

**Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2005**

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, Charles King, Colleen Less, Irwin Cohen and Town Administrator Martha White.

Chair Colleen Corona called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Contract amendment #2 for Oliver Ames High School building project

Project Manger Tony Iaccarino of Gilbane was present. Iaccarino explained the change order in the amount of \$3,135.

On Haederle's motion, seconded by Less, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the change order/contract amendment #2 in the amount of \$3,135.

One day auctioneer permit – Abid Butt

White explained the auction application for 5/30/05 and clarified the Building Inspector and Fire Chief's comments. White specifically noted that the Building Inspector would request that other than this one event, the Easton Country Club would need go before the ZBA for special permit approval if other auctions are requested. The original special permit/variance approved at this location did not include auction use.

On Less' motion, seconded by King, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the one day auctioneer license.

Common Victualler application –Tedeschi's #320 – 285 Washington Street

White referred to the new franchisee requiring the new license and the Fire Department comment request that they meet with the new owner to review regulations.

On Less' motion, seconded by Haederle, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the new license.

Brennan's Restaurant, Inc. – change of DBA

White referred to the request to change the DBA to Brennan's Grill and Irish Tavern.

On Haederle's motion, seconded by Less, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the change of DBA as requested.

FY'06 budget discussions

Members of the Finance Committee Robert Hicks, Donna Lopolito, Craig Gardner, Patrick Goodman and School Committee members Ellen Boyajian, Caroline O'Neill, Jane Pike Benton were present. White discussed the failure of the recent override question and the use of reserves. White suggested not using large amounts of reserves to fund the FY'06 operating budget. Lopolito discussed how the Finance Committee agreed on the use of reserves not to exceed \$550,000. White referred to mandatory capital needs that should be funded at this annual town meeting. Lopolito explained the current balances and the purpose of free cash. Reserves should not be used for non operating expenses. She spoke of the school needs and the need for school to cut \$365,000. She suggested the use of \$650,000 in reserves. Boyajian suggested that the town has been using reserves in the past several years. She stated that the revenue projections are based on the governor's version, the house version indicates \$100,000 more. She spoke of the NEAS&C Report and the things required. Corona spoke of the budget subcommittee meetings and the efforts to come up with the number to use. Corona spoke of next year's budget and how the situation will not get better. Hicks spoke of the difficult times and the use of reserves. Hicks noted that there is little free cash left to use for next year, each year the amount is smaller. Hicks suggested not using more than \$550,000 as voted by the Finance Committee. He spoke of the effect on the town's credit rating with the more money we borrow. Haederle spoke of the real impact on cuts and the concern for next year. He suggested not using more than \$550,000 in reserves. Corona agreed. O'Neill suggested a reduction in teachers would be irresponsible and further suggested using resources in stabilization and free cash to help fund the FY'06 budget. She reiterated the effect on children. Haederle spoke of the need for reduction in health care costs, including the teachers union. All other town unions,

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Fire, Police and DPW have agreed to take the reduction, the school has not. King spoke of the current decision process and understands the impact. King suggested not borrowing more than \$550,000. O'Neill noted that year after year we have taken reserves and replaced money each year with money coming in. She noted that the request of \$650,000 is not as much as what was used last year. Boyajian asked if we do get more money as proposed in the house version, could we have another discussion if more funds come in. White suggested we will be clarifying the numbers as they come in and new spreadsheets will be available for the next budget subcommittee meeting. Corona again expressed concern with next year's budget.

On Haederle's motion, seconded by King, the board **voted unanimously** to recommend the sum of \$550,000 of reserves to help fund the FY'06 budget.

Continuation of public hearing for Stoneforge Grill – Easton, Inc dba Stoneforge Grill – 521 Washington Street (application for restaurant all alcohol, common victualler and entertainment licenses)

Corona noted the need to continue the hearing; approvals are still needed by the Board of Appeals and Planning Board. The applicant was asked not to come this evening.

On Corona's motion, seconded by Less, the board **voted unanimously** to continue the public hearing to 6/13/05 at 7:15pm in the Selectmen's Office.

Water Division budget review

Water Superintendent Jack Marsh was present. Corona asked Marsh to explain the Water Enterprise Fund. Marsh explained the process of creating the fund and noted that the town's budget is partly funded by this fund. All the money coming in is earmarked for the Water Department and the required maintenance for that department. White noted that this budget has been reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee.

King referred to the failed override and asked what the revenues for the department are. Marsh explained the process and noted that he would have to refer to the Town Accountant for precise information on revenues. Marsh indicated that the department will be changing to quarterly water billing. The money coming in to the enterprise fund is sufficient to pay for the entire water budget. King asked if White would get the figures for the year. White agreed that we could get the number from the Town Accountant for the board. King asked about the color glossy booklets that are being sent out and some citizens' thoughts that they may be more costly than black and white. Marsh explained the requirement to send out this information and how the cost is half of what it would cost to do it in house. The company has the software; the Water Department enters in the data for their mailing. Although it looks glossy and nice, it is still cheaper than mailing it with black and white paper. King asked about the transfer of people from the DPW to Water. Marsh explained the process of DPW bidding on water jobs and the replacement of people when needs arise due to retirement, etc. We have not added new positions; we have only replaced existing positions. King asked about some of the department's functions. Marsh explained that they are adding a couple of hundred water meters each year. There is a new leak detection program in place. New hydrants are installed with each subdivision. He spoke of the road miles and the maintenance of all hydrants and meters. White added the department's efforts in the Stormwater Management and the UV Disinfection system. Marsh spoke of the Purchase Street water main project and the additional security needed in the water industry after the 911 event. King noted the technical system and the need for technical training. Cohen asked if there is a mandate in having a surplus within the department. Marsh explained the process and clarified that any extra money not spent does not go back to the town.

In Less' motion, seconded by King, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the budget in the amount of \$2,174,985.

Budget Review FY'06

White referred to the recent budget change memo #3. She noted that the FY'06 budget is on the website. White spoke of the reduction in the debt budget.

Debt & Interest Budget

The Selectmen discussed the budget as amended in budget change memo #3.

On Haederle's motion, seconded by Less, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the budget as described in change memo #3.

Selectmen's budget

The board discussed the Selectmen's budget.

On King's motion, seconded by Haederle, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the budget in the amount of \$228,353.

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Board of Health budget review

Health Director Wade Saucier, Chairman Bob Kane and Board of Health member Gil Heino were present. The budget was reviewed in detail. White noted that the Finance Committee voted to approve the budget as proposed. Kane noted that the board is trying to keep fees in line with other communities. The public can call Bristol County Mosquito Control to have their property sprayed for mosquitoes. Kane noted that August is the month posing the most risk of Eastern Equine Encephalitis. King asked for explanation of the revolving fund. Kane explained the fund and the need for town meeting to approve it this each year. The money that goes into this account can only be used for that purpose. It can be used for food training and related work and cannot be used for other purposes. Kane noted the importance for the Board of Health to have control of the agents that do the inspections. Having our own staff instead of hiring inspectors is beneficial to the department. Board of Health member Dr. Kligler arrived at this point of the meeting. Cohen asked why they just wouldn't just put the money in the budget instead of the revolving account. Kane explained that this account require approval by the Selectmen and the Finance Committee, the Board of Health prefers it to be voted each year at town meting instead. White clarified that revolving funds on the warrant are different for each department. She referred to reoccurring expenses that are expected to come in to the town's budget each year with each department that collects these types of fees. King asked if this is an enterprise fund. White explained no, it's a 53 ½ e account. King asked if we have a figure on what was taken in for revenue this year. Saucier replied \$30,000 – \$40,000.

On Haederle's motion, seconded by Less, the board voted unanimously to approve the budget as proposed.

Meeting with the Community Preservation Act Committee to discuss warrant article

CPA Committee members Pat Hunt, Mike Boyle and Doug Mullen were present. Hunt distributed information to the board. See attached. Hunt spoke of the warrant articles, the budget and the estimated and actual received matching funds. The FY'05 budget underestimated the budget causing the need to alter things. She noted the \$15,000 spent to date this year on the housing needs assessment. Hunt spoke of the next article and the anticipated matching funds again of 100%. Hunt spoke of other communities voting to be included in the CPA act. She spoke of the state matching funds on the money that the town collects. CPA member Lee Williams arrived at this point of the meeting. Corona asked what amount has been spent out of the account. Hunt explained \$100,000 for Massachusetts Historical. Hunt noted the \$25,000 reserved for the May Institute project and other anticipated expenses. King asked why we under projected the budget at the last town meeting. Hunt explained the figures used to the budget last year and we have corrected the figure we used when calculating the budget for this year. Haederle referred to recreation and the concept of future purchases for that purpose. Haederle questioned what the process would be if CPA didn't have the money and if bonding is an option. Hunt explained that they anticipate using bonding capacity to make some purchases. She explained the bond process and the length of time to bond. She noted the potential substantial parcels of land and the need to bond. Cohen asked if Easton is doing so well because we were one of the first communities to be part of CPA. Hunt explained that they feel that there is money in the state trust fund to fund a variety of projects over the next several years. Hunt explained the funding agreed to for the May Institute project within the Easton Country Estates development. Hunt also noted that the CPA is looking at the possibility of building four affordable duplexes in conjunction with another town project.

Article #6

On Less' motion, seconded by Haederle, the board voted unanimously to recommend.

Article #7

On Haederle's motion, seconded by Less, the board voted unanimously to recommend.

On Corona's motion, seconded by Haederle, the board voted unanimously by roll call to go into executive session for the purpose of real estate negotiations, to return to open session. 8:20pm

King yes, Less yes, Haederle yes, Cohen yes, Corona yes.

The board reconvened open session at 9:05pm.

Emergency Item

White noted an important development requiring discussion relating to Easton's ambulance service.

On Haederle's motion, seconded by Less, the board voted unanimously to take up a discussion about the town's ambulance service under emergency conditions.

Fire Chief Tom Stone was present. White referred to a meeting with the Department of Public Health (DPH) discussing our Advanced Life Service (ALS) license. They raised concern relating to our documentation process. The problem is not with the service, just the documentation process. At this time, the Town of Easton does not have an ALS license due to the problems identified by the DPH but we can still provide basic life support. Since the

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news, Chief Stone has been working diligently to come up with a plan to rectify the situation. Stone held a meeting with the Fire Union President and all Fire Department personnel. Stone has been discussing the situation with the Department of Public Health in efforts to resolve the issue. At this point in time, we are not sure when the license will be restored.

Stone noted that this is a work in process. Stone explained the break down in the system and reiterated that they are working around the clock to resolve this issue. As a result of the report, we realize that proper documentation is necessary. The EMT's and paramedics have been and will continue to provide exemplary care. We have an emergency room doctor's statement to confirm this information. Stone spoke of one key part of the problem; the town does not have physician oversight. Dr. Henry Crowley is now Easton's medical control doctor. White explained that the state will come out to see what the Chief has put into place over the last few days. Cohen asked the period of time. Stone noted that this is temporary and we do not have a definitive period of time. At this point, the state has been very responsive and helpful to us. Cohen asked if we would deal with other towns or private ambulance service. Dispatch is calling for mutual aid for any calls that even hit at the need for ALS. Stone noted that right now we are utilizing other towns but if it continues, we may be looking into other alternatives. King asked if we will have the medical director with us on a temporary basis or permanent. Stone noted permanent, as a consultant, overseeing the process and providing necessary training. The state is familiar with Dr. Crowley. Dr. Crowley is a member of the W. Bridgewater Fire Department. Stone noted that Dr. Crowley has already been assisting us. Stone spoke of the annual inspection done recently by the DPH. They see some deficiencies as minor and some that are more serious. We have to come up with a plan of correction. Changes are already taking place. King asked if the report is a public document. Stone predicted it would be but was not sure the status at this time. Haederle asked about the problem and if this was systemic or bigger problem. Stone noted both. Stone was confident that no Easton patients have been harmed. Haederle asked about the budget issue. Stone was not sure of the impact at this time. Stone again noted that we are supposed to have a medical control doctor and Dr. Crowley is now our doctor. White clarified that it is probably more accurate to say that we have relinquished the license rather than the state taking it away from the town. We have fully cooperated with the state and we have shown our willingness to work with them. Stone noted the difficulty in documentation while you are working on a patient in the ambulance. He noted the problem with the state's form and the time documentation that they ask for. Stone referred to a computer generated software program that may help. Corona reinforced the need for documentation in the medical field and suggested you are only as good as your documentation. Haederle suggested using a dictaphone to help with this issue.

FY06 budget

Other general budget

White noted that the Finance Committee has approved this budget.

On Haederle's motion, seconded by Less, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the budget in the amount of \$100,175.

Town Meeting warrant review

Article 14

On Haederle's motion, seconded by Less, the board **voted unanimously** to recommend.

Article 25

Corona noted that the board voted to establish a minimum sale price of \$675,000

On Haederle's motion, seconded by Less, the board **voted unanimously** to recommend.

Oliver Ames High School road closing request for the graduation ceremony

White noted the annual routine request.

On Haederle's motion, seconded by King, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the road closings on June 5, 2005 for the annual graduation request.

Review of draft Cable Advisory Committee charge

Corona read the draft committee charge.

Haederle asked for clarification that there would be no conflict that an advisory committee can negotiate contracts as listed in the draft. The board agreed that language could be added to clarify.

On King's motion, seconded by Haederle, the board **voted unanimously** to approve the committee charge as amended.

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Capital Planning resignation – Michael Boyle

Corona thanked Boyle for his service to the committee. A certificate of appreciation will be issued.

Southeastern Regional School Committee resignation – Joshua Jacobs

Corona thanked Jacobs for his service to the committee. A certificate of appreciation will be issued.

Reaffirmation of Selectmen's Statement of Ethics & Statement of Values

Corona referred to the attached document. White noted the need to vote this annually.

On Less' motion, seconded by Haederle, the board voted unanimously to reaffirm the statement of values.

Public Participation

None

Town Administrator's notes

None

Press notes

None

Selectmen's notes

King asked about the status of the audit report for FY'04. White explained it is not ready for review.

On Less' motion, seconded by Haederle, the board voted unanimously by roll call to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations.

Haederle yes, King yes, Less yes, Corona yes, Cohen yes. 9:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Southworth

Approved

Date