

SELECTBOARD MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 9, 2015

Meeting opened at 6:03pm.

Present: Alan Vint, Chair; David DiNicola; Robert Costa  
Duane Pease, Town Administrator (TA)

Erica Johnson of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) spoke to the Board regarding the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). PVPC applies for the grant and represents 4 communities, Middlefield, Chester, Huntington and Russell; this is a yearly grant application. This grant application addresses the needs of these towns. Last years priorities were reviewed, the Senior Center roof project has been completed. The high priority items remain the clean up redevelopment of the Brownfield site, Transfer Station improvements and completion of the Master Plan. There was extensive discussion of the Town Center and how this grant could be used; Erica advised this does not fit into the CDBG. However, there are other grant possibilities such as the Department of Housing and Community Development. Although this not something she normally does, she would be willing to aid the Town in completing the application. Cathy Roth stated this would be an opportunity to begin planning for the Town Center.

Maureen Sullivan, member of the Town Center Committee, said the clean up is a priority before anything can be done to improve the area. Alan said the Selectboard has been moving forward on this and is attempting to have the DEP waive its lien for the costs of the clean up and it appears the DEP may grant a Temporary Solution which will allow for development once the Town takes title to the land and buildings. The Selectboard has been in contact with MassDevelopment regarding available funding, they will not fund redevelopment for the Town but would fund demolition of the building.

There were questions regarding the ability of septic and wells being installed on the property and the possible rehabilitation of the residence for Town use. Building Commissioner, Bill Girard, advised the former General Store roof is in bad shape, there is water in the basement and would expect the building to cave in the next couple of years. He recommends tearing is down and erecting something better in its place. If the building is razed, Cathy Roth would like the facade to be saved or replicated on if another building is erected on the site.

Alan said there are 3 groups active in determining what to do on the site; they are the Selectboard, Planning Board and Town Center Committee. It does appear the General Store building will have to be torn down.

Erica said she will complete the yearly application and email it for the Boards signatures. Although 4 towns are included, this year Russell is not eligible as they have funding left from previous years and that will affect the available funding. The grant is based on needs and Middlefield is not considered a “needy” town.

Sarah Foley, School Committee member, spoke next on the Gateway Regional School. The Mitigation Funding was signed by the Governor and will be applied to this year's budget. A hearing on the lawsuit filed on the Worthington withdrawal was held and they are waiting on the decision of the Court. The School Committee is working on the budget and the results of a survey sent to parents, students, faculty and former students and found teacher received high marks and respondents want to keep local control of the schools. They felt the education they received was excellent. The High School is at Level 1 or 2 in the MCAT testing. Lastly, Middlefield needs another member of the committee and would like a resident to come forward. At the urging of the Board, Sarah will see if she can solicit another member and if not, a notice will be placed in the Country Journal.

Newly elected Selectboard member, Robert Costa, was welcomed to the Board. Bob replaced Howard Knickerbocker who resigned earlier in the year. Bob said he will be involved in the grant application for the Town Center along with Maureen Sullivan and the TA, Erica will also assist.

Minutes were accepted on motion by Alan, Dave 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 2-0.

Mail reviewed: letter received from the Attorney General's office regarding Open Meeting violation from Janine Savoy. Finding was her complaint was not valid.

Dave had brief discussion on the closed former landfill on Skyline Trail, property is owned by Anita Myers. He feels this is not moving fast enough and should be resolved sooner rather than later. It was explained all the testing information had been sent to DEP years ago and they have not moved on it. HRMC director, Kathleen Casey, is following up on this.

Alan motioned to adjourn the SB meeting and open a brief Board of Health meeting to discuss the Hudson lawsuit issue. Dave 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0 and SB meeting adjourned at 8:07pm and will be reconvened after BOH meeting.

Board of Health meeting opened at 8:07pm

Alan advised there is one phrase in the agreement the Hudson's object to and Town Counsel advised to eliminate the phrase, SB agrees to this. Also, vote needed to lift the Condemnation Order on the property. Alan motioned to lift, Dave 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0 and Order lifted. TA to advise Health Agent of this.

Alan motioned to adjourn the BOH meeting, Dave 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 8:09pm

Selectboard meeting reconvened at 8:09pm.

Wally Smith said the pig problem near his house has been solved, the pigs are gone. The Animal Control Officer and police chief had been to the location twice and advised the owners that restitution should be made for the lawn damages caused by the pigs.

Maureen Sullivan, member of the Agricultural Commission, said they should be advised of these issues so the members can investigate and deal with it.

Joe Kearns advised there is a GTAC Meeting on Thursday at Stanton Hall in Huntington at 7pm. Representative Pignatelli will be there and a SB member should attend.

Wally Smith complained that no one knows what's going on with the old store and the resident should be advised. Also, Cathy Roth and others use the store regularly for various things. Wally was advised the Town does not own the store and the people using it have had permission from the owner.

Dave addressed the anonymous complaints the Board receives, he does not think they should be investigated unless the letter or phone caller identifies him/herself and the nature of the complaint. The Board should have a contact number to respond to the complainant. Alan disagreed and said he could follow up on anonymous complaints and check them out. If they are valid, he will put his name on it and bring it to the board. Dave felt we are the SB, and not the police and should not be investigating. Bob said there are 2 issues: phone calls and you know the person and unsigned letters. If the letter is unsigned, ignore it. There was further discussion and Dave felt this would leave the Board open to harassment charges. If it was a safety or health issue Dave did not have a problem. Bob felt if a member wanted to check it himself that would be okay but did want to know who was making the complaint but not make it public at the time.

Bob motioned to adjourn, Dave 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 8:45pm

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease  
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

Alan Vint, Chair

David DiNicola

Robert Costa