

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2008**

12

#17-08

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

Ruth Nervig, The Brickhouse Request to take over the Skate Park

Ruth Nervig and Eva Lacotta representing the Skate Park Advisory Committee. Funds for the park will remain under the discretion of their Director Prakash Laufer and their Business Manager Michael Bosworth.

Discussion

- Request to hold concert to raise money on June 7th. Expect 100-200 people.
- Concert should be over by 6 PM
- Professional Sound Company will be in charge of the sound, noise control
- Want to take over management of the skate park.
- Use April and May to get Skate Park into working order.
- Need to check with Gina McNeely of the Health Dept. regarding food preparation, distribution, etc.
- Already have approval from Tim deChristopher to use his space and electricity
- Two accounts have Skate Park money. One from Block Grant has \$766. Account set up by Treasurer Has \$311 for a total of approx. \$1,100.
- Lease is up for renewal in October. 90-day notice required if we are going to renew.
- Town has liability insurance.
- Need to have permit signed by Chief Zukowski – will review regulations

Marge Levenson – Article 9 Special Town Meeting held on January 23, 2008

The article adopted specifically changed the voting requirements for closing district schools from a super majority of eight to only six members of the nine Regional Committee members. The change further provided that any Committee decision to close a school must be submitted to the Town Meetings for “acceptance” by a “majority of Town Meeting”.

- Ask that the Select Board to recognize that the action taken by the Town Meeting was based upon fraudulent and probably illegal assertions of fact advanced by the School Committee’s Attorney.
- Attorney General, Town Counsel and the citizens must be notified and action to rescind the Town Meeting approval started.
- Board feels that since ten days has elapsed since the Town Meeting, we probably should take this under advisement and contact our counsel. Might have to go back through the school to come forward with a new motion.
- Levenson: I have more papers to support the issue and am trying to make it as simple as possible.
- Information provided to Supt. Rocke and he is totally aware of the situation.
- Forward it to counsel for review so that proper steps can be taken.
- Papers will be stored in the Selectmen’s Office.

Tina Cote, FRTA G-Link Service for Montague

Tina Cote, FRTA: Distributed FRTA handouts.

- Approx. 1,030 people used the G-Link Service from July 1 of this year.
- Averages out to six people per day
- Service in Montague started between 2003/2004
- Estimated cost is \$8,800 or \$35 per day or \$5 per run
- Ridership has increased since 2002, and 12% since last year.
- Anticipate an increase in ridership as population continues to age and with the rising cost of gas
- Franklin County Home Care clients do not have to pay, as a grant is provided for them
- Assessments broken down for the G-Link have to do with Greenfield, Montague, Erving, Gill and Athol/Orange. Right now in '08 we are estimating the service is going to cost a little over \$250,000. So what happens is that the state makes up about 75 per cent of that and the other 25 per cent has to come from the other towns. We proportion that based upon the population and a cost allocation program that we have and so it kind of indicates to us how much each town should be contributing to that. The tricky part is that it was started in '99 and it was started with funding that was done either through grants or earmarks, which

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2008**

12

we now have exhausted. I did apply for a grant this year, and they awarded me \$97,000 towards the cost of that. That brings the assessment down a little bit for the towns that make that up, but again this is just an assessment. It is an estimate based on what we think will be provided in '09. The way we get funded is: they want us to estimate the service that we are going to provide in '09. In '08, right now we are receiving the money for the services we provided in '07. So we are continuously working backwards, again, it is just an estimate; this \$8,853 could go down or it could go up a little bit, this is our best guess estimate. We have taken into consideration all of the numbers we have thus far and that is what we have calculated up to. We are going to need \$8,853 from Montague right now in '08 to take care of the services that we provided in '07. We are looking for an increase of \$8,853 for '09, based on the services we are currently providing. So even though we are still in March, we had to give these figures to the Department of Revenue in December. We are trying to estimate what we think the cost of service will be at the end of June. Again these are estimates and they will provide you with the actuals once we close our fiscal year after July.

- G-Link runs five days per week, from 5 AM. The last time it gets to Court Sq. in Greenfield is at 7:20 PM
- If we decide to discontinue service, do other towns pick up the \$8,853? Cost has to be evenly distributed amongst the towns. The most funding we got from the State was \$97,000.
- Ross: At the General Advisory Board Meeting last Thursday, I mentioned, and I could tell by their changes in their facial expressions that the Orange/Athol/Erving members of the FRTA, that they were not excited by us dropping out. We also expressed the general budget tightening that is extreme and is probably true for the other towns. Who is going to suffer the most? It is not like we have a choice of great options here. On the flip side of that, if, in our continued relationship, there are ways that we can help publicize, not just this run, but the other runs as well, because obviously people could take busses to things like the Hallmark, restaurants, or the Discovery Center.
- Cote: We have an RFP (request for proposal) for a management company out. One is due every five years. Awardee of this RFP would help us do some analyzing of these routes for cost effectiveness and also to do some more promotional marketing things.
- Allen: We are all in favor of mass transit, but when you see there might be only two people on a bus, we must re-consider.
- Cote: Last year we were promised a three per cent increase and we got a .9 per increase in our funding.
- Cote: Conversation with Sen. Rosenberg indicated that they are pushing for funding.
- Ross: Short presentation of possible sites for the garage, currently functioning from a combination of the GMTA Garage and Kuzmeskus, or mostly GMTA.
- Cote: Looking for a site closer to the transit center.
- Abbondanzio: I am on the Board of Trustees at the GMTA. Whatever happens to that real estate affects the Towns of Greenfield and Montague, so I think everybody needs to keep that in mind because we are basically delaying the day, when that deficit has to be liquidated, and by selling that asset, they will be able to liquidate those deficit accounts.
- Cote: Currently we pay \$75,000 per year to lease that facility and it is leased on a monthly basis. We need to have a 21E done on. It will take money that FRTA doesn't have to do that right now. We are not completely discounting that, but at this time right now, we are exploring different options because it makes more sense for us to construct something that is new on a minimum site of hopefully just four acres, for future expansion and that sort of thing
- Limited service in Millers Falls – one run in the morning and one run about three or mid day.
- Due to lack of funding, mini bus is not a consideration at this time.
- Contact State Representatives for added service. Again, Millers Falls would also have to determine if they want the added service, and if there is money within the budget.
- Pruitt: What is happening with the contract?
- Cote: contract should be awarded no later than May 19th of this year. The RFP has to be back by April 29th. We will review that and make our selection and from there we are hoping that by September of 2008, that we will have it out in time. We have 40 towns within our transit authority which is something that a lot of people don't realize. We cover over almost 1200 square miles. We are the largest geographical transit authority in the state. There is a Joint Facilities Meeting scheduled for April 7, 2008. We are making progress. We are hopeful that the transit center will be up and completed by 2010.

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2008**

12

Discussion continued regarding the service, funding, and ridership. Brochures and schedules are available and will be available in the Town Hall.

Robin Paris, Shea Theater Board of Directors

- Almost fully booked for 2009. Will have fill-in things. Different classes in the summer. Working with Franklin County Home Care Corp. putting together a series for seniors.
- Have no Director. Have a part time consultant who is helping us.
- The Shea is coordinating with River Culture, when possible. Town businesses are all working extremely well together.
- Abbondanzio: We have your form to use Peskeomkut Park. The Police Chief has to sign off on this form, and then work on some of the other issues. Otherwise you can continue on the rest of this as it has already been signed by Pat back in November.
- Bar-b-q will start at 2 PM on Saturday, July 12th
- Request permission to close off J Street and Sixth Street. Two of the rigs are 15 ft., self-contained units. It is obvious why we want to close Sixth Street, and closing J Street is more of a safety issue, because we don't want anyone coming up behind the rig. Even though it is a self-contained bar-b-q rig, there is still fire.
- Allen: When this gets a little better defined, you need to talk to the Police Chief. I would expect that you would have jersey barriers. You need to speak with Tom Bergeron.
- Allen: You will need to have a one day liquor license.

Discussion followed regarding the final plans for the bar-b-q and necessary forms and licenses. Might not need to have J Street closed. Tents have been donated in case of rain. Select Board has been invited to attend the last comedy night series of the season ends this Saturday night. The show is at 8 PM. Please come as our guests.

Town Administrator's Report

Authorize FRCOG to contract on Towns behalf for fuels (DPW & Sewer)

Ross made a motion to authorize the use of the purchasing arrangements for #2 fuel oil, gasoline and diesel fuel with FRCOG for the Water Pollution Control Facility and our Highway Department for FY 2009. Seconded by Allen. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Approve Professional Services Agreement

- Approve agreement with Stantec Consulting. Review plans submitted by Hillside Plastics on their behalf. Planning Board made arrangements to have the services paid for by Hillside Plastics. Check for \$5,000, has been deposited into the account. Need signatures for approval.

Ross made a motion to authorize the Professional Services Agreement with Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. to perform the review of the site plan for the Hillside Plastics Company. Seconded by Allen. Discussion followed. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Seasonal Alcohol Beverage License Renewal Certification – Thomas Memorial Golf and Country Club

Ross made a motion to approve the seasonal renewal certification for 2008 for Thomas Memorial Golf and Country Club with the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission. Seconded by Allen. Approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Allen – Aye.

Commonwealth Sewer Rate Relief Fund

- Town will receive \$6,874 from the Commonwealth Sewer Rate Relief Fund for FY 2008. Money will be put into the Sewer Reserve Fund.

Disabled Individual using the FRTA

- Looking for a disabled commuter representative to serve as a non-voting member of the FRTA Advisory Board. Interested person should contact the Selectmen's Office.

GIC

- GIC will be coming out and doing one of their Health Fairs on Saturday, May 10, 2008 for School Employees.

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2008**

12

Meeting with Boston Benefits Group on Thursday, April 3rd. Comparing our entry into the GIC with all the pros and cons for the Town side. Health Fair is for the schools; however, in the event that it might be a good idea to consider it again, we might want people from the Town to go to the Fair.

OTHER

- Allen: Attended the Franklin County Selectmen's Association last week. We got a brief report of the school study that the legislatures, COG and GCC are putting together, and it is the first phase. Quite interesting. Phase I is called the "Low Hanging Fruit." Approach. Is there anything that could be done this year that could actually affect the 2009 budget? Phase II is a much broader approach. Obviously that is not going to be in time to help this year's budget. Study will be presented at Stan Rosenberg's conference on Saturday, April 5th. There will be folks from the State there. Linda Dunlavy from COG and Bob Pura from GCC are actually going to present and probably Rich Labrese is going to present on what is going on. Our legislators were there the other night and they made it quite clear that we need to buy into this. One of the things that was said was that if we can't move along expeditiously and come to some agreement that we are going to find that the State has some ideas of their own. This was made quite clear that we have a very limited time frame. If not then a lot of people on the school side of the discussion are going to have a very rude awakening over the next couple of years. Sen. Rosenberg said it will make our conversations in the county so far look conservative and tame. I think it is looking at the entire State and what they feel needs to happen. I think our legislators are saying we have good ideas, let's try to get ours in place. Our county is kind of known, like with COG, in getting something in place early; getting what turns out to be a model for the rest of the State. We are really hoping that we can do the same thing here instead of ending up being told what we are going to do, and that might not be so good for us. Unfortunately there were no school people there. I think all the Selectmen heard that we need to encourage our school districts to work together and do our usual sterling job of finding some great answers to these questions and problems.

Abbondanzio: Hopefully that same message will get out on Saturday.

Allen: There is only so much that we can do if we aren't on the school committees and administration..

Jean Golrick: Citizens for Sidewalk Advisory Committee ?

Abbondanzio: Will speak with Bruce Hunter to see when the first meeting will be with that Advisory Committee. We have one person who came forward to be on the Committee.

Allen: We'll discuss that Committee next week.

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