

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Working Session**  
**Topsfield Public Library**  
**Minutes of June 13, 2012**

Chairman Eldon Goodhue called the meeting to order at 4:03PM. Board members present in addition to Chairman Goodhue, were Martha Morrison, Dick Gandt, Laura Powers and Ken Vogel. Of the Selectmen's staff, Town Administrator Virginia Wilder was in attendance. Other persons present during all or part of the meeting were Cable TV/ Web Ryan Jarvis and resident Kim Sherwood.

Goals & Objectives: Chairman Goodhue opened the session stating the meeting was to review our FY12 Goals and Objectives and to set the Board's Long and Short Term Goals for FY13.

- I. Achieve more efficient and cost-effective Government
  - A. Develop a 5 year personnel succession plan and Continuity of Operations Plan  
Ms. Wilder reported that a committee has been put together at Town Hall, and the Fire Chief has been included, to begin to develop a plan.
    1. Develop a Town Government Retirement Forecast:  
A&B) Ms. Wilder reported that these items have been completed and will occur on an annual basis with retirement benefits recognized and proposed for appropriation in a Town Meeting Warrant Article.
    2. Identify key positions to be filled  
A&B) Ms. Wilder reported that key Department Head personnel have been identified including their retirement expectations.
  - B. Develop a three to five year financial plan to address vital needs in the areas of:  
Ms. Wilder reported that work on this Goal has begun, but not completed.
    1. Personnel- Ms. Wilder reported that this item is in progress.
    2. Equipment –Ms. Wilder reported that there is a master schedule and the Principal Assessor is responsible for it and inserts data into the “model”.
    3. Facilities –Ms. Wilder reported that this item has been completed.
    4. Technology – Ms. Wilder reported that this item is in progress.
    5. Record Keeping – Selectman Vogel noted there are no tasks listed. Selectman Morrison reported that the Town Clerk and Cable TV/Web Committee Chair have been working diligently on this task with activities including the following:
      - A) Assess the content and status of town documents
      - B) Develop a plan to preserve the documents
      - C) Seek funding for the projectSelectman Morrison reported that resident Jack Long has done a lot of work related to this item in coordination with the Historical Society.
  - C. Develop a plan to deal with budgeting one-time, non-recurring costs, such as retirements, sick time buy back, capital expenditures and training replacements, etc.
    1. Ms. Wilder reported that this item has been accomplished through a Warrant Article and will continue to be funded for those employees that announce retirement
    2. Ms. Wilder reported that this item is still in progress.
    3. Ms. Wilder reported that this item will remain in process on an annual basis
  - D. Develop a vision of the future organizational structure of the Town.
    1. Ms. Wilder reported that this is in progress.

2. And 3 have not been determined to date.
- E. Prepare to apply for grants.
1. Open Space Plan was completed
  2. FY11 Commonwealth Capital Application was completed
  3. Community Development Strategy is to be announced (TBA).
  4. Identify prerequisites for applying for each of the following grants:
    - e. Travel and Tourism Grants: There was a discussion relative to Topsfield becoming a destination for hiking and biking
  5. In progress
  6. In progress
  7. Update and/or prepare pre-qualification and other planning documents as needed to submit applications for grants identified as viable opportunities in #5.
    - a. Historic Structures & Pine Grove Cemetery: Selectman Morrison discussed Pine Grove Cemetery as being identified as a Historical Structure with the National Registry and the importance to the Town for this to occur.
    - b. Green Communities – established and progressing. Achieved the Town’s designation as a Green Community.
    - c. Agricultural Inventory – on going
    - d. Forestry Management – Selectman Morrison spoke regarding the Tree Planning Committee under the Conservation Commission as seeking more members that would address this and E items. In progress.
    - e. Tree City USA-as stated above, in progress.

Selectman Morrison began a discussion relative to tourism in the Town of Topsfield, which led the Board to add a NEW Goal - #VI – entitled Promote Topsfield with tasks to include Business and Tourism to increase economic development. Further discussion of the downtown area was touched on.

II Reduce Structural Deficits: was suggested to change Deficits to Liability

- A. Refund bonds to create capacity – all items have been completed.  
Selectman Vogel engaged a discussion regarding adding a NEW Goal which would be to address the Other Post Employment Benefit Liability (OPEB) that the Town is responsible for. Investigate funding mechanisms for the \$14 million.

III Align Town supported recreational activities with resident’s interests

- A. Develop a plan for the delivery of recreational services to the residents: all have been completed.
1. Meet with the Park and Cemetery Department  
A, B, C and D were noted as being known and accomplished
  2. Review of the Open Space Plan: has been accomplished and approved. The Plan enables the Town to be eligible for Department of Conservation and Recreation funds that become available. Selectman Gandt reviewed recreation opportunities the Town has to offer its residents: TAA, Rail Trail, Council on Aging activities.
  3. Inventory various recreational activities both competitive/non-competitive and active/passive provided by both Town sponsored and privately sponsored groups.

Selectman Powers spoke to the structural umbrella that the Recreation Committee is under and activities that they provide. It was discussed the potential of centralizing the group and the possible development of a Recreation Department that would be self-funded through the activities offered. This would also possibly end the duplication of activities being offered by groups within the Town, i.e. Council on Aging and Recreation Committee. Goal should be CHANGED to more look at the development of a Recreation Department.

IV Improve Communication within the Town

A. Promote better coordination of permitting within the Town

1. Develop a “How To” Guides is to be announced (TBA)
2. Change to IMPLEMENTING recommendation on permitting software  
There was a discussion of the benefits of implementing the permitting software and the assistance it will provide to residents and contractors.

B. Improve Customer Service

1. Investigate options for online payment is to be announced (TBA)
2. Town Administrator to hold roundtable discussion with Department staff who handle citizen inquires. Ms. Wilder reported that this has been accomplished. Selectman Gandt has requested that a REVERSE 911 be added to the TASKS, and different social medias used to release the information.  
Ms. Wilder requested that a new telephone system be added as a TASK for next year. Town Hall does not have voicemail or a directory service.

Selectman Vogel requested that a “P” card for purchasing be added. It was suggested to insert it under I: Labeled “G” the addition of a Purchase Card for the ability to achieve on-line purchasing.

V Promote and support resident participation in Town government

A. Recruit citizens to serve on Boards including supporting volunteerism by residents.

1. Implement a “Give Back” campaign
  - a. in progress
  - b. Volunteer application has been put on-line
  - c. In progress
  - d. On-going activity

**Warrants:** The Selectmen signed and approved FY12 warrants in the amount of **\$ 504,910.06**. The breakdown is as follows:

Warrant #FY12:	
099T	\$ 86,284.97
099School	\$ 276,426.48
100	\$ 142,198.61

At 5:22PM, Selectmen Gandt made a motion to adjourn and Selectman Morrison seconded the motion; so voted: 5-0.

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Respectfully submitted,

Donna Rich, Secretary  
Selectmen's Office

*Approved as amended at the August 13, 2012 Board of Selectmen's meeting.*

Per the Open Meeting Law, the documents that were either distributed to the BOS before the meeting in a packet, or at the meeting were:

1. Agenda
2. BOS Goals of FY11

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.