

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of February 22, 2010

Chairman Martha Morrison called the meeting to order at 7:30PM. Board members present in addition to Chairman Morrison, were Richard Gandt, Nancy Luther, Karen Dow and Laura Powers. Of the Selectmen's staff, Town Administrator Virginia Wilder and Board Secretary Donna Rich were in attendance. Other persons present during all or part of the meeting were: William Whiting of the Topsfield Cable; Brendan Lewis of the Tri-Town Transcript; Jack Minnehan, Chairman of the Board of Assessors; and members of the Renewable Energy/Green Communities Committee: George Hall, Sara Beck and Joe Geller (also present as Chairman of the Rail Trail Committee).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chairman Morrison announced that the Board would go into Executive Session to discuss both the Police Chief and the Police union contract negotiations, the medical status of an employee and on-going litigation and would not return to Open Session.

Chairman Morrison announced that the Historical Society and the town Library are jointly hosting an event on Sunday February 28th at 3PM at the Gould Barn entitled *A Timeless Love Story: Love Letters of John & Abigail Adams*.

APPOINTMENTS:

7:30PM – Board of Assessors Update - Jack Minnehan, Chairman of the Board of Assessors, was invited to explain the tax classification Public Hearing that took place in December and how that impacts individual residential property tax rates. Other items discussed were evaluations and the procedure to apply for abatement.

7:47PM - Renewable Energy/Green Communities Committee (RE/GCC): George Hall and Sara Beck were invited to update the Board on the RE/GCC activities. George Hall spoke about the committee's investigation of the state's "green community" designation, and pursuing that for Topsfield if it makes sense. They propose to work on energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives in any case. Mr. Hall spoke of the grant opportunities RE/GCC has applied for, noting that they have received a Massachusetts Technology Collaborative grant in an amount of \$8,507 and were waiting to hear regarding the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant. There was discussion of the RE/GCC using the funds from the MA Technology Collaborative to obtain an energy audit on all town buildings. Sara Beck gave an overview of a program of Mass Energy Insight that will track utility bills, and with the approval of the Board, Sara Beck and a Town employee, to be identified, will be trained to utilize the program, free to the Town. This program will assist in tracking the energy used by the Town, which may reveal inexpensive places to save on energy costs. There was discussion regarding utilizing solar panels on Town-owned buildings and the resources available to assist in moving toward obtaining solar panels.

8:25PM Rail Trail Committee Removal of Rails – Joe Geller, Chairman was invited to speak to the Board regarding an agreement with Iron Horse Preservation Society (IHPS) to remove rails and ties from a section of the Rail Trail. Joe Geller explained that IHPS is a non-profit organization which will remove the railroad track at no cost to the town. The track will then be reused, for example to secure the border between the United States and Mexico. Selectman Gandt made a motion to instruct Iron Horse Preservation Society of Reno Nevada to remove track material from the section of the railroad way extending from Summer Street in a southerly direction to the Wenham town line, beginning with those portions not affected by Wetland

Bylaws and continuing with the remaining portions following approval by the Conservation Commission, seconded by Selectman Luther; so voted: 5-0.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Old Business

Agricultural Commission Appointments: There was discussion regarding additional volunteers that have indicated their desire to serve on the Agricultural Commission and the possibility of alternate membership. Selectman Luther made a motion to appoint Richard Denton as a regular member and Sabina Petersen as a regular member to the Agricultural Commission for terms to expire June 30, 2011, seconded by Selectman Powers; so voted: 5-0.

Revised FY 2011 Police & Fire Budgets: Selectman Luther made a motion to approve the revised FY 2011 budgets submitted to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee for the Police & Fire Departments, second by Selectman Powers; so voted: 5-0.

New Business

Planning Board Engineering Consultant Contract: Selectman Gandt made a motion to award a contract to H.L. Graham Associates Inc. of Ipswich, MA in an amount not to exceed \$31,500 to provide administration and inspection monitoring for the English Commons elderly housing project, seconded by Selectman Powers; so voted: 5-0.

Special Municipal Employee Designation: Selectman Gandt made a motion to establish the Assistant Animal Inspector as a Special Municipal Employee, seconded by Selectman Powers; so voted: 5-0.

Holocaust Remembrance Day: Selectman Gandt made a motion to participate in Holocaust Awareness Week, April 11-17, by submitting the proclamation as revised and for the Chairman to sign, seconded by Selectman Powers; so voted: 5-0.

Liaison Reports

Selectman Gandt announced that the Public Hearing for the Masconomet Regional School FY2011 Budget is scheduled for Saturday, February 27th at 8:00AM till noon at Masconomet.

Town Administrator's Report:

- Warrant Update – 51 Articles to date
- Health Plan Design Reform Update
- Annual Town Reports are due to the Board of Selectmen's Office
- PERAC Meeting Update
- Response to Congressman Tierney's request for projects for appropriation – submitted by the Highway Department for the Rowley Bridge Road bridge project and the Fire Department for the replacement of the ladder truck and repairs to the Fire Station building.

Correspondence & Reports

Correspondence

Comcast Form 500 Complaint Data: Comcast submitted Form 500 for 2009 cable service.

Verizon Form 500 Complaint Data: Verizon submitted Form 500 for 2009 FiOS TV service.

Alfalfa Farm Cease & Desist: Inspector of Buildings Zoning Enforcement Officer Glenn Clohecy has sent a letter to Richard Adelman regarding zoning issues at 267 Rowley Bridge St.

Letter of Thanks: David Comeau and Al DiDonato of the American Legion Post 255 Topsfield have sent a letter of thanks for the 2009 Veteran's Day Celebration.

Emerson Field Lease to Town: Elizabeth Mulholland, Chairman, Board of Trustees of the Congregational Church, sent a letter to Park & Cemetery Commission explaining the Church’s position on the lease of Emerson Field to the Town. The Town has first right of refusal.

Auditing Standards: Richard Hingston of Giusti, Hingston & Co has sent a letter outlining standards that have been adopted by his firm and how they apply to the Town of Topsfield.

New Triple Play Bundle: Comcast has introduced new bundled service offerings designed to provide more programming options and advanced digital services.

Memorial/Veterans Day Committee: Town Moderator John Kinhan has sent a memo advising the Board of his appointment of Paula Burke of Blueberry Lane to the Memorial Day/Veterans Day Committee, effective immediately and to expire on June 30, 2010.

Galka Cease & Desist: Inspector of Buildings Zoning Enforcement Officer Glenn Clohecy has sent a letter ordering Andrzej Galka to cease and desist from using his property at 221 Washington Street to conduct a landscaping business.

Reports

Board of Library Trustees minutes of January 12, 2010 and agenda for February 9, 2010 have been posted to Library web site.

Conservation Commission has submitted a monthly report for January 2010

Police Department has submitted a monthly report for January 2010

Vocational School District has submitted minutes of December 10, 2009.

Warrants: The Selectmen signed and approved warrants in the amount of \$ 2,278,963.40. The breakdown is as follows:

Warrant FY10:	
069T	\$ 77,241.05
069School	\$ 205,307.41
70	\$1,996,414.94

At 9:05 PM Selectmen Dow made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss both the Police Chief and the Police union contract negotiations, the medical status of an employee and on-going litigation, seconded by Selectman Luther. In a roll call vote, a yes vote was recorded for Chairman Morrison, Selectman Gandt, Selectman Luther, Selectman Dow and Selectman Powers. The Board would not return to open session.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Rich, Secretary
Selectmen’s Office

Approved as written at the March 15, 2010 Board of Selectmen’s meeting.

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law,' G.L. 39, § 23B, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.