

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES  
Slade Building  
May 11, 2009**

Members present: Kristie Casey  
Matt Castriotta  
Ernest Newcomb

Staff present: Elaine Peterson, Town Secretary, Deb Roussel, Town Administrator,  
Karen Chick, Town Accountant, Jim Dunbar, Town Treasurer, Joyce Green, Town Clerk

Others present: Ed Collier, Tom Howlett, Vincent Ritchie, Walter Ducharme,  
B. J. Begin, Michael Stauder

Finance Committee: Ed Blanchard, Kellianne Becker, Sue Motta, Jennifer Chase  
Williams, Michael Araujo

Meeting commenced at 6:00 pm

**Reorganization of Board:**

**Motion: M. Castriotta** **2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**  
**To appoint Kristie Casey as Chair of the Board** **Vote: All in Favor**

**Motion: K. Casey** **2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**  
**To appoint Matt Castriotta as Vice Chair** **Vote: All in Favor**

**Motion: M. Castriotta** **2<sup>nd</sup>: K. Casey**  
**To appoint Ernest Newcomb as Clerk** **Vote: All in Favor**

<b>Warrant #24</b>
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<b>Motion: M. Castriotta</b> <span style="float:right"><b>2<sup>nd</sup>: K. Casey</b></span>
<b>To approve Warrant #24 in the amount of \$131,023.24</b> <span style="float:right"><b>Vote: All in Favor</b></span>

The Finance Committee and Board reviewed the warrant articles for STM/ATM. Planning Board Chair Vinnie Ritchie explained the solar farm proposal by Reliant Energy to build a solar farm on Hakala Brothers' 36 acres. The Building Commissioner has determined a special permit application would be required for the project. Mr. Ritchie stated an appraisal is required to value the land in order to determine how to tax the property for highest and best use. Mr. Ritchie stated his belief that the assessors' appraisal service could provide a value based on similar projects. If an agreement for a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) were put forward, the agreement would need to be approved by town meeting. Finance Committee members Blanchard and Araujo inquired whether to place the article on town meeting warrant now since there is no special permit application filed.

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Ms. Roussel explained that the time to schedule another town meeting to approve funding for an appraisal might be critical as the Board believed timing was essential for the project to come to Hubbardston. Mr. Castriotta reported that once this project was established, a parcel of town property might be used for another project that could provide a 25-year revenue stream for the town with virtually no impact on town services (police, fire or education). Mr. Araujo recommended amending the article to include certain conditions to prevent risk of spending money prematurely. Ms. Williams asked if there is a projection of revenue for the ATM. Ms. Roussel replied it would not be available until after a specialized appraisal were performed. Ms. Roussel reported another article had been added to the warrant to authorize expenditure of insurance proceeds over \$20,000 from a police cruiser accident in early February requiring town meeting approval to expense the receipt for a replacement cruiser. Ms. Roussel added that she had also added an article to transfer any money remaining in free cash to stabilization account on the advice of the Town Accountant.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**  
**To approve the STM warrant as presented**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**  
**Vote: All in Favor**

The Boards reviewed the Annual Town Meeting articles. Mr. Blanchard requested the stabilization account balance and free cash appear on the warrant. Mr. Blanchard requested an explanation of why free cash had not yet been certified. Ms. Roussel explained that it was only Ms. Chick's second year closing out a fiscal year, which was a complicated process. This taken together with the lack of clerical assistance has been the response of Ms. Chick. Ms. Williams indicated she believed this to be an issue to be addressed by the individual who supervised Ms. Chick. Ms. Roussel indicated she was Ms. Chick's supervisor and would be addressing the matter with Ms. Chick. Ms. Roussel reported the statement included on the warrant regarding the Board and Finance Committee decision not to include the line item budget in the mailing of the warrant noting the Town was waiting for resolution of the state budget, specifically local aid. Ms. Roussel requested inclusion of kept article 14 addressing safety improvements needed regarding renovation of the Slade Building entrance, noting it was a borrowing, not requiring appropriation in their fiscal year beyond interest. A 2/3 vote is required to approve the borrowing. Ms. Roussel added the Board has agreed to spend \$2,500 to pay a structural engineer to look at the Slade Building. Mr. Blanchard asked what is needed. Ms. Roussel stated fixing brick, pointing the brickwork, preventing hazardous conditions occurring from ice damming on the roof and gutters. Mr. Newcomb asked if anyone had looked into placing ice-melting cables on the roof. Ms. Roussel stated they had discussed, but did not believe it was a long-term solution. Article #24 included changes by legal counsel regarding processing of information for a ballot question.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**  
**To approve the ATM warrant as presented**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**  
**Vote: All in Favor**

The Finance Committee members moved to continue their meeting in the Senior Center.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**  
**To sign STM/ATM warrants as presented**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**  
**Vote: All in Favor**

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### **Ice Storm Debris Removal:**

Resident B. J. Begin came in to ask how decisions were made involving debris removal from the ice storm. Ms. Casey stated FEMA is reimbursing 75% of ice storm cleanup and the Town will most likely have to pay the remaining 25%. Ms. Casey added only debris in town rights of way would be removed to prevent drainage problems. The decision to have a drop off site at the recycling center was made for residents who were unable to burn or otherwise dispose of debris. Ms. Roussel explained town cleanup has to be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>, end of fiscal year in order to be reimbursed by FEMA. Ms. Begin is concerned about those people unable to bring debris down to the recycling center area as a result of medical conditions. It was suggested neighbors volunteer to help out each other in situations such as this as the cost of removal rises to the million dollar mark. Board members are concerned with expending further town funds. Ms. Begin was concerned about the limited time the center is open to receive the debris. Ms. Roussel explained the workers were only available to work during that time period due to other employment. Ms. Begin suggested having volunteers work at other times. Mr. Castriotta said if volunteers come forth let the Board know and we can proceed. Ms. Begin thanked the Board and exited the meeting.

Mr. Howlett informed the Board that Mr. Newcomb's birthday was tomorrow and to wish him a happy 58<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **Interdepartmental Transfer Request**

Ms. Roussel presented a request from Treasurer Dunbar for an interdepartmental transfer of \$6,000 from Chapter 32B, Health Insurance Account# 01-914-5100-0000 to Unemployment, Account #01-913-5100-0000.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**

**To approve Ms. Casey to sign approval**

**Vote: All in Favor**

### **Longsjo Bicycle Race**

Ed Collier, Executive Director and Race Coordinator returned this evening to report he had met with Acting Fire Chief Hayes and Police Chief Perron to finalize details for the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Fitchburg Longsjo Classic Race scheduled for July 2- 5, 2009. The race would be occurring in Hubbardston on July 2, 2009. Mr. Collier has added the Town of Hubbardston as additional insured and will fax the policy to Ms. Peterson. Informational fliers will be sent out as the date nears.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**

**To approve the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Fitchburg Longsjo Classic Race**

**Vote: All in Favor**

### **Minutes approved**

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: K. Casey**

**To approve minutes of March 30 and April 13, 2009 as written**

**Vote: Mr. Castriotta- yes, Ms. Casey-yes, Mr. Newcomb- abstained**

### **Appointments to Capital Improvement Planning Committee and Ad Hoc ZBA Subcommittee on Affordable Housing:**

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Ms. Casey reported hesitancy on reappointment of an individual to Capital Improvement Planning Committee as she believed there is a bias exists regarding certain departments. Mr. Castriotta asked what Ms. Casey was suggesting. Ms. Casey indicated she was not ready to move forward with any action at this time. A suggestion was made to contact each committee chair for comment before appointments are made or renewed. Another suggestion was to have the Board liaisons contact the chair before the appointment to discuss nomination. Ms. Casey will work with Ms. Roussel on a policy.

**Motion: M. Castriotta** **2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**  
**To appoint William Murray, Diane Lanney, Kevin Motta, Sue Motta, Greg Cravedi, Caleb Langer, Ernest Newcomb, and Karen Chick (ex officio) to the Capital Improvement Planning Committee and appoint Donna Warfield, Dennis O'Donnell, Judith O'Donnell, Kristie Casey to the Ad Hoc ZBA Subcommittee on Affordable Housing** **Vote: All in Favor**

Ms. Peterson presented a letter to MRPC indicating Ms. Peterson and Ms. Roussel as individuals permitted to invoice for MART Van expenses. Mr. Castriotta and Ms. Casey signed the letter.

Ms. Peterson requested to attend Municipal Licensing Corporation Meeting and Luncheon on June 2, 2009 in Quincy. She offered to attend without pay and to split mileage costs with the Town.

**Motion: M. Castriotta** **2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**  
**To permit Ms. Peterson to attend MLC meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup>** **Vote All in Favor**

The Board approved Ms. Roussel's attendance at the MA Municipal Management Association conference in Lenox; cost of the attendance is paid through her STAM membership. Ms. Roussel was paying cost of mileage and hotel out of pocket. She will be out of the office on Thursday May 28, 2009.

Ms. Roussel presented the annual report written on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, including her name in the submission as author.

**Motion: M. Castriotta** **2<sup>nd</sup> K. Casey**  
**To approve the submission for 2008 annual town report as presented**  
**Ms. Casey-yes, Mr. Castriotta- yes, Mr. Newcomb-abstained**

Ms. Peterson reported the Building Commissioner had submitted a vacation request for the last week of May 2009.

**Motion K. Casey** **2<sup>nd</sup>: M.Castriotta**  
**To approve Building Commissioner Brandt's vacation request** **Vote: All in Favor**

#### **Senior Work Off program –**

Ms. Roussel reported she had discovered Town Meeting has the ability to increase the ceiling senior citizens are allowed to obtain up to \$750 towards their real estate tax bills annually through the senior work off program. All slots are filled for this year so the discussion will be revisited next year after the senior work off committee examines the

additional \$2,500.00 revenue shift.

Ms. Roussel reported the Parks Commission was requesting if they could hire one of their commissioners, currently working for the cemetery commissioners as a part-time cemetery worker, to perform part-time maintenance work for the Park Commission. Ms. Roussel contacted MA Ethics with his permission and was advised he could be hired if the Parks Commissioners' position was designated as a special municipal employee and someone else supervise the individual. The individual will also have to file a notice of financial disclosure with the Town Clerk.

**Motion: M. Castriotta** **2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Newcomb**  
**To designate Parks Commissioners as SME and designate Town Administrator as supervisor** **Vote: Ms. Casey-yes, Mr. Castriotta-yes, Mr. Newcomb-abstained**

Police Chief Perron has submitted a missing children's policy and the Board has thirty days to respond. The Board will review and respond by the May 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **Ethics Discussion-**

The Board discussed with Mr. Newcomb possible conflicts of interest due to his current employment with the Highway Department and elected positions of Cemetery Commissioner, Parks Commissioner, and Board of Selectmen. Mr. Newcomb is also serving on the Historical Commission and Recreation Field Committee. Mr. Newcomb said he would continue to receive Cemetery Commission pay this fiscal year instead of the Selectboard stipend. Other questions that arose were; "Could he vote on the budget since his wages are included in it? Can Mr. Newcomb participate in other department union contract negotiations?" Mr. Newcomb has not received all information from the Ethics Commission yet. There was further discussion on what the public's perception of Board discussions concerning certain issues would be. Ms. Roussel asked Mr. Newcomb if he would be willing to share the written opinion from the Ethics Commission. Mr. Newcomb indicated he would take it under advisement. Mr. Newcomb added he would comply with the law regarding what he can and can't do.

Ms. Roussel reported the cable company has supplied a replacement unit for posting messages on the public access channel. Ms. Roussel recommended purchasing a television as well as the picture on the present one is starting to degrade.

Ms. Roussel reviewed the upcoming meeting dates and reminded the Board of the energy performance grading on Thursday in Athol.

Mr. Newcomb reported the Cemetery Commission still has one vacancy and submitted a letter of interest from Bruce Newcomb. Ms. Roussel suggested Cemetery Commission be invited and jointly appoint at the next meeting.

**Motion: M. Castriotta** **2<sup>nd</sup>: K. Casey**  
**To enter executive session at 7:56 pm to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to adjourn at end of session**  
**Vote: Mr. Castriotta – yes, Ms. Casey- yes, Mr. Newcomb- abstained**

Mr. Newcomb exited the meeting.

\*\*\*\*\* **Executive Session Minutes are Separate**\*\*\*\*\*

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Peterson  
Town Secretary

Approved: July 6, 2009

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