

A Regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Tuesday, January 13, 2009 beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Town Hall. The following members were present.

Catherine Winston, Chairman
Clifton Snuffer, Vice Chairman
David Sullivan, Clerk
Al DeNapoli
Christopher Timson

Also present:
Michael Boynton, Town Administrator
James Johnson, Asst. Town Administrator

Ms. Winston called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli to go into executive session to discuss litigation, seconded by Mr. Sullivan by roll call vote Mr. Snuffer-Aye, Mr. Sullivan-Aye, Mr. DeNapoli-Aye and Ms. Winston-Aye 4-0-0 (Mr. Timson was not present)

The Board returned to open session.

Ms. Winston wanted to thank the DPW for the great job they did during the last snow storm. The winter season is one of the worst we have had in a long time and the employees are doing a fantastic job.

7:58 p.m. **Field Master Plan**

Bob O'Brien appeared before the Board to introduce Gene from Weston and Sampson who will give a brief overview of the Field Master Plan. Gene stated it was a collaborative effort. He believes it to be a useful document for years to come. He is aware the economy is very challenging and he understands that everything in the plan may not be implemented immediately, but maybe over time. He hopes that the town can advance some of these recommendations. They looked at twelve different facilities. They did not look at private facilities. In the document they identified five basic things for town to consider. They did identify capital projects, installation of lights at Turco field, installation of synthetic turf at your upper field and expanding footprint at that location. Discussed adding a field at Old Post Road School where the town owns undeveloped land and small improvements that could happen at any of the fields. He also suggested adopting a field use policy which controls use on the field. One thing you want to avoid is having heavy use of a field during or after a rain storm. That happens all the time. He encouraged the Board to adopt such a policy and protect some of the investments. Identify other town owned property that can be designated for athletic fields. There is a deficit of fields in town and you have many hundreds of participants. You do not have enough fields for the use so it becomes difficult to maintain the fields.

Mr. Boynton commended Weston and Sampson for their work. He noted what is presented is not new but some of the ideas are new. The problem is obviously the budget. This is a blueprint as to where we need to go in this community. It is something that will allow us to plan.

Mr. Snuffer praised the work on the plan and felt it will help the town prioritize.

Mr. DeNapoli agreed the plan was wonderfully done. The town is handcuffed by the budget. Mr. Boynton noted that the Town has a policy for Turco field and it could be expanded. It will take some time to develop. Mr. DeNapoli suggested if there are surrounding towns with polices, suggested borrowing what they have.

Legislative Delegation:

Ms. Winston welcomed Senator Timilty, Representatives John Rogers, Louis Kafka, Richard Ross, and Paul McMurtry.

Mr. Boynton was pleased that the entire legislative delegation was present to hear the issues that the town is facing. He noted the loss of the \$750,000 from Prison Mitigation Funds and the projection of 2009 with potential aid cuts, and 2010 with more cuts on top of the previous cuts and a loss of local revenue are going to be difficult for the town.

He discussed the report from the MMMA. Allowing towns to more effectively manage their communities, where we could be less reliant on state aid. The biggest issue is the ability for cities and towns to manage health plans. It may be giving towns the ability to make changes without collective bargaining. We talk about better managing, the hiring process, take a look at procurement rules, and look at the ability to regionalize services. Allow impact fees to be assessed which would allow towns to recoup some costs from developers. Fix the Charter Schools financing inequity. The MMMA supports a plan to cap the local contribution at \$5,000 for charter schools. He requested the Board approve and endorse the report and make a recommendation to the legislators regarding the document.

Representative Rogers noted there is nothing too happy about this New Year. Many have said these are unprecedented times. On behalf of the other Representatives we look forward to our partnership with you. Difficult times called for difficult measures, we received a letter from you about expanding 9C powers to the Governor. In July he asked for those powers, Chapter 29 finance, when throughout the course of year, revenues will fall short. The Commissioner must inform the Governor and within fifteen days he must reduce spending, to make up for deficiency under 9B. We informed the Governor in July that we would not be giving him 9C powers, I know I speak for every Legislator here is that we try to increase local aide, we take pride in representing Walpole. We increased chapter 70 by 18%, because you and Chairman Nancy Gallivan articulated to us the importance. We were not ready to give him those powers. Given the economic climate we witnessed in the summer, the Governor went to work and reduced the allotments by 1.4 million and he cut 670 million from the state budget. The budget was cut severely. The health and human services have been cut by 340 million dollars. The mentally ill received big cutbacks and there are a lot of Walpole families in need. The Veteran's services have been cut. There have been cut in services for blind, deaf, elderly, and public safety has been cut by twenty five million dollars. Higher education has been cut by Forty million dollars and UMass alone by twenty five million dollars. Last week the Governor filed house docket 96, none of us want to give the Governor that power. We gave Governor Romney that power six years ago, and here we are again. None of us were happy about the cuts in local aid in 2003 and we share the pride in holding local aid harmless. We will know more this Thursday, when the Gov finalizes his number. It is my belief that we will take up that document. I think that bill will be on his desk tomorrow night. These times call for more candid discussion. There is always a hope that the legislators can act as a check to the Governor. None of us wants to act too late. The message we hear is do it quickly. Sorry I could not come here with better news. It is time for increase candor with our constituents. There are great ideas and hope we can get through.

Mr. Snuffer noted this recession has caught us all, crisis managers, a role that we do not want to embrace, the \$750 billion bailout. Auto companies, banks and stock companies. The average individual will get twenty a week. We are all faced with how we balance with fiscal responsibility. Mr. Snuffer would like the Board to adopt the MMMA position. The Town wants to help ourselves and be part of the solution but we need the Legislators help in doing that.

Mr. Timson spoke to the Town needing some tools to manage the crisis at our level. We are looking at cutting staff. If we had some other tools like the ones in here it may allow us to look at other options. I would ask you to look at these and hopefully act on them quickly. Walpole has already suffered a cut of \$750,000 and was able to absorb some of that. We have positions that have been vacant, and we are down staff in both fire and police. When the next cut comes, those positions will not come back and more will be lost.

Representative Rogers understands that \$750,000 is a lot to the Town. The Lt. Governor visited with Representatives at Cedar Junction and the Lt. Governor appreciates the role that the town plays, affording public safety service by hosting cedar junction. The Governor has a difficult job but we disagree with his cut.

Mr. DeNapoli pointed out that over the years the Representatives have worked for us, giving us the tools. You said the first round of local aide was held harmless, I think that is a perception, it is incumbent upon us to make sure that we drive that home, for towns that had Prison mitigation, we suffered the first rounds, cuts that other towns and cites did not. We are going to get a double whammy. We can not afford to accept more cuts. I want to make sure that message gets driven home. He suggested looking at increasing excise taxes. Raising it by five dollars would increase that revenue by twenty percent. Mr. Boynton spoke about the meals tax. Walpole has already figured out how to handle the \$750,000 shortfall. The Snow and ice deficit as of today stands at \$200,000 and it is still growing. He held an emergency meeting today and has put a hold on spending. He noted that as an employee, no one wants to pay more for health insurance or have the plans changed. The reality is, we have the potential loss of positions not only here but in other towns. If in fact there is a 10% cut we will not have the same services in July 1 as we have today. We need the support of the legislators to make unpopular decisions.

Mr. Snuffer spoke to revenue increases are increases in taxes. We have a need and requirement to provide essential services, keeping as many of the jobs as whole as we can.

MOTION moved by Mr. Snuffer that this Board approve and endorse the MMMA Supplemental Report and copies be provided to our legislative delegation, seconded by Mr. DeNapoli Voted 5-0-0

Senator Timilty stated that many of the issues in this report are almost certainties; you will be surprised with the time we act on these. We are paying for bad mistakes from the past. I have ninety bills that I am filing. There are a number of things I think we are going to do and we will do it. We will start tomorrow.

Representative Kafka noted the Board took the first step by adopting the MMMA document. Many of the items in here will go along way of helping the town manage the situation. The line of communication will have to get better.

Representative Ross stated there are two voices and we do try to balance each other out time to time. We remember when expanded powers needed to be given to Governor Romney and we are looking for reassurances that constraints are made. We want to make sure same cautious approaches are taken. He looks forward to coming up with new things for our communities,

Nancy Gallivan stated that the \$750,000 is a 6% cut in local aide. The School Committee and Superintendent have been working with our colleagues. It is important to pay attention to both Selectmen and us. What we talked about last night, we want to work on both federal and state. In terms of mandate relief on health insurance, give the Towns the ability to design the insurance. She is looking for checks and balances.

Superintendent Lynch stated the Schools operate under two hundred or more mandates. A lot begins with the Federal level. The no child left behind required a lot of standardized testing. The Federal government is bailing out private companies. If the Federal government could pick up the infrastructure of buildings that would open up a lot of local aide. Health insurance costs erode our budget. Special education costs are an unfair playing field. We are looking to help with no cost items.

Ms. Winston thanked the Representatives for attending the meeting. Mr. Sullivan left at 9:20 p.m. The Board took a short recess.

9:35 p.m. **Chief Bailey, Quarterly Update**

Chief Bailey appeared before the Board for his quarterly update. The Fire Department call volume is up, 5,246 calls for the year. The ambulance revenues for first half of the year is \$ 387,000 from July to December which is about \$40,000 ahead of last year. We approved the new ambulance rates and they are in affect. The collection rate is 90.24%. The biggest drop is where the patient is responsible for the entire bill. The Fire Department received a grant for \$700,000 that is for equipment that will be used throughout the fire department. The Department has state mandated vests and must be worn whenever we work in state or federal highway. We applied and received a safe grant for our school programs and we use it for our open house. Chief Bailey talked about the various fire trucks and the repairs. Ladder one repairs will cost \$46,464. We have filed an insurance claim for our Opticom system which was hit by lighting. There was a hazardous material incident on Halloween night and we tried to third party bill the MBTA and they said they are not responsible. That was a \$9,000 dollar hit to the Fire Department budget.

Mr. Timson raised the issue of the incident of the Boston truck losing its brakes and wondered how the Fire Trucks in Walpole are. Chief Bailey stated that we have an in house mechanic and we do preventive maintenance. We do stay on top of things. Mr. Timson stated that he has been trying to find a way to deal with the Fire Department overtime budget and one thing is potentially having call firefighters. Chief Bailey explained that many years ago we were a call department we still have some call, as times have changed. What would happen is we would train Call Firefighters and once we got them on board we would end up with two to five people left. We handle 92% of calls with on duty. The call back has been reduced. Mr. Timson stated there is no rosy picture out there, and thinks it is worth looking into. See if it is a viable option. The town is not in a position to bring on full time hires.

1-3 Gift Acceptance, Hollingsworth and Vose

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli to accept the gift with thanks, seconded by Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 4-0-0

10:00 p.m. Chief Stillman, Quarterly update

Chief Stillman informed the Board the 2008 calls increased by about 6%. Arrests have increased by 48%, and both crimes against a person and property crimes increased. Motor Vehicles accidents went up only slightly. The delegation mentioned cutbacks in health and human services. I think that is one reason we are seeing an increase in arrests. One thing we have been dealing with is the marijuana law change. From a public safety aspect it is a personal nightmare, our ability to control the use of marijuana. There were a lot of lies during the proposal. Marijuana is a gateway drug and gives the ability to get into the car to see the stolen property and other drugs in the car. The towns have to manage a ten hour community service program. There are a lot of programs that we offer, RAD program, School mentoring program, they are valuable to the community. It opens up doors. I am going to have to make some reductions to these programs because of the budget We are down three officers, I can not go any lower than what we have, but this is all I have left. I have not decided if I am going to pull the school resource officer out yet. We do a lot of parades and events and that is about a \$30,000 hit. Chief Stillman is seeking the Board's support for a proposed bylaw relating to marijuana.

Mr. Timson questioned if the Board needed to vote to place the proposed bylaw on the spring warrant relating to marijuana.

Ms. Chappell stated that Board of Health has taken a look at the bylaw, and they have regulations from 2005 for smoking and she believes that this is already covered. It is a violation.

Mr. Timson wants to read the Board of Health regulation prior to making a decision. Mr. Snuffer wants the bylaw to be a stand alone.

10:20 p.m. Jon Rockwood, Affordable Housing Partnership

Jon Rockwood appeared before the Board to discuss the next step in the transition from Affordable Housing to the Affordable Housing Partnership. He worked with Mr. Snuffer and has presented to the Board a copy of the proposed overview and details for the Walpole Housing Partnership. The five people that were members would like to be reappointed. We have had the consultant do some work for us.

Mr. Snuffer noted that he and Mr. Rockwood worked diligently on this. The Document is significantly different and is a workable document.

Mr. Timson commented that the document looks good. He likes the idea of steering affordable projects towards the statutory low income housing projects that pay back to the town. You can set them up so the town gets a per unit payback.

The Board discussed the number of members. Mr. Rockwood suggested starting with seven and if the Board should see a reason to make the membership expand they can expand to eleven.

Mr. Boynton suggested that they stay with seven members.

Ms. Winston suggested deleting section 2.4.

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli that we confirm that the Walpole housing partnership committee is the committee dealing with affordable housing in Walpole, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 4-0-0

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli that we adopt the Walpole Housing Partnership Overview and details with the modification that we strike 2.4 as to the automatic removal of a member, and to steer to affordable projects that will bring in money to the town, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 4-0-0

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli to approve the three candidates, Jon Rockwood, Cliff Barnes and Michael Berry with staggered terms, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 4-0-0

MOTION moved by Mr. Snuffer that Jon Rockwood be appointed chairman pro tem until their organization, seconded by Mr. DeNapoli, VOTED 4-0-0

1-14 Snow and Ice deficit

Mr. O'Brien said this is the third snowiest time in Walpole. As of today, I need to overspend in the budget by \$200,000. We are going to have to do more snow removal but we need to do it. He is seeking permission to overspend the snow and ice budget.

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli that we approve the request to overspend the snow and ice budget, seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 4-0-0

1-11 Gift Acceptance

MOTION moved by Mr. Timson to accept the gift from the Walpole Cooperative Bank, for the Recreation Department, seconded by Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 4-0-0

1-12 Gregory Yergatian, Resignation

MOTION moved by Ms. Winston to accept with regret the resignation of Gregory Yergatian from EDC, seconded by Mr. Timson VOTED 4-0-0

1-13 Allied Recycling, Release of Surety Bond

MOTION moved by Mr. Snuffer to table until next meeting, seconded by Mr. DeNapoli, VOTED 4-0-0

1-15 Library Request for Article

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli that we approve the request of the library trustees to place an article on the STM warrant for the funding necessary for a new library through a debt exclusion override, seconded by Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 4-0-0

1-16 Chapter 40R Outreach

Dave Sullivan and Clifton Snuffer will participate in the Chapter 40R outreach to downtown property owners.

MOTION moved by Mr. DeNapoli that we appoint Dave Sullivan and Clifton Snuffer as the representatives from the Selectmen to work with EDC and EDC grants officer with meeting with DT property owners with discussions on Chapter 40R, seconded by Mr. Snuffer, VOTED 4-0-0

Town Administrators update

Flag pole damage: Mr. Boynton spoke to there being a lot of damage to the pole and we were lucky that it did not hurt anyone, the pole can not be repaired and it is a major undertaking, new concrete work. The damage estimates are \$50,000 and it is covered by insurance. The new pole will be aluminum.

Building Maintenance Superintendent: Mr. Boynton is seeking the Board's ratification of Don Anderson's appointment as Building Maintenance Superintendent. He has worked here for 15 years and is qualified to fill the position. Will not be replacing his current position in the budget.

MOTION moved by Mr. Timson to approve the appointment of Don Anderson as Building Maintenance Superintendent, Seconded by Mr. DeNapoli, VOTED 4-0-0

FY 2009, 2010 Budgets: He is projecting a \$850,000 deficit. He held an emergency department head meeting today to discuss no spending. The department heads are dealing with issues in their departments. We will get threw it. Within the next few weeks, there will be some vehicles parked. Only certain department heads will have permission to bring vehicles home.

Ms Winston talked about the cars that should be 24/7, both chiefs, Town Administrator, Animal control, Scott Gustafson who covers for Water and Sewer and gets called back, and the Deputy Fire Chief.

Mr. Boynton noted it is difficult, if the duties require them to have it, I have no issue with the vehicle being home for an evening. I am looking at 10% state aid reductions, reduction in Motor vehicle excise tax, assuming zero in prison mitigation, we have our work cut out for us.

Mr. DeNapoli asked if there was any thought for consideration of trash fees with the projected FY2010 projected shortfall. I am not advocating it one way or another.

Mr. Snuffer spoke to that topic being the purview of the Board of Selectmen and that he would be opposed to trash fees.

MOTION moved by Mr. Snuffer to adjourn at 11:15 p.m. seconded by Mr. Timson, VOTED 4-0-0

Respectfully submitted

David Sullivan, Clerk