

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MAY 5, 2008**

Chairman Belanger called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Members present were Douglas Belanger, Thomas Brennan, Dianna Provencher, Richard Antanavica and Stanley Zagorski. Also present was Town Administrator Robert Reed. Town Counsel Joseph Cove entered the meeting at approximately 6:30pm.

Annual Town Meeting – Issues at hand

Article 25 – land acquisition/fire station – Mr. Belanger explained that the property the Town was looking at will not work, so we are not ready to move forward at this time on land acquisition. However, we will still seek funding for feasibility study, Article 24.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to pass over Article 25.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Article 27 – school roof – TA explained that we are still waiting to here if project has been approved by MSBA, while the project is still not even committed to the agenda on MSBA's next meeting of May 21st. Mr. Belanger read proposed Motion authored by Town Counsel.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to support article only as submitted by Atty. Cove.
Ms. Provencher seconded.

Discussion – Mr. Antanavica asked what happened, we were guaranteed by the School Supt. that this project was a go. Mr. Reed noted it has been difficult to get MSBA to respond to our calls or emails, while there is no commitment from the State at this time. He explained that the Motion was awkward, but included requisite language for the State. Mr. Belanger agreed that we cannot mess with the language as written.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Article 40 – wind turbines – Mr. Brennan cautioned that when the article is disapproved by the Planning Board, and fails to be approved by town meeting, there is a two year waiting period before it can be brought back up. TA noted that is correct, unless the zoning bylaw happens to be recommended by the Planning Board. Mr. Brennan wondered, if we move forward and it is disapproved by town meeting, can we then ask for reconsideration of the article, followed by a motion to pass over. Atty. Cove stated yes, as long as the request for reconsideration is done within an hours time of the original motion.

Mr. Belanger read over the amendment as outlined, with Ms. LeChasseur noting the two concerns the Building Inspector still has with this zoning bylaw proposal.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to continue to support the wind turnbine article as amended.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Moderator – Bill Griffin was present and asked about the so-called Burncoat Park project that will apparently be brought up for reconsideration on town meeting floor. Atty. Cove explained that the Legislature has asked for affirmation of the previous town meeting votes of 2006 allowing 20 acres to be used as active recreation. He stated that a report can be presented from Conservation Commission or Burncoat Park Planning Committee, outside the realm of town meeting; it is at the sole discretion of the Moderator. Mr. Griffin stated that he does not see anything in his handbook that speaks to this type of scenario. Atty. Cove assured Mr. Griffin that it is acceptable, and can simply be reported as part of the Burncoat Park Planning Committee's annual report. Ms. Provencher will make the report and the motion to reaffirm the Town's votes of May and November 2006.

Article 21 – operating budget – Mr. Brennan stated that he was unaware there was \$100,000 available in FY'08 operating budget to fund the FY'09 operating budget versus taking \$100,000 from the Stabilization Fund. Mr. Reed explained the budget handouts he went over with the Board last week, noting use of the FY'08 funds will make our Free Cash that much less next year, when he was hoping to build that fund up. At the present the Town has little more than \$26,000 in Free Cash; funds have been all but depleted. He did not recommend we operate with so little in reserves; what if we encounter an emergency situation, we cannot access Stabilization Funds without town meeting approval. Mr. Antanavica felt the townspeople were prepared to use the Stabilization Fund at this point in time; he warned that it could be worse in the Fall if we don't act now. Ms. Provencher agreed with Mr. Antanavica.

Mr. Zagorski stated that he was confused, asking for clarification of the balance sheet report, which Mr. Reed provided. Mr. Zagorski, if he understood the proposal for FY'09 operating budget correctly, noted that funding the FY'09 Budget with '08 funds would only take a majority vote of the townspeople, while use of Stabilization Funds will take a 9/10 vote of approval. TA stated that was correct. Mr. Belanger asked, if the 9/10 vote fails, could the article be reconsidered. Atty. Cove stated yes; and the funds are available from '08 Budget allowing the Administrator to make a slight adjustment to the Motion if amended. Mr. Belanger agreed that the Stabilization approach is timely, and we may very well circumvent what could be a bigger fight in the Fall were we to wait. He noted that the Stabilization Fund, as reported by Mr. Reed, will still remain very near 5% of the operating budget, so the interest we've earned could be spent and we would still be in keeping with our policies. Mr. Antanavica was not confused by the TA's report last week, and supported Mr. Reed's recommendation.

Mr. Reed hoped that this will begin some serious discussions on the Town's financial planning. This is no way to operate with so little in expendable reserves. The Town needs to plan for the future and get serious about pre-budget meetings and preparedness.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to change FY'09 operating budget funding to utilize \$100,000 from #914 line item within FY'08 Operating Budget. Mr. Zagorski seconded. 3-2, Mr. Belanger and Mr. Antanavica opposed.

MOTION: Mr. Brennan moved to recess to town meeting.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

The meeting was recessed to the Town Hall auditorium, where the annual town meeting will be held.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan LeChasseur,
Administrative Assistant