

Members present: Kevin McCormick Christopher Rucho
Valmore H. Pruneau Steven Quist
Allen R. Phillips

Mr. McCormick convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Read and acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meeting:

Motion Mr. Pruneau to approve the meeting minutes for the December 16, 2009 regular session, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all in favor

NEW BUSINESS

1. Concurrence on the following appointments to the Municipal Building Advisory Committee effective January 6, 2010 for a term to expire on April 30, 2010: Christopher Rucho BOS, Steven Quist BOS, Patricia Altomare FIN/CIB, and residents John Hadley, Bruce Peterson, John DiPietro, Marcia Cairns and Christopher Labreck.

Mr. Gaumond reported that his original proposal for the committee included four residents with various construction backgrounds. He has received applications from five individuals interested in serving on the committee and made his recommendation to the Selectmen who favored appointing all five individuals who expressed an interest in serving.

Motion Mr. Phillips to expand the number of residents to be appointed to the Municipal Building Advisory Committee from four to five, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all in favor.

Motion Mr. Phillips to concur with the appointments of Christopher Rucho BOS, Steven Quist BOS, Patricia Altomare FIN/CIB, and residents John Hadley, Bruce Peterson, John DiPietro, Marcia Cairns and Christopher Labreck to the Municipal Buildings Advisory Committee, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all in favor.

Town Administrator Commitment To Excellence Award Presentation

Mr. Gaumond noted that this is the third Commitment to Excellence Award he has presented. The award recognizes employees who have gone above and beyond in their commitment to the town. In year one Ed Cairns received the award and last year it was given to all the municipal employees for the work they did during the ice storm. Mr. Gaumond received a couple of nominations and the one he selected was our Building Inspector, Mark Brodeur, who was nominated by the Chairman of the Board, Kevin McCormick. The nomination outlines Mr. Brodeur's fund raising efforts to support the Memorial Day celebration and his trailblazing efforts in sharing Building Inspector duties in both West Boylston and Sterling. Mr. Gaumond encouraged Mr. Brodeur to keep up the good work in the community and presented him with the Town Administrator's Commitment to Excellence Award.

NEW BUSINESS (cont.)

2. Consider Designating Earthday Site Team Representative to the Earthday Town Representative Committee & Alternate

Motion Mr. Phillips to nominate Mr. Gaumond to serve as he served on the Site Team, seconded by Mr. Pruneau, all in favor.

Motion Mr. Phillips to nominate Mr. Rucho to serve as the alternate, seconded by Mr. Pruneau, all in favor.

3. Consider request from DCR to allow two trailers at the Wachusett Earthday site

DCR and Wachusett Earthday would like to be able to park another trailer at the Earthday site for cold storage. Mr. Phillips questioned where they would park the second trailer. Mr. Gaumond believes in the back of the property. Mr. Phillips does not see an issue in allowing them to locate a second trailer in the back and appreciates that they are asking for permission to do so.

Motion Mr. Phillips to allow for the location of a second trailer at the Earthday site on Huntington Highway, seconded by Mr. Pruneau, all in favor.

4. Review information from Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc. on the American Dream Downpayment Initiative

Mr. Gaumond noted that eight months ago the town received a similar request from the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission and at that time we agreed to participate in the program. That program has since run out of funding and there is a new program called the American Dream Downpayment Initiative. This program allows low income buyers in a participating community to receive interest free loans of up to 5% of the purchase price or \$10,000, whichever is less. If the buyer remains in the home for five years the loan will be forgiven. The program does not cost the Town of West Boylston anything. Currently we do not have anyone providing this service to the Town of West Boylston and they have extra money that could be given out to potential home buyers. A potential home buyer has approached them and by vote of the Board of Selectmen the home buyer would be allowed to gain this benefit.

Mr. Phillips questioned whether the organization would have to approve West Boylston being a part of it. Mr. Gaumond advised that they would be happy to have West Boylston participate because they have money to give out to first time home buyers and they know there is an applicant in the Town of West Boylston who has indicated an interest. The Department of Housing and Community Development has also agreed to allow West Boylston to join. Mr. Phillips questioned whether this would add to our affordable housing stock. Mr. Gaumond advised that it would not change.

Motion Mr. Rucho to join the American Dream Downpayment Initiative, seconded by Mr. Phillips, all in favor.

Mr. Quist questioned whether the Housing Partnership is on top of finding this information for the town. Mr. Gaumond believes somebody was looking for funds and this particular agency had funds that came down from the federal government. Mr. Quist would like the Housing Partnership to be out looking at funding programs for the town. Treasurer/Tax Collector Bonnie Yasick, who is in attendance this evening noted that she once worked in a community who had a program through CMRPC. Although she does not know all the guidelines, the program helped seniors to do repairs on their homes. Mr. Quist feels that is we want to entice people to come into West Boylston, and it would make sense to get involved in some type of program. Mr. Gaumond noted that two years ago we put in an application with CMRPC, however, we did not get funding. Mr. Quist stressed the need for the town to be on top of these things. Mr. McCormick believes the Housing Partnership is more focused on low income housing rather than this kind of housing. Mr. Phillips would like to look at doing the rehab program again. He noted that often you need to look at grants as lots of communities do not have funds.

5. Discussion and vote on changing contribution rates for non-union employees

Mr. Gaumond sent a notice to the Board of Selectmen today in anticipation of this discussion tonight. When he first arrived in West Boylston the Selectmen tasked him with the responsibility of changing some of our health insurance contribution rates. We have had some very good benefits provided to the employees in the past. It has been a long process and we started with certain decisions the town had made with regard to collective bargaining agreements and who we would have as

providers. Moving forward the one thing on tap to be done this year was to make progress in changing health insurance contribution rates. We have worked with our union groups to get us to the position to make some of these rate changes. Tonight the Selectmen will consider voting the following changes.

For those health care plans presently (as of June 30, 2009) at 90% (town) and 10% (employee) contribution rate split, the contribution rate shall change to 85% (town) and 15% (employee) effective March 1, 2010, 82% (Town) and 18% (employee) effective July 1, 2010 , and 80% (town) and 20% (employee) effective July 1, 2011.

For those health care plans presently (as of June 30, 2009) at 75% (town) and 25% (employee) contribution rate split, the contribution rate shall change to 70% (town) and 30% (employee) effective March 1, 2010, 65% (Town) and 35% (employee) effective July 1, 2010 , and 60% (town) and 40% (employee) effective July 1, 2011.

For all new hires of the Town of West Boylston, as of March 1, 2010, the contribution rate for those health care plans presently (as of June 30, 2009) at 90% (town) and 10% (employee) contribution rate split, the contribution rate shall change to 70% (town) and 30% (employee).

For all new hires of the Town of West Boylston, as of March 1, 2010, the contribution rate for those health care plans presently (as of June 30, 2009) at 75% (town) and 25% (employee) contribution rate split, the contribution rate shall change to 50% (town) and 50% (employee).

Mr. Gaumond reported that the rates were negotiated with one of our collective bargaining units and are necessary to keep our services next year as our budget is not likely to be any better. Unfortunately, the public employees have borne the burden of these cuts. In West Boylston we have seen our ranks decrease and for the first time the municipal employees did not get any raises. Our health insurance budget is 15.5% of our budget. We are now making some changes and more needs to be done to reduce the line item. The Insurance Advisory Committee deserves credit and we need to do more to sustain present budgets and provide services for the next generation.

Mr. Gaumond noted that when this item comes up for discussion sometimes retirees are also included in the mix. The motion speaks to current employees of the town and not retirees. Two of the members of the Board of Selectmen would need to recues themselves when the retirees are acted upon. Mr. McCormick thanked the DPW for signing a contract going forward with these changes. He also thanked the non-union employees who work hard. He stated that we are going to ask all the employees to come in line with the same changes and it is going to be our goal to be there with everybody before we are done. He noted that we have been very fair on how we form the budget and if we find a group that does not want to comply, maybe that is something we need to look at when we do that budget. Mr. Phillips explained that when we look at making changes such as this with union employees, we bargain certain things and sometimes we have to give something. He thinks it would be fair to the non-union to give them something back as well.

Bonnie Yasick spoke as a non-union employee, and pointed out the fact that this goes back to 2001 when we had discussion with former Town Administrator Paul Guida relative to insurance contributions. She stated that all non-union employees understand the need to make cuts in the health insurance as currently it is not realistic. She appreciates the fact that we have good benefits and it is one of the reasons she took this job. She is all for the change and being a non-union employee she is for fairness and is looking to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator that we are treated fairly. Before the Board votes on this she would like all the unions to agree to the changes, not just the DPW to be fair to all. She noted that we had this discussed before and we were promised what the union received and the non-union employees got nothing. She stressed that this change has to happen with everyone. And it should happen with all of us at the same time.

Mr. Phillips noted that a lot of things we cannot discuss because we are in negotiations. We do not have a lot to give and we are looking to be fair. As one Selectman, he understands that union

employees get a lot and non-union get nothing. We do want to do something for non-union employees to make it fair. Ms. Yasick would like the Board to wait to vote until everyone agrees. Mr. Phillips noted that our current negotiation proposal is for the same across the board for everyone. Ms. Yasick feels the health insurance percentage should have been cut a long time ago, but it needs to be done fairly. Mr. McCormick stated that the Board will work to make sure that it is as equal as we can.

Motion Mr. Phillips to approve the changes as outlined with the stipulation that we will do something to bring back to the fairness level for non-union employees, effective March 1, 2010, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all in favor.

Messrs. McCormick and Pruneau recused themselves.

Mr. Phillips has no desire to talk about the retirees until he has figures and the impact information from Mr. Gaumond. Mr. Gaumond will bring back how other towns deal with the retiree issue. He will go back to the Personnel Association to find out how communities have dealt with this in the past. Mr. Quist asked for the number of people in the plan. Mr. Rucho noted that the Board didn't have that information to make the decision on the non-union. Mr. Phillips believes the retirees are a different situation. Mr. Gaumond will get the number of retirees this will impact.

Marcia Cairns, Chairperson of the Insurance Advisory Committee, noted that many of the retirees are not on senior plans and are on regular HMO plans. Some of them are over sixty-five and can stay on that if they are not eligible for Medicare. The numbers she has do not separate retirees out. Mr. Rucho asked if an employee retires, do they go back to the 90/10 retiree rate if they retire at the 80/20 rate? Mr. Gaumond will get the answer to that question.

Motion Mr. Rucho to table any discussion relative to the retirees until the next meeting, seconded by Mr. Quist, all in favor. Mr. Gaumond will find out how many people will be impacted, and how it is handled administratively when somebody retires.

6. Announcement of 4th Annual Performance Measurement Report

Five years ago Mr. Gaumond brought to the Board an idea on performance measurement and how small towns can look at their performance and try to track things. We started an innovative program and since that time we have been rewarded through the ICMA and this year we received a Trail Blazer Grant for civic innovation and \$5,000 to help administer our program. Mr. Gaumond commended his department heads for embracing this program. We started this to try to get a baseline and we are starting to look critically at what it is we are actually measuring and collecting data and things need to happen with that data. We tracked trash and recycling, which is a good thing to track. We now are looking to move to the next phase and our grant will help us move from performance measurement to performance management. It is something that is a very important component of trying to close the loop to ensure our departments are doing their best we could. We are going to work on creative solutions on how we can start changing some of these things from negative to positive and prevent things from moving from positive to negative. For the last three years Mr. Gaumond has posted this report on line as is. This year we will make it more interactive and web based as we now have hard core data and we are going to go to the next level of reporting and it will be user friendly. One of the ways we will improve this is we are going to the next phase of customer satisfaction. We used money from the grant to be able to do on surveys on our web site. Currently we have a survey on the brush dump. We will use this tool to bring in a component of customer satisfaction. When we did the Town's Master Plan it had a component on how residents felt about a number of things and incorporated customer satisfaction data. This year when we send out the town meeting mailer there will be an attachment highlighting some of our findings. He will select six or seven things out of the report to highlight. It is something we are very proud of and he is very proud of his department managers for keeping up on this.

Mr. Phillips voiced concern with something not included. He read in the Banner about the results of some of the arrests and he always sees that it is dismissed. He asked whether the program we adopted on town fines could be the reason why this is happening. Mr. Gaumond explained that the things we were going to measure needed to be meaningful and easy. Mr. Phillips would like to see a category on cases dismissed. If the cases are going to be dismissed are we wasting our time on this. He noted that it is not unique to West Boylston as this happening with other towns as well. He would like to know why so many cases are being dismissed. Mr. Gaumond will look for dismissal rates for civil and criminal cases. Each year he goes to the citizens of the Town and the Board of Selectmen and asks if there is anything they would like to see added to the list. This is a work in progress and we will continue to add. Mr. Phillips asked for an explanation such as use of gas by the different departments. Maybe a note on the bottom to explain any big spikes. Mr. Gaumond noted that in the DPW you would use more diesel in the winter time. Mr. Quist commented that he thinks it is a great project.

7. Request from Town Clerk to designate Barbara Deschenes as Acting Deputy Warden for January 19th Election

Motion Mr. Rucho to designate Barbara Deschenes as Acting Deputy Warden for January 19th Election, seconded by Mr. Phillips, all in favor.

8. Public Hearing for ZBA Complaint

Mr. Gaumond explained that the next meeting of the Board has two public hearings both with discussion about the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Board has received a request from one of the members who requested that the hearing be continued and asked if the Board of Selectmen would reconsider if a hearing is warranted. The attorney representing Ms. Isgro is unavailable for the meeting on January 20th and has asked to have the hearing continued to the next meeting. In Ms. Isgro's letter she asks whether a hearing for her is warranted.

Mr. Phillips has no problem moving the hearing up to the first meeting in February for all the participants. He would honor this for Ms Isgro, and not necessarily her attorney as the attorney should be working off the Board's schedule. He did not read anything that would change his mind on whether we should not be having the public hearing.

Motion Mr. Phillips for the board to open both hearings scheduled for January 20th and continue them until the first meeting in February and send a letter to all the parties advising them of our intention to open and continue the hearing, seconded by Mr. Pruneau, all in favor.

MEETINGS, INVITATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. January 13, 2010, 8:30 a.m. – State of the Worcester Regional Retirement System Meeting – Public House, Sturbridge
2. January 15, 2010, 1:00 p.m. – Pre-bid Conference Tivnan Drive – Conference Room #1
3. January 19, 2010, 8:00 a.m. – Earth Day Meeting – 180 Beaman Street
4. February 6th – Recycle your Electronics & Appliances at the Wachusett Watershed Recycle Resource Center
5. January 9, 2010 – Our Lady of Good Counsel Church – The Board has received an invitation to attend the Court of Honor for two scouts from Troop 151 attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. Mr. Phillips offered to attend.
6. January 19th, special election, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Our Lady of Good Counsel Church.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Rucho asked whether we will have a Christmas Tree collection date. Mr. Gaumond will find out. Mr. Rucho would like to schedule a meeting with the School Department and other departments to discuss the budget. Mr. Gaumond has asked all departments to begin their budget submission and the School Superintendent should be getting him his budget within the next week or so. Mr. Gaumond will be meeting with Finance Director Michael Daley on January 1th and they will finalize the first revenue projects. He suggested a roundtable meeting on the revenue projects. Mr. McCormick recommends meeting with everybody soon to make sure we are all on the same page. The Board suggested January 28th or February 4th. Mr. Rucho asked about the status of union negotiations and Mr. Phillips offered to update the Board in executive session.

Mr. Phillips asked the status of being able to broadcast the Selectmen's meetings live. Mr. Gaumond noted that the Cable Advisory Committee has been in conversation and he has all the information in the Board's mail slots. Mr. Phillips thought the funding could come from the Cable Advisory Committee funds. According to Mr. Gaumond, the Committee has a plan for those funds. Mr. Rucho questioned the membership of the committee and Mr. Gaumond noted that we are still in need of members. Mr. McCormick suggested setting up a meeting with the Cable Advisory Committee. Mr. Phillips would like the texting item on the next agenda. Mr. Gaumond has been getting information on how other communities are handling this and he will have it for the next meeting. Mr. Phillips suggested outreaching to Boston.

Mr. Pruneau reminded everyone that tomorrow night at 6:30 there is a meeting at the Library to review the list of items the Library needs to have repaired.

Mr. Quist would like to start a discussion on economic development in town. He will have a discussion with Mr. Rucho who serves on the Economic Development Task Force.

Mr. Phillips would like to clarify the election date for this year. Mr. Gaumond believes the date will not change and the election will be in April as we have not heard back on the bylaw changes and nomination papers are open. The Town Clerk has made the call to have the election on the normal schedule. He will send the Board that email. Mr. Phillips believes something should be published on this. Mr. Rucho questioned whether it is unusual for the Attorney General to take so long. Mr. Gaumond indicated that it was not.

Motion Mr. Rucho at 8:30 p.m. for the Board to enter executive session under the provisions of MGL Chapter 39, Section 23b, Part 3 to discuss strategy with respect to union negotiations and the Board will not be going back into open session, seconded by Mr. Quist. Roll call vote: Mr. Quist yes, Mr. Pruneau yes, Mr. McCormick yes, Mr. Phillips yes and Mr. Rucho yes.

Motion Mr. Phillips at 9:00 p.m. for the Board to come out of executive session and adjourn, seconded by Mr. Pruneau. Roll call vote: Mr. Quist yes, Mr. Pruneau yes, Mr. McCormick yes, Mr. Phillips yes and Mr. Rucho yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: January 20, 2010

Nancy E. Lucier

Kevin M. McCormick, Chairman

Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman

Valmore H. Pruneau, Vice Chairman

Steven Quist, Selectman

Allen R. Phillips, Clerk