

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2016
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**

Present: Ronald E. Aponte, George D. Archible, Brenda Q. Aldrich, William R. Barnett, Nicholas O'Connor

- 1) **Call to Order:** Chairman Aponte called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

- 2) **Sign Documents:**
 - a) Warrant #1628 was signed for \$3,184,289.09.
 - b) Routine documents
 - c) Approval of Minutes: Ms. Aldrich moved the Board accept the executive session minutes of November 9, 2015. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 5 – 0. Ms. Aldrich moved the Board accept the minutes of November 23, 2015. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 5 – 0. Mr. Archible moved the Board accept the minutes of December 14, 2015. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0 – 1(abstain – Aldrich).

- 3) **Additions to the Agenda:**

- 4) **Appearances Before the Board:**
 - 7:35 p.m. Public Hearing – PVPC FY2016 Regional Belchertown-Hadley CDBG Application: Mr. Aponte read the public hearing notice and opened the public hearing. Ted Harvey from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission was present for the hearing. He corrected the public hearing notice indicating it's up to \$800,000 and not \$900,000.

Mr. Harvey presented a background of the block grant stating that it was authorized by Congress under Title I Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. He presented a more in depth description of the grant indicating there are a number of broad categories including housing assistance and development, economic development, commercial rehabilitation, public facilities, infrastructure planning and public social services.

He had maps that showed the target areas for both Belchertown and Hadley for anyone that wanted to have one. He indicated the primary goal for this meeting is to present the social services that we are looking to apply for and also to get the authorization from the Selectboard to submit proposed grant application for up to \$800,000.00. Also to get the authorization for the Chair of the Board to sign all required forms, documents and authorizations pertaining to the proposed FY16 CDBG grant application.

Again the budget is up to \$800,000.00 and will be broken out. It will be approximately \$600,000.00 for housing rehab, social services which would be the local civilian police advocacy services for \$50,000.00 and that is between the two towns. The med-ride transportation is for \$10,000.00. The remaining budget would be for administrative support and services. As the lead applicant for the grant Belchertown will have a few more houses qualify for the grant.

The Selectmen asked for clarification on a few items. Mr. Archible questioned if the geographical area changed from the last grant that Belchertown participated in. After looking at the map Mr. Aponte stated while it's not exactly the same location it's very close.

Mr. Brougham questioned that Belchertown will receive more money as they are the lead applicant and not because we are a larger community. He did not think that Belchertown would have more money available just because we are doing the administrative work. Mr. Harvey agreed that he had a good point and that along with that they have received a larger number of requests for housing that has been received from Belchertown vs. Hadley.

Susan West, Senior Vice-President from Behavioral Health Network and the program that they proposed is the civilian policy advocacy service which is a confidential domestic violence service. They are proposing a part-time trained advocate who will collaborate with the Belchertown and Hadley police. Their goal is to reduce the risk of future harm of victims of domestic violence in both adults and children. The advocate will provide links to social services, counseling and serve as an intermediary between the victim and the police.

Bill Korzenowski, Council on Aging Director spoke about the Med-Ride portion of the grant. He stated this is an ongoing operation which the Council on Aging has been operating for several years. The program currently does not receive any Town funding; it's been patched together with grants, donations and fund raising. The program assists seniors, particularly the lower income and frail senior's access to medical services. Most of the rides happen outside of the area. It is difficult for them to access services in say Springfield, Northampton or other surrounding towns if they are not driving. This program pays for someone to drive the elderly to their doctor appointment, stay with them through the appointment and bring them home. They are paid a small hourly wage plus mileage for this service. The program has been limited each year because of the lack of funding. This grant would be an influx of funds that they could count on.

Mr. Brougham questioned what the break out was for both the civilian police advocacy and the med-ride program. Mr. Harvey indicated the med-ride is just for Belchertown. The advocacy will be split 50-50 between the two towns.

Mr. Aponte entertained a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Barnett moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0.

Ms. Aldrich moved to approve authorization to submit the proposed FY 2016 Belchertown/Hadley Community Development Fund II grant application to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development in an amount not to exceed \$800,000, as detailed in the public hearing and to include funding for housing rehabilitation and the social services proposals. Seconded by Mr. Barnett. Motion passes 5 – 0.

Ms. Aldrich moved to authorize the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen to sign all required forms, documents and authorizations pertaining to the proposed FY 2016 Belchertown/Hadley Community Development Fund II grant application. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- 8:00 p.m. Selectman Nicholas O'Connor and/or Grace Adzima, Co-Chairman – Agricultural Commission: Mr. O'Connor indicated that Grace Adzima would do most of the presentation. He presented a brief overview. This is in reference to a portion of part of the December 14, 2015 meeting presentation that he did in reference to the Lampson Brook Farm area.

Ms. Adzima stated that the mandate of the Agricultural Commission is to promote farming and farming opportunities. A large part of Lampson Brook is woodland and conservation land. There is 427 acres with 11 farm parcels that are leased out to different local farmers. She clarified the area according to the State is known as Lampson Farm Agricultural Reserve and it is under lease to the New England Small Farms Institute (NESFI). NESFI currently has nine years left on their lease with the option to renew. Mr. O'Connor asked for clarification as to whether NESFI had the lease option on all 427 acres or just the farming parcels and not the wooded parcels. Ms. Adzima clarified that the lease that NESFI has is for the entire 427 acres.

She spoke about the history of the former Belchertown State School farm, how it was created along with the benefits to the facility.

She further spoke of the potential reuse benefits to 4H, Friends of the Farm and the Community at large. One of the suggestions is to have a community kitchen, a winter's farmer market and a farm store; recreation trails with handicap accessibility are just a few of the ideas for this property.

There have several businesses who have wanted to use this property but it is classified by the State as surplus property. It is not designated under any individual department. This property is in limbo until the State decides to do something with it. She explained how it came to be surplus property. When the former State School closed the Department of Corrections thought to use this property for a new jail. The Town residents voted that down.

Following that vote the property never transferred to the Department of Agriculture. In October 2015 Governor Baker's mandate for surplus property was to have a better use for public land for the good of the Commonwealth. The Agriculture Commission is in the process of drafting a letter to petition to ask the State to move forward. It is a little tricky as there are multiple departments involved. They are asking for the Board's support as they move forward. There is a lot of community involvement and they think there is a lot of potential for things that could be done none of which can happen until this property is out of surplus property of the State. They are not asking DCAM to donate the property to the Town. They just want it moved out of DCAM and into another department. It could be Mass Department of Ag Resources or the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Mr. O'Connor questioned if the State does move it into the Department of Agriculture how it would affect NESFI and the lease that they hold. Ms. Adzima indicated NESFI would continue to use the NESFI "30" which is the area that they run their programs in and they would retain oversight on remaining land.

Mr. Aponte stated his concern is that if the State does move it out and NESFI still has the oversight then the Town is basically at the discretion of NESFI as to what they want to do regardless of what the Town would like to do. Ms. Adzima indicated it brings her to the final part of her presentation which is the report that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission did for the Town of Belchertown through a grant to the Agricultural Commission. She feels the report is a planning tool for the Town and according to her NESFI totally supports it. She indicated that NESFI would certainly partner with the Town.

Ms. Aldrich questioned if NESFI would also be sending a letter asking that this land be removed from the State surplus and under control of another agency. Ms. Adzima indicated they are in support of this. She stated they are trying to decide whether it should be a joint effort or if the letters should be separate (one from the Town and one from NESFI).

Mr. O'Connor also voiced concerns that if NESFI is in control of the woodland areas as well that the Town needs to make sure that there are things in place to protect the Town. Mr. Aponte stated he would like to put it a step further because right now the Town can work with NESFI but who is to say that 10 years from now there isn't a change in management and they feel they don't want to work with the Town. He wants to make sure if there is a partnership that it is a contractual partnership.

Mr. Barnett is in agreement that he wants to see the Town protected. He is not willing to just rush into anything with NESFI without legal counsel.

Ms. Adzima asked then if the first step could be sending the letter asking to have this property taken out of surplus. Mr. O'Connor feels the Town and NESFI

should come to terms and send a unified letter indicating that both parties are in agreement, that both agree to adhere to this plan. Mr. Aponte believes that both parties should come to terms prior to sending a letter requesting to take this land out of surplus. It could be a problem if the land is taken out of surplus if both parties haven't agreed on a plan. The Town and NESFI could be at odds with each other. Ms. Adzima stated they are asking for the land to go under the jurisdiction of another State agency and they will still have jurisdiction. Mr. O'Connor indicated that is true but we are asking for it to be moved out of surplus so that we can do more with the land. We don't want to move it out of surplus and expand NESFI's control of it unless the Town is in alignment with NESFI. The appropriate thing to do is make sure the Town is in alignment with NESFI and then write a united letter to the State to ask to have it moved out of surplus. Mr. Aponte feels it will be a stronger letter because both parties will have agreed that this is what we want to do with the land.

Mr. O'Connor stated that as the liaison with the Agriculture Commission he will facilitate the agreement between both parties. He will bring the information back to the Board for comments.

- 8:15 p.m. LeeAnne Connolly, Conservation Administrator: Appearance rescheduled for a later date.

5) Discussion/Action Items:

- a. Accept Trustee Resignation from Calvin Bridgman Fund: Mr. Barnett presented the details. Carole A. Wagner submitted a letter announcing her resignation as a Trustee from the Calvin Bridgman Fund. Mr. Barnett moved the Board accept Ms. Wagner's resignation and to send her a letter thanking her for her work in the past. Seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- b. Accept Part-Time Police dispatcher's Resignation: The Board acknowledged the resignation of James Baj as a part-time police dispatcher, effective back to December 15, 2015. A letter will be sent to Mr. Baj thanking him for his service to the town.
- c. Accept Full Time Police Officer Resignation: Mr. Aponte presented the details. Officer Christofori. He has been taking part in the Massachusetts State Police Academy and as such he is resigning effective December 15, 2015. Mr. Aponte questioned the Town Administrator if the position has been filled. Mr. Brougham indicated the Acting Chief will hire from the list of part-time police officers and it would be appropriate to do it at the next academy date which is most likely in May. A letter will be sent to Officer Christofori thanking him for his service to the Town.
- d. Appointments to BCTV: Mr. Aponte presented details. At the last Board of Selectmen's meeting this was on the agenda but was tabled as there were some questions regarding the appointments, conflicts of interest, etc. Mr. Aponte stated that Mr. Louraine the BCTV Station Manager is asking to appoint Peg Louraine as BCTV Operation Manager and Frank Lomanno as BCTV IT Manager.

Mr. Aponte asked Lew Louraine to give an overview. Mr. Louraine stated that he is trying to make official something that has been de facto for many years. He indicated that Peg has been the operations manager, keeping them going and thinking of things that they need to do for many years. He wants to officially recognize that. He stated that the reason they go live from many locations throughout town is because Frank is the IT Manager and has the expertise and knowledge to make it possible. He is the reason there is wi-fi through the town common. He would like to recognize his abilities also.

Mr. Aponte questioned the money coming out for these positions. Mr. Louraine indicated it would be money coming out of the Charter stipend that is part of the Town's ten year contract. There is a 3% raise in the stipend in year three of the contract. Mr. O'Connor questioned the original contract amount. He was told it was \$45,000. Mr. O'Connor further stated he wants to make sure there is no conflict of interest as both Mr. Louraine and Mr. Lomanno serve on the Technology Advisory Board which negotiates the PEG money with Charter and are now receiving money from the PEG account. Mr. O'Connor explained the way the contract is negotiated and asked if Mr. Louraine would be negotiating another contract in seven years. Mr. Louraine indicated he would not be negotiating another contract. Mr. O'Connor indicated he would have not problem with the folks being appointed as long as they are not the folks negotiating the funds.

Mr. Aponte indicated the Board of Selectmen checked with the State Ethics Commission and were told that as long as Mr. Louraine and Mr. Lomanno as Technology Advisory Committee members approach the Board with that then there is no conflict of interest.

Mr. O'Connor moved per Mr. Louraine's recommendation to appoint Frank Lomanno as the BCTV IT Manager and Per Louraine as the BCTV Operations Manager with the condition that Mr. Louraine and Mr. Lomanno are not engaged in the contract negotiations on the Technology Advisory Board during the next Charter renewal negotiations. Mr. Aponte amended the motion to be position specific and not person specific IT Manager and Operations Manager. Seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- e. Approve Bike Race – April 30, 2016: Ms. Aldrich presented the details. This race has been run for a number of years through the Town. The race leaves the Tower at the Quabbin and heads out onto Route 9, to Route 202 north to 122 East then head onto Route 32A South. The racers end up back on Route 9 west onto the Old Ware-Enfield Road into Quabbin. The race is sponsored by the United States Cycling Federation. She indicated there is concern with this race but in Belchertown the police are out while the race is taking place in Belchertown.

Ms. Aldrich moved the Selectmen allow the bike Race to be held on April 30, 2016 as requested. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Mr. Aponte questioned the Town Administrator if he knew of any incidents with this race. Mr. Brougham indicated he knew of none. Mr. O'Connor indicated that both the police and fire

departments have endorsed this race. Mr. Aponte called for the vote. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- f. Site Plan Review – 20 Stadler Street, LLC – Day Care Facility: Mr. Barnett presented the details for the day care facility. The plan is for a 6,050 square foot building with parking and drainage. The site is on public water and sewer.

Mr. O'Connor questioned if this will replace an existing day care. Mr. Brougham confirmed that it will replace an existing day care facility. The plan is to build on a vacant lot which is properly zoned. It is a 6,050 sq ft day care facility with a 10,000 sq ft attached playground. The site plan is complete. It has site lighting, parking delineation. It is a complete plan. The property abuts the Swift River Playground. He feels it is a good use and has no concerns for this facility. Mr. Brougham stated for the record the Board of Selectmen have no approval of this plan they simply comment on the plan. The Planning Board will conduct a full hearing and will address any concerns or comments that the Board may have.

Mr. Brougham indicated the letter back to the Planning Board should indicate that the Board of Selectmen have reviewed the plan and would request that the Planning Board pay particular attention to any comments, questions or concerns from other Board or Committees, abutters or the public. Mr. Aponte asked the Town Administrator to send a letter to the Planning Board informing them the Board has no concerns regarding this site plan but ask that they pay attention to any comments, questions or concerns from other Board or Committees, abutters or the public.

- g. Application for Special Permit and Site Plan – Commercial Photovoltaic Solar Installation, 270 Franklin Street: Mr. Barnett asked Mr. Brougham to present the details. Mr. Brougham indicated the Board has received a very big set of plans for a proposed photovoltaic solar installation at the May Farm. There are two assemblies; one will be accessed from Mill Valley Road / Franklin Street and the other will be accessed off of North Liberty Street. He indicated this installation will light the entire Town infrastructure. This plan will also go before the Planning Board at which time comments and concerns can be made. This will be the largest solar field in Belchertown.

The applicants have come to the Town and offered a tax in lieu pilot starting at the same amount of compensation to the Town as the Greene's field on Route 9. This field could produce somewhere around \$70,000 a year in revenue to the Town or approximately 1.6 million over 20 years. He will meet with the applicant to further discuss the terms of the solar tax agreement. If an agreement is reached the Board of Selectmen will have to sign it and it will need to be ratified at Town Meeting in May to make it binding.

The applicants will also be asking for an easement from the Town on North Liberty Street in order to access National Grid on North Liberty Street to dump the power. Mr. Brougham indicated he has no concerns with this plan.

Mr. Aponte asked the Town Administrator to send a letter to the Planning Board informing them the Board has no concerns regarding this site plan but ask that they pay attention to any comments, questions or concerns from other Board or Committees, abutters or the public.

- h. Appointment of Members to Patrick Center Committee: Mr. O'Connor presented the details. Mr. Barnett moved to appoint the following individuals to the Patrick Center Committee; Gary Brougham, Town Administrator; Nick O'Connor, Steve Williams, Director of Public Works; Richard Fritsch, School Committee; Ed Boscher, Finance Committee; Chris Daley, Recreation Committee; Kristen Balboni, Family Center Committee – At Large. Term to expire at final report. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- i. Review Warrant Articles Submitted for Special Town Meeting: Mr. Aponte presented the details. There are 13 warrant articles for the Board to review for inclusion on the Special Town Meeting in February. The Board is only reviewing the articles to see whether they will be put on the warrant.

Mr. Brougham indicated that the dollar amounts can be part of the motion. He gave the Board as much information as he could. Since these were drafted a couple of additional items have come up that he is asking the Board to consider. He stated that Mr. O'Connor has asked about the feasibility of getting money for playing fields and that is not on the warrant article list. The second one is that the Town has been working on a timber harvest on a piece of property and he would like to ask that \$9,000 of free cash to fund the consultants fee to allow the Town to move forward with the timber harvest which will return a considerable amount of money. He is working with the Town Accountant and Town Auditor to see if that can be redirected into a special revolving account for that purpose in the Street Tree preservation. We are losing trees faster then we can replace them or hope to replace them.

The Board reviewed all warrant articles for the Special Town meeting. The Board asked Ms. Fenton, Animal Control Officer to explain the situation at the animal control facility. She stated the Dept. of Ag came in 2014 because of a complaint that had been filed. They found issues with safety and health. Changes cannot be made to the pound because the building is grandfathered to code and if changes are made they would not be grandfathered.

BARC has raised \$10,000 to go towards a new facility. Mr. Brougham stated the estimated cost to build the new facility is \$100,000. They have been trying to get this project off the ground for several years and his concern is that the fundraising will not keep up with inflationary costs. Several years ago the cost of building a new facility was \$50,000 - \$60,000 but every year the cost goes up. He continued that without some significant contribution to the budget fundraising will never get the job done. The current building is a pre-existing, non-conforming building and there is a limited amount of work that can be done to it. We have gone from having a dog officer to an animal control officer.

Mr. Barnett suggested the Town borrow the remaining amount of money needed to completely build a new animal control facility. Meanwhile BARC will continue fundraising and donations may come in to help offset the cost. Mr. Brougham stated there is an ample amount of free cash if the Board so decided to give the whole amount to have the facility built. No dollar amount was decided at this meeting but the Board agreed to keep this article on the warrant.

Mr. Korzenowski presented the details of the article requesting money for the completion of the Council on Aging Needs Assessment. We have already invested \$15,000 and this money would be to complete this project. A survey will go out to the community looking for their input. He stated that each year the Town is adding another 200+ seniors to the group that we already have to take care of. The Board agreed to also leave this article on the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

The Board discussed in detail the article for money for the underground storage tank removal and replacement at Chestnut Hill Community School in the amount of \$230,000. It was noted that the schools budgeted \$2.00 a gallon for heating fuel (slightly more for transportation). Heating oil futures closed today at \$1.05 a gallon. It was suggested to a finance committee member that the school department look at the difference of what was budgeted for fuel and what they are actually paying and that there is most likely a significant amount of money that can be earmarked in the new budget process to pay for this. Mr. O'Connor questioned why this isn't being handled out of the school budget. It was agreed to leave this article on for now. The school committee meets next week and this will be brought up at that meeting. The Board will make a decision to keep this article on or move it to the Annual Town meeting in May at the January 25th meeting.

It was agreed that all articles will remain on the warrant at this time. Several of them will be discussed again at the January 25th Board of Selectmen meeting for a final decision as to whether they stay on the warrant or are moved to the Annual Town Meeting in May.

j. Miscellaneous Matters: None.

- 6) **Town Administrator's Report:** Mentioned the letter that was received from the Town of Ware announcing that Baystate will be closing Mary Lane Hospital. All patients will be directed to Wing Memorial Hospital. There is a meeting this Thursday at 6:30 pm at Ware High School to discuss this. The Board members are invited to attend. He has notified Chief Bock as Mary Lane has been a hospital that our ambulance goes to.

We have begun the budget process for the upcoming budget cycle. Packets went out the first of the year and he expects departments to submit level service budgets to the Town Accountant's office by the end of January. An updated 5-year capital request has been asked for by the finance committee. Specific capital will be anything over \$3,000.

- 7) **Review of Weekly Mail:** Mail reviewed, no discussion held.
- 8) **Individual Board Members' Reports:**
Mr. Archible: The new DPW dump truck will be delivered at the end of the month.
- 9) **Questions from the Press:** Jim Russell from the *Republican* asked for clarification on the spelling of names for the Patrick Center Committee. He also questioned if community preservation money could be used for the Patrick Center. He was told it was too late in this grant process. In the future CP money could be asked for to say make repairs on the chimney but not to purchase the building.

Mr. Russell also questioned if the Board knows the old name of the day care facility and what the new name will be. He also questioned the name of the company that is proposing the commercial photovoltaic solar installation. He was told that company is Nexamp. He questioned if the Board knew the next meeting date that the Planning Board would be discuss this application. He was told it will be January 26th. He also questioned where the old animal control facility is located and where the new one will go. He was given the information.

Aimee Henderson from the *Sentinel* questioned if there is any concern with investing money with NESFI since the State actually owns the property. Mr. Aponte feels that one of the pluses is there is nine years left on NESFI's lease with the option for another 25-30 year lease. The Board indicated there is still a lot of work to be done and confirmed that the State would still own the property.

- 10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator


Board approved/endorsed: Jan. 25, 2016

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown


Endorsed by a majority:



 Ronald E. Aponte, Chairman



 Brenda Q. Aldrich



 George D. Archible

 William R. Barnett



 Nicholas O'Connor