

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
March 14, 2011
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229
900 Main Street, Millis, MA 02054**

CALL TO ORDER: Chm. Vecchi called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The following persons were present: Chairman Charles Vecchi, Vice Chair Andrea Wagner, Clerk Donald Hendon, Administrative Assistant Jennifer Cederberg and Town Administrator Charles Aspinwall.

DISCUSSION WITH CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Ed Chisholm spoke concerning changing the FEMA maps which was supposed to happen this year but has been delayed. He noted that he has been pushing to have FEMA and the DEP acknowledge that the study done for Millis which shows Zone B actually shows 100-year flood zones which don't fit the definition of Zone B (500 year flood zone). He reviewed some data on flood elevations for the Boggestow Brook and stated that we should ask them to verify Millis' elevations vs. Medway and Holliston as they all tie together. He requested that the Board send a letter of request for FEMA to review what they have so that the maps that are published in 2012 are accurate. Mr. Chisholm stated that you have to know what to anticipate and how you will service the parts of town effected when a 100-year flood comes. Mr. Aspinwall stated that he is requesting that FEMA come back and review this particular area before the maps are published, being sure that no structures are being built in a flood zone and those structures in the flood zone are being adequately protected.

Mr. Vecchi stated that there is a chance that the Town will go through all of this and nothing will change. Mr. Chisholm stated that Mr. Lee of the Conservation Commission is reviewing the regulations of the Town to address potential issues that may arise. Mr. Aspinwall stated that the Board needs to decide how to move forward with the information Mr. Chisholm provided. Mr. Vecchi asked for clarification on who would draft the letter to FEMA: who has the expertise to craft a letter. Mr. Chisolm stated the Conservation could do it but it would have to go out under the name of the Board of Selectmen. He further noted that this might illustrate additional properties that should consider purchasing flood insurance. He stated that there are currently four FEMA maps that constitute the Town of Millis.

Mr. Vecchi asked for a draft letter that the Board can review and approve. The Board directed Mr. Aspinwall to work with Mr. Chisholm to come up with a draft to be presented at a future meeting.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, that we ask the Town Administrator to work with Mr. Chisholm and the Conservation Commission requesting that FEMA review the Town of Millis flood zone maps. The motion passed unanimously.

MILLIS BEAUTIFICATION DAY: Mr. Brooks Corl from the Millis Lions asked for the Town's cooperation for Millis Beautification Day. He noted that this is joint sponsored by the Millis Lions and the Millis Garden Club. He stated it has taken place for 7 years to help keep Millis beautiful. There are 11 sites selected for this year to beautify and asked for volunteers to help on April 9th and gloves and tools are helpful. He stated it is a way Millis residents can contribute to their community by supporting the event, along with support of the DPW. He stated registration begins at 8 a.m. at St. Paul's Church so that individuals can sign up indoors this year. He noted that the event runs until noon though some sights finish early. The maximum commitment would be 4 hours. Anyone under 18 who wishes to participate must sign a parental permission form and any young groups under the age of 10 should be chaperoned by adult leaders.

DISCUSSION WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE: Mr. Christopher Smith introduced the Strategic Budget Subcommittee. He reminded the Board of his presentation that was given to the Board at their last meeting. He noted that since that time, health insurance costs have come down considerably which reduced the structural deficit to \$535,183. He further noted changes in OPED, Municipal raises and potential changes in local aid. A complete copy of this presentation will be an official attachment to these minutes.

Mr. Smith reviewed the various models presented by the committee. He presented a new option for additional staff (Model 3 AS) which would include \$175,000 for funding for this staffing increase. He noted that fixed costs remain

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
March 14, 2011
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229
900 Main Street, Millis, MA 02054**

constant, revenues have been tweaked a bit, and stated that there will be approximately \$21.9 million available for the FY12 budget. He briefly reviewed the 5-year outlook of local aid. He then went on to review the 5-year projected single family home average tax bill.

Mr. Smith reviewed a slide of cuts which would eliminate the deficit altogether for the next fiscal year but by FY13, the deficit would again begin to creep up. He then went on to closely review Option 1 which would raise taxes by \$182 next year and would not address the deficit beyond that. On Model 2, the average single family tax bill would be raised by about \$271. On Model 3, which solves for the annual deficit and includes the strategic option presented, the average family single tax bill would go up approximately \$295 per year. This would also hedge against any potential cuts. He stated that this would allow for more flexibility in managing a potential deficit. Model 3 AS adds \$175,000 of staff which would bring the total deficit to \$1,042,683 and raise the average single family tax rate by \$355. Model 4 is very similar to 2 but would impact the total deficit to \$927,683 and raise the average tax bill by \$383. The final Model, Model 5, would bring the total deficit to \$1,303,106 and would cost the average homeowner \$443 in taxes and would carry the Town through FY16.

Mr. Vecchi asked for specifics regarding adding staff. He noted that we are currently down a Firefighter and DPW worker. He stated that the Building Department has very little staff and that other departments have requested additional staff to bring them back to levels that used to exist but that have been cut over the years. Mr. Aspinwall gave examples such as the Board of Health, the Board of Selectmen and the Library. Mr. Baker highlighted the needs of the School Department which would not be full restoration and would require approximately \$125,000. Mr. Smith stated that though the Committee built in the number, it would be up to individual committees and Administration to decide where those positions should be allocated based on need.

Mr. Smith stated that the Committee identified five items which would be included in the strategic capital plan which are voted on as warrant articles every year. He noted that the costs of these items annually is just over \$188,000 and that these items should be on a regular schedule and not dependent on free cash. He also spoke concerning road maintenance and police cruiser rotation as well as building maintenance issues which need to be addressed on an ongoing basis. Mr. Vecchi opened the mike to any boards and committees who wished to make comment.

Mr. Baker of the School Committee addressed the Board and thanked the Committee for their hard work. He stated that the School will go to Town Meeting with a balanced budget as required. He noted that the School has turned over all stones to find savings and with a half million dollars of cuts on the school side, they would not be able to avoid lay-offs. They would look to hire more junior staff rather than senior staff as more teachers retire. He stated that they would need to cut approximately 10 people or 8 FTE. He noted that out of the 8 FTEs, about 5.5 would be teachers. He further stated that you need to factor in the cost of Unemployment benefits. He stated that the School continues to have growth despite cuts from previous years. He acknowledged that it is a very tough time to ask for people to accept an increase in their taxes. He noted that his hope is that each voter can look at things on balance and decide to support an override. He reminded citizens that the last override was managed very well and stretched out for the last 5-6 years. He stated that he believes he is leaning toward a 5-year solution to the deficit with a capital plan built in and that he could argue either way for staff.

Mr. Schultze stated that the Finance Committee is always talking about capital and cuts and that doing nothing is not a viable option. He noted that we will do what we have to do to come to Town Meeting with a balanced budget. He advocated that the Town consider an override. He further advocated that the Town strongly consider including the capital program to address needed repairs to buildings and roads. He echoed Mr. Baker in that he could go either way with additional staff but would like to preserve the staff that we currently have. He also noted that state aid is still unknown for sure. He stated that the problems are not going to get better unless we do something about it.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
March 14, 2011
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229
900 Main Street, Millis, MA 02054**

Mr. Aspinwall noted a number of areas in which the Town has had to assume additional responsibility which translates into additional costs such as road repairs with additional catch basins once the streets have been accepted. He stated that many of these things are happening at a time when the state is deciding how much funding we should receive in local aid. He asked the Town to please keep the overall atmosphere of the Town in mind and that the Administration has been as responsible as possible but that the voter will have to make the ultimate decision as to which direction to go.

Mr. Smith stated that the Board first determines whether or not the override should go on the ballot and, if the answer is yes, the Board needs to decide which option to bring to the voters: that multiple options on the ballot are not possible. He urged the Board to consider Option 3 as a minimum as 3 and above allow for crisis management plans by utilizing the funds put into the Capital Improvement Fund. He further stated that the number for local aid is fluid: some reps are telling their towns' one thing, and some are telling another. He stated that any additional cuts are going to significantly impact Town services. He said that in the event revenues come in higher from the state, which is unlikely, the Town does not need to collect the full amount of the revenue. He stated the Town could choose not to collect up to the levy limit as long as the budget is passed at Town Meeting. Further, if there were reductions the following year, the Town could raise the funds up to that levy limit. He guessed that the numbers presented are a realistic structural number but there still is a fairly good chance that those numbers will change. He reminded the audience that the Town does not need to collect up to 2.5% limit every year.

Ms. Wagner asked what if the deficit runs higher than projected. Mr. Smith stated that tonight, the Board would pick a direction. If we get bad news between now and the time of the election, this would give the Board the opportunity to say we need to scale back or revert totally from the capital plan or the add staff. He stated that those models at least provide the flexibility to address a potential 5% cut.

Mr. Vecchi stated that over the years the DPW has gone from a hard working group of guys who could do projects to a hard working group of guys who, with outside help, can address basic maintenance issues. He further commented that there is inadequate money to fix the roads in Town which are in really poor condition. He noted that we need to reach beyond Prop. 2.5 to be sure there is not further erosion in our infrastructure, schools, and Town and that it is up to us to work on it. He further went on to clarify the differences in the overrides and what was approved to purchase the Library. He stated that an operational override, such as what is being asked for, stays on the books permanently.

Mr. Schultze noted that we are still lower in taxes than many of our surrounding towns, on average \$500 less.

Wendy Barry urged the Selectmen to think out for more than just one year. She stated that looking at a 5-year plan gives people some leeway to work with.

Tricia Perry, Library Director, spoke concerning issues facing the Library and what they would face if an override is not passed.

Mr. Vecchi stated that he is of the opinion that the Town needs an override. Mr. Hendon stated that he would support an override and advocate for Option 4. Ms. Wagner stated that there are negatives to all options and that the numbers do not include the costs for the Library. She noted that the benefit is that an override solves the problem though FY16 and that it could be some time before we come back to ask for another override. She stated that the problem with the add staff option is that it does not address all of the staff shortages and cuts that have taken place over the years including a Firefighter position and a DPW position. She further stated that all options are expensive. Mr. Hendon echoed Ms. Wagner's concerns about the add staff option.

Gina Matthews stating that she doesn't mind paying extra money because it directly helps her Town.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
March 14, 2011
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229
900 Main Street, Millis, MA 02054

Jim McKay stated that elimination in the DPW staff would probably come from the Highway Department which would have a direct impact on the Town. Mr. Smith reminded the audience that the models can be adjusted to accommodate whatever number the Board deems appropriate, particularly when it comes to the added staff issue. Mr. Aspinwall stated that he feels some restraint needs to be shown in order to preserve the base that we have and that given the tough economic times, he would not recommend the added staff option.

Lisa Hardin stated that she would support Article 4 and that it is disappointing that not more people have come out to hear the options and make an educated decision.

Jennifer Farrar questioned the figures used in FY13 column. Mr. Smith stated that these are numbers that the increases of FY12 and FY13 which does illustrate that there are insignificant differences in the FY13 amounts. Mr. Conroy explained how to interpret that column. He noted that your FY12 increase will be higher while the FY13 numbers are closer in proximity.

Patty Kayo stated that the Town has been very fortunate to do more with less but that our senior population is growing at a very high rate and we need to protect our low income seniors. Mr. Vecchi stated that if there isn't an override, it is going to be very difficult to provide seniors with the relief that they need.

Mr. Smith stated that Model 3 fixes the fiscal year deficit and provides for a strategic capital plan. He reminded that there would be room to fix financial problems by tapping into the strategic capital plan if necessary in future fiscal years. Mr. Baker stated that nobody knows what a palatable number is and that historically, the Town has always edited itself. He noted that he agrees with Mr. Hendon's assessment. Mr. Hendon stated that elected officials seem to always find a way to mandate more and more to the Town's each year and that he doesn't foresee this changing. He went on to say that option 4AS gives us a cushion moving forward.

Lisa Hardin reminded the Board that a question needs to be written for the ballot and it should not include that the funds will carry the Town through FY16, particularly if they want flexibility. She further added that the people who vote for \$1.1 million will probably also vote for \$1.3 million.

Mr. Smith stated that this is our chance to do this right. Mr. Smith reminded the Board that if the financial outcome of the town improves due to state aid, the Town can reduce the tax rate or not collect up to the levy.

Beth Krimmel stated that she does not want to write another check to the Town, but the Town is run conservatively and cautiously and she would support option 4.

John Northgraves agreed with Charlie that 4AS is a bridge too far. He noted that Mr. Smith made a good case for 3 but it isn't quite enough. He stated that he is in support of 4 as a minimum and likes the way that it is structured. He made this his personal recommendation.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to put an operational override vote on the ballot. The motion passed unanimously.

Nancy Gustafson and Marc Conroy asked for an additional \$60,000 to be added to option 4 to cover physical education requirements mandated by the state. Ms. Wagner stated that she has a difficult time choosing an option that allows for some positions and not for others when there are mandates on the Town side as well. She stated that she chose 4 for this reason in addition to the suggestion offered by Mr. Northgraves. Mr. Vecchi agreed and stated that the school will be receiving additional funds and can look for the \$60,000 in other areas.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
March 14, 2011
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229
900 Main Street, Millis, MA 02054**

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, that the amount of the override that we ask the Town for is \$1,125,583 and that this amount be placed on the ballot for the Town election on 5/2/11. The motion passed (2-1-0) with Sel. Hendon voting in the negative.

OPEN AND CLOSE WARRANT:

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to open the warrant for the Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Mr. Aspinwall reviewed the warrant articles to be added.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, that we do add articles 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 41, 47, 48 and 49 as reference in the Town Meeting Warrant as well as article 50 which will add funds to the Stabilization Account and article 51 which will add funds to restore the Oak Grove Farm House. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to close the Town Meeting Warrant. The motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW TOWN MEETING WARRANT:

REQUEST FROM GOLD'S GYM: Mr. Hendon read the request from Gold's Gym.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to grant a permit to Gold's Gym of Millis to hold a Gold's Gym Charity 5K Road Race and Kid's Fun Run on Sunday, May 22 at 9 a.m. subject to coordination with the Police Department and DPW.

INSPECTOR OF ANIMALS:

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to appoint Brenda Hamelin as the Millis Inspector of Animals, term to run from 5/1/11 – 4/30/12. The motion passed unanimously.

ORCHARD STREET APPRAISAL: Mr. Aspinwall reviewed the offer from the Dewey family for the Town to purchase a parcel of land at the intersection of Orchard Street and Exchange Street. He noted that the first step in this process would be to obtain an appraisal of the property which would cost approximately \$2,500. Mr. Vecchi stated that this parcel would tie into the Cassidy open space and that it is worth looking into deeper. Mr. Aspinwall informed the Board that there are not currently enough funds in the CPA Fund to purchase the property. He stated that one option for payment would be to sell other Town-owned land, small parcels, and use those funds to purchase the Dewey land. He noted that the parcels to be sold would have to be put out to bid. Mr. Vecchi stated it is worth taking to Town Meeting.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to enter into a contract with Sheehan and Company Inc. to conduct an appraisal in the amount of \$2,500 as shown on Map 11 Lot 42.

FY 11 SNOW & ICE: Mr. Aspinwall reviewed an updated one page summary showing the deficit to be in the \$200,000 area.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
March 14, 2011
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229
900 Main Street, Millis, MA 02054**

WATER EMERGENCIES: Mr. McKay gave a summary of the recent water emergencies that have included numerous water main breaks in Town and seam leaks. They affected areas such as Middlesex Street which caused a problem at the Walnut Street tank. He noted that the SCADA system showed that they were pumping over 1,000,000 more a day so they felt the leak had been corrected. At the same time, low water pressure in homes was being reported. It was discovered that there was an additional water break in a pipe that runs beneath the Charles River at Pleasant Street and Dean Street. They found it was an 8 inch water main blowing full force into the Charles River. The repairs were completed very quickly. He stated that the DEP required the Town to impose a boil water order on the residents on Dean Street as water testing that was completed before the pipe was turned on were not done at a DEP certified lab. Mr. Aspinwall recognized the DPW for an efficient and effective effort in fixing these many issues.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: Mr. Aspinwall read from a document entitled Metro Boston Consortium for Sustainable Communities Memorandum of Understanding. He stated that MAPC has received a 3-year grant from HUD for \$4 and that the Town could consider, though funding via MAPC, whether to assist large properties such as GAF to spur along ideas on how to more quickly and effectively develop their properties which would, in turn, bring more tax revenue to the Town.

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to authorize the Town Administrator to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for Millis to become a part of the with the Metro Boston Consortium for Sustainable Communities and qualify the Town to be eligible for grants. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES:

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, that we do approve the regular session meeting minutes from 2/28/11. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURN: At 10:40 p.m.,

Motion by Sel. Wagner, seconded by Sel. Hendon, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer G. Cederberg, Administrative Assistant