

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES  
September 13, 2010  
Slade Building**

**Members present:** Matt Castriotta, Chair  
Michael Stauder, Vice Chair  
Ernest Newcomb, Clerk

**Staff present:** Elaine Peterson, Town Secretary; Debra Roussel, Town Administrator

**Others present:** Ed Blanchard, Chris Norcross, Finance Committee members; Joyce Green, Town Clerk; Sandy Knipe, Board of Health Chair; Police Chief Dennis Perron, Tom Howlett, Walter Ducharme, Jassy Bratko, Tom Bratko, Mike See, Danielle Arakelian, Jane Turcotte, Officer Timothy Miner, Bill Letsky, Virtual Town Hall Representative; Shelly Hatch, MRPC

Meeting commenced at 6:12 PM

Ms. Peterson informed those present that the meeting was being digitally recorded.

**Warrant #7**

Mr. Newcomb invoked the Rule of Necessity stating he was a Highway Department employee because the Board was unable to obtain a quorum.

**Motion: M. Stauder**

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

**To approve Warrant#7 in the amount of \$235,904.20**

**Vote: All in Favor**

**Generator Wiring Contract Award**

Ms. Roussel reported Highway Superintendent Gauthier is recommending awarding the wiring job for the Highway Department generator to Raborne Electric Corporation of Gardner, MA. The installation amount is under \$5,000.00, so a contract was not needed.

**Motion: M. Stauder**

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

**To award the generator wiring job to Raborne Electric Corporation, 260 Gardner Road, Gardner, MA in the amount of \$4,304.00**

**Vote: All in Favor**

**Motion: E. Newcomb**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Stauder**

**To authorize Mr. Stauder to sign the wiring work proposal on behalf of the Board**

**Vote: All in Favor**

**VS/VS- 6 Veteran Certification**

Ms. Roussel reported the Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires an individual be responsible for reviewing and certifying monthly expenditures made by the Veteran's Service Officer. It was determined Treasurer Jim Dunbar will be that individual.

**Motion: E. Newcomb**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Stauder**

**To authorize Vice Chair Stauder to sign the VS 5/VS-6 Certification Form**

**Vote: All in Favor**

**Home Rule Petition**

Ms. Roussel reported the Town has received a letter from the City of Lowell asking the Town to file a home rule petition which would allow towns to institute plan design changes for health insurance coverage or join the Group Insurance Commission (GIC). Ms. Roussel recommended against taking

action as the Town purchases health insurance through Quabbin District and has no authority over health plan design nor is the Town eligible to join GIC.

**Motion: E. Newcomb**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Stauder**

**To send a letter of regret to City of Lowell**

**Vote: All in Favor**

### **Facility Use Request**

The Greater Gardner Community Development Corporation has requested to use the Fire Station training room for two Saturdays in November to present a first time homebuyer education course funded by the joint CDBG grant with the Town of Ashby. Ms. Roussel expressed concerns as there are no locked offices and if the staff is called out during the day, no one to supervise the station in their absence. After discussion on other possible spaces, it was decided to see if a volunteer or staff member can be present. Ms. Roussel will return with the request on September 20<sup>th</sup> after speaking to the Fire Chief.

### **250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee**

Ms. Roussel asked the Board form a 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee to begin planning of the Town's celebration in 2017.

**Motion: E. Newcomb**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Stauder**

**To appoint a five member 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee to plan, implement and request appropriate funding in support of suggested activities**

**Vote: All in Favor**

Ms. Roussel requested the Board amend the minutes of July 12, 2010 to define the Senior Center Design Committee composition as a seven member committee, adding one additional senior and one community member at large.

**Motion: M. Stauder**

**2nd: E. Newcomb**

**To amend the minutes of July 12, 2010 to read**

**To expand the composition of the committee to seven members to include an additional senior and a member from the community at large and to appoint Paul Hale, William Fernekees, Ed Blanchard and William Murray to the Senior Center Committee with terms to expire June 30, 2011**

**Vote: All in Favor**

### **Boot Drive Policy**

Ms. Roussel reported she has amended the boot drive policy per the Board's request and added insurance requirements as well.

**Motion: M. Stauder**

**2nd: E. Newcomb**

**To accept the boot drive policy as presented**

**Vote: All in Favor**

Ms. Roussel presented an agreement with Country Oil, Inc. of 212 West St, Gardner, MA for purchase and delivery of #2 heating oil. The contract was awarded at a previous meeting for a fixed price of \$2.458 per gallon. The Board signed the contract.

### **Montachusett Region Strategic Framework Plan**

Ms. Roussel reported MRPC has received a \$40,000.00 grant from the MA Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development to develop a region strategic framework plan. The plan is intended to serve as a guide in promoting sustainable development in urban areas and targeted undeveloped lands while protecting and preserving environmentally sensitive open space.

Ms. Roussel has asked John Hume, Planning and Development Director, for an extension as she has not received any response from the Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission, Planning Board and Housing Authority. She asked if the Board had any recommendations for the survey. It was suggested to get a representative from each Board to meet and discuss.

### **Local Option**

Ms. Roussel presented comparisons between the Municipal Relief Act authorizing sending voters' information by local option and the Town's home rule petition version. The differences between both are the number of words, the time constraints for notification and whether to mail notification to voters' homes. Ms. Roussel questioned if the Town adopts the Home Rule Petition, how it would affect the override question being placed on the November 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot as the Town would not be able to meet the timeframe. Ms. Roussel informed the Board that if the Town adopts the Home Rule Petition, it will require more funding for mailing and legal counsel to provide question information.

Mr. Castriotta entered the meeting at 6:45 pm.

**Motion: M. Stauder**

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

**To approve the Municipal Relief Act Local Option for Voter Information**

**Vote: All in Favor**

The Board moved to the Senior Center to see a power point presentation from Bill Letsky of Virtual Town Hall, a company that provides easy-to-use, easy-to-update, affordable municipal websites using a content management system. Their office is in Maynard with a secure equipment/backup site in Portland, ME. Virtual Town Hall works with the Town to design the new website and provides ongoing support. Virtual Town Hall has been in business for twelve years and has over one hundred clients in Massachusetts. Mr. Letsky stated the trend nowadays for consumers is to go online to get information and conduct business. He reviewed different services such as News, Event Calendars, Agendas, Minutes, Alphabetical Listings and automatic email subscription for those who sign up. Standard features include printer friendly pages for forms and documents; drop down menus, and slide shows, and statistics on who is using the site.

The initial setup cost is \$3,500.00. Payments for the initial setup cost can be spread over three years. Annual cost is \$1750.00 and due on the day the site goes live. An additional cost of \$150.00 per user per year is charged after the first year. Turnover to the new website can take from 8 – 12 weeks. Ms. Roussel recommended the Board take the information presented tonight under advisement. The Board thanked Mr. Letsky for the presentation and returned to the meeting room at 7:25 pm.

Chief Perron entered the meeting to request to hire Timothy Miner as a full-time police officer. He reported Officer Miner has been an exceptional part-time officer since November of 2009 and both Sergeant Newton and Forte have recommended the appointment as well. Chief Perron reported Officer Miner has been cleared medically and psychologically.

**Motion: E. Newcomb**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Stauder**

**To authorize hiring Timothy Miner as a full-time officer with an hourly wage of \$17.13 effective September 15, 2010**

**Vote: All in Favor**

The appointment is for a term ending June 30, 2011. The Board congratulated Officer Miner.

Chief Perron requested permission to hire to the part-time position vacated by Timothy Miner going to full-time.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

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

**To authorize Chief Perron to hire to the part-time officer position**

**Vote: All in Favor**

Chief Perron and Officer Miner exited the meeting.

Shelly Hatch of MRPC presented CDBG contract #8 for a home improvement loan for a resident. The Board signed the agreement.

The Board moved to discussion of the Senior Center Design Committee's efforts to locate a site for the center. Ms. Roussel recommended obtaining requests for proposals for purchase of land and appointing

the Senior Design Committee as the Senior Design RFP Committee to review the proposals. In order to meet Ms. Hatch's grant application timeline, a Special Town Meeting would be set for October 19, 2010. Ms. Hatch expressed concern on the tight timeline for the grant application and stated she would have to go out for bids for architectural services for the design based on it being a vacant lot. The warrant for the Special Town Meeting will need to be opened this evening and closed next Monday. Ms. Roussel reported there would be an added expense for mailing the warrant as the Town will need to have another Town Meeting in December in order to set the tax rate. Ms. Roussel reported the Senior Design Committee is recommending selling some of the Ragged Hill Road lots in order to pay for the Senior Center site. An RFP would also be needed in order to sell the Ragged Hill Road lots.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Stauder**

**To open the warrant for an October 19, 2010 Special Town Meeting and close it on September 20, 2010 at 6 pm.**

**Vote: All in Favor**

Ms. Bratko asked the Board if the Town obtained land for a Senior Center, how do you plan to pay to maintain the building for heating, electricity, etc. Mr. Castriotta stated when and if it happens, it would be addressed. Mr. Newcomb stated if the Senior Center goes forward and the seniors move out of the Slade Building, the Library Basement town offices could be moved into the Slade Building thus eliminating expenses from using that space. Ms. Bratko asked what would be the size of the building and if the Senior Center could be used for any other use? Ms. Hatch stated it was originally planned to be the same size as the Slade Building (5000 square feet) and the terms of the grant stipulate it must be used as a Senior Center for the first five years. Ms. Roussel reported the original plan was to add a second story to the Slade Building, but due to public drinking water requirements and septic concerns, the committee decided to look at other town owned properties. After reviewing Main Street properties, the committee found the Ragged Hill Road lots as the only site large enough to accommodate for drinking water and septic system requirements. Ms. Bratko asked if the Town would be holding a special permit hearing if a High Street site is chosen at which abutters would have an opportunity to comment. Ms. Roussel stated there is no requirement for a special permit as town bylaw allows for municipal buildings in residential/agricultural zones. She encouraged Ms. Bratko to attend the Senior Center Design Committee meetings to provide feedback. Mr. Bratko stated the committee had already decided on the High Street property. Mr. Newcomb stated the Senior Center Design Committee was not committed to the High Street property. Discussion arose over a purchase and sale agreement between the Town and Dolores Ordway for land on High Street. Ms. Roussel stated one member acted independently of the committee in obtaining that agreement and that agreement is no longer valid. Mr. Castriotta stated the committee had not made a final decision and they are seeking the best possible site for the center. Ms. Bratko exited the meeting stating she was tired of being at Selectboard office every six months in order to defend her property. Ms. Roussel stated the RFQ committee appointed would have to follow specific grading criteria. Discussion ensued on whether the Board of Selectmen should review the RFPs instead of the Senior Center Design Committee.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Stauder**

**To authorize Town Administrator to create a Request for Proposals with the Senior Center Design Committee and come forward with recommendations to the Board of Selectmen**

**Vote: All in Favor**

Ms. Roussel invited those attending this evening to the Senior Center Design Committee meeting Thursday at 6:30 pm where they could express concerns during the planning for the request for proposal criteria.

Ms. Hatch requested time for a public hearing on the September 27 agenda and a public forum time separate from a Board of Selectmen meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Roussel suggested discussing tomorrow in order to check availability of space. Ms. Hatch thanked the Board and exited the meeting.

**Municipal Stormwater Drainage Systems**

Ms. Roussel recommended the Board read the Kopelman & Paige letter received today regarding proposed storm drain connection regulations for the September 20 meeting.

**Municipal Early Retirement Incentive Program**

Ms. Roussel reported the Worcester County Retirement Board has informed the Town that we have two employees that are eligible for the early retirement incentive if the Town moves forward with the plan. One of the two employees is not interested. The plan would need to be filed by September 27 to show evidence of savings to the Town. Ms. Roussel recommended appointing a committee composed of Highway Department liaisons to review the early retirement incentive for financial benefits.

**Motion: M. Castriotta**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Stauder**

**To appoint a committee composed of Highway Department liaisons from Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen, and Town Administrator to review the early retirement incentive for financial benefit to the Town and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen** **Vote: All in Favor**

The committee will be composed of Mark Connery, Jamie Pitney, Mr. Castriotta and Ms. Roussel and will need to meet by next Monday due to the deadline.

**Wage Authorization for Temporary Conservation Commission Clerk**

Ms. Roussel reported Ms. Burke would be out of work for an undetermined amount of time due to medical reasons. Conservation Commission Chair Mike Stevens has asked Lucinda Oates who is filling for the Building Department also to fill in temporarily for Ms. Burke.

**Motion: M. Stauder**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Castriotta**

**To approve wage authorization for temporary Conservation Clerk Lucinda Oates at \$13.76 per hour** **Vote: All in Favor**

Mr. Blanchard asked the Board if they had obtained requests for proposals for legal services. Ms. Roussel reported she had brought the request to the Board. The Board had met with Joel Bard of Kopelman & Paige and they had discussed legal costs. Mr. Bard had suggested the Town try out a retainer process for general legal services to reduce costs. Mr. Castriotta has asked Ms. Roussel to hold off on placing requests for other proposals as Kopelman & Paige were meeting the criteria of what the Finance Committee had requested. Mr. Stauder stated Mr. Bard had never finalized what was included in general services. Mr. Blanchard asked what harm it would be to advertise for other requests. Ms. Roussel stated she did not have the time to do it right now. Mr. Newcomb stated since the Town was in the middle of Town Common negotiations, it would not be good timing to switch legal services. Mr. Stauder suggested firming up with Mr. Bard on price and service and going out for requests in January 2011.

Mr. Ducharme stated tonight's discussion regarding the Senior Center Design was a good example of the Town's communication situation. The organization as a whole triboard is moving forward, becoming more efficient, productivity is improving and improving and communication needs to improve. He stated he attends most of the meetings and he has trouble keeping up with the continuity so he can understand why some residents feel they are not informed. Mr. Ducharme stated the Board needs to take away the excuse that people did not hear something and a good beginning is the Virtual Town Hall web site design to get the information out to all. Mr. Castriotta thanked Mr. Ducharme for his observation.

**Motion: M. Stauder**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Castriotta**

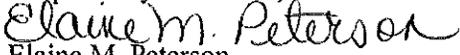
**To enter into Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of**

the Board and adjourn immediately afterwards. Mr. Stauder as Acting Chair confirmed the declaration. Vote: Mr. Castriotta- yes, Mr. Stauder- yes, Mr. Newcomb-yes

\*\*\*\*\*Executive Session Minutes Are Separate\*\*\*\*\*

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine M. Peterson

Town Secretary

Approved: November 22, 2010.