Dowling

2nd: T. Creamer

Vote: Three in favor; P. Gimás and M. Blanchard opposed.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen direct the DPW Director to issue a letter to the responsible party instructing them that the abatement issued by the Board of Selectmen be contingent upon the water being terminated at the street by the Water Department/DPW, by T. Creamer.

2nd: P. Gimás

Vote: All in favor.

Department Head Reports

Greg Morse, DPW Director, reviewed his report with the Board. He said that they have completed 3 ½ miles of paving, and are now working on the brush cutting program. Sidewalk work has been completed, and guard rails have been repaired on Rt. 15 and the Sidney Road area. The crack sealing work has commenced and will continue for another week or so. They are also cleaning catch basins.

G. Morse said that they have applied for a grant for the Champeaux Road Bridge and Walker Pond drainage projects.

G. Morse informed the Board that Dan Gervasi has resigned and moved to Arizona after 14 years of service.

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Glenn Colburn, Conservation Agent, reviewed his report with the Board. He informed the Board that Ed Goodwin is the new Chairman of the Conservation Commission.

G. Colburn reviewed the Determination of Applicability and Notice of Intent filings that had been reviewed by the Conservation Commission. He also reviewed Certificates of Compliance that had been issued for projects that have been completed. He noted that many of them involved the retrieval of records from storage at the Public Safety Complex.

G. Colburn said that two emergency certifications were issued due to water flooding concerns. One of them involved a driveway that had been washed out, and the homeowner will address the root of the problem.

G. Colburn has been working with Robert Levite on the conservation restrictions for the Shepard parcel and the Riverlands.

G. Colburn informed the Board that all of the members of the Conservation Commission had attended the Spring Environmental Conference in March at Holy Cross.

Past To Present – Request for a Sale of Antiques License

Donna Buccelli, owner of Past to Present appeared before the Board to request a Sale of Antiques License for her establishment at 479 Main Street.

MOTION: To approve the Sale of Antiques License for Donna Buccelli, Past To Present Antiques at 479 Main Street, by M. Blanchard.

2nd: M. Dowling

Vote: All in favor.

Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures Discussion

Police Chief Thomas Ford appeared before the Board.

M. Blanchard had a question regarding the organizational chart. She asked whether the Fire Prevention Officer for the Fire Department would be a separate person, or anyone on the staff who is qualified. Chief Ford said that it will be someone qualified. It is a position. T. Creamer noted that currently the Fire Prevention Officer gets additional pay per hour under their contract. It was T. Creamer's hope that all of the Lieutenants will be brought up to certification to be able to assume the role of Fire Prevention Officer.

Chief Ford said that there will be some changes and modifications to the Standard Operating Procedures when the new Fire Chief arrives. M. Dowling was pleased to hear that there will be more input with respect to the organizational structure. M. Redetzke agreed.

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T. Creamer said that the approach taken in the preparation of the Standard Operating Procedures manual was a good one, getting input from the people who will actually be required to adhere to it. He was impressed with the requirement for training, and the fact that part-time personnel must respond to 75% of all incidents and calls, and all personnel must attend 75% of all training programs. He recommended that all employees attend 100% of training.

M. Redetzke suggested that the attendance report be done quarterly instead of annually.

T. Creamer said that people are appointed subject to their successful completion of training at the Firefighting Academy.

T. Creamer offered to send Chief Ford a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures manual with his changes and recommendations to be incorporated into the manual. He suggested that the Selectmen review it and submit their input to Chief Ford, then take it up again in a few weeks. He asked that the committee that put it together take the Board's comments into consideration. Chief Ford commented that management practices change over the years.

T. Creamer commended Chief Ford and his officers for their swift action in apprehending a burglar who had broken into a home on Leadmine Road last week. He encouraged all residents to be vigilant concerning their own property and those of their neighbors. Chief Ford gave credit to the citizens who had gotten involved and provided information and descriptions to the police.

Regarding the 75% attendance for training, Craig Moran suggested that a poll be taken of the part-time firefighters and their schedules for availability. T. Creamer said that the 75% training ratio is based upon their availability for calls. He said that this ensures that everyone can get training. C. Moran suggested that training sessions be videotaped by the Tantasqua video crew; that way, if anyone misses a training session, that person could watch it at a later date.

Dangerous Dog Complaint

Further to the August 8th memorandum and request from Chief Ford, the Board had been requested to investigate and hear complaints concerning an alleged dangerous dog that reportedly bit two separate individuals on March 11, 2013 and July 11, 2013. The Board of Selectmen is the hearing officer under statute for such nuisance or dangerous dog complaints.

S. Suhoski had informed the Selectmen that if they find concern or merit in Chief Ford's initial request, they are encouraged to refer the matter back to the Chief and Animal Control Officer for further investigation with a report to be presented at a Public Hearing under MGL c. 140, §157. A suggested date was the Board's September 16th meeting to allow time for the report and to advise the owner and victims of the hearing.

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S. Suhoski had distributed a procedural guidance sheet from Town Counsel for the hearing itself. The question before the Board was whether the two bite attacks warrant the hearing as requested by the Chief. Since the second attack was after completion of training by the owner and dog, it was the consensus of the Board that the hearing is needed.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen refer the dangerous dog complaint filed by Chief Thomas Ford to the police department and Animal Control Officer for further investigation and report to be presented at a Public Hearing under MGL c. 140, §157 on Monday, September 16, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. and to authorize the Town Administrator to make any notifications or publication on behalf of the Board as required by law, by M. Redetzke.

2nd: M. Blanchard

Vote: All in favor.

Approval of Position Descriptions

The Personnel Committee met on August 15th for a reconsideration of the revised Fire Chief (Grade 19) description and to approve and classify the positions of Public Health Inspector (Grade 8) and Administrative Assistant / Building (Grade 4). Copies were submitted to the Board.

Fire Chief: The Personnel Committee removed the mandatory language for dual appointment as Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director as was suggested by some members of the Board of Selectmen. The language now presented is the same as one of the primary examples that S. Suhoski had used (from the town of Ayer) to update the description. The change resulted in the grade for Fire Chief remaining at Grade 19. If the next Fire Chief is appointed Emergency Management Director, it will be reflected in the final negotiated salary. Carrying the duties in the description is helpful.

Public Health Inspector: This description was based largely upon the template provided by the Board of Health Agent. It completes a goal from the prior fiscal year to develop a description for “public accommodations inspector” but in a format that allows a multi-disciplinary approach towards all forms of expected inspections including lodging, food, pools, housing and others.

M. Dowling suggested adding the following wording under Supervisory Responsibilities: “Limited supervision of clerical employees, currently two, in the absence of the Board of Health Agent.”

Administrative Assistant / Building: The incumbent employee began work as a “part-time clerk” but is now and has been assigned primarily to the Building Department and working as an administrative assistant. This description conforms substantially to the

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administrative assistant positions in planning and assessing and matches the same grade as all administrative assistants.

The above three positions and classifications were each approved by a 4-0 vote of the Personnel Committee on August 15th.

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the following position descriptions and classifications as voted by the Personnel Committee on August 15, 2013:

Fire Chief	Grade 19
Public Health Inspector	Grade 8 as amended
Administrative Asst. / Building	Grade 4

By M. Redetzke.

2nd: M. Blanchard

Vote: All in favor.

Recreation Committee Resignation – Schedule Joint Meeting for Appointment

Mark Rulli has relocated and therefore resigned his position as an elected member of the Recreation Committee. Under statute, the position may be filled through a joint appointment by the remaining members of the Recreation Committee and the Board of Selectmen to fill the seat until the next Annual Election.

S. Suhoski had requested in his update to the Board that a date be set for a joint meeting to fill this vacancy. As of this date, he received one statement of interest – from the Associate Member to the Recreation Committee – which had been copied to the Board. Anyone can seek election up to and including the evening of the joint appointment.

T. Creamer said that it is up to the Recreation Committee to determine when they can meet with the Board of Selectmen. M. Blanchard suggested that S. Suhoski get in touch with them.

Certificate of Adoption – Central Mass. Region-wide Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan

S. Suhoski had submitted to the Board a copy of an email from the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission. He noted that when the Board voted to adopt the regional pre-disaster mitigation plan in January 22, 2013, the title was “Sturbridge Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan.”

FEMA requires the title to be the same for all communities – “Central Massachusetts Region-wide Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan” – and therefore S. Suhoski had requested that the Board once again vote to adopt the appropriate resolution. It is important that Sturbridge be included in order to remain eligible for grant-funded equipment or projects.

MOTION: To adopt the resolution language as recommended by the Town Administrator, by M. Redetzke.

2nd: M. Blanchard

Vote: All in favor.

Senior Municipal Service Program Appointments

The following individuals had been qualified for the FY14 SMSP and their assistance had been requested by the referenced departments. One slot was to be filled under the volunteer provision with Grace Repucci undertaking the hours on behalf of Ms. Martel. This will bring to the program to 21 of 30 maximum participants.

No.	Name	Address	Department
20	Louise M. Martel	49 Clarke Road	Senior Center
	<i>By: Grace Repucci</i>	<i>Volunteer</i>	
21	Madeline Robidoux	Jamieson Road	Senior Center

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the above-named applicants, and volunteer, to participate in the FY14 Senior Municipal Service Program, by M. Redetzke.

2nd: M. Blanchard

Vote: All in favor.

Veterans Municipal Service Program

Wayne Belles was qualified as the Town's first participant in the Veterans Municipal Service Program. Mr. Belles has become a welcome and familiar face here in Town Hall for his work polishing up the building and grounds. He proudly served in the U.S. Marine Corps in the 1950s and is a participant in the senior program.

No.	Name	Address	Department
1	Wayne Belles	204 Crescent Way	Town Admin. / BOS

MOTION: That the Board of Selectmen approve the above-named applicant to participate in the FY14 Veterans Municipal Service Program, by M. Redetzke.

2nd: M. Blanchard

Vote: All in favor.

Staff Vacancies

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The Town is seeking to fill a number of vacancies and S. Suhoski anticipates bringing forward candidates for the part-time administrative positions in the Fire Department and Assessing Department on September 3rd.

Preliminary interviews with four candidates for Town Accountant are scheduled for next week and interviews with four candidates for the Building Inspector position are in the process of being scheduled.

The position of Fire Chief has been advertised in the Boston Globe, Mass. Municipal Association Web site and newsletter, with the Fire Chiefs Association of Mass. and through posting and distribution. The closing date is September 17th, and several applications have already been received. (*Note: S. Suhoski has received several inquiries for the search committee and will be further discussing with candidates next week.*)

The full-time patrol officer position funded by Annual Town Meeting is proposed for appointment on September 3rd. This candidate was recently ratified by the Board as a part-time patrol officer and will be advanced for appointment given the Chief's designation of Officer Hillary DaDalt as the School Resource Officer.

Recruitment for the Assistant Town Clerk and the part-time Data Collector for the Assessing Dept. is ongoing. S. Suhoski is awaiting feedback from the Finance Committee on the Part-time Clerk / Recording Secretary.

Other Matters: Following are brief updates on other pending matters.

- **Municipal Buildings:**

- **Library (updated 8/15)** – Drummey Rosane Associates have discussed the gutter system and skylight replacement with S. Suhoski and are developing the contract document.
- **Town Hall (updated 8/16)** – Jerry Day Fence Company advises that they expect delivery of materials by August 22nd, after which they will complete the screening / protection of the HVAC units on the north side of the building.
- **Sturbridge Nursery School (updated 8/16)** – The leak in the roof of this Town building was confirmed as repaired by both the contractor (Paul Davis Restoration) and by the school director. The work to repair damaged interior elements has commenced following a “drying out” period. S. Suhoski is awaiting a final report from the contractor and confirmation from the school director.

- **Other Meetings / Miscellaneous:** S. Suhoski met with the Board of Health chair and agent concerning administrative matters; conducted department head meeting; met with Finance Director regarding accountant position and additional duties of

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Finance Director; tested all TH/COB security alarms; met with Tantasqua RSD superintendent, business manager, IT director and Finance Director regarding IT continuation of shared services; attended summer meeting of Mass. Economic Development Council; attended ribbon cutting for OSV Lodges; attended Burgess School Building Committee meeting; prepared for and attended Personnel Committee meeting; discussion with department head and labor counsel re: personnel matters; met with citizen regarding betterment issues (to be brought to September 3rd Board of Selectmen meeting).

Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of August 5, 2013 as amended, by M. Blanchard.
2nd: P. Gimas
Vote: Four in favor; M. Dowling abstained.

Correspondence

M. Redetzke read the correspondence list into the record.

Old Business

M. Blanchard noted that the Building Inspector's last day will be August 22nd, and asked who would be filling in during the interim. P. Gimas thought it would be the Southbridge Building Inspector.

New Business

M. Dowling announced that the Stipend Study Committee will meet on September 10th at Town Hall, and residents are welcome to attend.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Knowles

BOS Clerk _____ Date _____