

IN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2006

Present: Chairman William J. Keller, Jr., Vice-Chairman John C. Drobinski, Selectman Lawrence O'Brien, and Maureen Valente, Town Manager

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, the meeting was convened at 7:37 p.m. in the Lower Town Hall, 322 Concord Road.

Opening Remarks

Chairman Keller began the meeting at 7:37 p.m., and acknowledged how well several of the local school teams have done this year. The men's cross-country track, women's volleyball, men's soccer, and women's lacrosse and field hockey teams all had successful seasons, playing well into playoff tournaments.

Chairman Keller introduced guests from Scout Troop 60 who attended tonight's meeting as part of their work to complete requirements for a communications badge. This badge is one of several required to become an Eagle Scout. The Scouts, Matt Wurm, Merrit Hall, Stephanos Calligas, Ben Ryan and Kevin Ravesi, each explained some of the requirements for the badge, such as giving a five-minute speech, working on essay skills and relating to peers. The Scouts are presently at the Life or Star level, working to achieve Eagle Scout status. Most of the Scouts only have one or two more badges to acquire, along with completing their final project. The Scouts were accompanied by Thrassos Calligas.

Chairman and Eagle Scout Keller mentioned that those needing to complete the project requirement should contact the Sudbury Conservation Commission, which often has tasks requiring assistance. The Board congratulated the Scouts on their accomplishments, and wished them well in their future endeavors.

Solid Waste Management Options Committee (SWMOC) - Applicant Interview

Present: Thomas G. Young, Jr., Solid Waste Management Options Committee (SWMOC) Applicant

Chairman Keller welcomed the candidate to be interviewed for the newly-formed Solid Waste Management Options Committee (SWMOC). This Committee will advise the Board on Town options in making solid waste disposal decisions. The Committee will gather, study and evaluate pertinent information and submit preliminary and final reports to the Board of Selectmen containing recommendations and conclusions. The Committee shall have nine voting members, all to be appointed by the Board of Selectmen, for terms not to exceed two years from the date of appointment. The Director of Public Works, or designee, will serve as a liaison to the Committee. The Committee will elect a chair and clerk and will conduct all its activities in compliance with all relevant state and local laws.

Thomas (Tucker) G. Young, 101 Stock Farm Road, is retired and would like to become more involved with the Town. He has lived in Sudbury for 39 years. Mr. Young believes the experience and skills he acquired working as an engineer for the Dupont Company could be helpful to the committee. He has experienced curbside refuse collection, the transfer station and the transfer station "Put & Take" programs and believes he can compare options objectively. He would like to work at improving the current Town options by evaluating as much technical and cost analysis information as possible. Mr. Young began using the transfer station once he retired because he found it to be a more economical choice than curbside collection. Mr. Young especially noted how impressed he is by the personnel at the transfer station who are very hardworking and dedicated.

The applicant fielded a few questions from the Board regarding his observations through the years regarding this topic. Chairman Keller stressed the importance of the Committee members keeping an open-

mind about the data and information collected so as to determine the recommendations that are in the best interest of the entire community.

Vice-Chairman Drobinski cautioned Mr. Young that this is a very controversial topic in Town and that the Committee will be closely scrutinized by the public. Mr. Young is confident he will be able to handle that pressure.

At 8:00 p.m., Chairman Keller thanked the applicant for his interest. Town Manager Valente mentioned that the Board will be interviewing another candidate at the December 5 meeting. The positions are still being advertised and applications are still being accepted for the nine positions on the SWMOC. Information is available on the Town website. Following the conclusions of all interviews, the Board will deliberate and vote on appointments and notify all candidates regarding selection.

Commission on Disability - Resignation

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To accept the resignation of Oscar W. Harrell II, 15 Bent Brook Road, as a member of the Commission on Disability, and to send a letter of appreciation to him for his services.

2006 Annual Town Report - Saltus Press Printing Bid

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To accept the quote of the lowest bidder, Saltus Press of Worcester, MA, to print Sudbury's 2006 Annual Town Report.

Land Gift - off Dutton Road

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To accept a gift of approximately 32,300 s.f. of land off Dutton Road, shown as Lot 4 on Progress Print entitled "Plan of Land in Sudbury, Massachusetts" prepared by Schofield Brothers, dated March 2005, to be conveyed with appropriate access thereto by deed to the Town of Sudbury upon approval of the plan therefore by the Land Court and the Planning Board as an ANR plan; said acceptance is subject to finalization of the deed and approval of Town Counsel.

Minutes

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To approve the regular and executive session minutes of November 9, 2006.

Health and Dental Insurance Contracts

Present: Wayne R. Walker, Assistant Town Manager/Personnel Director

The Board welcomed Mr. Walker to explain the proposed, new health and dental insurance contracts. Mr. Walker explained that the Town's self-insured status has kept rates much more reasonable than those experienced by many other communities. He has researched other municipalities and has found that Sudbury's rates are very competitive in comparison and, in fact, at the lower end of the rate increases

reported. Mr. Walker fielded questions from the Board.

Selectman O'Brien thanked Mr. Walker for his thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of the contract options for these programs, as well as his recent work on the changes to Medicare programs. Given the data provided by Mr. Walker, Selectman O'Brien questioned whether the Board should consider future changes or elimination of the Harvard Pilgrim program due to low enrollment and high premiums. All agreed this should be a future discussion at budget time.

Town Manager Valente also acknowledged the great job Mr. Walker and Benefits Coordinator, Debbie Greeno, have done to keep rate increases low for the Town and to scrutinize and synthesize the abundance of ever-changing information in the healthcare arena.

Mr. Walker thanked the Board for approving the Tufts Health plan for the Town retirees at its last meeting.

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To approve health and dental insurance contracts with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Boston, MA; Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Dedham, MA and Tufts Health Plan, Waltham, MA and establishing working rates and premiums for the calendar year, commencing January 1, 2007, as recommended by the Sudbury Employees Group Insurance Advisory Committee and Assistant Town Manager/Personnel Director Wayne R. Walker, in a communication dated November 17, 2006.

Reports From the Board of Selectmen

Selectman O'Brien reported that the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Boston Players completed a very successful four-night presentation of *Pippin*. The performances all were well attended. This was the first production under the leadership of the new theater director, who did a great job.

Selectman O'Brien attended the Town Center Committee meeting last week with the Cecil Group and the First Parish Church to further develop a collaborative, working relationship. The Committee will next meet with First Parish Church on December 5, 2006, to hear the Church's position on various proposals.

Selectman O'Brien also reported that approximately 60 people attended the Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee and the Fay, Spofford & Thorndike (FST) presentation on November 16, 2006. He complimented FST for its presentation and Vice-Chairman Drobinski for the excellent job he did as the moderator of the evening.

Vice-Chairman Drobinski reported attending and thoroughly enjoying a recent performance by Paula Poundstone, who made many references to her Sudbury roots in her routine. He also reported that he, too, thought the Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee meeting and the FST presentation went very well. He looks forward to receiving the final report from FST next month.

Chairman Keller noted again, for the Scouts in attendance, that they should try to view a rebroadcast of the Rail Trail Conversion Advisory Committee November 16, 2006 meeting. It was a good example of how opposing viewpoints and information can be communicated publicly in a civil manner.

Chairman Keller also took the opportunity to again highlight the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School (L-SRHS) Committee Field Project fundraising efforts. He reminded residents that this is an opportunity to enhance the Town's recreational activities with a contribution. Chairman Keller mentioned that many local

businesses have always been generous in the past and he hopes they will continue to contribute to the needs of the community. As an example, Middlesex Savings Bank has joined the campaign with a recent donation. Chairman Keller mentioned he personally is challenging his fellow golf and sports colleagues to financially help the project move forward. He encouraged others to think of creative ways to help the project meet its financial goals before the end of November. Board members can be contacted by anyone needing additional information on how to contribute to the Project.

Reports From the Town Manager
Town Common - Religious Freestanding Exhibit Request

Town Manager Valente has received a request to exhibit a freestanding, lighted Menorah on the Town Common. Ms. Valente mentioned that the existing policy of the Board is no freestanding objects are allowed on the Town Common. She also noted that the Common is owned by First Parish and is only maintained by the Town.

Vice-Chairman Drobinski recalls that a Menorah had been placed in the Common a long time ago and suggested Ms. Valente contact Jan Silva, former Administrative Assistant to the Board, for verification. He also noted a concern regarding the symbol size. He believes it is important that the Board does not appear to be insensitive to such requests.

Selectman O'Brien voiced the preference to accommodate such requests fairly for all groups to exhibit religious artifacts during the holiday season, with set timeframes, in order to celebrate Sudbury's diversity.

Chairman Keller cautioned the Board regarding a change in past precedent given that the land ownership held by First Parish is a significant consideration. Everyone agreed that First Parish must be consulted. Chairman Keller is inclined to follow past precedent by keeping a separation of the Town from sanctioning religious exhibits. While the Chairman fully supports the encouragement of all religious beliefs, he has concerns about Town government taking an official position on providing space for such requests.

Town Manager Valente suggested recommending a different Town location to the requestor. She also shared that in other communities, such as Lexington, religious holiday displays must be staffed by whomever requested the display. Chairman Keller thought this option was more desirable since it supports citizens' rights to free assembly.

The Board asked Ms. Valente to provide a sample policy for review, to consult First Parish regarding its viewpoint, to consult Jan Silva regarding past practices, and to research other potential sites which could be more welcoming for all such requests. The Board also asked the Town Manager to respond to the requestor that they need to pursue other options, since time will not allow for a policy and vote to be initiated for this year's holiday season.

Emerson Hospital - Signage

Town Manager Valente presented information and plans provided to her by Department of Public Works Director, Bill Place. Emerson Hospital has contracted an independent sign company to provide more signs directing the public to its facility. Emerson Hospital has presented proposed locations for these signs to provide safer access for the public. The proposed "H" hospital sign will also clearly state the name of Emerson Hospital.

The Board asked that Metrowest Hospital and UMass. Marlborough Hospital be consulted as to whether Hospital-specific signage would also be desired for those facilities.

Since the signs have been proposed as assisting with the care and public safety of the Town, the Board asked that Town Manager Valente review locations for the signs with the Town's public safety officials. Ms. Valente will consult with the Fire and Police Departments to obtain feedback regarding optimal locations for the signs and whether all area hospitals should be represented consistently.

Financial Summit - Preview

Town Manager Valente previewed for the Board significant research and data collected for presentation at next week's Financial Summit. Ms. Valente distributed charts which captured many interesting indicators such as revenues per capita from 2000-2006. She explained that as population grows, it is hoped revenues will also increase. However, the data indicates that Sudbury's trend has been flat and increases barely enough to offset inflation. This provides a difficult situation since added population places increased demand on services, which need additional funding. She further explained the data suggests revenues have only increased when there has been a tax override.

Ms. Valente also reviewed a chart showing that State aid has decreased from 10.4% in 2001 to 8.4% in 2006. Statistics relating to elastic revenues per capita, which respond to the economy, were also presented. This data showed that the Town's 2003 override did not generate a surplus, but rather only replaced income which had already been lost.

Data presented regarding property taxes disclosed that, after adjustments for inflation, the trend again was nearly flat in terms of purchasing power.

A chart depicting revenue surplus and shortfalls helped to reinforce Ms. Valente's practice of conservatively forecasting figures when developing budgets 18 months in advance. It is extremely important to be fiscally cautious throughout the budget process to allow for unforeseen circumstances such as when the Town did not make the budgeted revenue in 2004. The chart also showed that without free cash there is no surplus.

Debt Service data on the Average Tax Bill was also reviewed, and showed a decrease from 17.5% in 2002 to 9.69% in 2006. Ms. Valente noted that keeping this figure below 10% is desirable.

Ms. Valente also presented a chart with comparison data for communities very similar to Sudbury, titled "Increases in Average Residential Tax Bills." This information showed that Sudbury has done very well stemming the tide of significant increases since 2001 compared to similar communities.

Ms. Valente will present more information at the Financial Summit next week and is also working to collect similar data for the challenging area of expenditures.

In response to a question from Selectman O'Brien, Ms. Valente stated she will provide the Board with her notes from the November 20, 2006 Finance Committee meeting she attended. At that meeting, many financial items for 2007 were clarified and discussed in an effort to make better recommendations for FY2008.

Ms. Valente said she hopes Governor-elect Patrick, before implementing policies, will take the time necessary to research fully the complexity of factors to be considered and will work collaboratively with all key educational and civic leaders.

Executive Session

At 8:53 p.m., Chairman Keller wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and announced the close of the regular meeting and it was on roll call unanimously

VOTED: To go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining.

Chairman Keller announced regular session would not reconvene following Executive Session.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Attest: _____
Maureen G. Valente
Town Manager-Clerk