



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 1, 2010**

**Approved: February 22, 2010**

**PRESENT:** Rebecca Neville, Chair; Frank Powers, Clerk; Raid Suleiman, Member; and Les Fox, Member

**ALSO PRESENT:** Selina Shaw, Town Administrator and Cheryl Mahoney, Department Assistant.

Chair Neville called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Grange Meeting Room of Town Hall.

**APPOINTMENTS**

- Alan Rohwer, Owen Neville, members of the Grange, Historical Comm and Historical Society were present to provide input on potential Town Hall infrastructure improvements. TA Shaw presented a general overview of needed repairs at Town Hall and photographs. Her goal is to repair and maintain the Town Hall in the most efficient manner possible while continuing to preserve the historically significant aspects of the building. There was discussion about reactivating the Permanent Building committee. It was noted that Town Hall was built during the Victorian era so the original exterior color should be determined before it is repainted. It was suggested that hand-tinted photographs may exist depicting the original colors. The Beacon reporter was asked to do an announcement that the Town is looking for these pictures. There was discussion about the “attic” areas. TA Shaw would like to restore access as this area which is currently inaccessible. There was also discussion about whether the “stage” was original to the building and whether it could be removed. Currently it is unusable as it not ADA compliant. TA Shaw also noted that this is other needed work: repairs to the grange floor, replacement of the 20+ year old carpeting and replacement of windows in the original portion of Town Hall.
- Senator Jamie Eldridge, Middlesex & Worcester District and Representative Jen Benson, 37th Middlesex District were present to discuss local concerns and to receive input on issues. Rep. Benson and Sen. Eldridge gave a brief review of their legislative responsibilities. The first item discussed was the Quinn Bill, a state mandated educational incentive compensation program that provides step increases for police officers as they receive their college degrees. There was concern that the Governor would continue, as he did in FY 10, to severely cut back the state portion of this mandate. Rep. Benson advised that the Governor just submitted a supplemental budget to Ways & Means. She has not had an opportunity to review it in detail but it seems that this language is comparable with the MMA proposal, protecting municipalities from the additional financial burden even though the state is reducing its portion. It is the Governor’s intention to take care of this by amending the statute. There was discussion concerning stimulus money and other government funding sources. As to education finance it was noted that Special Education funding amounts will now be set in the fall, and will now lock private schools tuition amounts for that academic year. The Governor is supporting the level funding of Local Aid & Ch. 70, however, it would, still, be fiscally prudent to factor in a 10% reduction. It was also noted that the Governor’s budget is based on anticipated revenues, not actuals. With regional transportation it is the intent that in FY 11 the state’s portion cannot be cut more then those made to Chapter 70 aid, mirroring any reduction. Rep. Benson & Sen. Eldridge advised there are still going to be some serious cuts and the State intends to continue on with reforms. One example it that judiciary probation functions are to be restructured - consolidating several departments/functions and reforming procedures. The Governor intends to go forward on the next phase of pension reform, and to continue the phasing out the Quinn Bill benefits. There was discussion on the Federal Stimulus funds and it was confirmed that a significant portion of these funds have already been spent. However, there is talk about an additional disbursement, but they have not made an actual commitment to this. There was discussion on the regionalizing or sharing of municipal services. Rep. Benson acknowledged that she had received the Selectmen’s and others input as to unfunded mandates and is referring to this information during the Ways & Means Committee’s discussions. She would like to relieve some of these burdens that have been placed on communities. Sen. Eldridge addressed concerns about Minute Man Air Field, and advised that as a private facility they are not eligible for Federal funding. There was discussion on House Bill No. 4393 - Energy Efficiency of Residential Properties, which would allow municipalities to loan money to residents in order to make their homes more energy efficient. Sen. Eldridge advised that he did not think would pass before ATM; and suggested that this be revisited in the fall when more information would be available. There was discussion on how senior funds are calculated and how the anticipated increase in the senior population with the 2010 Federal Census will affect the funds the Town receives. There was also discussion on some of the proposed alternative funding sources such as the “Candy tax.” There was discussion on ethics reforms and the new training requirements. The legislature anticipates having a proposed FY 11 state budget in early March.

- DPW Dir. Tom Garmon and members of FinCom were present to continue the review of FY 11 budgets. An analysis of recycling usages has been done and Dir. Garmon was able to adjust the Transfer Station's Tonnage Tipping down to \$71,750. Cold patch has been reduced to \$4,000. It was determined that based on actuals, the total combined Repair & Service lines should remain at \$23,000. With the Ice and Snow budget, analysis continues as to the prevailing "best practice" for sand/salt road treatment and the potential savings on costs and man-hours. With adjusting of the rate he was able to reduce Overtime line item. The fuel budget was calculated using the run rate of the actuals for the last five (5) years. Dir. Garmon also anticipates obtaining fuel tax credits. Dir. Garmon confirmed that an article has been submitted to increase the shared DPW/Fire administrative support hours. As to capital items, some of the dumpsters at the Transfer Station need replacing, but he is exploring getting compactors and intends to try to stretch the current equipment out until FY 12.

*Agenda item #7(a) was taken out of order.*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Dir. Garmon remained to discuss the setting of the Transfer Station fees for FY 11. Dir. Garmon recommended maintaining the current FY 10 fee structure. There was discussion as to how fees are determined. Member Suleiman will prepare an analysis regarding these fees. The Selectmen deferred approval of Transfer Station fees for FY 11 until Member Suleiman's analysis could be presented and reviewed.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Chair Neville read announcements.

*Agenda items #4(a-d) were taken out of order.*

## **MINUTES**

- Member Fox moved to accept the minutes for the Regular session of January 11, 2010, as revised and the Executive sessions of January 11, 2010 and January 25, 2010, as written. Seconded by Member Suleiman. **Approved 4-0.**
- The minutes for Workshop session of January 9, 2010 were passed over.

## **SELECTMEN REPORTS**

- Member Powers reported that he and Member Fox had met with representatives from the Devens Hazardous Waste Facility to discuss alternative funding models. They have advised that LELWD wants to support this effort and the LELWD Board will be voting as to what financial support they are willing to provide to our community.

Member Powers also reported on the Police Chief search. The Committee was pleased with the quality of the applicants and has narrowed the field down to six candidates. The State Police will conduct background checks then the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of interviews will be scheduled in March. There was discussion about the need to appoint an interim chief pending the selection of the new Chief.

- Member Suleiman reported that all his time has been spent on the Police Chief search.
- Member Fox reported that he attended the latest Steele Farm Advisory Comm. meeting. They are still gathering input on the proposed Preservation Restrictions. There was concern about the maintenance of the dog waste disposal stations. Newly appointed member, Keith Lyons, and a prospective new member were in attendance.
- Chair Neville reported that they went over the budget, warrant articles, the Blanchard Restructure Sub-Committee's findings and the Police Search at last week's BLF meeting.

She reported that the A/B Regional School Committee presented the findings based on a survey done at A/B High School to analyze school work loads and stress on students. This is an ongoing effort and those involved are working on how to use these findings.

She plans to attend the joint AgCom /ConsCom discussion on the Flerra Community Gardens.

### **NEW BUSINESS (Continued)**

- There was discussion on exploring FY 11 Federal funding assistance options, opportunities and potential projects. U.S. Rep. Tsongas has communicated that there is federal funding available to communities, but no direction was provided as to how to identify these funding sources. There was discussion on obtaining input from department heads and putting together a list of ready-to-go projects. It was suggested that MAPC might be able to provide some assistance when preparing these grant applications.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

- There was discussion on Town Counsel's memorandum on the regionalization of municipal services.

### **CONCERNS OF THE BOARD**

- Member Suleiman advised that he has been contacted about the plans to dissolve the Senior Center Taskforce. He noted that some of those that had served on this taskforce had not been informed of this decision and he suggested that they be invited to a Selectmen's meeting, thanked for their service, and asked for their input.
- Member Suleiman also proposed that a new group/committee be formed with a charge of rehabilitating the Steele Farm farmhouse. It was noted that, actually, this was one of the SFAC original charges, and they have, over the years, presented several proposals to rehabilitate the building. Also it is anticipated that the rehabilitation of this building will be an integral part of the preservation restriction plans.
- Chair Neville noted that she was contacted by the Beacon about the demolition of Whitcomb House and the restraining order filed by the neighbors.

### **ADJOURN**

At 9:41 p.m. Member Powers moved to adjourn. Seconded by Member Suleiman. **Approved 4-0.**