

Approved 11/16/09

TOWN OF HAMPDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES

September 28, 2009
6:30 pm

625 Main Street
Town House

Board Members: Vincent J. Villamaino, John D. Flynn, Richard R. Green
The meeting was called to order by Vinnie Villamaino at 6:30 pm.

Right of First Refusal: Ray Kibbe, Jr. submitted documents relative to his property at 325 Wilbraham Road which is enrolled as Chapter 61A property. The board reviewed the plans and property description of the approximately 9 acres. A motion was made by Rick Green to release the town's Right of First Refusal on the property, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: all in favor and so voted.

Minutes of September 14, 2009: The minutes were reviewed and a motion was made by Rick Green to approve as amended, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Board of Health Variance Request: A plan was submitted for 240 Ames Road requesting a variance for a reduction of groundwater from 4' to 3'. Board of Health Agent, Lorri McCool recommended approval of the variance, noting that it is a repair to the system. A motion was made by Rick Green to allow the variance for 240 Ames Road allowing a 3' separation from groundwater instead of 4', seconded by Vinnie Villamaino. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Lion's Club: A permit was requested by the Lion's Club to sell food and drink for Sunday, October 4, 2009 from 11 am to 3 pm at the Hampden Nurseries. A motion was made by Rick Green to approve the permit for October 4th, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Correspondence:

Sr. Center Plowing: Billy Bond has agreed to extend his contract with the Senior Center for plowing and sanding services for this coming winter, as requested by Becky Moriarty, COA Director.

Fire Department Meeting Date: The Fire Department hold a business meeting on October 6th and the Board of Selectmen will attend that meeting at 8:30 pm.

Fall Town Meeting: The Board agreed that the second Special Town Meeting to handle money issues/necessary transfers will be held on Monday, November 9th at 7 pm.

Dispatcher's Contract Reviewed: The final draft of the dispatcher's contract was reviewed in preparation for the signing as soon as possible.

State Ethics Commission: The State has signed into law, Chapter 28 regarding the state's conflict of interest law. Section 84 of the Bill adds Section 29 requiring each municipality to designate a "senior level employee of the municipality" to serve as the liaison to the Ethics Commission and must be done prior to January 27, 2010. The bill provides that every municipal employee shall within 30 days after becoming employed, and every 2 years thereafter, complete the online training program. Such notice of training shall be retained for 6 years by the Town Clerk. Current employees should complete the online training program provided on the Commission's website on or before December 28, 2009.

Cemetery Transfer Response: The Cemetery Commission requested a transfer request from the Advisory Committee prior to receiving authorization from the Board of Selectmen. A memo was sent to the Commission reminding them of the proper channels that must be adhered to for transfer requests.

Dog Complaint: Residents from Colony Drive have written a letter of complaint regarding the threat they feel from a neighbor's dog. The Board checked with the police department regarding history of complaints as well as checking with Thomas J. O'Conner Animal Shelter. There were a few incidents and enough for the Selectmen to warrant a dog hearing for this dog. Notices will be sent to all parties, with a date for the hearing to take place in this office.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission: The Planning Board has to complete a plan regarding Open Space in the community. Some of the questions asked refer to our ADA Hiring Practices. The board will ask that Becky Moriarty come in along with Art Booth to discuss these issues.

Miscellaneous:

Dog Officer: The Board needs to seek additional information from surrounding towns to determine how best to approach hiring an officer for this town alone.

Registrars Name: The Republican Committee brought forth the name of Dick Patullo, to fill the temporary vacancy left by Betty Wells, to become a full time appointment upon the receipt of the resignation of Betty Wells. Rick Green made a motion to appoint Dick Patullo as a Registrar, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Drainage Information: Rick had pursued information from Wilbraham regarding the possibility of some help for people living near the river, but what came in would not be useful for these purposes.

Sr. Center Work Program: The Town of Wilbraham has a program that allows seniors to work for the town in some capacity to allow an abatement in return. This will be discussed further with Becky Moriarty when she returns from family medical leave.

Note: A resident suggested that a public skating rink would be a good use of the some of the property at Laughing Brook and the board asked that the suggestion be forwarded to the Mass Audubon Association.

Installer's License: The Board reviewed a license for a septic installers permit. A motion was made to approve a license for Geeleher Enterprises, Inc. to perform septic system installations in town, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Note: Post for Special Town Meeting on October 5th at TWB at 6:30 pm.

STM: The second Special Town Meeting is scheduled for November 9th at 7:00 pm.

Highway Department: Dana Pixley was in the process of having the garage doors worked on prior to the onset of winter. We will find out about the costs associated with the repairs in the event he needs money transferred in to cover the costs.

Dispatcher's Contract Status: The board will respond to the Union Representative, Bob Dickson's letter regarding contract ratification. The final draft had been forwarded to the IBPO via email for review.

Cemetery Commission: Linda Lehman came before the board prior to this meeting to discuss the behavior of the Cemetery Commissioner regarding the misfortune surrounding the burial of her father, Earle Harris. Linda had stated her case to the commissioner, to the selectmen and was recommended that she attend the next cemetery commission meeting on Sunday. She did attend the meeting, and asked to see work product, asked to see the schedule of how corrections were made, etc. and Dick Hatch stated that "he did not read, [did not know how to read] and that he didn't feel that he needed to respond to any of her questions or concerns". Ms. Lehman suggested that as an elected official he had an obligation to supply the information and she noted that the other two commissioners attempted to supply what she was seeking. Dick Hatch said he would not apologize, that he had nothing to apologize for and said that perhaps by the following week he would have the work product for Ms. Lehman. Ms. Lehman attended the meeting on the following Sunday, asked certain questions of Dick Hatch which he refused to respond to, he sat mute and would not answer any of her questions, and would not even acknowledge her presence. Commissioner Wilkinson tried to explain the procedures as to what had happened and Ms. Lehman did note that a check for some burial cost had been returned to her, but that has been the only response she has received. Rick responded that he would call Ed Norman, another commissioner the following day to get a further update.

Minnechaug High School: The board then turned the meeting over to a discussion of the proposed new building at Minnechaug High School, in the event those previously notified attended tonight's meeting rather than the one on the following night.

The following people were present to answer questions from the audience at 7:00 pm: Superintendent, Marty O'Shea, former Superintendent, Paul Gagliarducci, School Committee Chair, Scott Chapman, Town Accountant, Cliff Bombard and the Board of Selectmen.

There was a small group of people who attended the meeting, in part because the Selectmen and School Committee had agreed to host a combined meeting the following evening for the convenience of the residents.

There were new residents from Tall Pines as well as a few others from town in attendance and the following information was presented:

- Doing nothing is not an option that is currently available for the voters in our community
- We build a new school and receive reimbursement or we do system renovations with some reimbursement, but must meet MSBA approval
- We currently have a 2004 renovation number, but not one current in this year
- We would be required to do code updates as well as ADA renovations along with necessary system replacements
- Total estimated cost for the project with a new building is 82 million
- The reimbursement number for Springfield is much higher due to the community that lives there, and the difference in standards of living
- Of the 15 other communities that have been approved by MSBA for new schools, Hampden/Wilbraham is getting next to the highest reimbursement number.
- Katherine Craven said the team who negotiated the reimbursement from the state did an incredible job in getting what we will receive
- The current construction climate is a good time to be bidding a job – one of the schools recently completed the process and the job came in 12 million under budget
- Hampden's debt load has always been around 8% and the board plans on continuing that practice, even with the new school coming on line
- A lot of space in the existing building is not used to serve the population in the best way; the new plan provides a better layout, putting the space to better use
- The Building Committee did review doing a partial demolition and partial renovation, but the costs were far greater than building new
- The school committee is the only entity with the right to borrow the money that is stated in our question at STM
- Dr. Gagliarducci stated again that the good news for Hampden is that the Selectmen have been diligent in asking when this was all going to happen; wanting to know how to structure our debt; that our debt remains fairly level and the board has worked hard to maintain that debt service, rather than to allow it to spike
- A new resident asked if the town will have the money to handle the maintenance of the new building; Marty O'Shea explained that the state's reimbursement for maintenance is really new information and that a trust fund will be set up in the event a major failure occurs
- There will be an Assistant Director of Maintenance for the school, who will learn the energy systems and be an efficiency expert of the systems
- The current maintenance group is less than what was there 15 years ago, and with a smaller building, the staff should go further

- The State will pay for some renovations; they will reimburse for systems, such as roof, heating systems, etc.
- These are not the only issues at Minnechaug, we would need a total renovation, we could renovate, but the 50,000 sf problem is not something the MSBA is interested in, there are so many problems in Minnechaug, renovations would also required portable classrooms, renovations would require integrated systems all at the same time.
- If we were to stop at this point, we would go at the end of the line of approximately 100 other schools that are currently in line for funding.
- The borrowing for renovation alone would be for a short term loan and cost as much as it will to borrow for the new school, which can be carried for 30 years.

The Board of Selectmen wants to check on whether Dick Patullo can hold the position of Registrar while holding the other positions working as assistant to the Tax Collector as well as the Municipal Hearings Officer.

A motion was made by Rick Green to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney
Administrative Assistant

/pbc