

Members present:      Allen R. Phillips                      Kevin M. McCormick  
                                 John J. O'Brien                      Steven J. Quist  
                                 Christopher A. Rucho

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

**Joint Meeting with the School Committee to Fill Vacancy on the School Committee Until the Next Annual Election**

School Committee Chairman Richard Shaw and members Siobahn Bohnson, Jennifer Breen, and John Owanisian joined the Board to interview candidates to fill the vacancy on the School Committee until the next annual election.

Marc Trudeau and Judith Doherty joined the group. Both submitted applications for the vacancy. Mr. Phillips explained the process which will include an opening statement by the applicant, questions by both boards, a vote to include both candidates on a ballot followed by a roll call vote.

Judith Doherty explained that for as far back as she can remember she has been passionate about education. At 11 years of age she decided to become a teacher. She has taught from elementary to college level, taught overseas, and co-director of the Boston Writing Project. In her position as co-director she wrote grants, proposed budgets, supervised staff and teachers who taught graduate courses. She was also the Manager of the Cape Cod Better Business Bureau. What she brings to the table is a person accustomed to working with the community and noted her work with the Solid Waste Advisory Team. She is a mother of a child about to enter kindergarten who has the blessing of a small school. The teachers and staff members know her and welcome and her older child by name. She would like to build on the small school benefit and market it. One way to do that is to have a portfolio system where each child is noted as an individual – for example a writer. Or somebody who is a kid struggling putting those words together. You can have diversity. She would like to see more of it in the system. She is a person who understands the system and is committed to the system.

Marc Trudeau explained that he is not a professional educator, however he is the son of a prep school and college teacher. His background is in engineering. His interest in becoming a part of the School Committee began when he moved into town five years ago. He grew up in West Boylston, attended West Boylston schools and graduated from WPI. When he returned he found it strange that his realtor said if you are looking for great schools I would not go to West Boylston, I would go to Holden. He did not attach much credibility to that statement because he had gone to school here. Upon arriving in town and enrolling his daughter he discovered we suffered with deteriorating funding. The administration had been distracted by that issue and the staff was under pressure not knowing if they will have a job year and ultimately the students are impacted. He has read the budget and the contract but still thinks that the school has lost its identity. In working on the regionalization planning committee it was one of their primary findings. The school lacks an identity. His interest in putting his hat in the ring for the School Committee is to help the new administration to identify exactly what we want this school to be. He believes we want it to be a school of excellence with individualized instruction focused on academics. In recent conversations with Superintendent Schaper she mentioned the main advantage we have is to be a small school and we should know every student well and bring them up to a level of excellence and it will help us to retain students. We can better fund our programs and it will give our teachers and staff something to sink their teeth in. We will have a product that presents clear value and it will support property values and improve the heart of the town.

Ms. Bohnson – as you both have stated, you have been at town meeting and understand some of the issues we are going through. What do you see that differentiates us from other towns? Boylston is building a new school, are we going to lose students to them? Many people in the past, including my children, have received an excellent education, what one item do you see that can separate us?

Mr. Trudeau – My experience of the staff here is that we have some incredibly talented and creative teachers. One teacher at the middle school piloted an exception program to support students who really needed to find themselves in their motivation. That kind of passion and skill is what we need to foster. If the administration were to engage the staff and the School Committee in understanding what they feel is more special about the school and the starting point of our journey and articulate a journey. In a situation with steadily deteriorating funding relative to level services you can't continue to try to do everything as other things will deteriorate. Make sure that the most important things are the best you can get.

Ms. Doherty – the Balien Program got all the way to People Magazine and she thinks it is nice there are so many committed mentors – that could be broadcasted. She would like to have the Leaders in Literacy Program and would like that to get around that West Boylston is a leader. If you could follow kids from K-12 and enhance creativity. Grant writing is a good idea to get more science equipment. There is a man who donates regularly to the music program at the high school. If we had a Prop 2-1/2 Override and people were offered an opportunity to designate where the additional funding could go such as to the sports program or lab equipment.

Mr. McCormick – the budget, at town meeting we had a discussion, how would you solve the budget issue we run into every year?

Ms. Doherty is happy about pay-as-you-throw and that money made a difference. It is not always about money. If people could opt to give more in a direction that they care about. More grant writing and private foundations.

Mr. Trudeau – I like the idea about designating override funds. The reason I am hammering on being clear about who we are, having a consistently excellent program where you can measure the results of students' work schools and where they ultimate go to school. Thinks we can support an override if it clearly articulated. Having studied the demographics from the census, we do have a fairly well off town with the exception over the over 70, and it is legal to provide tax relief on an age basis. The school has to take great care to be part of the community and deliver services.

Ms. Breen – I personally feel as a School Committee member that we do have an obligation to do some things in the community as we do receive a lot of town revenues. I have fostered a relationship with Marcia Cairns in the Council on Aging to bring seniors into the school to read to the younger students. What kind of community relationships do you think are important and what kinds of things can we offer to the community that we are not doing now.

Mr. Trudeau – good question. I can imagine, and I do not know all the legal ramifications of the suggestions, but can see opening activities to the people in the town such as putting on a theater production – maybe there are people who are passionate about their hobbies and could be involved in a club program. He has a passion for aeronautics and put on a session to build paper airplanes. He thinks that the physical schools are some of the greatest assets, and they should never be idle as we have space. Marcia has mentioned that the walls in her offices are not well insulated and it is difficult to have more than one program at a time. Maybe we have classrooms that the Council on Aging could use.

Ms. Doherty – having a history of being a teacher in both a catholic and public schools background she has seen how the use of community service is heavily done in catholic schools as service hours are required. We also have the community garden program, which she and her family

have been involved in. We could have a service component. With the Solid Waste Advisory Task Force people they developed posters with the third graders. She coordinated hands on science with a set of guest speakers in one school after they lost a science teacher and she set that program up. Her husband, who is a physician and has a PHD in science, came in and did a program and she also got the DCR involved with some programs. Not everything has to cost money.

Mr. Rucho – if you were trying to tell me why I should keep my kid in the system or go to a different school, how would you sell the school? How would you do the commercial?

Ms. Doherty – I am determined to make these schools better and to get more involved. I could point to particular teachers. The new art teacher is amazing and kudos to the West Boylston Arts Foundation. I am not ready to do an ad yet, but I could make a commercial next year.

Mr. Trudeau – there are pockets of real excellence in the school organization. There is a program for at risk students. Larry Murphy has set a tone for the Middle/High School in terms of supporting his staff and being supportive to the parents. I have been very impressed with a number of teachers. There are pockets of real excellence and by the same token he sees signs of the pressure the school is under. A small school has to serve out yes when they have a request of a parent and say we will find a way. Although our staff is busy we could say this week we are going to focus on this aspect or these kids. We can expand those pockets of excellence and that is the opportunity to create that ad as great things already exist here.

Mr. Owanisian – the schools are very important to the towns' people and would be a major reason people live in town. The school is 2/3rds of the budget. My impression in the last couple of years we have worked more closely with the Board of Selectmen and other boards. Can you think of other methods where the School Committee could work more closely with the Board of Selectmen the Finance Committee and other boards in support of schools?

Mr. Trudeau – For me I think the most important thing joint boards can do in support of the schools and for the other departments is to facilitate a discussion about what are we missing. Here is what we were planning to fund this year but these are the next most important things and then facilitate that discussion. I believe they want a particular quality of life in town and think there are things below the cut line that are important.

Ms. Doherty – I have worked with another town committee and I've seen a lot of mutual cooperation in the general effort to deal with budget constraints and have seen willingness to say we have to tight up our belts. No new offerings on that.

Mr. O'Brien – thinks the town will continue for a couple of years to not only want excellent schools but to pay for those schools and work together to get the most out of the budget money. He does not think we will have a Proposition 2-1/2 override. Collaborating is a key skill on your resume you said you collaborated with physics professor to teach writing as a means to learn physics. Could you elaborate on that?

Ms. Doherty – I never took a physics course until then. He was older and did traditional writing on the board and students were falling asleep. He invited me to his classroom to help him in bringing methods back to the classroom. It gave me an opportunity to work with the kids to use writing with reading. I brought the writing to help gain the way of learning that would embed the knowledge into their minds. He was excited and it helped his career get more animated.

Mr. O'Brien to Mr. Trudeau – in your resume you have worked for as an advisor to Chairmen, Directors and CEO's of startups to Fortune 500's valued for analytical skills and ability to balance need of diverse stakeholders, how do you handle that?

Mr. Trudeau – I think the core of that statement is around the statement that different people with different backgrounds often look at the same statement and perceive it in different ways. I was a

physicist by training and then an electrical engineer. Engineers have a particular way of looking at things. They tend to view the users of a product in a linear way, which helps to facilitate that conversation about the customer life and the engineer life. You use ice breakers to get them in a frame of mind, using his TV then you put prototypes of things and have them use them. The engineers can grasp why it is hard for customers because the task is much more complicated. Getting the engineer that work for money to understand why time to market is important. People can be on the same page and have no meaningful discussions.

Mr. Quist – being a former educator and industrial arts teacher, my concern is vocational education what do you think the solution is for vocational education?

Mr. Trudeau – I think vocational education is an important component of our educational offering but we need to help students and parents understand when a vocational education is appropriate and important for a certain student and when it is not. Right now there are parents who take their kids to Asabet in the belief that they are not losing anything academically and they are gaining this other way of making money. It is discerning my calling and being aware of what I might lose by making the decision incorrectly and value what West Boylston school has to offer and Asabet has to offer. It is expensive to run a vocational school. We have an obligation to provide vocational education. We should provide it to students when it is appropriate. A vocational plan is individual offerings we are required by law to support. We need to understand when there is no chance we can provide an offering.

Mr. Doherty – is delighted to know that Mr. Quist was a vocational teacher. She added that he would know better than anybody and he could connect with the School Committee and visit their meetings on this very question with somebody from the Finance Committee she would suggest it is a perfect moment for Mr. Quist to do an analysis on where the tipping point is and maybe pay up and be part of one of those systems. She sees it as an ideal moment for collaboration.

Mr. Quist – in the thought process of vocational education, what would you think about local businesses offering vocational education in their business?

Mr. Doherty – I have a neighbor whose son is suffering terribly in special education, liked sports but does not think he is gaining ground in West Boylston.

Mr. Trudeau – my question would be about the time commitment requirements thinks we should investigate whether an apprenticeship would qualify as a state vocational program - what better way to build community.

Mr. Shaw – pleased to have both awesome candidates. Marketing – we have to be prepared how would you market our schools, not only to local people but beyond that. It is almost like a private school with an educational program.

Ms. Doherty – it is a dilemma for me because as a parent I see and understand these parents who are choosing the academic schools like AMSA and Boylston for the brand new buildings – she wants to dig in and figure it out. It would be premature she sees why people are choosing another school system. She thinks there are a lot of good things and people with good will in this town. Offered Leaders in Literacy and wants to dig in and find a good solid answer to last years and years.

Mr. Trudeau – two pieces to the question for him. Local government services are not exactly the most interesting things to discuss with people. How do you make a school offering compelling and interesting. How do you make it interesting when you are talking about services and a school whose reputation is a little tarnished. He thinks it is about what have you done for me lately. He would take a program developed in the last year and say these are the new things going on in West Boylston. Here is the evidence they are working and here are the next things we are taking on. How do you get it out there? He would suggest we engage realtors or guidance counselors who visit schools where our

students go. We have to get really creative. Concerts in the park have an intermission; engage the 50-100 people sitting there by handing out brochures.

Mr. Phillips – thanked both for coming in and feels either would make a fine addition to the School Committee. He understands people would run at election time; please describe the role of School Committee member as you see it.

Mr. Trudeau – I think we have a role facing the school administration, and staff and a roll facing the voters. The role of the School Committee and the staff is one much like Board of Directors. The Administration runs the schools and needs to be supported by a group of talented people to advise the Superintendent around what might be the pitfalls and opportunities. First job is to support the Superintendent running the schools and to hire and fire if you are not getting what you need out of that role. You have the responsibility of elected officials and you have to spend time at events and meetings and as committee member you have a responsibility to help the community. You have to spend some effort to take the temperature of the waters to understand their frustration and priorities, what is our funding strategy.

Ms. Doherty – I agree with Marc. In my work as Co-Director of the Boston Writing Project we had a Steering Committee, a group of people like the School Committee who launched ideas to see the school become spectator. Agree with supporting the School Superintendent, budget analysis with a fine tooth comb, and work with the Board of Selectmen to look at small details. In my community development work it was paying attention to those who wanted to complain about the school and hear what it is that could be made better and turn it around.

Ms. Bohnson – we have to remember that we are here for all the students and in all of this conversation we have to remember that is our top priority. We do have the advanced at the high school. What concerns me (to Ms. Doherty) is you talk about the advanced and we should look at that - what about the average kids. The law says we have to take care of our other children and those who need special services. What are you going to do for the average kids?

Ms. Doherty – I have been going to the school volunteering this year in all three poetry classes and I see the range of learners. There are many different types of intelligence and with a small school we could ask what is it about you that makes you excited to come back to school. It is more about that and where is your strength and how do you build on that? We could market ourselves as we are the school that really knows your child.

Mr. Trudeau – When I was talking about excellence I did not mean serving only the most capable student. Any topic you want to teach has foundational components. That topic is like an onion with layers. Most capable students needs less effort to peel back layers of the onion. I believe in a single-classroom situation with the teacher as the team leader. They can direct the use of supplemental services and you can have a mastery of the core. It is delivery of personalized care and when I talk about excellence it is delivering personalized care and knowledge.

Mr. Phillips opened the floor up to nominations.

Motion Mr. Rucho to nominate Ms. Doherty and Mr. Trudeau to fill the vacancy on the School Committee, seconded by Mr. McCormick.

Roll call vote: Ms. Bohnson – Mr. Trudeau; Mr. McCormick - Ms. Doherty; Ms. Breen – Mr. Trudeau; Mr. Rucho - Ms. Doherty; Mr. Owanisian - Mr. Trudeau; Mr. O'Brien – Ms. Doherty; Mr. Quist – Ms. Doherty; Mr. Shaw – Mr. Trudeau; Mr. Phillips – Ms. Doherty.

**Discussion of Project Funding Agreement for the Major Edwards Elementary School Green Project with the School Committee**

Retired School Superintendent Tom Kane joined the Board. He explained that about one year ago we applied for funding through the Mass School Building Authority program to assist schools in repairs and upgrading building structures to increase energy efficiency. There are a number of classrooms at Major Edwards that were not upgraded during the renovation which took place in the 1990's including classrooms in the t-wing and under the gymnasium. We were fortunate to be able to move forward with the project. We received initial approval with the MSBA, came up with preliminary numbers, they met to review our project and advised us that our project has been approved to move forward. It is the responsibility of the town to appropriate the full amount for the project and we have 90 days, until October 25, to secure the funding. Mr. Kane reports that he has been working with Mr. Gaumond to discuss the possibility ways of funding this project as it is the town's issue to decide where the funds would come from. He is here to answer questions about the project. All of the windows will meet the stretch energy code and it will improve our insulating abilities in those classrooms. The total cost is \$352,000, 56.26% or \$183,000 will be reimbursed. The town's portion is \$170,000. The project cannot go over the \$352,000 as that is as much money as we can pay. The MSBA is involved in the bidding of the project and should the bids come in over the \$352,000 he does not know what the next step would be although he offered to find out. Mr. Gaumond believes the town would be responsible for the overage.

Mr. Gaumond met with the Finance Director, the Town Accountant, Mr. Kane and Superintendent Schaper. We have some old borrowings from previous school projects which would give us \$37,000. For the \$320,000 balance, he recommends using Free Cash if it is certified by the time town meeting happens and provided it does not interfere with the percentage we need to balance our Free Cash Policy. It is one-time money for a one-time project. When we get reimbursed the money would return to Free Cash giving us a net loss of \$170,000. We could use Stabilization with the understanding that the reimbursement flows back to Stabilization. The balance in Capital Investment is only \$68,000. Mr. O'Brien asked about the consequences if we do not do the project and if we do the project the associated savings. Mr. Kane explained that we have a system which is fifteen years old and will have to be replaced sooner than later. At some point the town will have to replace them. The savings will be energy efficient windows replacing single-pane windows. When they replaced the windows in the gymnasium they estimated the pay back to be \$90,000 over ten years. He does not believe the pay back for this project would be that dramatic. Mr. Shaw asked if the Board thought about a debt exclusion and saving the funds for the budgets. Mr. Gaumond stated that he is not proposing any funds that we would be using for operations next year according to our Free Cash Policy. We could look at a debt exclusion, however, that adds the element of cost and expense for a special election. The deadline to get the funding source is October 24. Mr. Owanisian asked if it is possible to estimate what we have for Free Cash. Mr. Gaumond advised that our books have not yet been certified by DOR. His expectation is that we would probably have enough in Free Cash.

Ms. Breen commented on Mr. O'Brien's comments related to cost savings. She noted that we have an opportunity to replace the windows and have 56% of the costs returned to us. We may have to do this project in a few years and if we don't take advantage of this opportunity the town would be responsible for the entire amount. Mr. O'Brien thinks we should go forward with the project. Mr. McCormick voiced concern over using our Free Cash as the \$170,000 inevitably will go to something else along with Stabilization money. He is also very concerned that if we take the extra money we may end up hitting Stabilization harder than we have for the last two years so he recommends a debt exclusion. Mr. Phillips feels there is support to move forward with the project and the only issue is how to fund it. Everyone indicated that they are in favor of the project. Mr. Ken Quist, in the audience, noted that with a debt exclusion, all residents have an opportunity to vote. Mr. Phillips added that we

have heard from town meeting that we should start taking care of our buildings and it makes sense for us to accept a grant and do the project now. Mr. Ken Quist, in the audience, agrees with Mr. McCormick's statement that we should stop taking money from Stabilization. Mr. Phillips stated our goal tonight is are we are going to move forward with the project and if so, we will instruct the Town Administrator to determine the best approach. New School Committee member Judith Doherty joined the Board. Mr. Rucho pointed out that the Board did not want to take money from Stabilization, however, it was town meeting voters who voted to take money from Stabilization. Mr. Phillips added that it is the town's decision on how the money will be spent. Mr. McCormick does not agree with taking funds from Stabilization and prefers a debt exclusion. He does not know if people would vote for it or not and then the next option would be go to town meeting and take it from Stabilization. He would not want to take it from potential town operating budgets.

Based upon the comments of the Board, Mr. Gaumond will schedule this discussion for a future meeting of the Board and he will run some scenarios with Finance Director Michael Daley. If we could get the special election done prior to the October Town Meeting it would give us a fall back option. It was agreed to include this on the next agenda. Mr. Quist would also like to know the cost of running a special election. Mr. Gaumond noted that it runs \$5,000 to \$6,000.

#### **Consider Signing Regulatory and Use Agreement for the Franklin Street Freedom Village Project**

On July 8 we received notification from the Franklin Street 40B project developer that the Comprehensive Permit Regulatory Agreement needs to be signed by the Chief Elected Official, the Board of Selectmen. Town Counsel has reviewed the documents to insure that the Comprehensive Permit and the Regulatory Agreement are consistent with each other. Mr. Gaumond received the Acknowledgement of Zoning Board of Appeals, which is Exhibit of the document. Town Counsel has recommended that there is no reason why the Board of Selectmen should not sign the Regulatory Use and Agreement. This will allow the town to party with DHCD and the developer to enforce the Regulatory Use and Agreement.

Motion Mr. McCormick to authorize the Chairman to sign the Regulatory and Use Agreement for the Franklin Street Freedom Village Project, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all in favor.

#### **Presentation by Mr. Quist of Conceptual Affordable Housing Plan Prepared for Malden Brook Farm LLC**

Mr. Quist announced that he has run this by the Ethics Commission and been cleared. He will recuse himself. Mr. Quist sat at the Board's visitor's table and stated that this is all a conceptual drawing dealing with our sewer policies. He has asked the Sewer Commission to review our sewer policies and we have a meeting on September 7 to talk with Weston & Sampson about our flows and where the system goes. As a Sewer Commissioner he does not know what the system looks like. This is a conceptual drawing and he has no clue if it will go on or not. It is a conceptual drawing of a project and if this will go any further there would be a public hearing.

Mr. Phillips stated that he took a look at the conceptual drawing and asked whose land is it. Mr. Quist replied, it belongs to Dr. Tashjian. Mr. Phillips asked if he was a Trustee. Mr. Quist advised that he is a member of the Board of Trustees for a non-profit. Mr. Phillips asked why Dr. Tashjian is not here making this presentation. Mr. Quist replied this is a conceptual drawing and all I am doing is saying there is a sewer hookup here and there could be potential economic development. Mr. Phillips would not comment on a conceptual drawing as the land does not belong to Mr. Quist. He would rather have the land owner make the presentation. Mr. McCormick added that if Mr. Quist is

doing this to have something to do with the evaluation of the sewer system, he does not have to have a conceptual plan put in front of him. For him this is a waste of his time to see whether the sewer system can handle this. The sewer system is very complicated and we have many agreements with a lot of people. After that review we can evaluate whether we should add to the system. Then we could make a decision on a conceptual plan. He does not want to discuss a conceptual plan. He stated that when it is going to happen, then we will have a discussion and this is a waste of time. Let's talk about the sewer system when the sewer system discussion is on the agenda then we will vote on if we need to change our policy or not. He does not think this is the right approach. He pointed out that all the people in the audience are mad because they live on the little street. He does not think this is the right approach. Mr. O'Brien voiced concern with the process and he does not think this is the right process on who should be talking about this project. He also has a problem with the word 'conceptual' when he sees a detailed plan. He added that we have a meeting to go over sewer policies but it should not be related to one specific project. Mr. Rucho agrees he does not believe this is the right process.

Motion Mr. McCormick to end discussion and adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Rucho. Mr. Ken Quist, in the audience, asked how do we, the neighbors, get our point across. Mr. Phillips stated that this is not going to come before the Board of Selectmen, we are not going to have this discussion because there is a motion to end discussion. Mr. Ken Quist asked why Steven Quist is here making the presentation. Mr. Phillips suggested he ask him later. He was here to present a conceptual plan and if Mr. Ken Quist would like to ask him some questions he could ask him on his own. Mr. McCormick added that the project is not going in today or maybe it will never go in. If it were to go there would be months of public hearings where the residents would be able to make their position known. Before this could happen the Board of Sewer Commissions would have to extend the sewer system and the residents would be welcome to come to our next meeting and listen to that discussion. Mr. McCormick stated that he does not want to listen to this discussion on a conceptual plan. Mr. Ken Quist voiced his frustration that the Board allowed Mr. Seven Quist to be on their agenda and many people came to hear the presentation.

Vote on the motion to adjourn, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: October 5, 2011

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Nancy E. Lucier, Municipal Assistant

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Allen R. Phillips, Chairman

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John J. O'Brien, Vice Chairman

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Christopher A. Rucho, Clerk

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Kevin M. McCormick, Selectman

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Steven J. Quist, Selectman