



Town of Sturbridge

Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Administrator
Email: ssuhoski@town.sturbridge.ma.us

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen
FR: Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Administrator
DT: September 2, 2011
RE: Town Administrator's Report for September 6 Meeting

Following please find my report and recommendations for your September 6 meeting.

GENERAL ITEMS:

FY12 Tax Classification Hearing

The Tax Classification Hearing will include a presentation by the Principal Assessor and the Board of Assessors outlining the Town's FY12 tax levy and the recommended tax rate and how it is allocated between the residential and commercial/industrial/personal property (CIP) classes. After the presentation the Board of Selectmen will open the floor to the general public for comment, questions and opinions.

The Board of Selectmen, as the Town's executive body, cannot change the total tax levy that will be collected in FY12 as the budget was established by the Town's legislative branch, Town Meeting voters, during the Annual Meeting on June 6, 2011. The Board of Selectmen will, however, make several important votes:

- to determine the percentages of the local tax levy to be borne by each class of real property by adopting a "residential factor" for FY12,
- to determine whether to apply an Open Space Discount for FY12,
- to determine whether to apply a Residential Exemption for FY12, and
- to determine whether to apply a Small Commercial Exemption for FY12.

The vote to adopt the residential factor will determine whether the Town retains a "flat" tax rate for FY12, or whether the Town reverts to a "split" tax rate between residential and CIP property for FY12. The votes for the Open Space Discount, Residential Exemption and Small Commercial Exemption, if adopted, merely "re-allocate" the tax levy in different fashions amongst taxpayers.

Special Circumstance Dock Permit Application

A copy of the application is in your mailboxes. This application is further to the site visit conducted at 78 South Shore Drive. I recommend you approve the special circumstance application as it will further remove the subject dock from the sightline of the neighbor and afford better access to the water for the applicant.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

1. Council on Aging Director Appointment: I am very pleased to report that, after a robust search that yielded 27 total applicants, both the Council on Aging and I concurred (by separate assessments) that Melissa Beauchemin, of 5 Farquhar Road, would be the preferred candidate to assume the Council on Aging Director position.

The appointment of the Town's primary advocate for the senior population was taken very seriously. Ms. Beauchemin has a demonstrated history of service to this population and an obvious passion for her work. She organized events and programming for a large retirement community in Fairfax for nine years before moving to Sturbridge. She has experience in Massachusetts as the former outreach coordinator for the North Brookfield COA, and, after a hiatus to raise her child, has served as the social services director at the Accord Adult Day Health Center in Dudley for the past three years.

I am very pleased to recommend Ms. Beauchemin for the position of COA Director. We have agreed on the starting salary and the applicability of the standard six-month probationary period.

Recommended Action: That the Board of Selectmen ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of Melissa Beauchemin to the position of Council on Aging Director effective on or after September 12, 2011 at a starting salary of \$46,500 and subject to a six-month probationary period.

2. Senior Municipal Service Program Appointment: We have an approved candidate to fill the final slot in the SMSP. Ms. Louise Martel, of 49 Clarke Road, has qualified for the program. Because she is physically unable to perform the duties volunteer Heather Hart will complete the hours required under the new legislative and local program amendment sponsored by members of this community. Ms. Hart's efforts will be gladly accepted by the Town Planner.

Recommended Action: That the Board of Selectmen appoint the above-named individual to participate in the Senior Municipal Service Program for FY12 and that said volunteer hours will be donated by Heather Hart in the Planning Dept.

3. Master Plan Implementation Committee: Further to the approved appointment process, the Planning Board has recommended in an August 25, 2011 correspondence that five individuals be appointed to the MPIC. I concur with the recommendation.

Recommended Action: That the Board of Selectmen ratify the Town Administrator’s appointment of the following individuals to the Master Plan Implementation Committee:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Sandra Gibson-Quigley	Planning Board Representative	2015
Penny Dumas	Planning Board Representative	2012
Heather Hart	Former Master Plan Steering Cmte. Member	2015
David Barnicle	Former Focus Group Member	2014
Jennifer Morrison	Former Focus Group Member	2013

Subsequent appointments would be for five year terms.

4. Debris Monitoring Contract Award: Attached please find a proposed Agreement to utilize the statewide Disaster Debris Monitoring Services contract to retain O’Brien’s Response Management, Inc. to conduct FEMA-required monitoring of debris removal activities, including preparation and filing of required documentation, based upon hourly rates for work requested by the Town. The firm also has experience and will assist the Town in seeking maximum FEMA eligibility for other sites such as the DPW Barn Fields access road and environs. Hourly rates range from \$34 to \$70 all inclusive, but, are only upon request of the Town. The cost of this contract is also eligible for 75 percent FEMA reimbursement. It is my intention not-to-exceed \$20,000 in local funding (this would allow up to \$80,000 in contracted services with FEMA contribution). The contract will be managed by the DPW Director and the Town Administrator.

Recommended Action: That the Board of Selectmen approve the award of Disaster Debris Monitoring Services to O’Brien’s Response Management, Inc. in accordance with state contract No. HLS02 and the Town’s Agreement dated September 6, 2011. It is further the Town’s intent not-to-exceed \$20,000 in local cost share for these services.

5. Route 49 Resurfacing Project (Bike Lane Request): Your Board has a request from Mr. David Barnicle seeking to have the Town officially request that MassDOT include dedicated bicycle lanes as part of its planned resurfacing of Route 49 in 2012. I have prepared a DRAFT letter for the Board’s signature and recommend you support the request for the reasons therein.

Recommended Action: That the Board of Selectmen approve execution of correspondence dated September 6, 2011 to MassDOT supporting inclusion of dedicated bicycle lanes in the scope-of-work for the 2012 resurfacing of Route 49 from Sturbridge to Spencer.

6. Miscellaneous Items: Following are some concise updates on other matters that are pending. The list is not all-inclusive.

- **Tropical Storm Irene Response:** Spent many hours coordinating Town response with Police Chief and Lieutenants, DPW Director, Fire Chief and BOS Chairman. Vocal participant in conference calls with National Grid. Conducted direct advocacy with NGRID staff contacts to enhance response to priority concerns (eg. large population at retirement community, live wire near Burgess School Rd., neighborhoods previously devastated by tornado, etc.). Engaged state Rep. Todd Smola to interface with state-level counterparts at the utility on Town's behalf. The Town's public safety and public works departments admirably responded to many calls for service throughout and after this event.
- **Land Lease for Solar Power:** Conducted Pre-Submission Conference with interested parties. There was a very good response with over a dozen attendees for the meeting at Town Hall and the tour of the landfill and recycling areas with the DPW Director and Town Administrator. Deadline for submittals is September 19 after which the Energy Advisory Committee will begin its advisory review.
- **Walker Pond Road Drainage Study:** Participated in meeting with Dave Prickett of Tighe & Bond and DPW Director to review status of information. Scheduled meeting with residents for September 7 at 5pm in Town Hall for preliminary review. Schedule calls for Tighe & Bond to present findings to Board of Selectmen on September 19.
- **Walker Road Drainage:** CME engineers retained by DPW Director to review and recommend options (no progress past week due to storm operations).
- **Debris and FEMA:** Held meeting with DPW Director and Northern Tree concerning contract applicability. Town will need to proceed with separate bid for Route 20 and Route 15 debris stockpiles. Further to discussion with DPW Director, I am making a more concise bid package that I hope to have published by September 14. The monitoring contract award will greatly assist in furthering a more formalized debris plan. Departments have completed draft reimbursement request to be reviewed by Town Administrator and Finance Director week of September 6 for submission.
- **Water / Sewer Rates:** TA still responding to calls and complaints about water and sewer invoices. I have issued your Board a memorandum concerning the initial flurry of calls.
- **Personnel Committee:** Reviewed draft Tree Warden job description and scheduled next meeting scheduled for September 28.
- **Charter Complaints:** Confirmed that prior complaints were all addressed (one could not be resolved) and that Tom Cohan will attend the October 3 BOS meeting.

- **2012 Polling Locations:** The Host hotel received some additional logistical information from the Town Clerk to assist with cost assessment. Also, School Superintendent responded that the decision would rest with the School Committee.
- **Abandoned Motor Vehicles:** No further progress due to vacation schedules. The Police Chief, Finance Director and I met to discuss the “pros” and “cons” of the Town’s process of disposing of abandoned motor vehicles (these primarily result from towing operations by Sturbridge Service Center and, to a lesser extent, Sturbridge Auto Body); Good progress was made at the meeting and Chief Ford is developing some enhancements that should make the processing more consistent and less labor intensive for the Hearings Officer (Finance Director by virtue of role as Parking Clerk).
- **Road Program:** No progress past week, however, previously scheduled paving on Whittemore Road was completed together with the resurfacing of Picker Road through the additional MORE Jobs grant funding.
- **Cable Advisory Committee:** Attended CAC meeting; received applications for the part-time clerk position which are now under review with Bruce Butcher. Plan is to interview two candidates along with CAC chairman for presentment to the CAC for concurrence prior to the Town Administrator proposing an appointment to your Board.
- **Municipal Health Insurance Reform:** Attended seminar sponsored by MMA to review changes to law. During the next two months I anticipate bringing the Insurance Advisory Committee together to discuss plan changes in Sturbridge to bring down costs for both the municipality and the employee.