

Selectboard Meeting
August 8, 2011

Present: Noreen Suriner, Chair; Alan Vint; Mitch Feldmesser
Duane Pease, Administrative Assistant

Meeting called to order after Special Town Meeting at **8:05pm** by chair.

Marie Pease requested the library be placed first on the agenda as a number of elderly people were in attendance specifically for the library issue. After heated exchange between **Mitch Feldmesser** and **Marie Pease**, order restored and the library was placed first on the agenda.

Susan Baker-Donnelly, chair of the Library Trustees read a letter of resignation that library director, Cyndy Oligny had submitted to the Trustees. Letter states she has had a strong difference of opinion with municipal officials regarding the library policy, cooperation between departments and use of the building and did not see the situations resolving in the near future. Her resignation is to be effective August 30th but is willing to extend her date by 2 weeks. (The letter is attached to these minutes.)

Susan Baker-Donnelly said the Board does not want to accept her resignation and there is tremendous community support for her. Cyndy has been the director for 27 years and the library has been a labor of love for her. Susan wrote a letter supporting the library. (That letter is attached to the minutes.)

Trustee Chris Bresnahan spoke of the dedication Cyndy has shown to the library and its patrons, of how she has spent 20 minutes on the phone with elders to get them the book they want. She maintains the library and only receives a \$1,000 yearly stipend. Chris then spoke of the budgets neighboring towns have for their libraries: Huntington, \$59,100; Chester, \$24,374; Becket, \$42,000 and Middlefield's library has only a \$3,000 budget.

Noreen questioned what caused the conflict and if it was any criticism by the Selectboard.

Alan questioned who was causing the conflict. He had requested the Grange to clean the grease trap and that was refused due to questions of liability. Also, he and **Joe Kearns** had removed 2 of the old refrigerators from the kitchen and brought them to the Transfer Station. The Town had also installed new shades in the library.

Marie Pease stated the Board of Trustees runs the library.

Chris said the tone has made her feel threatened and she needed permission to post signs.

Susan stated a Public Servant resigning after 27 years was not right. That Cyndy felt threatened and bullied.

Alan said anything we can do to keep Cyndy we will do.

Susan said we need to keep her.

Alan mentioned the library budget was terrible and the Trustees should ask for more money in their budget.

Susan hopes it is a misunderstanding and it can be resolved.

Alan said he can be brash, sarcastic and loud but in no way did he mean it to be directed at Cyndy.

Susan does not want this to turn into a he said/she said.

Noreen said the library board should meet with the Selectboard and Finance Committee in an attempt to obtain more funding for the library.

The Selectboard will write a letter to Cyndy stating their appreciation of her and all that she does for the library and its patrons and urging her to reconsider.

Next **Noreen** introduced **Eric Weiss and Marcos Marrero** to discuss the Green Grant the town received and possible ways to utilize the funds. A hand out had been prepared and the recommendations were to emphasize energy efficiency, showcase Middlefield's commitment to sustainability and provide incentives to residents. (Handout attached to minutes.)

Alan stated this was the time to brainstorm, get input from the townspeople and decide how to spend the grant.

Noreen said there had been a lot of planning between **Marcos and Alan** is assessing the Town's needs. **Eric** had previously been heavily involved in the roof, windows and furnace replacements.

Eric said there had been many hurdles to overcome in obtaining the grant and gaining the Green Community designation. Previously the windows, roof and furnace replacements reduced fuel consumption by 40%, thus reducing the carbon footprint.

Marcos listed several projects that comply with the Green Grant stipulations and all are a benefit to the Town. The handout shows all the options.

Eric stated that if the Town Garage did not retrofit the exterior walls all could be done on the handout including the Solar PV array on the Town Hall and providing an energy improvement fund for residents to use in making additions to their homes. Even without the retrofit in the garage there would be a good return. The Fire House is in pretty good shape and the retrofits would benefit its energy efficiency.

Maureen Sullivan questioned the Town Garage as a problem location that can't house all of the equipment and did not want to see grant money put into this building. There had been prior research on replacing or rebuilding the garage. It had been hoped the Fire Station and Highway Garage could be relocated behind the Transfer Station but the Town did not qualify for the grant.

Eric said to look at when items were last replaced in the garage, do those and pass on the walls.

Alan stated it could be 10-20 years before any money was available to replace these facilities.

Maureen relayed most money for small town building projects does come from State or Federal grants.

Alan said we need to have a plan to use this grant money by August 22nd.

Marcos noted that they do not like to waste or spend money unwisely.

Eric said this is an outline of the plan as of today:

1. Take out the walls on the Town Garage;
2. Remove the Senior Center Roof.

This will place the total grant spending at \$137,000 and will include solar on either the roof of the Town Hall or on the lawn.

Question from the rear asked about storage batteries, **Eric** responded that this is not the type of system that would use batteries but would put any excess back into the grid.

Joe Kearns mentioned the back-up generator at the Town Hall is not green.

Ray Gero questioned if the system were installed what would we lose from the handout. He was told it would be the wall retrofit on the Town Garage and the insulation in the attic of the Senior Center.

Eric said that small towns like Middlefield can do a lot with grants.

Susan Baker-Donnolly questioned why the electric bill at the Senior Center was higher.

Joe Kearns explained it was due to demand charges.

Ray Gero then said we should hold off on the walls and Senior Center.

Noreen then asked if the audience agreed and all were in agreement as were **Mitch and Alan**.

As there was still a small amount of grant money left, **Susan Baker-Donnolly** questioned if it could be used to obtain shades similar to the ones recently installed in the Town Hall. She will submit measurements for **Eric** to include in grant.

Ray Gero wants the Town to come up with a plan for “Community Use” of the Town Hall for the Grange, Fair and other entities that would like to use it. That way people would not feel out of place asking to use it.

Noreen said they just have to ask and then put it on the calendar that is in the hallway.

Alan stated they are trying to do the right thing, figure out what the costs are, etc.

Ray said there should be a set of rules and that you can use it if you apply.

There is a question of liability insurance and there is a difference if it is being used by an individual or organization.

Alan suggested he keep checking back for updates.

There was a discussion with **Noreen, Alan and Mitch with Susan Baker-Donnolly** regarding the perception of the townspeople with the town leaders.

The Warrants were signed.

Minutes of the previous Selectboard meeting on August 1st were carried over to the next meeting for approval. Likewise the minutes of the Communication Committee’s meeting with the Selectboard on July 30th were carried over to the next meeting for approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane C. Pease
Administrative Assistant