

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
October 25, 2010
Slade Building**

Members present: Matthew Castriotta, Chair
Michael Stauder, Vice Chair

Member absent: Ernest Newcomb, Clerk

Staff present: Karen Chick, Town Accountant; James Dunbar, Treasurer; Debra Roussel, Town Administrator

Others present: Chris Norcross, Ed Blanchard, Finance Committee members; Walter Ducharme, Tom Howlett, Paul Hale, Clare Barnes, QRSD Facilities Director; Leslie Greiner, Jess Twarog, Melissa Haddad, Meredith Stevenson, Maureen Donelan, Center School Principal; Shelly Hatch, MRPC Representative

Meeting opened at 6:05 PM

Mr. Castriotta commended Mr. Norcross and Mr. Howlett on the building progress on the new storage shed at the Curtis Recreation Field. Discussion ensued on whether a concrete floor would be poured at some future date. Mr. Norcross reported the Hubbardston Business Association had donated \$2,000.00; Wachusett Lumber had provided all the trusses at a cost of \$300.00 and Overlook Services of Rutland gave a generous discount on all the lumber.

Warrant #10

Motion: M. Stauder
To approve Warrant #10 in the amount of \$196, 136.31

2nd: M. Castriotta
Vote: All in Favor

MIIA Loss Control Grant

Ms. Roussel reported the grant is to fund the purchase and installation by vendor of a security system to afford protection to the Slade Building administrative offices and Public Works facility. The Slade Building would cost \$3,448.00 and the Highway Department would total \$1,456.00. No matching funding from the Town is required.

Motion: M. Stauder
To approve the MIIA Loss Grant application

2nd: M. Castriotta
Vote: All in Favor

Recreational Trails Program FY'2009

Ms. Roussel presented a grant application from the Open Space Committee. Ms. Roussel had received an email from Chair Jassy Bratko concerning the grant application. Last October the committee had applied for the same grant but it had been turned down. This new grant will provide funding for the same projects, including, work on recreational trails at Mt. Jefferson Conservation Area and Malone Road Conservation Area. They have applied for a grant through

the Hubbardston Business Association and have planned to apply for a smaller more focused grant from the Recreational Trails Program. This would enable accessibility at the Shady Grove picnic area for the town's all terrain wheelchair, reroute the badly eroded Behind the Chimney Trail, build two bridges, a stone sign holder and update trail maps. They would also remove selected trees from the Malone Road meadow to enable easier mowing and maintenance. Mr. Castriotta asked if there were matching funds required. Ms. Grenier was unsure of that. Ms. Roussel stated Ms. Bratko did not mention a need for matching funds. Ms. Roussel reported the committee would be also be asking for funding from the Fund for Hubbardston Preservation.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd: M. Castriotta

To authorize the Chair to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board for the Recreational Trails Grants Program

Vote: All in Favor

The **Fiscal Year 2011 Massachusetts Cultural Council contract** in the amount of \$3,870.00 was presented for approval.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd: M. Castriotta

To authorize the Chair to sign the MA Cultural Council agreement on behalf of the Board for funding in the amount of \$3,870.00

Vote: All in Favor

Ms. Roussel presented **Addendum Number Two of the Intermunicipal Agreement for Emergency Communications**. Hubbardston shall pay to Rutland a share of the annual budget for Rutland Emergency Communications Center, the percentage to be based on population figures, as indicated in the original agreement. Rutland will provide to Hubbardston an annual report of expenditures and revenue of all wages, purchased services and supplies, including grant funds. In the event any disputes or questions arise, the parties agree to settle through negotiation. Should the non-grant funded, shared Dispatch budget appropriation (Dept. #299) need to be increased for necessary department operations, any deficiencies in the annual payment shall be included in the next year's payment and should any funds remain in the department #299 budget at the end of the year, the balance shall be deducted from the next year's payment, in accordance with the cost-sharing formula established in the original agreement.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd: M. Castriotta

To authorize and sign Addendum Number Two of the Intermunicipal Agreement for Emergency Communications

Vote: All in Favor

Ms. Roussel presented a recommendation from Highway Superintendent Gauthier to award the road salt bid to Eastern Minerals, Inc. with a bid price of \$63.30 per ton obtained through the Town of Oxford Consortium. Ms. Roussel reported she had checked the state contract bid which was \$49.28 per ton. Ms. Roussel reported she had spoken to a gentleman in charge of the state contract and unfortunately the Town cannot sign on at this point as we have already participated in the Oxford Consortium. The Town may sign up next year for the remaining term of the contract.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd: M. Castriotta

To authorize the contract with Eastern Minerals, Inc., 134 Middle St. Suite 201, Lowell, MA for delivery of 1400 tons of number one grade bulk mineral mined rock salt with anti-caking agents at \$63.30 per ton

Vote: All in Favor

The Hubbardston **Center School Playground** Committee entered the meeting. Committee member Jessie Twarog reported the committee is in the process of selecting a vendor to supply the equipment. The committee has a letter from the Building Commissioner stating they do not need approval from the Planning Board for the playground. The outstanding issue now is the location of the playground. The vendor had recommended a 60 x 80 foot area. The committee is now looking at a location on the field as the previous suggested location by the gymnasium has some issues. Center School Principal Donelan stated placing the playground at the back of the gymnasium raises visibility concerns as her staffing is limited and she also has concerns about vandalism as there has been some in that area previously. Discussion then turned to creating an additional parking area at the school in the tennis court area. Mr. Hale stated after visiting the school grounds on Saturday, it is recommended to change the parking area to be diagonally oriented and create a one way direction for the school driveway. Discussion on other areas of the field and accessibility for physically challenged people ensued.

Ms. Stevenson stated there are different options on their building expenses; they will be applying for grants as well as seeking donations. Mr. Blanchard asked if the group had a time frame for installation. Ms. Stevenson stated their goal would be over two years and construction would occur in the summer. Mr. Blanchard asked if the Wheeler property, particularly the house beside the store, is currently up for sale, and might be appropriate for parking. He added the Wheeler Store could be used for the Historical Society. He stated there appears to be an Elm Street lot for sale across the street from the school for sale as well. Mr. Hale stated that lot would only accommodate six to eight parking slots.

An area was indicated on the school grounds plan that appeared suitable for the playground. Mr. Castriotta thanked the playground committee. The members exited the meeting.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Hearing

The Board announced the public hearing open at 6:57 pm. Ms. Hatch, MRPC Community Development Director, explained according to the grant, a public hearing is required to inform citizens of the status of the FY 2009 grant program. She reported the Town of Ashby as the lead community and Hubbardston have received \$802,197.00 in funding through the fiscal year 2009 program to assist low to moderate income households with housing rehabilitation needs and to provide financial literacy training sessions on topics such as first time home buyer classes, reverse mortgages for elderly residents and budgeting issues. To date, the Towns have assisted seven homeowners in each town with housing rehab and septic system replacement projects.

There is enough funding to assist one to two more households due to each town coming in under budget. The Town of Ashby needed to request an extension for the time of completion from the Department of Housing and Community Development to June of 2011 due to two septic cases in Hubbardston requiring additional permitting as they are in Quabbin Watershed Area and proximity to wetland areas. The landscaping portion of the project will have to be postponed until next spring. The Board of Selectmen authorized the extension request and the form was sent to DHCD for approval. There is no report for fiscal year 2010 as the Town did not qualify. The applications for FY'11 are due at DHCD on Friday, December 10, 2010. The Town of Hubbardston will be applying with the Town of Westminster as the lead community. Both towns are requesting funding to hire an architectural firm to complete design plans for senior centers and for a housing rehabilitation program. A decision will be announced in early April.

Ms. Hatch stated target area requirements, in addition to how bonus points might be achieved which include integrated projects and complementary projects, and the community development strategy need to be discussed this evening in regards to the new application. A public forum was held in October in the Senior Center. Hubbardston does not need to define a target area as it is not required if the population is under 5000. The entire Town would serve as the target area. Ms. Hatch stated with the joint application, both Hubbardston and Westminster have included two integrated projects; the senior center design and the housing rehabilitation projects. For the complimentary project funds, the town needs to show that town funds were spent within the target area on a community development type project. Some of the articles on the Special Town Meeting warrant if approved would qualify, such as the parking lot engineering study.

Ms. Hatch presented last year's Community Development Strategy for updating. The revised version could be presented at the next public hearing in November and the Board will need to vote to adopt it.

Ms. Hatch reported MRPC will solicit support letters from various members of the community such as town officials, departments, and citizens. Letters from seniors stating the need for an expanded senior center will be required for the application in December.

Ms. Hatch reported on the senior income survey. 252 of 476 surveys have been received back from Hubbardston seniors to date. She will need to recalculate how many are actually needed to qualify as the original numbers have changed.

Motion: M. Stauder
To close the public hearing at 7:16 pm

2nd: M. Castriotta
Vote: All in Favor

On another issue, Ms. Hatch reported she was working with Hubbardston homeowners identified as Case #1, on housing rehabilitation and a septic system replacement. The housing rehabilitation was started first last fall to replace a failed heating system. However a second project, a failed septic system replacement, was not begun until this past spring. By the time construction began on the septic design, Ms. Hatch realized the homeowners were going to be over the \$35,000.00 cap. Anything over the cap is due back to the Town. The homeowners are on a fixed income and have since stated they would not have done the program if they knew they were going to go over the cap, stating they felt as though they were misled by the housing rehab consultant. Ms. Hatch stated the Board of Selectmen has to right to waive the remaining balance due over the \$35,000.00 limit. The amount over the cap is \$26,000.00. Ms. Hatch is requesting on behalf of the homeowner if the Board would waive the remaining amount. Ms. Roussel asked if they could litigate the matter. Ms. Hatch indicated they could. Mr. Castriotta asked Ms. Hatch what her recommendation would be. Ms. Hatch stated it was an error and MRPC now has taken steps to correct the error from happening again.

Motion: M. Stauder
To waive the amount due over the \$35,000.00 cap for Case#1

2nd: M. Castriotta
Vote: All in Favor

Ms. Hatch requested a copy of the approved minutes for the record. Ms. Hatch thanked the Board and exited the meeting.

Kevin Fox of Melanson and Heath & Company, PC presented to review the **Fiscal Year '09 audit** with the Board. Mr. Fox explained an audit involves going through procedures to verify the balance sheet accounts, assessing the accounting principles used and examining evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.

Mr. Fox reported that on the financial statements the Town has an unqualified opinion which is the best opinion the Town can get. Mr. Fox stated there is management discussion and analysis; which addresses the various changes year to year and these are fully GASB 34 compliant.

The group proceeded to review the management letter. Current year issues cited are to establish regular reconciliation procedures for cash, ambulance receivables, septic loan receivables, and Chapter 90 funds. Ms. Roussel stated policies will be established to address the above. Ms. Chick stated she has spoken with Chief Hayes regarding the ambulance receivables. Ms. Chick reported Tax Collector Doane is reconciling the septic loan receivables quarterly. Another issue is improving internal controls in the Building Department office. Recommendations include pre-numbering building permits to provide an adequate audit trail and reconciling receipts regularly to the Town's general ledger. Another issue is that receipts are received by the same personnel who maintains the receipt log and prepares departmental turnover to the Treasurer. Mr. Fox acknowledged that is often the case in small towns. None of these have been addressed to date. Ms. Roussel stated when a new Building Department clerk is hired; the new policies will be instituted.

There is also a recommendation to improve controls over Software Security as town computer backups are not regularly stored off site. Ms. Roussel stated there is an article on the November 9th Special Town Meeting requesting funding for costs associated with software and computer support.

Mr. Fox pointed out that the recommendation to prepare for changes in the Open Meeting Law is a standard recommendation that their firm places in all management letters.

Melanson & Heath recommends establishing formal policies and procedures for these accounts in order to improve internal control; accurate balance sheet reporting and assurance that free cash certification can be completed in a timely manner. Mr. Fox offered to provide some draft policies if needed.

Discussion proceeded on Town Accountant Chick performing internal audits of individual departments and Treasurer Dunbar establishing a tailing account for outdated stale checks from 2000 to reduce available cash balance and time to reconcile.

Another recommendation is to submit timely requests for reimbursement of Chapter 90 funds. Ms. Chick and Mr. Dunbar will implement safeguards for tracking of Chapter 90 receipts and expenditures.

The next item discussed was improving control over invoice documentation. Ms. Chick has implemented improved review procedures for formal documentation on vouchers and notation for successive payments under one invoice.

Mr. Fox asked for permission to print the report and stated he will be sending the documentation electronically to Ms. Roussel to provide response from the Town. He stated a representation letter with the Town letterhead will be required.

Motion: M. Stauder

To accept the findings of the audit as presented

2nd: M. Castriotta

Vote: All in Favor

Motion: M. Stauder

To allow the Chair to sign the acceptance letter in the absence of the full Board

2nd: M. Castriotta

Vote: All in Favor

Mr. Castriotta thanked Mr. Fox. Mr. Fox exited the meeting.

Ms. Roussel reported the Board had a recommendation to hire Brian Sena for winter seasonal plowing. Rate of pay will either be \$16.00 an hour for CDL and \$15.00 an hour without CDL, depending on the vehicle being drive.

Motion: M. Stauder

To hire Brian Sena as seasonal winter driver with a wage rate of \$15.00/\$16.00 per hour depending on the vehicle being driven

2nd: M. Castriotta

Vote: All in Favor

Ms. Roussel reported Chair Castriotta requested placing **personnel reviews and department head reports** on the agenda. Ms. Roussel stated she met with department heads and discussed a reporting template. But each department head from Police, Fire and Highway agreed one format does not work for all three departments. Mr. Stauder suggested meeting quarterly with Fire, Police, Parks, Cemetery, Finance Committee etc. Mr. Castriotta stated this was done previously and attendance was poor. Mr. Castriotta requested each department provide a sample. Personnel reviews will be discussed at a later date.

Ms. Roussel reported the Board has received a letter from the Building Commissioner informing the Building Department Clerk will not be returning from medical leave. Ms. Roussel recommended creating a **Land Use Clerk position** as suggested by a former Finance Committee and Planning Board member, Mark Dymek. The Town of Ashburnham has a similar position which combines Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Building Department, Board of Health and Zoning clerk positions, thereby increasing service to the public. Ms. Roussel will be meeting with Personnel Committee member Casey this week and can work on the job description. She would like to discuss with the Town of Ashburnham to see how they handle their position.

The discussion moved to **municipal land for affordable housing**. The ZBA subcommittee on Affordable Housing is waiting for a recommendation from the Board in order to complete and file their housing plan with the state. Ms. Roussel reported most land in tax title is located in the Pinecrest Development and will not be available for use until 2012 and later as the tax title process is at least a two year process. Ms. Roussel stated the only town land large enough to serve as designated affordable housing for ten units is on Ragged Hill Road. There is five acres located on Mile Road, but there is no access from Hubbardston. She suggested utilizing an open space residential development, placing the units on one lot of the Ragged Hill Rd. parcels and leaving the others available as open space. Mr. Stauder reminded the group about previous discussions about obtaining an RFP on the Ragged Hill Road lots for municipal use and stated he

is hesitant to designate the only land of value the Town now owns as affordable housing. Mr. Castriotta suggested discussion at a later date. The Board took no action.

Ms. Roussel reported the Board of Health has requested to use the **electronic bulletin board** to advertise an October 30th flu clinic. Ms. Roussel recommended establishing a use policy, asking the Board if they wish to designate it only for public safety use, as other entities are now requesting to use it. The Board took no action.

Ms. Roussel reported Highway Superintendent Gauthier has submitted a project need form to MA Department of Transportation for reconstruction of Route 68 beginning at the Rutland town line and continuing to Williamsville Road, which will eventually place the project on the TIP list.

Motion: M. Stauder **2nd: M. Castriotta**
To support the Route 68 design/ construction project **Vote: All in Favor**

Free public meeting posting opportunity was passed over until the next meeting.

A building permit for construction of youth baseball dugouts at Curtis Recreation Field #3 was submitted. The Board's signature is required.

Motion: M. Stauder **2nd: M. Castriotta**
To sign the building permit application **Vote: All in Favor**

Surplus property

Ms. Roussel reported she is meeting with a vendor who does online auctions for municipalities. She requested the Board declare the submitted list as surplus equipment.

Motion: M. Stauder **2nd: M. Castriotta**
To declare the submitted list as surplus property **Vote: All in Favor**

Minutes Approved:

Motion: M. Stauder **2nd: M. Castriotta**
To approve September 20, 2010 minutes as written **Vote: All in Favor**

Ms. Roussel reported Mass Watershed Coalition is seeking feedback on "A Community Guide to Growing Greener" and a donation of \$500.00 toward this work. The Board took no action.

Ms. Roussel reported Town Secretary Peterson has requested to attend Board meetings again. Ms. Peterson will continue to record digitally in case a question on what transpired but will actively record minutes while attending the meeting. The Board concurred. Ms. Peterson has also notified the Board that she has been summoned to U.S. District Court for the period from November 1 to December 23, 2010.

The Parks Commission has submitted a request to donate white lights to the Town for holiday decorations on town buildings and bushes. Mr. Norcross stated the Parks Commission will cover the electric bill for the lighting as well.

Motion: M. Stauder **2nd: M. Castriotta**
To accept the gift with much merriment and cheer **Vote: All in Favor**

Mr. Stauder suggested checking into the legality of a holiday display to see what is allowed.

Town Charter Committee Appointments

Ms. Roussel reported Tom Howlett, Wendy Howes, Walter Ducharme, Roger Knipe and Sandra Knipe have requested to be appointed. She recommended amending the committee composition in order to allow more representation from non-government

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd: M. Castriotta

To amend the Town Charter Committee from 5 government to 4 government positions and 4 non-government to 5 non-government positions

Vote: All in Favor

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd: M. Castriotta

To appoint Tom Howlett, Wendy Howes, Walter Ducharme, Roger Knipe as non-government representative and Sandra Knipe as a government representative to the Town Charter Committee with a term to expire June 30, 2011

Vote: All in Favor

Ms. Roussel recommended a Board member serve on the committee as well. Mr. Stauder agreed to serve.

Motion: M. Stauder

2nd: M. Castriotta

To enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to adjourn immediately afterwards

Mr. Castriotta- yes, Mr. Stauder- yes

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Peterson
Town Secretary

Approved:

DRAFT