

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2008**

09

#11-08,12-08

Meeting opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons Patricia Allen, Patricia Pruitt and Allen Ross. Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio.

Approve Minutes of February 25 and March 3, 2008

Ross made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2008 meeting with corrections. Seconded by Pruitt. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Ross made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2008 meeting with corrections. Seconded by Pruitt. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Announcements

Allen: Mothers Against Drunk Driving recognized Patrolman Chris LaPointe of the Montague Police Department, at it's annual Drive For Life Law Enforcement Recognition Event.

The Board congratulated Montague Detective Lee Laster and Greenfield Detective Kevin Rowell who won the Massachusetts Enrique S. Cameron Award for their accomplishments with the Hampshire-Franklin Community Narcotic/Gang Task Force.

Airport Commission

Allen: Looking through our agenda, it became rather clear that before we can make appointments to the Airport Commission, we actually have to come up with some policy guidelines. We are not intending to making any appointments tonight, because I don't think we are actually going to get through all of our policies, and get them firmed up tonight. It is because of dealing with the Airport Commission, the configuration of the Committee, that it has brought to light that we have some kind of holes in our policies for all of our Committees. I think we should start a discussion of some of the issues, and some of the issues are the quorum, whether residents only should be on a Committee or can non-residents be on a Committee. If non-residents are on, can they vote on all matters or excluding financial matters? Should there be liaisons or consultants rather than non-residents as voting members? We have applications coming into us. There are some questions about whether or not they should go to the Board first. There are quite a few issues that we can deal with.

Pruitt: I am thinking that the Airport Commission is perhaps a bit unique among the Town Committees. In the sense that in serving the airport, they do serve a mixed group of people; it is not just local folks that use the airport; maybe even the majority are from other towns. So that is kind of a unique situation. That is one reality that they have that other Boards do not have. I think another is that they also have among the non-residents and residents, people who have financial interest in the airport, because they have a hangar or they are renting or whatever, so that is also a different piece than you see on the other Boards. It means that we have some other considerations in deciding how to appoint people.

Lengthy discussion was held regarding the quorum issue, having a town regulation vs. a by-law, selection process resident vs. non resident on committee (with or without voting privileges). For complete transcript, see Wendy.

Lengthy discussion regarding whether or not everyone should be able to vote on the budget.

Ross made a motion that the policy for the Airport Commission would allow non-residents to be appointed with the voting privileges on matters that do not involve a personal conflict of interest. This does not mean that if they have a conflict of interest that this would absolve them of that. Seconded by Pruitt. Motion passed two to one. Ross – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Nay.

Further discussion regarding non residents on the Airport Commission.

Pruitt makes a motion that we limit the non-Montague membership to no more than two members at any given time. Seconded by Ross. Motion passed two to one. Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye, Ross – Nay

The Board would like the Airport Commission to look at the applicants and make recommendations to the selectmen on who they would like appointed. The Board would like the opportunity to sit in on the interview process.

Cable Advisory Committee

John Reynolds: Our report to you folks sums it up. It speaks specifically to the job that the MCTV has done and the way we have straightened out a huge number of financial issues that used to plagued us, year in and year out. They have actually stayed within their budget and ahead of their budget, and they have plans for the coming year. The activity in Town has been highlighted in the reports. This in terms of the things that they have been able to tape and record. There are never enough people to do all the editing, so anybody who would like to do that is certainly welcome to step forward. We have been trying to get Comcast to give us more drops throughout the Town, specifically down at the park and it picks up the bandstand, so that we can actually tape right from there live. There are a few glitches in that problem that we are working on. Aside from that, we have come up with a connection from Erving. Erving wishes to use our facilities because they don't have enough money to run their own, and so MCTV is working up a contract or an agreement. It looks as though that is going to go forward and we may get some interesting things out of that. We need Comcast to change it's formula for putting in cable. Right now in the rural areas of the Town and this part of the state, they require twenty houses per running mile. Needless to say it leaves a lot of the area out. It is amazing if you aren't right on the street itself, you don't count. It would be nice if Western Mass was equal to Eastern part in some of these areas. Comcast has been very clever in their contracting that no Town expires at the same time.

Chris Sawyer-Laucanno: You have a good number of Board members and MCTV members sitting in the back row. MCTV has used their capital money very wisely. The purchases that they have made, Princeton being among them, are very smart; the cameras, the quality of equipment they are getting is excellent and they are really doing a fine job of budgeting. They have paid back the loan that they had taken out initially against some of that capital money, and just the day to day operation is running very well. They have made some very nice corrections for the '08 budget based on what they learned from '07. They seemed to have been scrupulous about their accounting, but also about how they spent their money. We are very impressed with that. Kudos should go to Michael Bosworth who does the spreadsheets and whenever there is a question, he is quick to answer. Anne Harding, the Treasurer, also has done a tremendous job supervising the finances at MCTV. We are very pleased as to what is going on.

Allen: It may not sound positive, but the recognition that there is frustration with some of the sound quality, and that is being worked on.

Chris Sawyer-Laucanno: This is an issue that we have been very concerned about as have many viewers. We know that it is a Comcast issue. Comcast has been very slow to try to do anything about it. Steve Fitzgibbons, who is the Community Relations person, who in the past has been very responsive, is in the process of negotiating about six different contracts right now with Towns. I think the guy is extremely busy and so a little sound issue in Montague does not seem so important. On the other hand to us, it is very important. So we are also in touch with the engineer at Comcast and he is really the one who will solve this problem.

John Reynolds: It is nice when people call in and help us know where the problems are, but they need to give the location and perhaps the programs that it is related to.

Chris Sawyer-Laucanno: Someone from Crocker Ave. will have a reception issue that Avenue C will not have, because it isn't coming out of a studio, it is something in the fiber that is going into that particular residence or that particular street and it will switch back and forth. If we know that, we know what the location is, so it certainly helps MCTV when they pass that information over to Comcast.

Ross: This is another very impressive progress report, financial, etc. Suppose somebody just wants to learn how to use a video camera. What do they have to do? Let's suppose they are 16 or 65 and they wanted to be able to do that and what is a producer. Is there anything that the Board can do encourage individuals?

Nick: Process to learn how to use a video camera – just call the station at 863-9200. Takes about an hour and training is free.

Anne Harding: I was just going to say that we have been approaching groups in Town that might be doing their own video productions and offer to train them. We have been to the PTO at Sheffield School, we talked to the Scout Troops, we have sent to most of the groups in Town and that is really what we would like to encourage is that if

groups come in we will arrange for training in both camera work and in editing. Then they could produce their own videos, about their own special events in Town, because people like to watch it. We are starting to get more and more people in there, but there are never enough.

Registration for Assembly public demonstration: Girl Scout Troops 21 and 24

Ross made a motion to approve the registration for assembly and public demonstration for Charlene Arsenault, Kim Hersey, for Girl Scout Troop 21 and 24 at the corner of K Street and Ninth Street on March 15, 2008 from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Seconded by Pruitt. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Turners Falls River Culture Lisa Davol/Dianne Ellis

Dianne Ellis indicated their plans to create the pathways project, known as Boardwalks. Essentially what we are proposing is to create this artistic walkways, starting with the 7th and High Street Boardwalk. We are going to connect 7th and High Street initially and the vision would be to look at restoring and recreating the space around the L and High Street Boardwalk in the coming year. Basically, we're creating these pathways, people know they are poured concrete slab with concrete pillars and guide wires with a handrail and what we are describing is cleaning up the woods where there is a lot of trash and working with an area artist and many youth from the community to come up with a vision for what our artistic representation might be. Maybe painting on these pillars, different aspects of our community, by villages of the Town of Montague, it is hard to really say what that vision might look like. We would like to go through a facilitated process with kids and having them come up with some ideas. I think a recycling bucket and secured trash barrels make sense so when kids are walking up and down the pathways, that there are some ways to dispose of things. Creating a walkway so that people in the community will be able to use the walkway to go from the hill, go down town or vice versa, and feel that it is a safe comfortable walk space. It is hard to think of it in terms of comparing it to something that is already established as notable as the "Bridge of Flowers", but I think of it as a feature that Montague has and that this incredibly unique feature to our community that is under-utilized at this point. So we'll look at it as an artistic asset that brings together the youth in our community and it is inspiring and exciting to me. Lisa and I have had conversations and we would like to move this idea forward and that is why we are bringing it before the Board.

Allen: What did you actually have in mind? Do you want to have a forum?

Lisa Davol: We were thinking we would have a facilitator and have a charrette and invite youth and community members to talk about what they think about this plan, have they walk downtown, have they ever used, why, why not, what do they think about Turners, what is unique about Montague, how could we pull all the Villages of Montague together? What do pillars mean to people, what are pillars of our community? We would find the right facilitator to do that. Then that facilitator would bring the results of that compiled and we would put it in our RFP for an artist to take all those things into consideration.

Allen: A charrette is when you start a project and work all night long and you pull it together with everybody adding their input.

Lisa Davol: We are working on the Town owned sites so there are already Town owned right-of-ways. We are going to keep people on the Town owned parts. There are some pillars in the public way that are in disrepair and we are also asking if there are any plans to repair them. We are partnering with a whole bunch of other agencies and people; Regional Employment Board is getting in on it, Gill-Montague Regional School District, The Brickhouse, School Based Systems, people are really latching onto this.

Further discussion regarding the process and who Lisa Davol is in contact with to make sure they have approval to do this project.

Ross made a motion to approve the moving forward with the Pathways Project with details of specific needs and projects to be detailed at a later date. Seconded by Pruitt. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Block Party

Ross made a motion to approve the registration for assembly for the Block Party on Avenue A between 3rd and 5th Streets in Turners Falls, on Saturday, August 9, 2008 from 12 noon to midnight with a parade route to be determined. Seconded by Pruitt. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Discussion followed regarding dedicating one of those footpaths and the bridge off North Street in Montague Center into the Conservation Area, and possibly we could push for that Bridge to be restored.

Abbondanzio: The project has actually been in the works. Dan has had some discussion with the Fisheries and Wildlife people and the question of insurance, they would like the Town to create an entity to take over the insurance of the Bridge. They don't want to have to deal with that. They might be open to the idea.

Town Administrator' Report

- **Franklin County Selectmen's Association Quarterly Meeting** at 6 PM for the Social, 7PM for the Dinner, March 27, 2008, Bill's Restaurant, Greenfield, MA. Reservations are necessary to attend.

- **Final Payment – 2006 CDBG Crosswalk Improvements**

Ross made a motion that the SelectBoard approves our Chairperson to signing off on the final payment of \$25,636.33 to the C & A Construction Company for the last phase in the Crosswalk Improvement Project. Seconded by Pruitt. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye.

- **2007 CDBG Sidewalk Replacement Project**

Abbondanzio: The first meeting was held recently and we are going to form a Citizens Advisory Committee. A couple of years ago, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments conducted a study where they inventoried the condition of all the sidewalks in the Town and rated them by quality, from run down up to excellent. As a result of that, the tab went up to \$250,000 to replace sidewalks. We also applied for a Community Development Block Grant to pay for other sidewalks that were in areas that were income eligible, under the Community Development Block Grant Program. Further explanation given regarding sidewalk replacement project. I would like to request any people interested in sitting on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Block Grant portion, please submit letters. We also want to get somebody from the School Department on it as well, or anybody who lives in the area of Unity, Seventh, and Spring Streets.

- **Authorize deficit spending for snow and ice**

Ross made a motion that we authorize the DPW to spend the appropriate amount of money for snow and ice. Seconded by Pruitt. Approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Discussion followed to see if we would get any reimbursement, but no one has heard anything. The anticipated amount for the snow/ice removal was \$15,000-\$20,000. for this year.

- **FRTA G-Link fixed transit route**

Abbondanzio: I spoke with Tina Cote, and she is looking for two things: 1) do we want to continue with the bus this year because whatever we do this year ends up in next year's assessment and she also wants to know if we are going to be doing it in '09 because that affects the fiscal year 2010. Even with a grant we are paying around \$8,000. Our assessment for '09, with the small grant that they have is projected to go up about fifteen per cent. Previously when we spoke, and before the grant was figured in, we were looking at an increase of forty-two percent. I told Tina that the Board did want to continue with it for this year through June 30th.

Ross: In your communication with her, was she clear as to when the deadlines were, if we were to terminate that?

Abbondanzio: She needs to know now, but I told her we are OK until June 30th, 2008. As far as next year, she needs something for that as well. She said five people were applying for the grant – they got a \$97,000 grant. The run costs \$230,000. There are no guarantees and who knows what next years' budget will be. That is the grant for this year and if there are more people applying for it, then it is possible that they won't have a grant funding for next year.

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2008**

09

Discussion about changing the stop, how many people are actually using this service and where are they going. Abbondanzio will set up a meeting for the FRTA representative to meet with the board at an upcoming meeting.

Cell Phone Stipend

Ross made a motion to approve a cell phone request for James J. Deery, as described, approximately 100 minutes per month. Seconded by Pruitt. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Other

Next Selectmen's meeting which is scheduled for Monday, March 17, 2008. This is going to be the Economic Forum that we have been talking about for a few weeks, and we are looking for people to come. We will be describing the state of our budget this year and looking for input from people on what they think we should be offering in services, how we might handle what is actually happening, and by televising this we will hopefully make sure that most of the Town is aware of the fiscal constraints that we are under, and what the issues are. As well how we are projecting to deal with the same with your input.

Ross made a motion to adjourn the SelectBoard meeting. Seconded by Pruitt. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye.