

**Minutes**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
**WORKSHOP MEETING**  
**February 10, 2009**

**Present: Selectmen – Suzanne McAuliffe, Jim Hoben, Dr. Marasco, Bud Groskopf, Jerry Sullivan; Town Administrator – Robert C. Lawton Jr.**

**AmeriCorps Presentation:**

Ashley McCourt and Jacqueline Hockrider from AmeriCorps review the mission of AmeriCorps Cape Cod. Christine Marshall the program supervisor reviews the projects AmeriCorps has been working on this past year including work at Taylor Bray Farm. Ms. McCourt reviews the specific work that has been done at Taylor Bray Farm she also says that AmeriCorps week is on May 9<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Marshall says to keep AmeriCorps in mind for help on environmental projects in the community since they are a free agency. She gives the Board project proposals in case there are any current projects on the horizon.

Ms. McAuliffe says that the Darling property needs some clearing on trails. Ms. Marshall says that she just got a proposal from DNR today about that property and they will be out there clearing the trails. The Board thanks AmeriCorps for coming to the meeting.

**Assessors – Discussion Residential Exemption:**

Joe Sullivan, Jim Carroll, Bill Lionetta from the Board of Assessors and Matt Zurowick Yarmouth Assessor are before the Board to speak about residential exemption options. Mr. Zurowick explains that there is a 20% shift between resident homeowners to non-resident homeowners. He says it is a lesser shift for more expensive homes because the maximum percentage credit off a home assessment is \$71,196 therefore homeowners with less expensive homes will receive the highest benefit. For example he says if a resident has a \$150,000 home value the owner will receive with the exemption a reduction of \$71k off their assessed value. Mr. Zurowick reviews what permanent residency means.

Mr. Zurowick says that this exemption cannot go into effect until October 2009. Mr. Zurowick says that the Board of Assessors feel that the residential exemption will exaggerate the difference in taxes paid between a non-resident and resident who own homes of the same value. Ms. McAuliffe asks what the percentage is of homes valued at \$350,000 or lower. Mr. Zurowick indicates about half of Yarmouth homes are assessed at \$350,000 or less. He also believes that 60% of the higher end properties are non-residents. Mr. Sullivan points out that the middle and lower end non-resident homeowners will get hit really hard by this change. Mr. Zurowick says that the majority of year-round residents live in homes valued at \$350,000 or less.

Mr. Hoben states that he would feel more comfortable looking at a 10% shift first instead of a 20% shift. Mr. Zurowick indicates that each year the residential exemption can change. He does say that it is a large project that will cost approximately \$10,000 to complete and will also take an extensive amount of time. He says one of the downsides to this exemption is that people may not want to come to Yarmouth to purchase second homes. He indicates that the Town of Barnstable has had this exemption for the past three years and they faced the problem of tracking down the properties to give the exemptions and they ended up with too much money collected from several properties. He also says that having a residential exemption is an ongoing process for the Assessors because houses are being bought and sold by residents and non-residents.

Dr. Marasco says he is not a fan of cost shifting. He says non-residents use less town services but they are still paying taxes. He does not think a residential exemption will work in

Yarmouth because it is a huge seasonal community. Dr. Marasco says he cannot support a new tax for individuals who are not using many services.

Mr. Hoben says that non-residents still use services, for example there are some homeowners who rent their property year-round to individuals who have children in our schools. He also says that the town provides emergency services for all homes regardless if someone occupies the home. Mr. Sullivan says that this exemption will deter people from purchasing second homes in Yarmouth. Mr. Hoben says that this shift will not effect people buying homes in Yarmouth. Ms. McAuliffe says she originally suggested the residential exemption to be an incentive to pass an override. She says that there has been dissatisfaction with the residential exemption in Barnstable. Ms. McAuliffe says she is compelled to support the residential exemption for this year to provide relief for the neediest in our community. Ms. McAuliffe asks if the Board would like to hear from residents before they make a decision. Dr. Marasco strongly disagrees with the residential exemption.

Mr. Groskopf motions to institute a residential exemption with a specific amount to be determined at a later date. Mr. Hoben seconds. Ms. McAuliffe that Board should understand that this decision is dependent on funding the changeover. The Board continues to discuss the residential exemption. VOTE: 3-2, Dr. Marasco – No, Mr. Sullivan – No.

### **FY10 Budget Update / Annual Town Meeting:**

Mr. Lawton says that the Technical High School's increase will be approximately 28% for FY10. He says that the best case proposal from the School Committee would be \$665,000 increase which is about a 3% increase over FY09. He estimates if the D-Y School Committee level funds the budget we would have a \$1.8 million dollar deficit. Mr. Lawton explains why the cost is so great for D-Y's level funded assessment. He indicates that this financial situation means that the Capital Budget will have to almost be eliminated. Mr. Lawton says that if the deficit number stays at \$1.8 million the departments will have to reduce their budgets by 3.3-3.5% based on the budget numbers approved at the September town meeting. He says that with the 3.3-3.5% budget decrease the budget numbers will reflect the 2007 budget. He is very concerned with public safety. He also does not believe the town will receive any money from the federal stimulus package. He says that Carol Woodbury indicated that the federal stimulus money for schools has a lot of strings attached and is mostly for new projects so she won't be able to use it to offset budget problems.

Dr. Marasco believes that residents should expect major reductions in all town departments. He asks Mr. Lawton about overtime. Mr. Lawton says that almost all overtime was cut last September with the exception of Police and Fire. Dr. Marasco says he expects there to be a hiring freeze in the future. Mr. Hoben says that he was impressed with the Finance Committee's explanation of the town's current budget situation that they explained at their last meeting. He says the School Committee must understand how dire the town's budget situation is. Mr. Groskopf believes that the MacArthur School needs to be closed. Ms. McAuliffe says that it may be too late in the budget season to close a school. Mr. Lawton reviews the multiple cuts that town departments had to make in last year's budget. He indicates that the school received an 11.1% increase which resulted in approximately \$2.2 million dollars in new money. Mr. Lawton says with the current budget number the school is using there would be another 7.1% increase in Yarmouth's assessment, he says part of the reason is the shift in the Chapter 70 formula calculation. Mr. Groskopf wants residents to know that in the past two years there's been a substantial increase in the school's budget.

Mr. Lawton says he would like the Board to start to consider the order of the warrant articles. Mr. Sullivan says that he would like to discuss the flow of town meeting.

He believes that in the past there has been too much non-town meeting business before the start of the meeting which delays the start time. He says that he would like to ask the Moderator to try to do all non-town meeting business prior to 7:00pm. Mr. Lawton says that we could change the start time to 6:30pm. The Board agrees to suggest town meeting start at 6:30. Mr. Hoben suggests that the CPC articles should go at the end of the second night and move the zoning articles up. The Board agrees to move zoning before CPC. Ms. McAuliffe asks the Board to review the articles and they will talk about the order at their next meeting.

### **Appointments:**

#### **Board of Health - One Regular**

Mr. Hoben reminds the Board that he has had a hard time finding applicants for the Board of Health who could meet at 3:00pm and has asked several times for the Board of Health to meet at a later time. Mr. Hoben says that he recently had an applicant for the Board of Health who could meet at the 3:00pm time. He reviews the contentious interview of the applicant the events that followed. He says that he would like to hold off on appointing the applicant to the Board of Health until a future meeting. Mr. Sullivan says he's getting very tired of this issue and would like more cooperation of the Board of Health. He says that if the Board of Health does not cooperate and move their time to 7:00pm he would like an article on the warrant to officially change the Board of Health's meeting time. The Board continues to discuss the issues with the Board of Health meeting time.

#### **Resignation – Community Housing Committee**

Mr. Hoben regretfully accepts the resignation of Kieran Healy from the Community Housing Committee.

### **Selectmen's Items:**

#### **Lifetime Golf Memberships**

Mr. Sullivan reviews the three people who have lifetime golf memberships. He feels that the act was done to honor the three employees for great service to the town. He doesn't want letters to go the former employees to recind their lifetime memberships. Dr. Marasco feels that golf memberships today are worth too much money to give them away to former employees. He thought that this practice had ended several years go but he recently found out that three people were still receiving these benefits. Dr. Marasco says it's not about the individuals but he believes with budgets being so tight there should not be lifetime golf memberships. Mr. Sullivan asks Dr. Marasco if he doesn't want to honor these past employees. Dr. Marasco says he still disagrees with these past employees to receive the benefits especially since they all receive pensions. The Board continues to discuss this issue. The consensus of the Board is to allow the past employees to keep their golf memberships. Dr. Marasco is the only member who disagrees with the decision.

#### **Google Latitude**

Dr. Marasco suggests that all employees with cell phones should have Google Latitude which allows employees to be tracked throughout the town. Mr. Lawton says he will send a note to Shawn MacInnes to look into it.

#### **Selectmen and Counselors Assoc.**

Ms. McAuliffe reminds the Board about the next Selectmen and Counselors Assoc. meeting.

## **Town Administrator's Items:**

### **Consent Agenda**

Mr. Lawton reviews the consent agenda. Motioned. Seconded. Dr. Marasco asks for a discussion on the future of the Yarmouth Port Library. Mr. Lawton says that in the letter it is clear that the Yarmouth Port Library will be self sufficient, and there will be no fee to use it. He also says that the current employees will be reassigned to other Yarmouth libraries. Mr. Lawton says the Yarmouth Port Library will use the items that are in the library and if the items are sold in the future the town will receive the money. He also states that if the library is going to remain in the CLAMS program they will have to spend 15% of their expenditures on new material. Dr. Marasco says that he would like a presentation from the Yarmouth Port Library Assoc. Mr. Groskopf says that we had several public hearings regarding the library. Dr. Marasco says he would like to explore the issue more. Mr. Lawton says that the Board has discussed these issues previously and Peter Johnson-Staub has backup information on the impact to the other libraries in town. Ms. McAuliffe indicates that there have already been significant donations to support the Yarmouth Port Library as well as a fundraising plan for the future. VOTE 5-0 to send the letter to the Yarmouth Port Library Association.

### **Water Department Automatic Reading System**

Mr. Lawton says that the Water Department is almost finished with the Automatic Reading System which will allow the Water Department to read meters more frequently. He also says the Water Department has gone to an Alarm Clock system to ease issues at the Collectors Office.

### **Community Policing**

Mr. Lawton states that the Governor has eliminated all community policing money from the budget so there will be no citizen police academy and bike patrols will be reduced or eliminated.

### **Snow Deficit**

Mr. Lawton says that the snow deficit is continuing to rise, but DPW has only used private contractors once this winter.

### **Flax Pond Article**

Mr. Lawton discusses the capital article for Flax Pond.

## **Adjourn**

Motioned. Seconded. VOTE 5-0 Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15pm.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **ACTION ITEM**

**Review of Draft letter outlining an agreement between the Town and the Yarmouth Library Association (Yarmouth Port) allowing the continued use of Town owned books, DVDs and other items located in the Yarmouth Port Library after 6-30-2009.**

**DATE: February 10, 2009**

**Voted: 5-0**