

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Ms. O’Keeffe at 6:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Alisa Brewer, Aaron Hayden, Diana Stein, Gerry Weiss (6:41,) Stephanie O’Keeffe

Absent: None

Town Manager Larry Shaffer

Town Staff: Director of Conservation and Development David Ziomek, Community Development

Director Roy Rosenblatt

Members of the Public: Bob Ackermann, Carol Gray

OPENING REMARKS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. O’Keeffe said that there might be discussion of the library budget at the end of the meeting if time permitted; otherwise there would be discussion of whether or not to meet on June 23rd.

SELECT BOARD'S ACTION

Accept Conservation Restriction – Johnson Property

Mr. Ziomek explained that the conservation restriction would be purchased with Community Preservation Act funds (approved earlier at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting) and a State grant. The restriction will be approved by the Select Board and the Conservation Commission and held jointly with the Kestrel Trust. Kestrel Trust will close on this property by the end of June while the Town’s closing will occur in July, to allow for the mandated referendum period following conclusion of Town Meeting. **VOTED** 4-0, 1 absent (Weiss) to approve a Conservation Restriction to the Amherst Conservation Commission and the Kestrel Trust, pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 184, Section 32, for the Johnson Property located at 1114 South East Street.

Committee on Homelessness Report

Mr. Ackermann presented the committee’s report, also submitted as a written document, outlining their efforts to create and distribute a brochure about homelessness resource services and to pursue transitional housing and emergency shelter in Amherst. He noted that food distribution is strong in town. Mr. Rosenblatt gave an update on the feasibility study considering parcels that may be suitable for permanent housing for homeless individuals. Once the study is complete, an RFP will be issued for agencies who might buy, manage and provide services with the \$450,000 of CDBG funds awarded for that purpose. He said that there is an 18 month period in which to address the complexities, utilize the money, and seek additional funds to contribute to the effort. The Select Board expressed appreciation for the committee’s work and the report.

No action taken.

Library Budget Proposal Update and Next Meeting Plan

It was decided that the Select Board would meet June 23rd to consider a new proposal from the library. Ms. Gray of the Library Trustees explained that the Community Preservation Act Committee had voted

5-1 to recommend that Town Meeting rescind its vote of \$35,000 for the Writer's Walk sign project, and to instead fund exterior repairs of the Jones Library. The proposal urges support for that, and to then take \$35,000 of the \$55,500 in the capital budget for those repairs and to reallocate it for library operating expenses. Further details will be discussed at the next meeting.
AGREED by consensus to meet at 6:30 on June 23rd.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Budget Update

Mr. Shaffer updated budget projections based on recent action by the State legislature: about \$800,000 more than recently anticipated would be available in unrestricted aid, and about \$300,000 less from the meals tax, while the room occupancy and telecom taxes stayed within expectations. He said that would allow a smaller draw from reserve funds than had been expected. The Select Board discussed its reserve use policy and whether or not it wanted to reconsider that -- perhaps seeking to allocate additional reserve money up to the original \$1.2 million limit for other uses. That the economy remains so uncertain, and that reserves would be necessary if mid-year cuts from the State occur again, were the primary reason the Select Board agreed to maintain its position on reserve use: that additional revenue would decrease the reserve draw rather than increase spending. It was noted that the State's proposal still needed approval by the Governor, and new local option taxes would require approval by a Special Town Meeting.

AGREED by consensus to maintain the Select Board's original position on reserve use.

Union Conversation Update

Mr. Shaffer said there was no vote scheduled by SEIU on COLAs, but that they expected to meet soon. He said there may be some room for negotiation with the Police union, while that was unlikely with the DPW's union. There was additional clarifying discussion about what COLA concessions would or would not mean to the budget, and how COLA conversations may be linked to avoiding layoffs with some unions and addressing different interests with others.

No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

By consensus, the meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

-- Respectfully submitted by Stephanie O'Keefe