

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of March 30, 2009

Chairman Jackson called the meeting to order at 7:30PM. Board members present, in addition to Chairman Boyd Jackson, were Richard Gandt, Martha Morrison, Nancy Luther and Karen Dow. Of the Selectmen's staff, Town Administrator Virginia Wilder and Board Secretary Donna Rich were in attendance. Other persons present were Evelyn Hammond of the Topsfield Cable, Faye Raynard of the Village Reporter, Jaclyn White, Director Town Library, Barbara Pratt, Historical Society Strawberry Festival Chairman, William Hunt, Board of Health Chairman, Sheryl Knutsen, Board of Health member, David Strachan, Commissioners of Trust Funds Chairman, John Kinhan, Moderator, Paul Dierze of the Finance Committee, Jeff Evaul, Chairman School Committee, Jeanine Cunniff and Becky Brockelman, School Committee members, and residents as follows: Paul Ackerman, Barbara Crowley, Jen Hunt, Rob Fitzgerald, Rosemarie Lucey, Heidi Fox, Al Holland, Dorothy Waas, Lori Peacock, and Laura Powers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Selectman Morrison announced that the Mosquito Questions and Tick Talk: In Your Backyard and In Your Community is to be held on April 15th at the Gould Barn beginning at 7PM.

Selectman Luther announced that the League of Women Voters is holding Voters Night at 7:30PM on April 15th at the Proctor School Library. This "Meet the Candidates" night event will be taped and broadcast the following week.

Selectman Dow announced that the new principals for Proctor School and Steward School will be Ms. Sarah O'Leary, and Ms. Michelle Costa respectively. Both candidates have worked in the district and have a good understanding of the town's elementary schools. She congratulated Dr. Creeden on "good job nurturing teachers to grow into future positions."

Chairman Jackson announced that the Board would be going into executive session at the end of open session to discuss union contracts and to discuss with the Conservation Commission a matter of potential litigation and would not return to open session.

APPOINTMENTS:

7:30PM - Strawberry Festival Banners – Barbara Pratt presented a prototype of a new banner that is intended to celebrate the Strawberry Festival. The Historical Society had asked students in the MASCO graphic design class II to design potential banners and Denise Fuller's design was chosen. The new banner has been approved by the Main Street Foundation; and, if approved by the Board, would be installed on the bracketed telephone poles along Main Street. Selectman Luther made a motion to approve the installation of the Strawberry Festival banners as presented, seconded by Selectman Dow; so voted: 5-0.

Selectmen Minutes: Selectman Gandt made a motion to accept the amended minutes of March 16, 2009, seconded by Selectman Morrison; so voted 5-0. Selectman Luther made a motion to accept the amended minutes of the Executive Session of March 16, 2009 and to hold until all matters are resolved, seconded by Selectman Gandt; so voted 5-0. Selectman Gandt made a motion to accept the amended minutes of the Executive Session of March 2, 2009 and to hold until all matters are resolved, seconded by Selectman Morrison; so voted 4-0-1, Selectman Luther abstained.

GENERAL BUSINESS

New Business

2009 Annual Town Meeting Warrant: Articles were reviewed individually noting that final figures were not available as the Finance Committee had not yet voted on all items. There was discussion on some articles. Due to final editing the Warrant was not voted at this time but would be taken up for a vote at a Board meeting posted for Wednesday, April 1, 2009.

Chairman Jackson recognized Board of Health Chairman, Mr. Bill Hunt and member, Sheryl Knutsen stating that they had new information to share with the Board in regards to their request for a Revolving Fund. Mr. Hunt explained that the Revolving Fund request would be funded by reimbursements from the annual flu shots which would be used to fund the vaccines the following year. Ms. Knutsen reported that health departments have concerns relative to future funding of vaccine programs, therefore, the establishment of a Revolving Fund would afford the Town the possibility to continue to offer the flu vaccine in future years if state funding is no longer available. Chairman Jackson noted that it was too late in the process to reinstate the request, however, it is worthy of further conversation for placement on next year's Warrant.

Proposition 2 ½ Ballot Question: Selectman Gandt noted that the override was to be \$130,059 in one article representing the following departments: Elementary Schools, Police (for School Resource Officer), Highway, Park & Cemetery and Board of Health. There were no override funds requested for the MASCO budget.

FY2010 Water Department Budget: Selectman Luther made a motion to approve the Fiscal 2010 Water Enterprise Budget in the amount of \$792,976, seconded by Selectman Morrison; so voted: 5-0.

Public Hearing Petition: Selectman Morrison stated that John Kinhan, Town Moderator, has agreed to moderate a forum to be taped and then televised prior to Town Meeting. John Kinhan addressed the Board saying that a date was being decided upon and that he is looking for participants to formulate questions of concern and forward them to him or the Town Administrator. John Kinhan would also like to know who will be participating from the different departments. The forum is expected to be structured as the Rail Trail Informational Forum was last year and is expected to run an hour. Selectman Gandt read a petition that was received by the Board of Selectmen and is attached.

Heidi Fox, resident, addressed the Board requesting knowledge of when the budget would be posted on the Town Website. Ms. Wilder stated that it isn't posted yet due to an internal computer issue, but would be posted shortly.

Jeff Evaul, Chairman Elementary School Committee, addressed the Board thanking the Moderator and the Board of Selectmen for their efforts, complemented the process and expressed his support of the \$130,059 override.

Rob Fitzgerald, resident, addressed the Board explaining that the override appears to only be \$54 a year per household. Then there was a discussion regarding communicating to the citizens via poll watching, door-to-door and circulating flyers.

Jeanine Cunniff, member of the School Committee, addressed the Board regarding the format of the Budget Information Forum and requested that open questions be permitted. The Moderator explained that by knowing the questions ahead of time the appropriate representative would be able to provide concise answers.

Dorothy Waas, resident, addressed the Board regarding trash she had photographed around the downtown area. She was informed that there was a litter bylaw in the annual warrant.

David Strachan addressed the Board regarding the investments and endowments in reference to the library and his concerns relative to future reliance on these monies to fund the library operating budget.

Library Masonry Flashing Repairs Contract: Selectman Gandt made a motion to amend the contract for the library masonry flashing repair project with Roger A. Tremblay Contractors, Inc. of Salem MA to extend the contract expiration date from March 1, 2009 to June 20, 2009 and to change the total to be \$6,050, seconded by Selectman Morrison; so voted: 5-0.

One Day Liquor License: Selectman Luther made a motion to approve a one day liquor license for “Hands on Disaster Response” for a fundraiser to be held at the Gould Barn on May 1, 2009 from 6PM – 10PM, seconded by Selectman Morrison; so voted: 5-0.

Approval of Prior Year Bills – The Board discussed the timing and dates associated with a Fire Department request to approve two tuition reimbursements as prior year bills. Chairman Jackson said he would get additional information from the fire chief about the request.

MASCO Scholarships – Selectman Dow made a motion to approve three (3) \$400 scholarships for the Scholarship Foundation to award to three MASCO seniors this year, seconded by Selectman Luther; so voted: 5-0. The balance in the account as of March 25, 2009 was \$3,131.44.

Rail Trail Phase II – Selectman Gandt made a motion to award the bid for a topographic survey of Phase II, from Summer Street to Route 1, to Hancock Associates of Danvers, MA in the amount of \$2,450, seconded by Selectman Luther; so voted: 5-0.

Engineering Peer Review for New Meadows – Selectman Gandt made a motion to award the contract for the Independent Peer Review for New Meadows Elderly Housing Project for professional consultant services to Beals & Thomas of Southborough, MA in an amount not to exceed \$26,950, seconded by Selectman Morrison; so voted: 5-0.

Town Administrator’s Report:

- Town Meeting Preparation
 - Budget Related Meetings Attended
 - Override Issues Addressed
 - Regional Dispatch Meeting
 - Regional Ambulance Meeting
 - Town Report Update
- Announced: Hydrant Flushing and Candidates Night

Barbara Crowley, resident, requested to address the Board regarding the possibility of utilizing software during the budget process. Ms. Wilder said she would meet with Mrs. Crowley to discuss the matter.

Selectman Morrison addressed the Green Communities Act and the desire to establish a committee with a mission statement. It was agreed that Selectman Morrison and Gandt would work together to develop a mission statement.

Correspondence & Reports

Correspondence

Department of Environmental Protection has sent a letter informing the Town of the inability to award Municipal Sustainability grants for FY09.

Bill Whiting, Chairman, Cable TV/Town Website submitted a letter expressing how the suggested budget cuts would affect the Cable TV and the Town Website committees.

Topsfield was awarded the Common Cause-2009 e-Government Award and received the certificate.

First Justice Robert Cornetta has submitted a letter explaining the availability of community service workers through the Office of Community Corrections (OCC).

Letter of appreciation from the Town Clerk to the Historical Society was received regarding the display case that was built by Dan Philpot, resident, and donated for the purpose of the Boston Post Cane.

Reports

MBTA Advisory Board submitted the minutes of Nov 6, 2008 and FY09 Transfer Request.

Library Trustees submitted the minutes of Jan 6, 2009.

Town Web Site Committee submitted the minutes of Nov 19, 2008.

Invitations:

Essex Heritage Annual Meeting to be held on April 28, 2009.

Walk for HAWC on April 26, 2009.

Warrants: The Selectmen signed and approved warrants in the amount of **\$ 106,038.07**. The breakdown is as follows:

Warrant FY09:	
079T	\$ 70,366.48
080	\$ 35,671.59

At 10:14 PM Chairman Jackson motioned to go into executive session to discuss union contracts and a potential litigation issue with the Conservation Commission, seconded by Selectman Morrison. In a roll call vote, a yes vote was recorded for Selectman Morrison, Selectman Dow, Selectman Luther, Selectman Gandt and Chairman Jackson. The Board would not return to open session. Virginia Wilder and Donna Rich were also present.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Rich, Secretary
Selectmen's Office

Approved as amended at the April 27, 2009 Board of Selectmen's meeting.