

**Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
2/9/09**

The Board of Selectmen met this evening at the Easton Town Offices, Selectmen's Office, 136 Elm Street, with Chair Colleen Corona presiding.

Members present: Colleen Corona, John Haederle, Chuck King, Irwin Cohen, Ellen Barlow and Town Administrator David Colton.

Corona called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

One day liquor license request – Stonehill College, Inc.

Voted: (Haederle/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve a one day all alcohol license for a fundraising event on February 21, 2009 from 6-10pm

No Place for Hate Committee

Carol Allen, Chair of the No Place for Hate Committee was present. Corona noted that the MMA suspended partnership with the No Place for Hate Committee. Corona suggested the Selectmen consider suspending the committee and over the next few weeks, putting together another committee with similar goals.

Voted: (Corona/King) voted unanimously to suspend the affiliation with the No Place for Hate Committee

Winterberry Hills 40B – extension

See the attached requested from Attorney Costa requesting an extension of the two year deadline in the Site Eligibility Letter issued by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

Voted: (Corona/Barlow) voted unanimously to allow an extension of the DHCD Eligibility Letter to 12/17/2010.

Vote final draft of Williams Street 40B comment letter

Acting Director of Planning & Community Development, Alice Savage, was present.

See the attached draft letter submitted by Savage. It was noted that the Historical Commission will be meeting and discussing this issue next week, therefore their comments have not been included in the draft.

Voted: (Haederle/King) voted unanimously to approve the draft letter to MassHousing with the condition that any applicable Historical Commission comments be included for final approval by the Board of Selectmen Chair before the letter is sent

The Board took a brief recess at 7:13pm reconvened at 7:15pm.

Presentation by the Green Communities Task Force

Chair Maurice Goulet, members Adrienne Edwards, Alice Savage and Consultant to the Committee, Al Benson was present. Task Force Member Mark Trivett could not be present this evening.

See the attached presentation and recommendations.

After hearing the presentation and having discussion, the Board advocated for establishing an Energy Committee. Corona asked Benson to work with her on a draft committee charge for implementation at a future Selectmen's meeting. Benson agreed.

The Board commended the committee for the extensive report and all the work to date.

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Special Municipal Employee Designation – Historical Commission

Corona suggested designating the Historical Commission as Special Municipal Employees. If the Historical Commission members become Special Municipal Employees, they could serve on the commission and still represent a client before a town board other than their own commission.

Voted: (King/Barlow) voted unanimously to designate the Historical Commission as Special Municipal Employees

Contract approval for supplemental road salt - International Salt Co.

Voted: (King/Haederle) voted unanimously to approve a contract with International Salt Co., not to exceed \$119,985 for road salt

FY'10 Preliminary Budget Presentation

Colton referenced the attached documents relating to the FY10 preliminary budget. The override in 2006 was discussed and the recession and cut in local aid doesn't allow the money to continue. Revenue for the town will grow less than 1/3 of .1 percent, while costs continue to rise. Local aid has been cut and the deficit could increase further if certain things do not pass.

To meet the challenges, department heads submitted budgets as lean as possible; no more than 3%. In the aggregate, the departmental budgets are 8/10 of a percent above FY09. Because of the escalated costs of uncontrollable things like collective bargaining contracts, health insurance costs, pensions, and energy costs, we have a deficit of approximately \$2,038,000.

Colton gave a summary of six suggested ways to close the gap as indicated in his preliminary budget memo.

1. Reorganization plan
2. Six month wage freeze
3. Health insurance plan changes
4. Health insurance contribution rate adjustment
5. Increase use of stabilization funds
6. Adopt 1% local option meals tax if enacted by the legislature

The Board and Colton agreed that this is not the time to be asking for an operational override.

Corona, on behalf of the Board, thanked the department heads for submitting budgets as they did, the employees who work so hard to provide services, and Colton for the work on the budget during this crisis.

The Board discussed the concessions as proposed and suggested if they do not pass, the town will be forced to eliminate more positions. Colton agreed and noted that we will be looking in terms of people. The proposed FY10 preliminary budget does include a few layoffs. If we need to cut deeper, it will be multiple employees. Unemployment costs were also discussed.

The Board discussed the possibility of the meals tax at great length. Massachusetts meals tax is much lower than some other surrounding states.

Colton noted that the School Superintendent suggested that the School Department budget will not come in higher than 3%.

Colton noted that he is open to any ideas the employees may have.

Minutes

Voted: (Haederle/King) voted unanimously to approve general minutes dated 12/29/08

Voted: (Barlow/King) voted unanimously to approve general minutes dated 1/12/09

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Voted: (Haederle/King) voted unanimously to approve executive session minutes dated 1/26/09

Voted: (Cohen/Haederle) voted unanimously to release executive session minutes dated 3/8/04, 4/12/04, 5/3/04, 5/25/04, 12/13/04, 1/24/05, 12/19/05 and 4/24/06. There was no action taken on the release of executive session minutes dated 7/17/06

Town Administrator's notes

Colton announced Police Chief Tom Kominsky's retirement as of June 30, 2009. Colton spoke referred to Chief Kominsky as a tremendous Chief, an asset to the Town of Easton and a friend to Colton since he started in Easton in 2007. Colton referenced his retirement as very well deserved and wished him well.

The Selectmen agreed and reiterated the loss to the Town of Easton and wished him well in his retirement

Press notes

None

Public participation

None

Selectmen's notes

Barlow noted that the Activate Easton Committee is sponsoring February fitness promotions; the information is posted on the town's website.

Voted: (Haederle/King) voted unanimously to adjourn (8:45pm)

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Southworth