

**TOWN OF SOMERS
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, October 8, 2009, 6:00 p.m.
Selectmen's Conference Room**

- 1 Call to order – First Selectman David Pinney called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
 - 2 Members present – Kathleen Devlin, David Pinney and Joseph Tolisano. Also present were Francine Aloisa (Library Director), Bob Cafarelli (Town Engineer/Director of Public Works), Jenifer Charette (Director of Human Services), Ann Marie Logan (Town Clerk), Marcia Mitchell, recording (Exec. Asst./Operations Manager), Greg Simmons (CFO), State Representative Penny Bacchiocci, and a number of interested citizens
 - 3 Pledge of Allegiance
 - 4 Correspondence
 - 4.1 Rick Krein resignation from Ethics Commission (condition of appointment to Zoning Board of Appeals).
 - 4.2 John Cowles resignation from Cultural Commission
Motion (Ms. Devlin), second (Mr. Tolisano) and unanimously voted to accept, with regret, both resignations.
 - 5 Citizen Comments - none
- Mr. Pinney recognized State Representative Bacchiocci and asked her to join the Selectmen at the table.
Motion (Ms. Devlin), second (Mr. Tolisano) and unanimously voted to take agenda out of order and proceed with Item 8.1 at this time.
- 6 Opportunity for Selectmen to add agenda items – none from Ms. Devlin or Mr. Tolisano. Mr. Pinney added a state budget update to old business.
 - 7 Old Business
 - 7.1 Directors' discussion – each of the Directors reviewed their current activities and priorities with the selectmen, all of which are in line with the BOS priorities for the current fiscal year. Ms. Devlin spoke on behalf of the board, thanking the Directors for their "agility, adaptation, and alignment" in delivering expense savings and efficiencies in the past fiscal year.
 - 7.2 State Budget Update (added by Mr. Pinney) – Mr. Pinney commented on the finalized state budget and allowed that, while it was not worse than we had anticipated in our budget process, the following were noteworthy facts:
 - The Pequot grant funds to Somers had been reduced by \$1.0 million from last year; and
 - PILOT funding for hosting the prisons was anticipated to be \$1.5 million, down from \$1.76 million last year, and funded at a level of only 63% of its full value. By state statute, PILOT funding is not supposed to go below 85% of its full value.
 - 8 New Business
 - 8.1 Confirmed guest, State Representative, Penny Bacchiocci – Rep. Bacchiocci thanked the BOS for inviting her and thanked First Selectman Pinney for his work on the application for the recently awarded \$200,000 STEAP grant for improvements to Somers Recreational Facilities. Rep. Bacchiocci said that she had been contacted by multiple groups in Somers regarding potential application of these funds to their programs including the Skate Park committee, users of the basketball courts at Field Road requesting regulation hoops for the courts, and the Somers Little League, which has raised and invested more than \$40,000 into their program since 2004. She said that she shared this information for BOS reference only, and that it was up to the BOS to determine how and for what facilities and programs the funds would ultimately be used. Rep. Bacchiocci said that the grant would be administered by the CT DEP, a state organization that had a reputation for being easy to work with on this type of grant. She again commented that this was a wonderful award for Somers to receive, especially given

the current state of the economy, and commended First Selectman Pinney for his work on the application. There being no questions, the BOS thanked Rep. Bacchiocchi and returned to take the remainder of the agenda in order, with further conversation regarding the application of the funds deferred until later in the meeting.

After completing item 7.2, the Selectmen took up discussion of how to deploy the STEAP funds received for "Improvements to Somers Recreational Facilities".

- Aileen Henry, representing citizens who regularly use the Field Road tennis facilities presented a written proposal asking the Selectmen to consider applying some of the funds to replace the aging tennis courts. She and her group had met with Mr. Pinney, and were working on getting three quotes on this work. She said that Mike Provencher, Parks Maintenance Coordinator had requested that the quotes include engineering the courts to be converted to a skating rink in the winter months to optimize their use by as many citizens as possible. Total replacement is estimated in the \$130,000 range.
- Karen Murdoch spoke on behalf of the Skate Park Committee, which has raised \$2,000 of its "ideal skate park" estimate of approximately \$200,000. Ms. Murdoch has spoken to vendors about a scaled-down version of the park which could be completed for as little as \$75,000.
- J.J. Wassmuth, Chair of the Recreation Commission, expressed hope that the BOS will consider the Recreation Commission's recommendations, that the funds could be applied over many projects, and not just one or two, to support as many groups as possible and that improvements could potentially include fencing, irrigation, basketball hoops, etc.

Mr. Tolisano recommended that the BOS turn over to the Recreation Commission the evaluation process for application of the STEAP funds with a request that their recommendations be returned to the BOS at the end of 90 days. The other selectmen agreed, and charged Ms. Wassmuth with coming back to the BOS at one of its December meetings (12/3 or 12/17, to be determined) with a prioritized listing of the Commission's recommendations along with a line-item budget for use of the funds.

- 9** Authorization of Scheduled Payments – ***Motion (Mr. Tolisano), second (Ms. Devlin) and unanimously voted to authorize scheduled payments totaling \$133,099.69.***
- 10** Appropriations/Transfers – ***Motion (Ms. Devlin), second (Mr. Tolisano) and unanimously voted to approve Library transfer request of \$2,450 from Building Maintenance to Water/Sewer to cover water expenses for sprinkler system.***
- 11** Approval of Minutes – 9/24/09 – ***Motion (Mr. Tolisano), second (Ms. Devlin) and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the 9/24/09 Board of Selectmen's meeting as written.***
- 12** Board of Selectmen Remarks – Ms. Devlin asked if we had any estimate from CT DOT as to a ballpark cost for redesigning the Rt 190/Rt 83 intersection. Mr. Pinney said that the conversation with DOT was only just beginning, and that there was significant discussion to be had on how to get this to a working, fundable project. Ms. Devlin commented that a plan written for the Recreation Commission by Mike Boyer some time ago had identified a walking trail as a priority for Recreation, and she asked to have this raised to the current Recreation Commission as part of their evaluation and development of recommendations for the STEAP grant. It was suggested that perhaps the Land Trust might be convinced to develop the McCann farm as a walking trail.

Mr. Pinney shared with the selectmen that he had been notified by DEP that an approved bonding recommendation had been forwarded to the Bonding committee to put the water main on Sunset Drive. He has also been told that the project will not be able to rely on Federal funding. State Bonding prospects look bleak, given the number of requests on the bonding agenda, and the state's current fiscal condition. Residents of Sunset Drive should be notified of the status so that they may join the Selectmen in pressing our legislators to make sure this project is funded.

Ms. Devlin asked if Somers Schools would be receiving any assistance from the ARRA through the state; Mr. Pinney said yes, but of the mechanism under which the funding would be received has yet to be clarified by state officials.

- 13 Citizen Comments – Dan Thayer, 10 Colton Road, asked if the town had any legal recourse on the PILOT shortfall from the state. The selectmen responded that while all towns heavily dependent on PILOT payments lobbied hard for full payment, any legal challenge on this would be fruitless. Mr. Thayer also wanted to know the status of the Revaluation project. Mr. Pinney replied that the Assessor has confirmed that everything is on schedule for mailing the revaluations out in the December timeframe.

Karl Walton, 45 Sunset Drive, and formerly the chair of the Planning Commission spoke regarding ongoing issues between the BOS and the Planning Commission, which he characterized as “not productive”. He expressed concern about the motion on the Highland View subdivision (McCormick) as being incomplete, and noted that it lacked a number of conditions including requiring a bond for the placement of the pins; a bond for erosion control; a bond for WPCA fees; as well as making the motion contingent upon an appraisal that had not yet been conducted for purposes of assessing the open space fee. Mr. Pinney replied that Town Engineer Bob Cafarelli had drafted the motion based upon prior motions in the records, as well as in consideration of the town’s subdivision regulations, and that the Planning Commission had been comfortable enough with the motion to move, second and unanimously carry it. Mr. Pinney will refer Mr. Walton’s concerns in this regard to the Town Engineer for review. Mr. Walton said that he disagrees with the removal of the position of Town Planner, and that his concern is for the welfare of the town.

- 14 Adjournment – ***Motion (Ms. Devlin), second (Mr. Tolisano) and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.***

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia L. Mitchell
Exec. Asst./Ops. Mgr.
Recording Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING