Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 6:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Lucy Wallace in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Ken Swanton, Stu Sklar, Alice von Loesecke and Kara McGuire Minar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro. Executive Assistant Julie Doucet entered at 7:00pm.

Entertainment License Hearing – Friends of the Council on Aging
Pat Cooper explained the event will be a First Night fundraising event. They will sell tickets for a dance that will be held from 7pm to 12:30am. They will allow BYOB.

There was not public comment.

On a Swanton/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to close hearing.

On a Swanton/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to issue entertainment license as proposed.

Department of Public Works appointment
DPW Director introduced Joseph Miller to fill vacancy left by Jason Kidder. On a von Loesecke/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Joseph Miller to the DPW.

Maxant Conservation Restriction
David Outman and Peter Dorward from the Harvard Conservation Trust were present along with Chair of the Conservation Commission Paul Willard. Outman said the Trust is requesting the Board of Selectmen approve a five acre restriction from Ted Maxant which is being given to the trust as a gift. Outman said the purpose of restriction is to provide cultural landscape in the historic Still River Village and there is connectivity between other conservation lands. The property will stay an agricultural use restriction and they plan to keep the lands open. Maxant committed to continue mowing the land but Outman said the Trust will take that on if need be. Willard added this is a very generous gift. Dorward confirmed the trust has approved the donation. On a Swanton/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously for the Town of Harvard to approve the Maxant conservation restriction.

Town Administrator Report
Bragan said the Bare Hill Rowing Agreement is coming due again. Bragan asked the board if they were agreeable to him working with Pam Erdos to redraft the agreement as a multi-year agreement and have an opening clause included. The board agreed.

Bragan reported the Craftsman Village project is before the ZBA therefor the project is moving ahead.

Bragan is working with Town Counsel and the Dog Officer on a dog issue on Depot Road. They are working to avoid a dog hearing.

Bragan is working with the Department of Environment Protection and Tighe & Bond (Engineers/Environmental Specialists) to renew our wastewater permit which is due every five years. This will be completed by the end of August.

Bragan reported on the assessment from Montachusett Regional Technical High School. Bragan said Harvard is still in need of a representative.

Bragan said the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has met and he distributed their recommendations for next year's annual town meeting.

Bragan reported the Tree Warden has provided an updated list of trees removed in 2017 and trees expected to be removed.

Bragan announced House Bill 3773 An Act to pay prior year bills is currently in the senate. Questions have arisen and it is with the senate legal counsel. House Bill 3772 has been passed an act relative to Town Administrator authorities and it passed both House and Senate allowing the Town Administrator to sign bill and payroll warrants. On a Sklar/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to accept Chapter 126 of the Acts of 2017.

Bragan said work is being done to assist the Energy Advisory Committee with their annual submittal of our green community reporting.

Bragan said the town common tree has been turn off until the annual pageant and tree lighting is held next Sunday.

Bragan said the Town Hall will close on December 21st at 12:45 and reopen to the public on the 26th.

Resignation
On a Sklar/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to recognize the resignation of Sue Guswa from the Council on Aging and the Housing @ Hildreth House Committee and send a thank you letter.

Appointments
On a von Loesecke/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Carl Sciple to the Housing @ Hildreth House Committee.
On a Sklar/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Chris Cutler to the Old Library Accessibility Committee.

Fire Chief out of state travel
On a Sklar/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to allow the Fire Chief and two officers to travel to Toronto for a pre-construction meeting for the new tanker truck.

Upcoming meeting schedule
The board decided on the following dates:
January 9th & 23rd
February 6th & 27th

Fire Department Future Facility Needs
Swanton added this item to the agenda to discuss short and long term solutions that came up at the Special Town Meeting about public safety with respect to the location of the Fire Station. Fire Chief Rick Sicard and Fire Association members Chuck Nigzus and Bill Barton were present. Chief Sicard said the study was to initially determine if the building could add a second floor but it is obvious at this time the study should also entail investigation of other suitable locations.

Sobalvarro expects the study would cost more than $20,000 if it is to include a structural analysis, assessment of alternate locations and traffic study. Minar suggested contacting MRPC about the traffic study.

Nigzus noted areas of concern or improvements such as:

- loss of parking where the new parking area near the Hildreth House is
- no parking in front of the old ambulance building
- possible paving to the Powder House for more space
- adding no parking tow-zone signage near the cones in front of Town Hall
- Finish pavement patching near the station

Wallace suggested creating a small working group to frame a scope for the study in preparation for the annual town meeting and to also address immediate needs that can improve safety for their department and the public. Von Loesecke did remind everyone future needs can be difficult to determine without knowing about Devens. Swanton emphasized that the long term study should not only look at new sites, but should also look at the fire station staying on its current site. Bragan recommended they consider increasing the amount from $20,000 to $40,000.

Athol Estoppel net-metering agreement
Energy Advisory Committee member Eric Broadbent said after the Town signed an agreement with Oak Square Partners for the purchase of Net Metering Credits to reduce our electricity costs the investor in the solar array is asking for assurance in the form of a legal document. Broadbent has reviewed the agreement as well as Town Counsel. On a Minar/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to accept the estoppel agreement for net excess generation credit sales agreement. On a Minar/ von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously Kara authorize chair to sign the agreement.

CPIC Requests
Capital Planning Committee members John Seeley and SusanMary Redinger said the committee ranked and voted on projects. They are supporting eleven of the sixteen projects submitted. They explained their rationale behind the decisions made. Wallace was disappointed the Hildreth Study was not included for funding. Redinger explained because phase two is not expected to start for a few more years they felt the data would be outdated. Wallace did not agree and asked her fellow board members to vote to support it for this year. On a Sklar/Minar motion, the board voted to ask CPIC to reconsider the $40,000 for the Hildreth Study for fiscal 19. (3-2 vote – Swanton & von Loesecke – nay) On a von Loesecke/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the eleven projects CPIC has recommended for funding.

School Department operational budget and capital review
Superintendent Linda Dwight and School Business Manager Peter Rowe were present along with School Committee Chair Mary Traphagen and member SusanMary Redinger. They received 84 questions from the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee which they answered and distributed prior to the meeting. Many questions related to the central office, school facilities, Hildreth Elementary, Bromfield, Pupil Services, Technology, Bridges/Community Education and some other miscellaneous items. Dwight and Rowe provided further explanation in some areas. Areas of discussion included stipends, professional development, curriculum, bus contract, administrative staffing and special education (SPED). Reddinger noted state reporting has increased requiring more time and effort. Dwight explained the Dean of Students is tasked with absence issues which touches upon student wellness. She said leadership in schools has changed. Finance

Committee member Jennifer Finch asked for the technology leasing (Apple versus Chrome) to be revisited each year and her fellow Finance Committee member Mark Buell agreed. Swanton noted with Apple products being so expensive and Chromebooks more affordable it requires careful consideration. Traphagen understands the budget process is new this year but suggested if this becomes the process moving forward maybe having a liaison from the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee who can attend School Committee budget hearings would be beneficial by reducing the number of questions.

Budget Update

Bragan provided the board with the expense budget. He noted health insurance is the biggest increase estimated at 12%. Sobalvarro noted this is an estimate with final numbers in January. Bragan then distributed the omnibus budget that shows where the budgets stand now. Currently there is a deficit of $689,853. He has given the board all the tools they need and will expect the board to be ready to make decisions at the December 19th meeting. Bragan offered some ideas with respect to small warrant articles. Bragan will have more refined numbers once the Governor sets the state budget. The board will need to provide a budget to the Finance Committee by years end.

**** On a Sklar motion, the Board voted unanimously by a roll call vote: Sklar – Aye, Wallace – Aye, Swanton – Aye, Minar – Aye, to enter into executive session at 9:50pm, as authorized by Chapter 30A, Section 21. 2, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. Following the executive session, the Board will reconvene only to adjourn. ****

Documents referenced:
Entertainment license application – dated 11.13.2017
DPW appointment letter – dated 12.5.2017
Maxant conservation restriction – dated 11.28.2017
Guswa resignation letter – dated 11.16.2017
Out of State travel request – dated 11.29.2017
Athol Estoppel net-metering agreement - dated 11.29.2017
School Dept. question/answers – dated 12.5.2017