

Approved 1.7.14

WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Meeting of Tuesday, November 12, 2013
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on November 12, 2013 at 7 P.M. in the Selectmen Chambers.

With a quorum present, Chairman Whittaker called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

Selectmen Present: Ken Whittaker, Chair; Patrick Wilson, Secretary (7:09 P.M.)

Not Present: Jack Wilhelm

Also Present: Mark Andrews, Town Administrator; Catherine Tinsley, Minutes Secretary

Public Information

Agenda

Finance Report

Resolution for Community Innovation Challenge Grant Program

Gale Master Plan

Minutes – October 15, 30 & November 5, 2013

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Whittaker made the following announcements prior having a quorum and calling the meeting to order.

1. Volunteers are being sought to fill positions on the following Boards/Committees:
 - a. Cemetery Commission
 - b. Hamilton Wenham Recreation Board
 - c. Historic District Commission
 - d. Zoning Board of Appeals
2. The Special Election for the Proposition 2 ½ Debt Exclusion Ballot Questions is scheduled for December 12, 2013
3. The Town Hall Holiday Celebration is Thursday, December 5, 2013 3 to 5 P.M. in the Selectmen Meeting Chambers at Town Hall
4. The Hamilton Wenham Village Public Vision Meeting workshop regarding the development of the downtown area is November 14, 2013 at the Library.

Mr. Whittaker took the agenda out of order.

Finance Report

David Genereux, Interim Finance Director, Baystate Municipal Accounting Group (BMAG) summarized the Finance Report:

1. The Town has been awarded the highest level of Bond Rating, Triple A status
2. The Finance Department is up to date with posting deposits, etc.
Selectman Wilson arrived.
3. The BMAG Finance Service Contract bill for September & October 2013 was a total of 248 hours; Of the 248 hours, onsite hours were 62.95% and off site hours worked were 37 % showed total time billed. To date this Fiscal Year, BMAG has worked 58% of the time on site.
4. By using contracted services vs. a full time employee with benefits, the town has saved \$21,736.69.
5. The Financial Reports include the Budget Variance Report. This is a seasonal average of what is anticipated to be expended at the four-month mark (33.33%). The FY 2013 Audit has been completed, and is being reviewed. The Audit Committee will meet on November 25, 2013 to review the audit. Mr. Andrews noted this is a “Clean Report”.
6. Free Cash was certified for FY 13 at \$797,322 in November, noting the FY 12 Free Cash of \$584,345 was certified in March.

7. Information is being compiled to submit to the Department of Revenue for setting the 2014 tax rate. Mr. Whittaker called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm

NEW BUSINESS

Recognition of Attainment of Eagle Scout – Blake Denman

John Clemenzi, Stage Hill Road, Eagle Scout advisor of Troop 28 in Wenham, introduced Blake Denman, who recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout, noting that Eagle Scout is the highest rank in scouting. The first Eagle Scout in Wenham was Albi Dodge, who is still involved and attends every Eagle Scout ceremony.

Mr. Clemenzi spoke briefly about scouting saying Boy Scouts of America recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Blake Denman was present and reviewed his time in scouting. He explained his Eagle Scout project saying it must benefit a non-profit organization. He worked with the Hamilton-Wenham Open Land Trust on trail blazing and restoration, and built two benches/ bridges along Wenham Lake on what is known as Nickerson Knoll.

Mr. Whittaker read and presented a Proclamation from the Selectmen congratulating Blake Denman on attaining the rank of Eagle Scout.

Tax Classification

Steven Gasperoni, Principal Assessor, was present and reported the Board of Assessors voted unanimously on November 7, 2013 to recommend the Selectmen institute a single tax rate, “factor of one” for the FY 14 Fiscal Year. *Vote: Mr. Wilson moved, and it was seconded, to accept the Assessor’s recommendation of a single tax rate. The motion carried unanimously.*

There was a brief discussion if the Town would consider a separate tax rate for businesses. Mr. Gasperoni said he did not see this happening until commercial business exceeded 20% of the tax value.

Standard & Poor’s Increase of Credit Rating

Mr. Wilson announced that the Town’s credit rating was increased to the highest rating of “Triple A” due to strong financial practices.

Peter Frazier, Senior Vice President of First Southwest was present and talked about the Town’s “Triple A” rating. He noted only approximately 10% of Massachusetts’s municipalities attain this rating. He referenced a PowerPoint presentation to explain the bond rating that represents the opinion of a Rating Agency. In a side discussion, it was further explained that Wenham’s (and Hamilton’s) credit rating influences the credit rating of the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District which currently has a credit rating of “Double A plus”.

Senior Outreach Services and Council On Aging (COA) -Update

Jim Reynolds, COA Director was present and updated the BOS on the activities of the COA over the past 90 days he has been the Director. He continues to seek how to best serve the community and is working on a strategic marketing plan for Wenham.

He reviewed recent accomplishments including:

- The COA van now reads Wenham COA
- Ridership is up 35% and total donations for October were \$450 – compared to the past average of \$250 a month. He commented that the van could go anywhere there is group interest, such as Market Basket.
- Wireless internet service is now available at the COA
- The COA is looking for iPads for the seniors to use
- New classes i.e. art, stretch strength & balance
- Tea tasting
- Toured Appleton Farm
- Movies, history, and monthly Saturday morning coffees
- Audiology
- Monthly Newsletters
- Outreach Program
- SHINE Counselors

He noted various volunteer opportunities, including someone to help in the wood shop, resurrect the handyman program, and assist with social networking.

He talked about the improvements he is looking to make, such as comfortable seating, updating the kitchen and bathroom, etc. His focus is also ongoing programming in collaboration with e.g. other COAs, Senior Care, Library, HW Cam, and Gordon College

Joint Appointment to the Hamilton Wenham Community Access & Media Cable Board

*Vote: Mr. Wilson moved, and it was seconded, to appoint **Brain Doser** to the Hamilton Wenham Community Access & Media Cable Board for a three-year term. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Vote: Mr. Wilson moved, and it was seconded, to appoint **Susan Carp** to the Hamilton Wenham Community Access & Media Cable Board for a three-year term. The motion carried unanimously.*

Appointment of Parking Clerk

*Vote: Mr. Wilson moved, and it was seconded, to appoint the **Town Administrator**, Mark Andrews, as the Parking Clerk for a three-year term. The motion carried unanimously.*

Resolution for Community Innovation Challenge Grant Program – Department of Public Facilities and Infrastructure

Sue Petrolia was recognized for her time and efforts with grant writing.

Mr. Wilson read the resolution to participate and support a regional application for Community Innovation Challenge Grant Program funding.

Vote: Mr. Wilson moved, and it was seconded, to adopt the Resolution as read. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and Update for Filling the Opening to the Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee (HWRSC)

There is a joint meeting of the WBOS and HWRSC on Thursday November 21, 2013 to interview candidates for the Wenham Seat, vacated by Melissa Moore, on the HWRSC.

The BOS understand that there are three candidates are Larry Swartz, Stacey Metternick, and Catherine Cullinane.

Discussion of Gale Recreation Master Plan

Mike Lombardo, Hamilton Town Manager, was present but did not participate publicly in the discussion.

Mr. Wilson talked about the Recreation Master Plan presented to Hamilton & Wenham about a year ago. Given the recent effort to support for a major expenditure of the Master Plan, the Patton Park Pool, he urged the two towns to go forward and to build a broad consensus of implementing the recommendations in the plan.

He stressed that the recommendations in the Master Plan included how to go about funding the initiatives.

The pool at Patton Park is included in the Master Plan. Mr. Wilson encouraged citizens to review the plan and come forward with recommendations.

Denis Curran, Hamilton Wenham Recreation Board talked about the Gale Associates Master Plan saying the community was surveyed and the pool and turf field were most important to the community. He noted the pool can be supported by Community Preservation funds but the turf for the fields cannot solely be supported by Community reservation funds. He supported going forward with the pool and providing Wenham residents an opportunity to vote on providing supporting funding. He went on to talk about the need for turf fields and the value to the community, suggesting a phased approach.

Selectman Wilson suggested a series of public hearings, with the Recreation Board leading the meetings, and that the Gale Associate Master Plan be a living document. He strongly supported funding suggestions in the Master Plan, e.g. corporate sponsorship, in kind donations, etc. be considered.

Tyson Goodrich, Arbor Street, asked how to start the process. Mr. Wilson responded that attendance at a Recreation Board meeting would be an appropriate starting point. Mr. Whittaker commented that he was surprised at the show of support for the pool in Hamilton, and the best way to approach funding by Wenham, is to try to address the concerns with using Community Preservation funds, adding that there are limited funds available.

Mike Lucy, Wenham Finance Committee, recommended a designee from each town's BOS, Finance Committee, and the Town Executives to work with the Recreation Board and the consultant on the process.

Scott Maddern, Hamilton Selectmen and liaison to the Recreation Board, commented that the various pool related programs should be considered as well as the current state of the pool, which is leaking and may not be usable next season. He noted the pool has been discussed over the past 10 years. He offered a few suggestions including; get real estimates and present them to the Community Preservation Committee, sponsorship, seek individual contributions, and that the towns work together.

Upcoming Preliminary Items for the 2014 Annual Town Meeting

Chairman Whittaker reviewed some issues coming forward for the annual town meeting.

1. Historical Commission draft bylaw
2. Recommendation of the Government Study Committee
 - a. Revisions to Town Administrator position
 - b. Proposed changes to town government
3. Open Space Acquisition Fund

REPORTS

Mr. Andrews announced a grant opportunity that just became available for technical assistance for marketing and graphic design for the Hamilton Wenham Village.

Vote: Mr. Wilson moved, and it was seconded, to authorize the Town Administrator to write a letter of support on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, for a grant for technical assistance from the Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development for streetscape improvements (e.g. banners, way finding signs, period lighting) for the Hamilton Wenham Village. The motion carried unanimously.

Town Web Site

Mr. Andrews reviewed that Mary Morrow has been working on the Town's new web site, which is anticipated to go live in the next few weeks.

Ms. Morrow was present and gave an overview of the new Town web site saying it is simple to understand and navigate with a scrolling news feed, calendar, agenda/minutes, and outside links. The virtual town hall will be linked to UniPay for online payments including permitting fees, tax, and utility payments. Each department will have its own email notification that residents can sign up to receive.

Mr. Andrews added that this is a user friendly program, gets information out to the public at a reasonable cost and should be up and running within the next two weeks. He recognized the Town Clerk, Trudy Reid for her contribution in the process.

Chairman Whittaker announced that Albi Dodge received the Community Service Award at a recent dinner at the Hamilton Wenham Community House.

MINUTES – October 15, 30 & November 5, 2013

*Vote: Mr. Wilson moved, and it was seconded, to approve the BOS meeting minutes of **October 15, 2013**. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Vote: Mr. Wilson moved, and it was seconded, to approve the BOS meeting minutes of **October 30, 2013**. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Vote: Mr. Wilson moved, and it was seconded, to approve the BOS meeting minutes of **November 5, 2013**. The motion carried unanimously.*

Vote: Mr. Wilson moved to adjourn at 9:19 P.M. and it was unanimous to do so.

Respectfully submitted by

Catherine Tinsley
11.16.13