

Selectboard Minutes
February 10, 2014

Meeting opened at 6:00pm

Present: Alan Vint, Chair; Howard Knickerbocker, Clerk; Mitch Feldmesser
Duane Pease, Administrative Assistant

Warrants signed: Expenses \$130,582.38; Payroll \$8,415.06

Minutes approved on motion by Alan, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0.

Alan motioned to go into Board of Health (BOH) meeting to approve minutes from January 27th BOH meeting; Howard 2nd, vote 3-0.

BOH meeting minutes approved on motion By Alan, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0.

Alan motioned to adjourn BOH meeting and return to Selectboard (S/B) meeting, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 and S/B meeting resumed.

Peggy White and Kevin Cahill from Peru Concerned Citizens (PCC) group addressed the Board regarding the proposed 5 Wind Turbines to be constructed in Peru. There is a ZBA Special Permit being requested in Peru for the installation of these turbines. There was extended discussion regarding the impact of these towers on both towns as one of the turbines would be within 1 mile of the Middlefield town line and would affect 8 houses in Town. Within the 3 mile radius of the turbines there are 52 homes in both towns that would be affected by the turbines. There is considerable “whooshing” noise generated by the blades. There are also concerns on the property values of nearby homes, health effect of the constant noise as well as emergency response in case of a failure or maintenance emergency. Alan advised that Middlefield had written a restrictive By-Law regarding installation of turbines. Cahill stated this issue has divided Peru as some citizens are interested in the “Green” aspect of the power generated, others in the money it would bring into the Town in the form of tax revenue and also the health issue. When asked what Middlefield could do, PCC requested they come forward at the public hearing that will be scheduled. That meeting has been postponed twice at the request of the developer and a date has not been set. When PCC requested copies of the proposal submitted to the Town, they received a heavily redacted copy of the proposal. PCC has also

hired an engineer to review the plan and have applied for a grant to map the noise created by the turbines.

Alan thanked them for coming to the meeting to explain their concerns and that he was supportive of their goals.

Highway Superintendent, Skip Savery, advised the Board the new propane fired heaters in the highway garage were working fine and he was pleased with them. Eric Weiss has requested proposals for the new doors and windows and they will be installed next.

There was brief discussion on the Town Center as the Committee inspected the premises of the former General Store and adjacent home. Mitch suggested this topic was not appropriate as the Committee had not met since the inspection. Alan felt the consensus of the group was the store was not salvageable and that both buildings were not Brownfields, but just the store. There will be a conference call at 1pm on February 18th to obtain direction, guidance and clarity from DEP. Public is invited to attend but there will be no public discussion.

There have been 2 companies that have inspected the kitchen and are preparing estimates for the cost of a hood and suppression system over the stove.

Next item discussed was the Town Counsel budget and the current costs. There will have to be a Special Town Meeting (STM) to request additional funding for this account for the remainder of the fiscal year. There are issues that residents have wanted to have cleared; however, the voters will have to approve the finding. Mitch felt the Board needed to speak with the Building Commissioner to get some idea of estimated costs if these are to be pursued and end up in court. Also, next year's budget should be increased to cover possible costs. Alan stated the Board should bring these issues to the Town floor and if not approved, the Board will not go forward in attempting to have everyone comply with the Town Zoning and By-Laws.

Pandora Hague and Dan Jacques met with the Board regarding Worthington's attempt to withdraw from the Gateway Regional School district (GRSD). They had requested the S/B chair sign a letter addressed to the Department of Education. The purpose of the letter is to obtain a meeting with the Dept of Education. There was discussion regarding the financial

impact if Worthington was successful in obtaining the Home Rule legislation. Towns would have to raise taxes, cut other Town budgets and the education budget of GSRD would have to be also cut. With a small GRSD population from Worthington, the cuts made by the school district would be minimal and the remaining Towns would have to bear the burden of the additional costs. There would be approximately \$740,000 the remaining 6 towns would share on a proportionate basis of student population. They have met with Senators Downing and Humason and the pending bill is being held in Committee for a 3rd reading. They have gone directly to the Worthington to see if they are willing to listen and work with the rest of the Towns to address the problems in the district. If the lingering problems can be addressed, they feel confident Worthington would remain in the district. Signing the letter sooner rather than later is necessary as the bill can't be kept in Committee indefinitely and the Senate President can call it for a vote at anytime. Mitch was in favor of having Alan sign the letter and Howard agreed. Alan did sign the letter and a copy of the letter will be emailed to the Board after all Chairs have signed.

Budget was next item on the agenda. Alan felt the S/B should request an increase in the stipend paid and said he would recommend \$3,000 per member. The S/B is responsible for running the Town and controls numerous accounts. Howard was okay with that and Mitch agreed as long as Alan was willing to make the case for the increase. Alan motioned to request \$3,000, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 in favor.

The S/B expenses to remain the same as last year. Town Counsel to be doubled to \$12,000. Administrative Assistant (AA) and Recording Secretary (RCF) discussed next. Discussion centered around each department allocating their own funds for this. It was felt it could become a nightmare in trying to decide budgets and that by adding funds to the AA account; the money could be drawn from that account for the RC.

The Animal Control account to \$500, the current officers are very proactive and doing a good job.

Eleanor Doyle, Library Trustee, requested the Board appoint Ruth Feldberg as a Library Trustee, Alan motioned to appoint, Mitch 2nd; vote 3-0 to appoint. AA to send appointment letter to Ruth.

Eleanor also advised the Board of problems with the library computer, the program for checking the books in and out ended up being deleted. AA to contact Steve Harris and have him resolve the problem or contact someone that can resolve it.

Town Clerk, Marge Batorski, advised the Town Caucus will be held on Wednesday, March 26th for 4-8pm.

Eleanor, as member of the Highland Agricultural Committee (Fair), also asked on the status of the kitchen as the Fair uses the kitchen for various fund raisers during the year. She was informed of the status of obtaining estimates for the hood and suppression systems.

Ray Gero said if there is no deep fryer, a suppression system is not needed; just a hood with a gas cut-off switch. He also asked if there was a Town ordinance against plowing snow on to a town road. He stated there are areas near him where the people plowing out their driveways just leave snow in the road and do not clean it up.

Alan motioned to adjourn, Howard 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 7:49pm

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

Alan Vint, Chair

Howard Knickerbocker, Clerk

Mitch Feldmesser