

SELECT BOARD MEETING

Monday April 5, 6:30 p.m.

Town Room, Town Hall

MINUTES

Attendance:

Present: Stephanie O'Keeffe (Chair), Alisa Brewer, Aaron Hayden (Clerk pro-tem), Diana Stein, Jim Wald, Larry Shaffer (Town Manager,)

Others presenting:

Sandra Burgess, Tim Nelson (Chief APD), John Spinetti, Laura Griffin, Marahu Falcon, John Musante (Asst. Town Manager), Heidi Overby (sp), Elaine Fligman (sp)

Call to order:

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

Swearing In of New Fire Chief Tim Nelson

Public Comment

Post-Election Select Board Reorganization

Nominations;

For Chair: Stephanie O'Keeffe

Alisa Brewer moved to nominate Stephanie O'Keefe: Diana Stein seconded and the nomination was approved unanimously.

For Clerk, Aaron Hayden

Diana Stein moved to nominate Aaron Hayden as Clerk: Jim Wald seconded and the nomination was approved unanimously.

Alisa Brewer moved to keep the monthly rotating Vice Chair, the order to be determined alphabetically: Diana Stein seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Licenses and Permits

New Taxi Driver/Chauffeur License – Nicholas Karlak, Jr.

Diana Stein moved to approve the new Taxi Driver/Chauffeur License for Nicholas Karlak, Jr., 103 Old Mtn Rd, Leverett, MA Jim Wald seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

New Taxi Driver/Chauffeur License – James D. Houle

Diana Stein moved to approve the new Taxi Driver/Chauffeur License for Jales D. Houle, 32 Howard Hepburn Drive, Sunderland, MA Aaron Hayden seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

New Taxi Driver/Chauffeur License – Diasse Pouye

Diana Stein moved approve the new Taxi Driver/Chauffeur License for Diasse Pouye, 47 Turn Pike Road, Greenfield, MA Aaron Hayden seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

New Taxi Driver/Chauffeur License – Justin Wentworth

Diana Stein moved to approve the new Taxi Driver/Chauffeur License for Justin Wentworth, 638 Riverside Drive, Florence, MA Aaron Hayden seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

7:05 Parking Request - Walk and Roll for Speech Aphasia

Laura Griffin and Marahu Falcon presented the details of the event in support of research at UMass on Aphasia. The request includes parking for mobility impaired who are likely to attend.

Stephanie O'Keefe noted the large number of parking places being requested, almost 100 spaces.

Larry Shaffer suggested holding 10 spaces and let the organizers manage the spaces for drop off.

Alisa Brewer suggested changing Boltwood Ave to handi-capped parking.

Jim Wald noted that the Spring Street lot is chaotic and not as safe for pedestrian traffic.

Diana Stein thought to set aside some parking in front of Grace Church for serving the wedding that day.

Larry Shaffer presented a parking map: He discussed how to accommodate the Church, the merchants and the event - maybe reserving the south side of Spring Street lot about 16 spaces.

Ms. Falcon wouldn't know how to manage since visitors are not simply being dropped off ; rather she expects many people will park and stay for the event..

Alisa Brewer noted this is new event and that we might consider giving all 95 spaces. Alisa Brewer moved to approve setting aside the 21 spaces on the east side of Boltwood Avenue as handi-cap spaces on April 10, 2010 from 9:00 a.m.to 5:00 p.m. for Walk and Roll for Speech Aphasia. Diana Stein seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Voting and assigning Select Board Positions on Town Meeting Warrant Articles

All these articles have been discussed at length in earlier Select Board meetings, discussions are available on the Town website and ACTV re-runs.

Article 1- Reports of Boards and Committees

Diana Stein moved to recommend Article 1 – Reports of Boards and Committees to Town Meeting Aaron Hayden seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Ms. Stein will present the article to Town Meeting.

Article 2 -Transfer of Funds - Unpaid Bills

John Musante reported that there are no bills to pay

Diana Stein moved to recommend Article 2- Transfer of Funds for Unpaid bills if there are any bills to pay; otherwise to dismiss the article. Alisa Brewer seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Wald will present this article to Town Meeting.

Article 3 - Optional Tax Exemptions

John Musante explained that this article recommends additional exemptions than the standard State allowance and so needs action by Town Meeting. The exemptions and their amounts are explained on the Town Website or by the Tax Assessor's office if you call. Alisa Brewer moved to recommend Article 3 – Optional Tax Exemptions. Diana Stein seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Alisa Brewer will present this article to Town Meeting.

Article 4 - Authorization for Compensating Balances

John Musante presented this article which allows his office to enter in agreements to reorganize budget balances without a special action by Town Meeting. Diana Stein moved to recommend Article 4 – Authorization for Compensating Balances. Jim Wald seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Diana Stein will present this article.

Article 5 - FY 2010 Budget Amendments

John Musante explained this article allows moving money between budgets as needed to balance surpluses with short falls. The exact amounts and accounts affected will be determined before Town Meeting. There is one transfer anticipated. This is not new spending. The decision was tabled until the 26th when we will have more information.

Article 6 – Retirement assessment

John Musante explained that Amherst is part of the Hampshire County retirement system. Retirement funds are collected from employee contribution, the Town's investment into this fund and the fund's investment. We will retire all our unfunded liability by 2030. This article will fund about \$3m of the \$8m we owe, the balance will come from enterprise funds (which supports the people who work within enterprise areas). Looking forward the assessment may jump because of market conditions and an actuarial adjustment. There is a bill that will allow paying down the unfunded liability by 2040 which will reduce the annual cost.

Alisa Brewer noted we are obliged to pay this assessment and don't have control over this payment; we just have to pay.

John Musante responded that our pension obligation is fixed by State law. The system has a board that sets the policy. There is also an advisory board made up of treasurers from each town in the fund.

Diana Stein moved to recommend Article 6 – Retirement Assessment. Aaron Hayden seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Stephanie O'Keefe will present this article to Town Meeting.

Article 7 - Regional Lockup Assessment

John Musante explained this is another assessment which supports a short term lock-up that reduces our costs for this service by sharing it with other communities. There isn't a dollar

amount right now; the amount will be reported later this week Diana Stein moved to recommend Article 7 – Regional Lockup Assessment. Aaron Hayden seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Diana Stein will speak to Town Meeting on this article.

Article 9 - FY 2011 Town Operating Budget (with updates on budget news and projections)

John Musante presented itemized restoration lists. He reminded us the Budget Coordinating Committee's recommendation that we not levy the maximum amount the Override allows if the budget changes favorably – there are two favorable pieces of news, the maximum cut in state aid is to be 4% not the 5% we budgeted, and in early March the teachers and school committee negotiated furlough days that will save \$350k. Together these savings will reduce the levy by \$550k lowering the amount needed from the override to \$1.1m from \$1.7m. Also the school's contribution to the district has been recalculated and it will be lower than originally estimated also lowering the tax levy.

Larry Shaffer explained funds were reallocated from the Administration budget to Operations to reflect Robert Pariseau's, the current Assistant Director of Water and Wastewater, retirement.

Stephanie O'Keefe observed that if we had had the latest information about the State's reduced cuts and the school's reduced need we would not have asked for the \$1.6m override. We will be mindful that the \$500k is money we would not have had if we did know so we will not spend it except as needed ("unless we are going over a cliff").

Larry Shaffer reported the state may have a \$2.5b shortfall in FY 12 that we have to prepare for as soon as possible.

Diana Stein noted it is important that we are not asking for the full tax levy the override allows and is grateful that we have a bit of a buffer against the storm.

Stephanie O'Keefe asked what might be sustainable going ahead.

John Musante noted that health care costs are the real problem and that some of the cost projections are optimistic while the projections of development are more likely.

Stephanie O'Keefe noted that the budget as presented to Town Meeting really shows how many pieces were put together to make the budget work.

Larry Shaffer and John Musante gave brief descriptions of how each of these budget areas were established and how they are different than from other years.

John Musante also explained why money in Enterprise Funds; Water, Sewer, Solid Waste, and Transportation can not be used to fund the general budget beyond payments for services the General Fund provides in supporting them.

Diana Stein moved to recommend to Town Meeting a Public Safety budget of \$8,394,386. Alisa Brewer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The decision on Debt Service was deferred until we have more information.

- Diana Stein moved to recommend to Town Meeting a Public Works budget of \$1,941,540. Alisa Brewer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- Diana Stein moved to recommend to Town Meeting for the Water Fund an appropriation of \$3,791,975. Alisa Brewer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- Diana Stein moved to recommend to Town Meeting a Conservation and Development budget of \$745,073. Alisa Brewer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- Diana Stein moved to recommend to Town Meeting for the Sewer Fund an appropriation of \$3,425,726. Jim Wald seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- Diana Stein moved to recommend to Town Meeting a Community Services budget of \$1,474,725. Alisa Brewer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- Diana Stein moved to recommend to Town Meeting for the Solid Waste Fund an appropriation of \$532,274. Diana Stein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- Diana Stein moved to recommend to Town Meeting a General Government budget of \$6,037,195. Jim Wald seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- Diana Stein moved to recommend to Town Meeting for the Transportation Fund an appropriation of \$874,051. Jim Wald seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Article 10 - Reserve Fund

John Musante presented the article. For a number of years we have been adding \$100k to the reserve. At the end of the fiscal year this fund pays for budget short falls, usually in the snow and ice budget. Diana Stein moved to recommend Article 10 – Reserve Fund. Jim Wald seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Diana Stein will present this article to Town Meeting.

Town Manager's Report

Bangs Center reorganization update

Mr. Shaffer has been attending meetings of the Council on Aging to discuss the planning process for reorganizing the Bangs Center. Fundamentally he would like to review programs in the Bangs to look for efficiencies in its operations with an eye toward the likely worsening budget problems. The Bangs Center houses 3 departments, Health (the original deed of gift to the Town of the property for the Bangs Center includes a codicile to promote the Town's Health), LSSE and the Senior Center. A number of things have changed: the CDBG was consolidated into Town Hall, the Health Dept was moved down to the main floor, and Social Justice was relocated to Town Hall. The Cambodian outreach program will be fitted in somewhere maybe moved out of health. Veteran Affairs services have been consolidated with Northampton. The Health Department has forged an agreement with Northampton for restaurant inspections. Mr. Shaffer is looking to get the three programs to collaborate and consolidate. There have been meetings with Kay Zlogar and 3 department heads to put together a plan including housing clerical, reception, and copying services. The Bangs Center is a single unit – the assumption is that revenue will be less, and we are trying to get same services with less revenue. The end product needs to be equal to if not better for Seniors - the Status Quo is not working. Reducing space use in the Bangs will make more space for other programs and allow

leasing the top floor at market rates and to rent to other spaces that offer social service programs that tie into LSSE and Senior Ctr.

Stephanie O'Keefe noted that many people were present at the meeting and made time to allow public comment though it is late and the Select Board has a lot of work to do. The Town Manager is following the direction of the Select Board in trying to improve the efficiency in use of Town resources. We are looking out for the program's interests – the Select Board believes the Senior Center programs ARE part of the Town's core.

Heidi Overby, resident of Ann Whalen Apartments – is impoverished and can't leave her home every day. Her life is diminished and there are 400 residents live near Bangs Ctr. and who need services. She has been hearing that the seniors will be moved into the cellar. Poor old people are intimidated by change. Psycho-spiritually (the current space) works since there are windows to see life going on around. She is appealing to compassion, what is so shocking about not wanting to be in the basement and being diminished?

Larry Shaffer noted his concern about the unfounded rumors.

Elaine Fligman explained the Senior Ctr. is her home away from home. The Senior Center makes very good use of the space, not being inefficient in use of the space. On the reception area downstairs, old people can't use the cold space.

Fire Station relocation

The Fire Station Committee discussed response time. It studied a three fire station solution, North, Central and a new South Fire station to reduce response time in So Amherst with a price tag close to \$13.5m and which would add an additional annual operating cost of \$900k. The new fire chief has been asked to start planning for a new fire station including the determination of suitable alternatives. The 2 station plan, given its cost, may be the best plan - possibly with a new south station. Moving the current Central Station might be part of improving the downtown.

Next year's capital program will include scheduling the future construction and pre-construction costs. Central Station is not adequate for modern equipment and Mr. Shaffer would like to get started while there are still favorable prices for its construction.

Warming Center and Shelter.

Mr. Shaffer is working to extend the shelter services through April. We learned a lot from working through the problems this winter.

Diana Stein noted at times there were 22 people coming there for services. She hopes we could use volunteers to help provide these services and maybe a comforting warm meal. How to do it is unknown but would encourage us to move in that direction.

Alisa Brewer considered the complications of developing a longer term solution. She pointed out the need for caution as we move along to avoid problems and the need to run with our heart as well as our head.

Mr. Shaffer noted that no single community can be responsible for serving the needs of the region. We need to understand how we fit into the regional plan for working on the problem. Need to understand where there needs to be centers that handle drug users, families and the others. We need to understand what piece Amherst will play - For example if we are the only center that included drug rehab services within 30 miles we will receive clients from 30 miles away. He also noted that a not-for-profit organization that specializes in providing these services would be best to operate a center.

Untimed Items

Signing the May 3, 2010 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Approval of Street Closings & Parking Request - Farmers' Market annual Parking Request
John Spinetti presented the application and noted the Farmer's Market is starting a week earlier this year than last to coincide with the Energy Fair. Diana Stein moved to approve the closing of the Spring Street parking lot each Saturday from April 24, 2010 to November 20, 2010 from 7:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for the Farmers' Market. Aaron Hayden seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Street Closings & Parking Request – Cushman May Day Celebration
Diana Stein moved to approve to close Henry Street from Pine Street to Market Hill Road on Saturday May 1, 2010, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for a May Day celebration. Aaron Hayden seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Special Wine & Malt Licenses

Special Wine & Malt License – University of Massachusetts

Diana Stein moved to approve the Special Wine & Malt Liquor License for the University of Massachusetts for April 7, 2010 from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at the Computer Science Building for reception. Alisa Brewer seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Special Wine & Malt License – University of Massachusetts

Diana Stein moved to approve the Special All Alcohol Liquor License for the University of Massachusetts for April 23, 2010 from 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Fine Arts Center for reception. Alisa seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Special Wine & Malt License – R&P Liquors

Diana Stein moved to approve the Special Wine & Malt Liquor License for R&P Liquors for April 17, 2010 from 1:00 p.m. -7:00 p.m. at the Hampshire College Library Lawn Spring Fair. Alisa Brewer seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Special Wine & Malt License Robbins Grace Episcopal Church

Diana Stein moved to approve the Special Wine and Malt Liquor license for Robbins Catering Service for April 10th from 10 am to 5 pm at the Grace Episcopal Church for a wedding. Alisa Brewer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Liaison Assignments

The Select Board is to submit to Ms O'Keeffe committee assignments each of us has and would be willing to give up for re-assignment and their schedule of meetings - Thursday noon deadline. We are to include information on their minutes and postings on line.

Calendar Review

4/12 SB Meeting: Swearing-In Ceremony: Christopher Pronovost as APD Captain; Progress Report - Town Manager FY 10 Goals, Vote Positions on Warrant Articles

4/13 7:00 and 7:30 TMCC/LWV new member orientation and Warrant Review Meeting

4/14 Chamber after 5 - 5:00 p.m., New England Environmental

4/21 SB Meeting: (Wednesday meeting - Police Department Community Room) Vote Positions on Warrant Articles

4/26 SB Meeting: Vote Positions on Warrant Articles, FY 10 3rd Quarter Budget Update

4/30 Celebration for the Fight Against Child Violence- Flag Raising and Ceremony, 12:00 noon

5/03 Annual town Meeting Begins

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:06 p.m.

Comments and corrections encouraged;

Respectfully submitted;

Aaron Hayden