

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2008

#05

#07-08

Meeting was opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons Allen Ross, Patricia Pruitt, Patricia Allen, Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio, Jon Dobosz, Robert Trombley, WPCF Superintendent; Arn Albertini, Hugh Massey.

Approve Minutes of January 22, 2008

Pruitt made the motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2008 with corrections. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Approve Minutes of January 28, 2008

Pruitt made the motion to approve the minutes of January 28, 2008 with corrections. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Jon Dobosz, Park & Rec Director

Dobosz: Announced the Public Hearings for both the Unity Park Enhancement Project as well as the Norma's Park Strategic Plan. The Public Hearing for the Unity Park Enhancement Project is planned for Wednesday, February 20th at 7:00 PM at the Unity Park Fieldhouse. The Public Hearing for Norma's Park is planned for Wednesday, March 12th at 7:00 PM at the Spiritualist Hall, Lake Pleasant.

Allen: It would be good if you want to give a synopsis of what you have here, to give everyone a better idea as to what is going on.

Dobosz: In terms of Unity Park, it is a much more ambitious project on a much larger scale. We have a lot of antiquated playground units down at the park, some of which has been around since before I was born. We certainly want to replace those items and put in ADA Accessible Play Units and essentially make it much more accessible than it is. We also have enough space to expand on the play area and Unity Park itself, has considerable regional appeal. If you go by there on a nice day, even during the middle of winter, there are a lot of people out there. It is a major advantage for the physical health of the Town of Montague to want to improve the overall accessibility of the park as well. Most particularly the parking lot has two major barriers standing between the parking lot and the playground. One is the Field House, and we know that it isn't going to go anywhere, and the second is the driveway. It isn't very safe to go from the parking lot to the driveway. It is only accessible for Service and Town owned vehicles, but still there is no fence dividing the driveway and the playground either. The proximity is not conducive to making me feel any better. There are some aesthetic issues, but they should be resolved with these enhancements. We are looking forward to meeting with other people on the 20th. This will probably not be the only Public Hearing on Unity Park. We do anticipate having at least another one, probably if not in the summer, then next fall. We want to make sure that we do it right, and make sure all ideas are addressed. In terms of Norma's Park, we are currently in the middle of improvements. Last summer, we were able to take out some play units that again, were very old and were on the border in terms of safety. This past fall we had a new fence installed between the park and Lake Pleasant Road, which is a long straight stretch of highway. We want to re-energize the project and hope to have a picnic shelter constructed, as well as a flower bed for a community garden. A lot of people have expressed an interest in helping us out in past Public Hearings. I think our last one was in 2006. Again, we want to go back and say this is where we are at this point and this is what we are going to be doing in the next few months, just to see if people are still interested in helping us out.

Allen: If people are interested in helping out, then we could actually move ahead with the help of volunteers?

Dobosz: Yes, definitely not only in terms of volunteer help, but donations for wood and probably shingles for the picnic shelter. It is really a nice spot, a small and very quiet park.

Discussion

Robert Trombley, WPCF Superintendent

Trombley: They are excavating at the plant today and have all the well points and they are pumping out the ground water, so things are moving along. I go down several times a day and talk to the inspector and the on-site manager for the contractor and see what the latest is.

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Draft National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit

Trombley: This is a permit that authorizes the Town to discharge treated wastewater and also from the CSO's to the Connecticut River. The permit has a term of five years. We had applied for renewal a little over a year and a half ago, and that was within the five year term. The State has just responded, so it has been renewed for another year. We are grandfathered into the previous permit that will still stay in effect until the new permit becomes effective. What I have tonight, in regards to this, is only by way of information, are some comments that I have on the permit. This is just a bare bone draft letter right now to Mark Malone of the EPA who is the gentleman working on our permit. It serves the purpose of giving me some guidelines to see where I want to go, how I want to write it and also to show the Selectboard and Frank, the complexity in just a few pages of the permit. It is a fairly involved document which includes a Fact Sheet which tells about the plant, the flows, where we are located and a number of different things. I have some comments on what I found out to be incorrect data which they have to correct and it goes on to other comments I have. The hearing in Boston is open to the general public and they will take comments from anybody. We also have a right to comment, which we will do. The State will take this back and respond to it in another month or another year – we don't know. In essence the comment period is just a delaying tactic to a certain extent. The permit is pretty important especially given some of the things that they are asking us to do in the roughly eight or nine different reports they would like us to do. One of the reports we worked on with Tighe & Bond, an Engineering firm out of Westfield, about ten years ago and at that time their report was estimated to be between \$25-30,000. They give us any where from 60 days to a year to get the reports done and I think it is bottom line crazy. Reports are productive and yes they are important, but the Town is presently spending 5.7 million dollars on a CSO project. I think to require all these things at the level of expenses that it is going to take to accomplish them over the next year or so, is probably not really needed. I talked to Paul Gilbert and he is going to help me put some spin on things. In my opinion, a draft letter, should come from the Selectboard with the Town Letterhead on it.

Abbondanzio: How much of this was actually addressed in the CSO Facility Plan?. Seems as though a lot of it was addressed at a level of sophistication that could put us ahead of the curve, in terms of some of the information they are obviously looking for in the report.

Discussion

Report Proposals

Trombley: Three different reports. The first two being Emergency Response Plan and a Vulnerability Assessment that are triggered by the Town accepting funds from the United States Department of Agriculture. These are two of the conditions that we have to meet to continue to accept the funds that they are giving us by means of loan and grant for the CSO Project. The third is an Industrial Pretreatment Program Enforcement Response Plan.

Allen: In number 3, there is such a gap between the prices from the two firms.

Trombley: The \$2,500 reflects a Tighe & Bond cost estimate strictly using the EPA model for the Enforcement Response Plan, adapting that to the Town. The one from CDM meets the requirements of the EPA model, but it comes along with a lot of bells and whistles that we don't need, such as a computer program with limits and things, if we want to do that for the industry end of it. It is all nice, but I don't think for our involvement with the industry, that we need all the horsepower that CDM would give us. I think that the Tighe & Bond estimate is the better choice.

Allen: Have you talked to Capt. Escott about the Emergency Response Plan?

Trombley: No, I haven't. That is a good thought.

Abbondanzio: I also want to touch base with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments because it is possible that there is some kind of generic plan that has been developed for treatment plants in general for the Emergency Response Plan.

Trombley: It is also built specific to the plant that you have and the processes and the different chemicals or whatever might be on site or the other items of hazard. So there is a difference there. I will check with Capt. Escott on that and with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

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Allen: How many plants do we have in the county?

Trombley: I don't know. Greenfield, Deerfield, Sunderland, Erving, ourselves, Shelburne, Ashfield.

Allen: It seems as though the project is on schedule.

Trombley: Yes, we have a progress meeting on Wednesday with the engineers and the contractor. We will see about where we are. We will see if there are any issues that we might have.

Discussion continued about the plant.

Discuss changing date of Annual Town Meeting Date

Abbondanzio: The dates that we are looking at when the school is available for the meeting are: May 24th or June 14th. Someone pointed out today that May 24th is on Memorial Day Weekend.

Discussion continued about various reports, especially budget numbers, being ready so that we could use them at the annual Town Meeting.

Allen: I would suggest that we switch the Town Meeting Date to June 14th. This will give more time for the Finance Committee, schools, us more time to work on budget figures.

Pruitt made a motion to reschedule the Town Meeting from May 3rd, 2008 to June 14th, 2008. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously –Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

PLEASE NOTE: Since this vote, the meeting has been changed back to Saturday, May 3, 2008

Selectmen's Meeting – Week of February 18th

Abbondanzio: Since Monday, February 18th is a Holiday, do you want to have the Selectmen's Meeting on Tuesday, February 19th? Discussion followed. The meeting will be held on the 19th.

Meeting with the Mass. Aeronautics Commission

Abbondanzio: The meeting has been confirmed for 4:00 PM on Monday, February 25th. If anyone has questions they should forward them to the Selectmen's Office at least a week prior to the meeting.

Discussion followed regarding the details of the meeting.

Meeting Dates & Times

Abbondanzio: There is a special meeting at 10:00 AM on Thursday, February 7, 2008. The Fiscal Collaborative Meeting is at 5:15 PM. The Five Year Plan Committee will meet at 7:00 PM. Proposals for the Five Year Plan Committee are due at 2 o'clock. Everybody realizes that there is an issue of time and also money.

The Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen meet Wednesday evening at 5:00 PM.

Antitrust Litigation

Abbondanzio: I have an agreement that Sue SanSoucie provided regarding the antitrust litigation that was resolved through the Attorney General's Office stating that the library is eligible to receive \$300 as part of a 2002 compact disc settlement with several music companies and retailers. The Board of Selectmen needs to sign the acceptance form.

Montague Elks Open House

Abbondanzio: The Elks Lodge is holding an Open House for the Community on Saturday, February 16th, 2008 from 10 AM to 1 PM. The purpose of this event is to give the residents of Montague an opportunity to learn more about the National Organization of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United State of America and in addition to become more familiar with the Montague Lodge. This is a great opportunity to check out the plans for the new Lodge home they expect to build on Millers Falls Rd. The Board of Selectmen and any Montague Town

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employees are invited to attend. A complimentary breakfast will be served. Please RSVP to Mary Brown at 863-9449 if you are planning to attend.

Other

Allen: Any word on GIC?

Abbondanzio: In meeting with the Insurance Advisory Committee, it was kind of decided that it would be nice if the Town could obtain a study of the cost benefits from an insurance consultant, the same as was hired by the Mass. Teacher's Association, for all of the school districts. I did contact the Boston Benefits Group and they have promised to get me a quote on that. They also said that maybe we would want to wait until the new data comes out from GIC in terms of which plan we are comparing our plan with. It might not be the same plan that we have this year as we had last year. The quote should be coming soon. Once we get that we will be working with the Insurance Advisory Committee on developing some kind of an action plan on that.

Strathmore Paper Co.

Abbondanzio: I spoke with Joe today and he said that truck #7 is coming in on Thursday. The packaging is happening for truck #8 which might be completed this week. The roof work is underway for both buildings.

Police Station update

Abbondanzio: A ton of materials went over to the Housing Authority for the Police Station Project, Community Development Block Grant application that is going in on the 15th of February. I have more forms to be signed by the Chairman.

Other

Ross: Just a follow-up on the Franklin Regional Transit. Frank mentioned that the assessment that the Town of Montague got and Greenfield got was dramatically higher than last year. Frank spoke with the Accountant and I spoke with the FRTA to try to get an explanation for it. Besides some general increase in costs, the most significant increase was because a \$250,000 grant that funded the connection between Greenfield and Orange had run out. In order to maintain that service it necessitated the need to increase the assessment of the member towns, which included Greenfield, Montague, Erving, Orange and Athol. There might be another grant that would replace about 60% of the funding, so our assessment wouldn't backdrop significantly from what appeared on the cherry sheet.

Abbondanzio: I spoke with the Director Tina Cote to see just how heavily used that service is from people in Montague. We really have to reevaluate that program to see if it does make sense for the Town of Montague. It is a very expensive program and it might not be worth it if only a few people use it. I asked her to provide us with some statistical data, so we can make an evaluation whether the Town wants to do that or not, because the assessment went from \$47,000 up to \$69,000 or something like that.

Discussion continued regarding the FRTA and public transportation issues.

Voting

Allen: Reminded everyone to vote. It is very important for people to vote. Montague Center Polling Place has been changed to the Montague Center Fire Station; otherwise they are in their usual spots with the usual times.

Pruitt makes a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ross. Approved unanimously by Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.