

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2008  
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM**

**Tape #49-08, 50-08**

**35**

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; Administrative Secretary Wendy Bogusz; Dan Laroche, Town Planner; Tom Bergeron, DPW Superintendent; David Detmold, Montague Reporter, Hugh Massey, WHAI

**Approve minutes of December 1, 2008**

*Allen makes the motion to approve the minutes of December 1, 2008. Seconded by Pruitt. Pruitt noted that she still has to submit her letter regarding the ethics question to the Town Clerk, which she will submit this week. Approved 2 – 1, Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye, Ross – abstain, as he was not at this meeting.*

**Informational Meeting, FY2009 Community Development Strategy (Dan Laroche, Town Planner)**

Laroche: Every year we are required to do an informational meeting for the Community Development Strategy which we update every year, in order to qualify us for Community Development Block Grant funds which we are looking to apply for again this year. The Selectmen had a meeting back in September with project proponents for block grant applications. There will be a follow up to that in the upcoming months for public hearing to agree on a final grant application. Prior to this, the Selectmen need to vote and support the Community Development Strategy. (Dan passes out handout) The strategy is broken up into three parts. The first part is a narrative piece that has an overview of the Town, various community planning entities, planning processes and plans the Town has worked on over the years. The second part is the project list that is broken up into an economic development, a public works, community infrastructure, conservation and other projects. Within each of those categories those projects are ranked. The project list this year has changed from the previous year where we had an overall ranking of all projects, we have now done the ranking within the projects. The third part of the CDS is a target area map. The Town is broken up into 4 target areas that correspond to the villages and the Town.

Laroche goes over his handouts titled “2009 Community Development Strategy – Town of Montague, Turners Falls, Lake Pleasant, Millers Falls, Montague Center and Montague City” and “Town of Montague FY2009 CDBG Application Activities” <see copy attached>.

Discussion about where items are on the list

*Allen makes the motion to approve the 2009 Community Development Strategy and the FY2009 CDBG Application Activities. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye*

**Town Administrators Report**

**Request to change Christmas holiday at the Highway Department**

Bergeron: Mostly everyone in the DPW has requested the day after Christmas off and we'd like to switch the days off.

*Allen makes the motion that the DPW will have December 26 as it's holiday off rather than December 24, this year. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye*

**Pay for Pager**

Abbondanzio: Another issue that has been raised by the accounting office was on the vote made by the Selectmen that allows you to carry the pager instead of Dick.

Bergeron: Only one person at a time will be receiving pager pay.

**Program Income Hearing (Unity Park Master Plan) \$8,250**

Allen makes the motion to use \$8,250 of Program Income money to fund the Unity Park Master Plan Study and that will leave a balance in Program Income of \$112,909.89. Seconded by Pruitt.

Detmold mentioned that someone might be coming to the meeting to discuss this issue at 8:30 PM

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Abbondanzio: This is for a Master Plan, which is based on a concept, so it is very general. Typically when you do a Master Plan, you start out by doing a needs assessment and that looks at various types of recreational uses.

Allen: The skate park is not listed in the Master Plan

Pruitt: I thought Jon Dobosz made a clear statement that the skate park was not in the plans.

*Allen makes the motion to table the original motion until 8:30 PM, Seconded by Pruitt. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye, Allen - No*

**FY2009 Tax Classification Public Hearing (Paul Emery, Theresa Miner, Barbara Miller)**

Miller passes out packet that changed from the one that was originally submitted.

Miller: I talked to the DOR and verified that because we won't be having any overrides or anything, we could vote the tax classification and the excess levy capacity and not have any issues with the fact that we still are not prepared with a budget.

Allen: What if the Town Meeting votes down the budget?

Miller: Nothing is going to change. Something has to be put onto the recap where the money is going to come from to fund the school budget at some point when something passes, but is not going to be added to the tax rate, I'm assuming. I've talked with the Town Accountant about this and we both felt that there was about zero likelihood of the taxpayers approving it as an override. We figure it will either come out of budgets or it will come out of reserves, neither of which changes the excess levy. As far as I know we can't do a recap until we get a Town Meeting vote on the budget, so I won't be doing anything with it and if something changes, it is not likely to effect what we are doing tonight. You're taxed to the maximum amount of your levy capacity when the Towns' are in the situations that almost all towns in Massachusetts are in right now. The only way it would change is if the Town voted an override. I'm doing this now, because I want to be as ready as possible so that the day after we have a town meeting, if things are decided at that meeting, that very next day I will be prepared to submit to the DOR and get a tax rate and tax bills in the mail as soon as possible. The Treasurer needs money. Barbara goes over her handout titled "Proposed Rate Impact – Fiscal Year 2009". The Board of Assessors are recommending the board vote for a split tax rate.

*Allen makes the motion to set the proposed split tax rate at residential factor .903201. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye, Ross – Aye.*

*Allen makes the motion NOT to adopt the Open Space Discount, Residential Exemption and the Small Commercial Exemption. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye*

**Robert Trombley, WPCF, CSO Project Change Order #8 (Code Compliance issue at Operations Building)**

Trombley: This is our attempt to bring the operations building back into being code compliant with fire safety laws and requirements of the electrical inspector. If we weren't code compliant any changes we did at the building would be more expensive because we would have to go with explosion proof equipment. Change Order #8 involves the heating ventilation, air conditioning issues and actual physical separation of the headworks from the operations building and partitioning off the sludge storage tank hatch area from the remainder of the dissolved air flotation room. It involves replacing one existing door, knocking a hole in the wall to put a new door in and other miscellaneous items along with explosion proof fans and ventilation. The control system for all that will come with the next change order.

*Allen makes the motion to approve change order #8 for the code compliance improvements of the operations building, the Sludge Holding Tank/Headworks Areas Isolation, the net increase will be \$160,000 and total adjusted contract price will be \$2,360,410 with an extended completion date to April 10, 2009 from February 9, 2009. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye*

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**Pole Location Hearing, Request to place one jointly owned pole on westerly side of First Street, Ray Galaski, WMECO**

Galaski: The state is going to be working on the bridge and I need this pole to start my new feed on Prospect Street.

*Allen makes the motion to approve one jointly owned 40' pole on First Street numbered 69/5M as indicated on the plan 6F810427. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye.*

**Pole Location Hearing, Request to place two jointly owned poles on the easterly side of Unity Street**

*Allen makes the motion to approve 2 jointly owned 40' poles on Unity Street numbered 185/23 and 185/22M as indicated on plan 6F810447. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye*

**Town Administrators Report**

**Other**

Abbondanzio reads announcement from Tax Collector regarding accepting tax payments before the end of the year.

Abbondanzio passes out International Brotherhoods agreement for signatures.

Abbondanzio: For your information, I'm appointing Barbara Miller to the Employee Assistance Team. Barbara is replacing JoAnn Greenleaf on this team.

On Wednesday, December 10, 2008 at 10:00 we will be doing a project briefing on the walk through in Montague Center School Feasibility Study.

The landfill committee had a good meeting the other night. One of the things that came out of that meeting was very clear was that the committee felt we needed to look at all of the potential options for reuse of that site, before moving forward with an RFP. It is not just a question of reviving the RFP that was out, the feeling was we needed to keep an open mind based on what we heard at Town Meeting and other places. People wanted to know if there was other potential revenue generating use that could go into that site. The committee will do this in house first than we might be looking to spend some of the feasibility money that already exists or come before the board for some Program Income. We will be meeting again in January.

Discussion held regarding changes that should be made to the next landfill RFP

***Program Income Hearing (Unity Park Master Plan) \$8,250 continued at 8:20 PM***

Detmold: Feels there is a strong opinion that the skate park shouldn't be put within Unity Park with the current commissioners. Community dialog has not happened yet and thinks before the Master Plan should go forward they should be heard. It is meeting a need of keeping kids off of Avenue A and giving them something to do. Worried one of the likeliest spots being ruled out before more dialog could occur. We haven't had a chance to have the dialog with the Park and Recreation Commissioners and the Selectboard yet.

Abbondanzio: We are also talking with another owner in town about a possible site for a skate park on the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue A. The owner is interested in leasing the property. The problem with Unity park is not an immediate project. I will continue to pursue this site if everyone feels it is a good idea. The master plan is linked to the block grant and the assumption is that the Master plan for Unity Park will produce a final concept for the park and will come up with cost estimates for what it will cost to do the work in the park and that will be part of the application that will go in February. That will be an application for \$45,000 for bid ready design, which is actually design documents where you can go out and build. The assumption being if we got that and designed all the improvements of the park, in the following year they would come back with another application for the block grant for the actual cost of doing the work; which would up to a quarter of a million dollars to do the work in the park in the next year around. If we don't get to the point where the architect needs to be in late January, we won't have sufficient information to file the block grant for the design money. That is a fact. I'm not trying to rule out the possibility of the skate park being part of that final concept. Jon Dobosz took the architect around and said we liked this, and this, and this. He could also say we would like a skateboard park, does it work in this location and where would it work? That is part of developing the concept; maybe it wouldn't work at that location, but I think

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everybody needs to know. All it would do is take it to the next step which would be to file an application for design money. We find out about that in the summer, we wouldn't do the work until the following spring then we would file an application for a grant to actually do the work. This could be a very lengthy process. Pursuing an interim location for the skate park might make sense because we need a site now. Assuming we could work out a similar arrangement like the one we had with Mr. DeChristopher, use of property in lieu of taxes.

*Allen makes the motion to use \$8,250 of Program Income money for the Unity Park Master Plan leaving a balance of \$112,909.89 Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Allen – Aye, Ross - Aye*

**Award Unity Park Master Plan Bid**

*Allen makes the motion to approve Berkshire Design Group, Inc. to do the study of the Parks & Rec at Unity Park Master Plan with bid total at \$8,250 as delineated on page 16 of their proposal. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye*

*Allen makes the motion in the master plan the potential for a skate park site be considered. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye*

**Other**

Abbondanzio: We are running out of money in our legal budget. (Frank gives detail of expenses spent to date) I think we will need \$15,000 - \$20,000 for the legal budget and if we go to a special town meeting in February we will need to restore money into the reserve fund.

*Allen makes the motion to authorize Frank to go to the Finance Committee to request a reserve fund transfer of \$20,000 for legal costs. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye*

*Allen makes the motion to close the meeting (at 8:40 PM) to go into executive session for the purposes of collective bargaining and come out just to adjourn our meeting. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye*

*Allen makes the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 PM. Seconded by Pruitt, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye*