

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes

November 14, 2011

Slade Building

Members present: Ernest Newcomb, Chairman
Matthew Castriotta, Clerk

Members not present: Michael Stauder, Vice Chairman

Staff present: Brian Bullock, Town Administrator; Elaine Peterson, Town Secretary; Police Chief Dennis Perron, Fire Chief Bob Hayes, Highway Superintendent Lyn Gauthier, Emergency Management Planning Director Dennis O'Donnell, Jim Dunbar, Treasurer; Joyce Green, Town Clerk; Cyndy Washburn Doane, Tax Collector; Karen Chick, Accountant

Others present: Senator Stephen Brewer, John Prentiss and Al Afonso, Assessors; Harald Scheid, RRG; Tom Howlett, Jamie Pitney, Walter Ducharme, John Nason, Paul Hale, Raeanne Siegel, Finance Committee; Sanda Barry, Rick Green, Ed Leonard, Jacques Fauteux, Mark Haranas, Peter Jefts

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM

STRAP Grant/MASSWORKS Program Award Announcement

Mr. Newcomb invited Senator Brewer to speak. Senator Brewer stated he was here to relate good news. He said the taxpayers of the Town of Hubbardston has stepped up to the plate and authorized 1.3 million dollars to repair 8.2 miles of roads, approximately 10 percent of all town roads. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has announced they will be awarding 1 million dollars to Hubbardston to help in this regard as well. Applause filled the meeting room.

Senator Brewer thanked Town Administrator Brian Bullock for writing a terrific grant, stating Hubbardston is well served by him. This grant will create around twenty-five jobs.

Senator Brewer stated good things are happening right now in the Commonwealth noting Massachusetts has one of the highest bond ratings in the country. By January, the legislature will trigger an income tax reduction for citizens of Massachusetts as well. He stated the unemployment rate is two points less than the national rate. In addition in the supplemental budget they also funded \$50,000.00 through the Secretary of Affairs, the opening of the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center in Winchendon which had been closed by the Veterans Administration. He also cited through pension reform, taxpayers will be saving five billion dollars over the next thirty years which will be voted on tomorrow and go to the Governor's desk.

Senator Brewer congratulated the Town of Hubbardston and Mr. Bullock for writing a darn good grant. Applause filled the room again.

Mr. Bullock stated this is a first for him and thanked the Senator for all of his considerable support of this grant. He thanked the voters of Hubbardston pointing out that they had matched the grant amount last year. He thanked Representatives Kim Ferguson and Anne Gobi, the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and the Capital Improvement Planning Committee for their support. He also thanked the department heads for their general support and attending the recent regional meeting conducted by Lt. Governor Murray in Barre and campaigning for the grant with Commonwealth officials there. He thanked Paul Hale, Sanda Barry and Police Chief Perron for their participation in the video submitted along with

the grant application. Maloney and McBroom, Engineering Firm assisted with some of the technical research. He also thanked Gardner Mayor Mark Hawke for his letter of support adding that Gardner received one half of a million dollars as well. Rick Green, former President of the Hubbardston Business Association, was also acknowledged for his letter of support.

Mr. Bullock thanked QRSD Superintendent Maureen Marshall and School Committee Chair Ed Leonard as well as Glenn Eaton of Montachusett Regional Planning Commission.

Mr. Newcomb thanked all concerned and was echoed by Mr. Castriotta. Applause again filled the meeting room. Senator Brewer thanked everyone again and exited the meeting.

Tax Classification Hearing

Mr. Newcomb invited Assessors Prentiss and Afonso and Mr. Scheid of Regional Resources, Inc. to the table. Mr. Scheid stated the classification hearing is the Board's opportunity to select the tax rate. If the Board decided to increase the tax rate for commercial/industrial owners (7% of the town's total), it would have to be increased by 13% in order to yield a 1% reduction on the residential side. He stated he had printed a tax rate options sheet, but he was hesitant to circulate it as the Assessors' office had submitted new growth reports to the state about three weeks ago. They have yet to hear back from them on the certified new growth number. If for some reason the number the Assessors have determined in house were to change, it would affect the tax levy and the tax rate. He advised the only decision tonight the Board should take is whether to choose to shift the tax burden. The Board of Assessors voted last week to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to adopt a uniform class rate across all classes of property.

Motion: M. Castriotta

2nd: E. Newcomb

To accept the Board of Assessors' recommendation to adopt a uniform class tax rate across all classes of property Vote: All in Favor

Assessors Prentiss and Afonso and Mr. Scheid thanked the Board and exited the meeting.

Community Development Strategy Public Forum

Mr. Bullock asked the Board to vote to go into a public hearing to consider the community development strategy for the Town of Hubbardston.

Motion: M. Castriotta

2nd: E. Newcomb

**To open up a hearing to consider the community development strategy for Hubbardston
Vote: All in Favor**

Mr. Bullock stated this public forum is necessary in order to apply for a joint grant for housing rehabilitation along with the Town of Templeton. Mr. Bullock recommended if there are not any comments from the floor to vote to adopt the community development strategy and close the public forum.

Mr. Paul Hale asked the Board to consider the need for town office building/space, public safety complex, a senior center, additional road improvements and a plan for dealing with trees overgrown over the roads in town due to the recent snowstorm. He added the need for additional senior housing should be researched with the senior community increasing in town. Mr. Bullock stated there was no difficulty in listing those needs of the community.

Motion: M. Castriotta

2nd: E. Newcomb

To accept the community development strategy and other recommendations as stated goals and close the public forum Vote: All in Favor

Ms. Peterson reported the Parks Commission has asked permission to use the town seal on banners for holiday decoration on Main Street and to decorate the town grounds. She added the tree lighting on the Town Common will be December 3rd this year.

Motion: M. Castriotta

2nd: E. Newcomb

To approve the holiday decorating and use of the town seal on banners

Vote: All in Favor

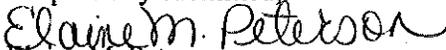
Motion: M. Castriotta

2nd: E. Newcomb

To adjourn the meeting at 6:25 PM

Vote: All in Favor

Respectfully submitted,


Elaine M. Peterson

Town Secretary

Approved: November 21, 2011