

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
December 1, 2010**

**Present:** First Selectman Tom Frenaye, Eileen Moncrief, Brian Fitzgerald and Timothy Reynolds. Absent: Joanne Sullivan. Mr. Frenaye called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on December 1, 2010 in the lower level conference room.

**Minutes:** Selectman Moncrief made a motion to approve the Minutes of November 17, 2010 regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

**Public Comment:**

John P. Murphy, 18 Downing Way and Scott Guilmartin, Hale Street, co-chairpersons of the Suffield Republican Town Committee were present and stated that several members of the RTC presented serious concerns and issues regarding the Public Works Department and also two town employees. They felt obligated to bring these issues to the Selectmen hoping they will take action. Mr. Guilmartin submitted a letter requesting that it be made part of the Minutes. (See Attached). Serious management questions were raised on a bi-partisan basis by members of the Public Works Commission at the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. The gravity of these issues required immediate investigation and review by the Board of Selectmen and potentially the Board of Finance. Public Works employees do not punch the time clock but instead, hand write their hours on sheets of paper. Abuse of this practice required that the Department start using a time clock. The Public Works Director and Supervisor never informed the PWC of their refusal to use the time clock. The Supervisor of the Highway Department also coaches several high school teams and is coaching when the highway crews finish their day and is not present. Therefore he cannot verify whether employees are accurately reporting hours worked. The Supervisor receives coaching compensation as well as compensation as Public Works Department Supervisor. There is an overlap in hours and therefore he is receiving double compensated. Concerns that Highway crew hours have expanded significantly for the maintenance of baseball and soccer fields have been raised and documentation requested. Utilizing employees at top pay to mow lawns is indefensible. When members of the PWC raised several of these issues, Jack Muska became angry and stormed out of the meeting. Muska reports to the PWC and his actions are insubordinate and unprofessional and justifies a personal reprimand. When the First Selectman was contacted by a PWC member regarding these issues, he responded it was a difference of opinion in management style. Poor management cannot be justified as a different opinion of management style. Also the Director of Economic Development works for both Suffield and Windsor Locks and is compensated independently for and by each town. The Town Clerk will be spending significant time away from her job since being elected as State representative, and continue to be paid full time by the Town and receive full State compensation as an elected State Representative. Suffield Taxpayers deserve

management practice that puts their interests before employee interests. They asked for the Board's immediate attention to these issues.

Tony Roncaiolo, 125 Randall Drive, co-chairman of the Public Works Commission said these issues regarding the Highway Department was brought up by him at the Public Works Commission's last meeting. He was concerned over the utilization of highway crews doing Parks & Recreation type projects for the last three years and there was never any clear resolution of defining roles and responsibilities. The issue of the time clock arose when he had just started as a member of the PWC. The issue arose of falsification of time sheets and the PWC was notified that a time clock was purchased. After following up with Jack Muska if the highway crews were using the time clock, he was told we were waiting to link it directly with the Town Hall payroll. Mr. Roncaioli said it should have been communicated back to the PWC and a justification as to why the time clock would not be used.

Mr. Frenaye thanked everyone for their input and told them that the Board will take this under consideration. However to bring up personnel issues naming employees in a public session is inappropriate. The proper procedure would be in executive session. Selectman Sullivan added that she was certain that Mark Cervione puts in a huge amount of time for which he is not compensated for, and although he does coach High School students, he is still performing tasks for the Town through the Board of Education.

Mel Chafetz, 803 Mapleton Avenue. Thanked the Board of Selectmen for putting on the Public Forum last evening to discussion capital projects and bonding. Regarding the fire trucks to be replaced issue said we bought them all about the same time, and in the future stagger the purchase of fire trucks, so they don't all need to be replaced at the same time. He also suggested that instead of renovating Bridge Street School for office space, add onto the town hall so everyone is under the same roof.

James Richardson, 916 Mountain Road, Assistant Foreman at the Highway Department said that Mark Cervione puts in a lot more time than what he is compensated for. He said the Department does not punch a time clock, but employees are required to fill out their time posted on the wall on a daily basis.

Elaine O'Brien, Hill Street, Town Clerk. She commended the Selectmen on the Public Forum on Capital Projects. She also wanted to speak about her being elected State Representative and keeping her position as Town Clerk. Most of the State Representatives hold full time jobs because the Legislature is part time. She proposed to the First Selectman that we keep track of the time that she puts in at Hartford which should get deducted from her pay as Town Clerk. She doesn't want anyone think that she would be paid for doing two jobs at the same time. If this is acceptable, this would be her proposal. She also added that she doesn't take the town's insurance, so it won't affect her benefits.

### **Purchase of Development Rights: Leahey Farm, Taintor Street**

Present was Bill Hawkins, Town Planner.

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, the Town and State Department of Agriculture entered into an agreement to purchase the development rights to the 79.37 +/- acre farm own by William Leahey on Taintor Street, with 572 feet of frontage on Sheldon Street. The cost will be divided between the town and the State Department of Agriculture which will be partially reimbursed by the U.S. Dept of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service. The town is responsible for 30 percent of the total purchase price. Therefore, the purchase of development rights price will be \$926,228 which equates to \$11,553 per acre for the Leahey Farm. Since the Town is responsible for 30%, the price will be \$274,868 or \$3,466 per acre. The funds will come from the Open Space account.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion that the Board of Selectmen approve the expenditure of \$274,868 from the Open Space Fund for the purchase of development rights to the 79.37 +/- Leahey Farm and recommend it to the Board of Finance and ultimately to a Town Meeting for approval. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

### **WPCA: Reimbursement for Kent Farms generator**

Present was WPCA Chairman, Bruce Remington and Acting Chief Operator, Craig O'Neil

Mr. O'Neil asked for approval for a transfer of funds to cover the cost of a new generator for Kent Farms to replace the 25 year old generator. The governor is broken and there is a hole in the housing. By DEP regulations, the Town must have a generator at each pump station. Two bids were obtained, one from Electric Technologies for \$8,650 and Kinsley Power Systems for \$8,800. The request for the funds will come from the Kent Farms Account in the amount of \$8,650 to purchase a new generator for pump station #8, Kent Farms.

Selectman Sullivan made a motion to approve the transfer for the reimbursement of \$8,650 from the Kent Farms Sewer District Reserve Fund for the purchase of a new generator at Kent Farms and forward to the Board of Finance. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

### **Follow up from the Public Forum on Capital Projects on November 30<sup>th</sup>.**

The Forum was well attended with 100 people present and about 27 residents who commented and offered ideas. Selectman Sullivan felt more people should be involved in this process, and added she would like to see a Bridge Street School combined with a Community Center and a Library as she did not want to see the land lost on Bridge Street. If we are going to Bond, we should push this all the way and include everything. Selectmen Reynolds agreed that we should not sell the property on Bridge Street. He felt the residents are in favor of the road projects and fire trucks and Town Hall renovations. He felt the people who support a new Library will not support millions in renovations,

but rather want a new Library. We might think of bonding about \$8 million for a new one, demolish the existing Library, open it up as a Park and keep the land.

Selectman Sullivan suggested a new Library in the playground area of the Bridge Street School and convert the Bridge Street School into a community center. This would keep most of the children in the same location. Mr. Reynolds said if we put up a new Library on land the Town owns, we could still probably do everything for a \$15 million dollar bonding package.

Selectman Sullivan also felt the Town should consider the land across from Spaulding School in the Bonding package. Selectman Moncrief said this was the first time we had a public forum in several years. People want to be heard, and we should hold more public forums. Selectman Fitzgerald said he doesn't want this Bonding issue to stretch into the Budget season. He would rather have the Selectmen settle on these issues and bring it to the Board of Finance, and if approved, go to a Town Meeting and hold a Referendum. If we start dealing with a lot of other projects, we are not going to make the time line. Mr. Frenaye said the very latest we can approve this would be our meetings in January. Discussion followed on whether the Selectmen should hold another public forum during the day to accommodate people who could not make the night meeting. Mr. Frenaye asked what would be the expected result from that? How different would that be as to a town meeting to actually make a decision on it? Selectman Reynolds said this would give more people an opportunity and be more open about it, giving people as many opportunities to express their views on it. But the Selectmen should have an actual plan on what we want to do.

Discussion on increasing the Bond amount continued and what the impact on taxes would be. The Selectmen decided to continue discussions at a Special Meeting of the Board on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Reappointments:**

Social Services Commission:

Selectman Sullivan made a motion to reappoint David Reed Brown to the Social Services Commission through November 2014. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Selectman Sullivan made a motion to reappoint Sharon Kozaczka to the Social Services Commission through November 2014. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Frenaye said there are two members who did not want to be reappointed, but just to finish off their terms. One was Ernie Petkovich who was its Chairman for many years, and the other was Sarah Leahey. Therefore, there are two openings on this Commission.

### **Tax Rebates:**

Selectman Fitzgerald made a motion to approve the tax rebates of Brendan J. & Donna M. Rueli for \$76.39 and DCFS Trust for \$335.65. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

**First Selectman's Updates:**

2011-2012 Budget: The Town budget process gets underway starting December 1<sup>st</sup>. It is time for each department in town to start your 2011-2012 budget preparation. We will also ask for input on Capital Projects for next year with a projection out for 5 years. The Grand List is not increasing, interest earned on money we hold is also way down. Mr. Frenaye said he doesn't think we will even make the amount in interest from those accounts that we projected this year. Our biggest source of revenue is the State of Connecticut. The biggest part being the Education Cost Sharing money. The Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) money and Casino money is about 5.5 Million. We typically get \$13 million of our \$50 million dollar budget from State Funding, and this will not be increased this year. This year the Town took 2.5 million from Fund Balance for OPEB and the School Building Funds and a few Capital Projects. Insurance costs from Anthem have increased also.

**Public Comment:**

Jim Richardson said there is history with Public Works Commission. When he started with the Highway Department there were 15 men, and today there is only 11. There are a few men who are ready for retirement which will probably not be replaced. He wasn't sure why the Public Works Commission is complaining, but they do the same type of work they have always done, and also the same type of work any Public Works department does in any Town.

**Add to the Agenda:**

Selectman Moncrief made a motion to add an Executive Session to the Agenda to discuss personnel matters. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

**Executive Session:**

Selectman Moncrief made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 8:35 p.m. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 9:20 p.m. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the Selectmen, Selectman Reynolds made a motion to adjourn. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christine Koren, Recording Secretary