

Town of Princeton, Mass. – April 3, 2017 – 5 PM

Board of Selectmen – Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairman Stan Moss, Edith Morgan, and Jon Fudeman plus TA Nina Nazarian.

5:05 PM Stan opened PBMLP meeting (see separate minutes)

5:15 PM Stan opened BOS meeting in the Town Hall Annex. Advisory Committee members present were John Shipman, Jim O'Coin, Wayne Adams & Judy Dino. George Handy came in later.

The Board voted to open the public hearing for Mountainside Market, 23 Hubbardston Road – Change of Beneficial Interest, Transfer of Stock and Change of Manager. The Board voted to waive the reading of the motion. A previous hearing had been held on the matter. Kathrine Huck and Robin Springfield as principals in the business were in for a change to satisfy a technicality the ABCC “transfer of manager” document.

Selectmen voted all in favor to waive reading the hearing notice and approve the addition of “Cork & Winsor” to the transfer document.

5:20 PM Group turned attention to proposed warrant articles, with Nina noting that the Fire Dept. would be revising some costs. Library IT requests will be studied by the IT Committee.

By closing five, dormant accounts there will be about \$21,000 available which can be transferred to a specific (targeted) account as a special appropriation. They looked at Environmental Cleanup Fund as possibly being over-funded and an excess of \$50,000 could go into the F.D. exhaust system by transfer at Annual Town Meeting.

Selectmen voted all in favor to include an article of paying \$500 to the Wachusett Greenways Rail Trail as a special appropriation, and insert it before Highway Dept. grants.

Proposed budget would use all but \$45,000 in free cash from starting number of \$610,000 and some Board of Selectmen and Adv. Cmte. members reluctant to drain free cash. George H. suggested moving Infrastructure Stabilization funds into operating budget. The Board took a quick break from the discussion to make an appointment to the Conservation Commission.

5:45 PM Brian Keevan and Barbara Laughlin came in for Conservation Commission. After reviewing the recommendation from the Conservation Commission and her extensive resume—she has a MS in geology and is an environmental consultant—the board voted all in favor to appoint Ms. Barbara Laughlin to the Conservation Commission for a term ending June 30, 2019. They expressed delight at having her on board.

5:59 PM Focusing back on capital spending, the group will be meeting with an advisor on OPEB funding. Jon suggested that dealing with OPEB should wait for a upcoming meeting. He also suggested that recurring capital expenses should be in the operating budget. Noting that most effective fund has been Road Maintenance Fund which receives \$350,000 each year by ATM approval and utilizes extensive grant monies.

Nina announced that the BoS has just about finalized the operating budget and just needs comments from the Adv. Cmte. George noted that the current budget, with the proposed WRSD budget increasing by 24 percent, will up the average tax bill by \$350. Several stabilization funds could be swapped around to avoid raising the levy limit. Nina made a comment that she will look to begin a discussion to formalize financial policies and procedures relevant to boards', as respective duties appear to be unclear.

6:15 PM Adv. Cmte offered some opinions but generally agreed with all articles. Nina mentioned that Board of Assessors are waiving their stipends to increase the salary of the

principal assessor, Kathy Stanley, as she has more duties. The Adv. Cmte. did note several articles which are “to be determined” when they meet later this week.

6:30 PM Selectmen voted all in favor to reconvene/reopen the public hearing for the cable franchise license applications and then voted all in favor to continue the hearing to Wednesday April 5 at 6:30 in the Annex.

6:32 PM Group returned to budget discussion. The Underutilized Assets Committee reported 11 parcels that could be sold but some had no deeds found, including the two building lots on Hubbardston Road. The issue requires some research and Nina will ask town counsel if it's possible to put an article to sell parcels, in the warrant, in anticipation of sorting out the deed problem. Nina explained that she would encourage tapering out of the Building Maintenance Fund, over several years, if we prepare & implement a long term facilities plan, and use the Reserve Fund to cover emergencies. The Bldg. Maint. has been used to cover any problem. A goal is to use the Infrastructure Stabilization Fund for capital spending and not to address emergencies. Adv. Cmte. noted that many capital expenditures are emergencies, as equipment usually breaks down unexpectedly.

A stabilization fund is proposed for future septic system repair at T.P. School, transferring \$2,000/year, the monies of which comes from WRSD as maintenance fee.

Selectmen expressed general support for all articles.

On a citizen's petition to create an Environmental Action Committee, organizer Claire Goulding will come in to next meeting to explain details.

Discussion went on about the Adv. Cmte. abstaining from the citizen's petition from Jon F. which changes their committee to a Finance Cmte. with more responsibility—different charge.

7:30 PM Adv. Cmte. adjourned then reconvened to listen to Jon's explanation of his article.

Jon gave a presentation with statistics around Princeton's finances and said the decision-making process could be improved. He cited MGL Ch. 39 Sect. 16 which authorizes finance committees as a requirement for all municipalities. He went over the history and noted that Princeton officials many years ago created a bylaw that shifted the budget-making process from a finance/advisory committee to the BoS. Only 12 percent of Mass. towns have selectmen appoint the finance committee—most towns have the town moderator appoint them.

8:05 PM Stan would like Adv. Cmte. to present a breakdown of the \$310 increase in the average tax bills at the ATM. The Adv. Cmte meets Thursday night and will finalize their recommendations for their hearing on April 24.

Selectmen addressed a request from DCR, which wishes to acquire the Krag property, which is in Chapter 61, of over 100 acres fronting on Calamint Hill South. A DCR letter of notification came in for the selectmen, as the town has a right of first refusal within a 120 period. DCR is asking the town to waive the 120-day period and sign a document proving that this request was announced in a public forum. Jon F., as clerk, signed the document. Selectmen want more information before they agree to waiving the time frame. They voted all in favor to pass over the request for now.

The Board voted all in favor to approve the road race events by the North Face Endurance Challenge, being held by Publicis Hawkeye, Inc. on June 10th and 11th. Public Safety has reviewed the proposals and a Certificate of Liability Insurance is on file with the TA.

8:15 PM Selectmen discussed T.A. job performance and noted improvement even with challenges of high turnover of department heads and boards which hinders the ability to delegate. Stan listed most of tasks completed and improvements in the auditing process. Also, noted her becoming a Mass. certified public purchasing official. He summarized the overall rating as “strong to excellent” and Jon pointed out the importance of motivation. Board members praised the fact that they engaged with Nina regularly, with ongoing feedback.

8:27 PM Selectmen voted all in favor to accept the evaluation and Stan signed it.

Addressing the Capital Improvements Plan and Community Compact Cabinet Grant they received a revised proposal to include the preparation of capital improvement plan policies. The Collins Center will be enlisted. Stan noted that many examples are available and suggested Town of Barre. A \$2,500 payment will be put on a spreadsheet for the next meeting.

8:35 PM Selectmen voted all in favor to send in their BOS Annual Report for 2016, as edited by Stan. They voted all in favor to approve minutes of March 20 and 27 and approve but not release executive session minutes of March 20.

8:40 PM Stan moved and Jon seconded to go into executive session, and not return to regular session: in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, §21: A. Exemption Three – To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel (town administrator). In roll call Edith voted “Aye,” Jon voted “Aye” and Stan voted “Aye.”

SEE SEPARATE MINUTES

8:45 PM Selectmen adjourned from executive session

Respectfully submitted, Marie Auger, admin.assist.

BOS Referenced Documents: ABCC “transfer of manager” document for Mountainside Market; Barbara Laughlin for Conservation Commission resume/application; town budget materials and draft warrant for 2017 ATM; public hearing notice for the CATV; citizen’s petition from Jon F.; DCR letter of notification; request documents for road race events by the North Face Endurance Challenge; TA job performance evaluation; Capital Improvements Plan and Community Compact Cabinet Grant; BOS Annual Report for 2016.

Marie Auger
Administrative Assistant
Planning Department
978-464-2100