

MINUTES
WILLIAMSTOWN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
December 8, 2008
7:00 P.M.

Present: Jane B. Allen, Chairman, David A. Rempell, Richard C. Steege, Tom Costley, Ronald Turbin

Others Present: Narain Schroeder, Pamela Weatherbee, Leslie Reed-Evans, John Brooks, Beth Goodman, Joseph Finnegan, Peter Fohlin, Kathy Poirot

1. **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING STATEMENT:** Ms. Allen read the list of events for the upcoming Williamstown Holiday Walk on December 12, 13 and 14.
2. **SELECTMEN'S MINUTES:** November 24, 2008 – Mr. Turbin moved to approve the November 24, 2008 minutes. Mr. Rempell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
3. **PETITIONER'S REQUEST:** None.

4. ITEMS FOR SELECTMEN'S CONSIDERATION:

A. Berkshire Natural Resources Council - Conservation Restriction (Narain Schroeder) Pam Weatherbee – Mr. Turbin moved to approve a conservation restriction from Pamela Weatherbee to Berkshire Natural Resources Council of 13 acres of her land on Sweet Brook Road. Mr. Steege seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Williamstown Rural Lands – Conservation Restriction (Leslie Reed-Evans) John & Jytte Brooks – Mr. Turbin moved to approve a conservation restriction from John & Jytte Brooks to be managed by Williamstown Rural Lands for 1.75 acres on Green River Road. Mr. Rempell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Finnegan Conservation Restriction (Beth Goodman) – Attorney Goodman presented a request for a conservation restriction from Joseph and Teresa Finnegan to be managed by Williamstown Rural Lands for 37.60 acres on Northwest Hill Road adjacent to Hopkins Forest. The parcel had been approved for conservation in 2007 but the state rejected it because of building conditions the owners had placed on an adjacent parcel. That parcel was removed from consideration to simplify the procedure. Mr. Rempell moved to approve the conservation restriction request. Mr. Costley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

During discussion of the above three conservation restriction requests, selectmen noted that this is the first time that four conservation restrictions were brought before the Board at one meeting (Item 4F refers to a notice that the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation have an interest in acquiring 214 acres on Blair Road, placing 149 acres in conservation restriction). Ms. Allen and Mr. Rempell expressed concerns about the increasing open space in the town limiting development; in particular the 300 acres discussed this evening, causing a decrease in the tax rolls and resulting in loss of town income. Mr. Costley said land use was a discussion that needed to be held within the town, such as with the Planning Board and Conservation

Commission. He advised that the Selectboard should not be making people feel badly about preserving their own private property.

D. 2009 Annual License Renewals – Mr. Costley moved to approve 2009 license renewals for Restaurants as presented. Mr. Steege seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Rempell moved to approve 2009 license renewals for Package Stores as presented. Mr. Costley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Alteration of Alcohol Serving Hours on Christmas Eve – Mr. Rempell moved to Allow liquor serving establishments to close early on Christmas Eve if they so choose. Mr. Turbin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation – Conservation Restriction Interest – Ms. Allen announced in accordance with 301 CMR 51.00 that the Commonwealth has an interest in acquiring all or portions of, or lesser interests in, approximately 214 acres of land located off Blair Road in Williamstown. No other action was taken.

G. Water & Sewer Warrant (\$209,727.26) – Mr. Rempell moved to approve the Water and Sewer Warrant for the amount of \$209,727.26. Mr. Costley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

H. Mt. Greylock Regional School District – Regional Agreement between Lanesborough and Williamstown Request for Negotiation – Ms. Allen read a letter dated November 24, 2008 from the Lanesborough Board of Selectmen requesting that negotiations commence between the two towns to update the agreement. Ms. Allen stated she would contact Town Administrator Paul Boudreau to schedule a meeting.

I. Ann Clermont Mullen 100th Birthday Proclamation – Mr. Fohlin stated that one of Ms. Mullen's grandsons asked the town to share in her birthday celebration by sending her an acknowledgement. Ms. Mullen is a Williamstown native who now resides in Utica, NY and will turn 100 on December 16. Therefore, Mr. Fohlin presented a document in Ms. Mullen's honor proclaiming December 16 and 17 as Annie Eugenie Clermont Mullen Centennial Days. Mr. Steege moved that the selectmen sign the proclamation. Mr. Rempell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

5. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

Mr. Fohlin reminded residents that the town can only recycle hard plastic bottles that have a neck; soft plastics, such as tubs and microwave dishes will no longer be accepted.

Mr. Fohlin also discussed a letter dated December 3, 2008 addressed to Selectmen, and other committee members including the schools regarding Williamstown finances. The letter stated that he and Finance Director St. John constructed analyses to gauge the impact of decreases in state aid assuming a 2.5% increase in local property taxes. They modeled a 10% reduction in local aid, a 20% reduction new growth and a \$40,000 loss in motor vehicle excise taxes. The sum of these factors is a minimal increase in total available revenues of \$258,666 or 1.6% for FY2010. He said that this is less than half the increase in revenues available for the FY09 budgets. An equitable distribution of this additional 1.6% results in the following target numbers for early budgeting

purposes: General Government \$5,957,850; Elementary School \$5,260,169; McCann \$282,773 and Mount Greylock \$4,570,176. Mr. Fohlin said he would update everyone when new reliable information is received.

6. **OTHER BUSINESS:** Mr. Turbin asked that selectmen interested in attending the MMA Annual Meeting let him know so that reservations can be made.

Ms. Allen announced that this is the last meeting of 2008 and the next selectmen meeting is Monday, January 12, 2009. Happy Holidays.

7. **ADJOURN:** Mr. Costley moved to adjourn at 9 pm. Mr. Rempell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Turbin
Secretary

RT/kp