

IN BOARD OF SUDBURY SELECTMEN  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2011

Present: Chairman John C. Drobinski, Vice-Chairman Lawrence W. O'Brien, Selectman Robert C. Haarde and Town Manager Maureen G. Valente

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, the meeting was convened at 7:08 p.m. in Conference Room A at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School.

**Opening Remarks**

At 7:08 p.m., Chairman John Drobinski opened the meeting which will be brief due to the Special Town Meeting which begins at 7:30 this evening.

Town Manager Valente brought to the Board's attention that the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) meeting will take place this coming weekend and Asst. Town Manager Maryanne Bilodeau will be attending in her place.

**Massachusetts Municipal Association – annual meeting**

Chairman Drobinski authorized the Assistant Town Manager to vote at the business meeting on his behalf and signed the appropriate documentation for the MMA.

One issue up for MMA discussion concerns Health Plan Design Changes being taken out of Collective Bargaining.

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Massachusetts Municipal Association option to petition the legislature to remove Plan Design Changes from collective bargaining.

Chairman Drobinski further reported that there is another option to be voted - a proposal that Chapter 90 State funding not be diverted elsewhere. He made a motion to authorize Ms. Bilodeau to vote in the affirmative on the topic to not divert these monies.

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Massachusetts Municipal Association option to petition the legislature to not allow Chapter 90 funds being diverted.

**Article 2 – Home Rule Petition**

Present: David Levington, Ralph Tyler and Patricia Brown

Mr. Drobinski turned the discussion to Art. 2 of this Special Town Meeting and asked Town Manager Valente for a report. She stated that, if this Special Act is enacted, Town staff will administer the program. She stated that there is growing concern that Town staffing may need to be increased if the State enacts the petition for a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption. If enacted, Town staff wants to go on record as possibly requiring extra help to get the tax rate set and the tax bills issued on time.

Selectman Haarde asked if the Town of Hamilton needed to use extra help. Ms. Valente responded that that it is not yet implemented in Hamilton, and noted that Hamilton's approach is different than Sudbury's. It is those differences that cause the concern.

Vice Chairman Larry O'Brien stated he feels that not enough study has been done to implement this initiative and asked if it made more sense to study this a little further.

Town Manager Valente opined that the main concern is that 400 people currently utilize the tax deferral. She wonders whether the individual situation of each of these same people will need to be addressed by the Assessors' staff.

Selectman Bob Haarde said he doesn't feel that the burden shift will make enough of a difference.

Mr. Drobinski reiterated that, regardless, it may mean additional staffing to implement the program.

Ms. Valente stated that this would need to be addressed when preparing the FY13 budget as there is not enough time to adjust the FY12 budget, and she opined that a year from now would be a better time to come back to this.

Chairman Drobinski asked Mr. Levington and Mr. Tyler if they were willing to postpone the article until the 2011 Annual Town Meeting, suggesting that the article may need additional time to be studied.

Mr. O'Brien stated that the Town Manager and the Director of Assessing have not had sufficient time to evaluate the implementation process. If we were to postpone this until the Annual Town Meeting, would it allow Mr. Levington and Mr. Tyler time to better prepared for the Board's support. He posed the question to Town Manager Valente and asked if 90 days give enough time to sufficiently study this plan.

Mr. Valente stated that she doesn't feel confident to make this kind of judgment at this time.

Mr. Tyler stated that we are looking at 2013-14 for implementation. These enactments take a long time, and it would still have to come back to the Annual Town Election.

Mr. O'Brien stated that several changes have been made to the proposed article. In this discussion, if we come to an agreement to postpone the article tonight and put it forth to be taken up as the first article at the second night of the 2011 Annual Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen would support the concept.

Mr. O'Brien would like to do a time certain with the statement that the Board of Selectmen and time for the Board of Assessors to review the plan more closely.

Mr. Tyler questioned why moving to postponement and not supporting what he has presented. Again, Mr. O'Brien stated to buy more time for studying the concept.

Selectman Haarde stated that the petitioners have done a lot of work and he feels it is a little late to pull the rug out.

Chairman Drobinski affirmed that the Town has long supported its seniors – long before many other communities have done so.

Selectman Haarde feels that the Town government should not decide the issue but should allow it to go forward.

Chairman Drobinski, stating that the Board has supported other senior tax issues and it is worth starting the presentation, moved that the Board support the article to be presented, with the caveat that corrections that may be needed would be brought before the 2011 ATM, and he noted the article has been amended to allow for corrections that will make it easier to administer, if enacted.

Vice Chairman O'Brien seconded the motion and it was unanimously

VOTED: To support the petition article for a Home Rule Petition for a means tested senior citizen property tax exemption.

Chairman Drobinski stated that working together on this is very important.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Maureen G. Valente  
Town Manager-Clerk