

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MARCH 10, 2008**

Chairman Belanger called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Members present were Douglas Belanger, Thomas Brennan, Dianna Provencher and Richard Antanavica. Also present was Town Administrator Robert Reed. Selectman Zagorski was absent.

Stuart Kravitz – 2nd Annual Road Race

Mr. Kravitz was present seeking authority to hold 2nd annual road race in memory of his son, Devin Kravits, to be held August 30th, Labor Day weekend. The Board asked if approval had been given by Police Chief. Mr. Kravitz stated that he was seeking authority from the Selectmen prior to going any further, but will submit traffic plan to Police Chief. He was reminded that there were traffic problems last year due to the route passing the Recycling Center, which will be open again on this particular date. Mr. Kravitz stated that he will work with the Police Chief and Recycling Coordinator to improve on this issue, but with the success last year on Labor Day he would hope to be able to continue this tradition. He noted that ambulance will also need to be available.

MOTION: Mr. Antanavica moved to approve, subject to all traffic plan being approved by Chief of Police.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Board of Fire Engineers

Selectmen Antanavica had invited the Fire Engineers in to speak about the new truck they will be acquiring, and talk about budgeting and unfunded mandates put into law by the State. Chief Wilson noted, with the support of the Selectmen and the townspeople, they are in good shape equipment wise. The clerk for the Fire Dept.'s hours were cut a few years back, so the clerk for EMS had to take over those responsibilities; he praised the work of Donna Fields in assisting the Departments. He noted the annual burn permit season is tough to handle, feeling the best approach would be to combine regional efforts. He spoke about maintenance the firefighters put in of their own time using donated supplies to keep the buildings up. Replacement gear was funded with staggered purchases over a few years; increased costs have cut into those plans.

The Board praised their efforts, always living within their means, dealing with tough mandates, continuing to protect the townspeople under difficult financial conditions. Chief Wilson stated he would love to be able to put in a 5.3% increase to his budget like the School Department just did, that would be very helpful.

Selectmen Antanavica reported that the firefighters do a lot that we don't see, they volunteer for so many projects, are giving of their time, and the members are like a family.

Chief Wilson reported that the Board of Fire Engineers met earlier this evening, and approved the updated Rules & Regulations for their Department, which they hope to keep updated on annual basis. He will provide copies to the Selectmen's Office.

The Board thanked them for coming in, and for all they do for the Town.

EMS/Fire Study Group

Selectman Antanavica reported that meetings continue to take place, the wetlands are being flagged at the 1122 Main Street site, and they continue to review potential properties. Chief Wilson noted that the main station at 15 Water Street has outlived its usefulness, there is no space to house modern fire or ambulance equipment, response times don't meet current standards, restroom facilities are insufficient as is office space. He felt we would probably receive low construction costs under the current economic conditions of the day. The Board noted that they are committed financially to the project. Mr. Antanavica noted that engineer is working to fit a new facility on the proposed site at 1122 Main Street, and will be ready with sketch for town meeting.

Liquor License

MOTION: Ms. Provencher moved to sign off on new license for Northeast Pizza, name change from Uncle Sam's, recently approved by ABCC. Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Arts Council – Reappointment

Request to appoint Charles Leis to Arts Council, term to run 3/19/08 to 3/19/11, the first 3-year term.

MOTION: Ms. Provencher moved to appoint Charles Leis to Arts Counsel as noted.
Mr. Brennan seconded. UNANIMOUS

Registrars - resignation

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to accept resignation from Dale Pitzen with regret, with letter of thanks for time served. Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

The Board agreed to advertise seeking candidates for Registrar of Voters, who must serve on the Town Republican Committee. They also need to find replacement for US Census representative. PENDING

Annual Town Meeting**Personnel Board – Town Meeting requests**

Chairman Doug Menard was present and discussed 9/17/07 approval of Selectmen to reclassify Secretary to Fire Chief/EMS Director to Grade 7, which must be approved by town meeting. They are also proposing amendment to Bylaws, to clarify several areas that are being interpreted differently by employees and department heads alike. The Board was not opposed to the recommended changes as presented, but asked that the Personnel Board meet with the employees to give them a heads up about the proposed changes.

Town Office Study Committee

Chairman Belanger asked that we hold on this item for now, he is not prepared to discuss at this time. PENDING

Wind Turbine – article request

Chairman Belanger was concerned that the Planning Board is not prepared to consider this energy alternative in time for town meeting. Mr. Brennan suggested that we might postpone town meeting, perhaps that would allow them enough time. Mr. Belanger felt we should assist by obtaining any wind turbine bylaws adopted by other municipalities, ones that have already been approved by Attorney General's office. He will work with the Town Administrator and Mr. Antanavica to see how we can get this accomplished.

Hillcrest Country Club – sewer connection

Mr. Reed noted funds for transfer from Board of Health revolving account could be made available to pay cost to connect HCC to sewer line, therefore removing the failed septic system from this facility. Mr. Brennan felt the connection fees should be waived by the Districts, we have saved them money by paving roadways, etc. Mr. Belanger stated that this discussion will be tabled at this time. PENDING

Board Reports/Other Business**Ms. Provencher**

- Open Space & Recreation Plan is available online with hard copy at Public Library. She thanked Town Planner and others for all the work involved; now it's on to the updating the Master Plan

Mr. Antanavica

- Capital Improvement Planning group will be meeting on March 11th, with FY'09 Plan anticipated to be ready for submission at Selectmen's meeting of March 24th
- Recommendation to allow LCAC to use vacant space in basement for studio. Mr. Reed recommended that a plan be presented for approval to Building Inspector before any work is done in this building. The Board approved.

Mr. Brennan

- False alarm bylaw is now active, systems must be registered with Police Dept. or pay fine
- April 7th annual town election noon-8pm with absentee ballots available
- Send letter to outgoing Town Manager Carter Terenzini and another welcoming Paul Guida to Town of Spencer. The Board approved.
- Forward his communications regarding proposed Mass Turnpike exit/onramp to abutting towns
- Thanks to all that made 26th Annual Jimmy Brennan scholarship fund a success, held at Leicester Hill Country Club

Signatures

Mass School Building Assistance fund – Initial Compliance Certification to be signed by CEO/Chairman, then forwarded to School Department for executive by Superintendence and School Committee Chair.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to authorize Chairman of the Board of Selectmen's signature.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Town Election Warrant

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to authorize Board to execute 4/7/08 Annual Town Election Warrant as presented by Town Clerk. Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

Police Chief's contract

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to approve and execute as submitted the Employment Agreement between the Town and James J. Hurley, Chief of Police. Mr. Antanavica seconded. UNANIMOUS

The Board recessed at 7:28pm;

The Board reconvened at 7:35pm.

School Department – Town Meeting article requests

Primary School Roof - Discussions on bids and related MSBA funding application to replace Primary School roof. Mr. Antanavica wanted better maintenance records kept and regularly scheduled inspections for all school facilities. Mr. Reed noted that Town Counsel will draft article and motion to prepare funding mechanism; town meeting approval in anticipation of grant award is a requirement of the process.

Restitution for Water Damage Claim – restitution from insurance proceeds must be approved when claim is over \$25,000.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to authorize article for restitute on water damage claim at High School.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Deferred Maintenance – Request to fund \$226,280 worth of deferred maintenance for School buildings.

Discussion on somehow funding the \$77,600 portion within the FY'09 Budget to work on maintenance projects; the TA will work toward this end. Mr. Antanavica was concerned as funds are already provided within School budget each year for maintenance; where are these funds being used, and why are our buildings in such tough shape. Mr. Armington made a commitment that, if funded, he would assure that the deferred maintenance projects would be completed in FY'09, and without any further appropriation. The proposal to fund an additional \$148,680 as an article was denied, with any available funds from the Town already depleted.

Curriculum Support Materials and IT upgrades – Request to fund \$163,175 in IT hardware/supplies and \$110,262 in curriculum support materials. Discussion on extending the life expectancy of computers and the recycling of older models to lower grade levels vs. all students having new models. It was noted that the students use computers more now, cutting back on textbook costs. This is a request for a one-time expenditure outside of the Budget.

Mr. Brennan suggested borrowing for these maintenance and support items, and consequently reducing annual school budget accordingly to pay down debt. Mr. Armington felt the concept could be looked at some day, but we are not here this evening to make deals, but to present article requests. He noted that, if the State would take over Special Education transportation costs as we have suggested, that would free up a huge portion of their budget allowance to spend on these items and therefore support all students within the school system.

Mr. Reed stated that he has already utilized any available moneys to fund the FY'09 Budget and town meeting articles. Mr. Belanger reported that the Board has directed the TA to do just that; there is nothing left to pay for added IT or maintenance repairs.

With regard to the FY'09 Budget as a whole, Mr. Belanger noted the petition that is circulating asking the State to release additional revenues to the Towns to increase local aid. He asked all to participate and keep this iron hot, legislation has been proposed which we need to support or pursue some version of this sorely needed assistance to the communities.

Executive Session

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations and land acquisition, not public announcements expected, the Board to adjourn with lack of quorum. Ms. Provencher seconded. The Board was polled: ALL AYES

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:05pm.
The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:14pm.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to adjourn. Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

The Board adjourned at 9:15pm.
Respectfully submitted: Susan LeChasseur, Administrative Assistant