

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 2, 2006
“APPROVED”**

Present: Peter S. Cunningham, Chair; George F. Dillon, Jr., Vice Chair; John L. Saball, Clerk; Mihran Keoseian, Member; and Jeff Ritter, Interim Administrative Officer.

Chairman Cunningham called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m.

Elizabeth Currier, Personnel Manager, Introduction

Mr. Cunningham welcomed Ms. Currier to the position of Personnel Manager. Mr. Dillon extended a warm welcome. Mr. Keoseian stated that he had served on the Personnel Manager Search Committee and there had been strong candidates. He congratulated Ms. Currier and wished her well in her new position.

Joint Public Hearing with Finance Committee

Finance Committee members present: Ms. Ann Walsh; Mr. Jay Prager; and Ms. Monica Hinojos; and Valerie Jenkins, Town Accountant.

Mr. Dillon moved to open the public hearing at 7:03 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Cunningham read the legal notice and noted that the Finance Committee did not have a quorum for the meeting.

Article 1 – Prior Year’s bills

Ms. Jenkins stated that the total amount was approximately \$2,795.

Article 2 – Current Year Transfer

Ms. Jenkins stated that the amount was approximately \$15,000 and all have to do with wage/salary issues that were not known at the Annual Town Meeting. There were shortfalls in the following: Council on Aging; Administrative Office wages; Police Chief; Graves Registrar. There will be no increase cost as the amounts can be used from Health Insurance overage and Administrative Officer's salary.

Article 3 – Inter-municipal agreement – Board of Health

Mr. Bob Hanninen, Chair Board of Health and Mr. Ben Cutone, Health Agent, Nashoba Boards of Health were present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Hanninen stated that according the MEMA the inter-municipal agreement needs to be in place between communities to have cooperation between the towns in the event of a major event.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there would be any difference in the current day-to-day running of the Board of Health. Mr. Hanninen stated that the agreement was similar to the one utilized by the Fire/EMS departments between municipalities.

Mr. Cutone stated that the State recommends that the Board of Health get permission to begin discussions on getting inter-municipal agreement into place. Mr. Cutone stated that the agreement was geared more to a “doomsday” type of event, rather than an outbreak of EEE or West Nile virus which already have protocols in place. The agreement is preemptive and there is funding available through the State.

Mr. Prager asked if there were any costs associated with the agreement. Mr. Dillon asked how many communities were involved in the Nashoba Boards of Health. Mr. Cutone stated that there were 14 communities and a part of Devens.

Article 4 – Copier

Mr. Prager asked if there were a service contract.

Mr. Cunningham stated that more details were necessary regarding the replacement of the copier.

Article 5 – Easement on the B & M Railroad

Mr. Cunningham stated that this had been an on-going issue and they were waiting to hear from the attorney of an abutter. Ms. Barbara Ganem stated that the easement would allow for the abutter to cross the property and cross back.

Article 6 – Intermediate Truck – Highway Department

Mr. Tom Delaney was present for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Prager asked if the request was the same as had been presented in the capital plan. Mr. Delaney stated that it was the same.

Article 7 – Mowers

Mr. Delaney reviewed that the current mower had been destroyed by fire and he would like to replace the mower with two smaller but faster mowers to increase efficiency. Mr. Prager asked if there would be a request to increase staff. Mr. Delaney stated that there would be no increase.

Article 8 – Police Contract – FY06

Mr. Dillon stated that the amount to fund would be \$17,000 and there had been a 2% base wage increase.

Article 9 – Police Contract – FY07

Funding for the second year in the amount of \$87,800.

Article 10 – Town Hall/Library Contract

Funding for FY07 first year in the amount of \$83,000.

Article 11 – Williams Barn-Cemetery Land – article pulled from consideration.

Mr. Hartnett asked why the article was pulled. Mr. Cunningham stated that committee had pulled the article to get a source of funding.

Article 11 – Update By-laws - \$2,500

Article 12 – Property Tax Deferral – 41a

This will raise the income cap to \$40,000 for senior residents

Article 13- Engineering at Groton Residential Gardens

Mr. Cunningham stated that there have been ongoing issues with the engineering of the drainage and the Zoning Board of Appeals has no budget for the engineering required. Ms. Jenkins stated that she believed the amount to be between \$3,500-4,000; although she had nothing in writing at this time. Mr. Dillon indicated that verbal input from Mr. Schulman was for \$3,500 and that Mr. Schulman would send a memo to that effect.

Article 14 – Station Avenue Planning

Mr. Cunningham stated that the article called for \$50,000 for design guidelines for Station Avenue.

Mr. Dillon stated that the wording “...at future” left thing open and he would like to see a timeframe. Mr. Cunningham stated that language could be changed to state “at Annual Town Meeting 2007.

Ms. Collette stated that the Planning Board had applied for a grant from the State EOEA and the money is on hold, but there is the possibility that the amount could be reduced by \$30,000.

CPA Articles

Article 15 – Chicopee School Fund Mr. Richard Chilcoat reviewed the ongoing upgrades which have been done to the property through private donations and the request for CPA funds for installation of fencing and restoration of a privy.

Mr. Prager asked if there had been unanimous support within the CPC for the projects.

Mr. Rick Hughson stated that the CPC qualified the applications.

Mr. Dillon asked if the CPC was spending all the monies allocated and what was the actual philosophy of the CPC. Mr. Hughson stated that the CPC after STM should address the issue of putting money aside each year. Mr. Hughson stated that there had been \$170,000 in CPA application requests and it was projected to have \$450,000 to spend on projects.

Article 16 – Document Preservation

Article 17- Community Wide Preservation Project

Article 18 – Norris Property

Mr. Dillon complimented the author of the management plan.

Article 19 – Wharton Plantation Footbridges

Mr. Cunningham stated that he had had questions on whether CPA funds could be used for projects on private property. Mr. Hughson stated that he had contacted DOR and was awaiting confirmation, but the CPC does request that the land owner give authority for projects.

Article 20 – Prescott School

Article 21 – Basketball Court

Article 22 – Transfer a Sum of Money to the Capital Stabilization Fund

Mr. Cunningham asked Ms. Jenkins is she had an approximate amount. Ms. Jenkins stated that approximately \$450,000 at the most.
Mr. Prager stated that the Capital Planning Committee had not met yet, but there were some significant capital purchases on the horizon. Ms. Jenkins stated that \$440,000 would put us in good shape.

Article 23 – Transfer a Sum of Money to the Stabilization Fund

Article 24 – Tax Rate

Ms. Jenkins stated that there would be nothing left in free-cash to affect the tax rate.

Article 25– Right to Farm By-law

This is a state statute and an agricultural commission would be formed.

The Finance Committee will be meeting on October 10, 2006 to take positions on the articles.
Mr. Dillon moved to close the public hearing at 8:06 pm. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Planning Board – Change from Planning Administrator to Town Planner

Mr. Cunningham stated that Ms. Collette has been certified as a Town Planner and the Planning Board would like to change her title only, not any compensation. The Board congratulated Ms. Collette on her accomplishment.

Mr. Dillon stated that with the formation of the Town Hall/Library Employee’s union, the change would need to be made that the title was valid only while held by the incumbent. Mr. Keoseian stated that it would need to be very person specific so as to not serve as past practice. Mr. Ritter stated that he would write a Memo of Understanding between the Town and the Union.

Blue Ribbon Governance Committee

Mr. Cunningham stated the committee had met and there was a consensus of advancing the form of management and reviewed the timeline of holding hearings, coordinated meetings for presentation at Town Meeting.

Surrenden Farm Update

Mr. Cunningham stated that the Committee had narrowed the focus to its remaining tasks i.e. land management plan and the loose ends of the package deal. There will be communication with Trust for Public Lands, Groton School and the State. Also a letter will be sent to Trust for Public Lands asking for information regarding the fundraising efforts and the ANR lots.

Ms. Collette stated that after the meeting she had contacted Beal Associates regarding the ANR lots and they were just about ready and the plans would be sent to the Marion Campbell Trust in Chicago after which a public hearing will be held on November 2, 2006.

Rail Trail Letter of Support

Mr. Cunningham stated that he had been to a Friends of Willard Brook meeting at which this issue had been discussed and there were not a lot in the budget for Trail management. Mr. Dillon stated that from the application it looked as though they were applying for grant money and listing “in-kind services”.

State of the Town

Mr. Ritter reviewed the history of his implementing the State of the Town event as a budget kick-off to gather people in the government and the public to get a better understanding of the state of the Town’s finances. After discussion of several dates in November, the event was scheduled for Saturday, November 18, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.

Selectmen Take Positions on Articles

Article	Support	Opposed	Abstain	ATM	Comments
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1	4				
2	4				
3	4				
4	3			1 (JS)	
5	4				
6	4				
7	4				
8	4				
9	4				
10	4				
11	4				
12	4				
13	4				
14	4				
15	2	2 (MK & FD)			
16	4				
17	4				
18	4				
19	4				
20	4				
21	4				FD – questioned what restrictions will be placed on the structure if approved. PC – Would like answer to that question.
22	3	1 (MK)			MK – Some unanswered questions.
23	4				
24	4				
25				4	
26	4				

Rail Trail Letter of Support

The Board reviewed a grant application. Mr. Cunningham stated that he had attended a Friends of Willard Brook meeting earlier in the day and had some insight into the request. Mr. Cunningham stated that the DCR had budget cuts and was understaffed and there was very little budgeted for trail maintenance. Mr. Dillon stated that it appeared they were applying for a grant and listed “in-kind services”.

Report of the Interim Administrative Officer

Mr. Ritter reported on his weeks activities.

Selectmen Liaison Reports

Mr. Cunningham stated that he had attended a monthly meeting of the Council on Aging which had addressed the need for transportation and the current Road Runner was inadequate to meet the needs. Mr. Paul Routhier, Groton’s LRTA representative is trying to increase coverage and discussing the possibility of sharing a van with Pepperell. A survey will be going out in the November electric bills.

Mr. Dillon stated that he had attended a good meeting at the Nashoba Valley Regional Technical School. Mr. Dillon offered thanks to Kevin McKenzie, NVRTS representative for a job well done and to Dr. Judith Klimkiewicz for her outreach to member communities.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Dillon moved to approve and not release the Executive Session minutes of September 18, 2006, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Dillon moved to approve the Payroll warrant dated October 5, 2006. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Dillon moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Saball. Unanimous vote.

Approved: John L. Saball, Clerk

respectfully *submitted*,
Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant

Date Approved: *October 30, 2006*
Attachment (1): Articles Received to Date (9/15/2006) DRAFT