

Town of Ayer
Board of Selectmen
Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room
Ayer Massachusetts, 01432
12-23-08



Tuesday, December 23, 2008

Meeting date: 12-23-08

Present:

Carolyn McCreary, Chairman (Ms. McCreary)	X	Cornelius F. Sullivan, Vice-Chairman (Mr. Sullivan) Running Late-prior engagement	X
Richard D. Gilles, Clerk (Mr. Gilles)	X	James Fay, Member (Mr. Fay)	X
Gary J. Luca, Member (Mr. Luca)	X	Shaun Suhoski, Town Administrator (Mr. Suhoski)	X
Janet Lewis, Secretary (Mrs. Lewis)	X		

Meeting Called to order at 7:05p.m.

Public Input-Chairman McCreary requested if there was anyone present wishing to meet with the Board under Public Input. No one stepped forward.

Selectman Fay-Budget Statement

Selectman Gilles-Tri-Board January 14, 2009 @7:00p.m. Professional Development Room.

Selectman Luca –Agenda Item #3- Taken off the Agenda

Chairman McCreary called for a motion to accept the Agenda. Selectman Luca moved the Board approve the Agenda as amended, 2nd by Selectman Fay, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

Chairman McCreary opened the meeting by wishing Zelda Moore a Happy 90th Birthday.

Chairman McCreary made the following Press Release-Advising residents to Alaina Kilpatrick Dozier, Ayer High School student has been selected to participate in the MA Electoral College Ceremony on December 15, 2008 at the State House. The Board sent along their congratulations to Ms. Dozier.

Selectman Fay-stated due to current budget and as a fiscal responsibility cost savings measure he has deferred his attendance at the MMA Annual meeting in Boston to Selectman Gilles and Chairman McCreary to bring back to the Board information from this meeting to be shared among the Selectmen.

7:20p.m. Selectman Sullivan entered meeting.

Selectman Gilles advising and inviting the Board to Jan. 14, 2009 Executive Tri-Board meeting at 7:00p.m. in the Page-Hilltop Professional Development Room re on going budget deliberations.

Agenda Item #1. Chief Murray-Dispatcher appointment-Johanna Brissette-The Board met with Chief Murray who introduced Ms. Brissette. Chief Murray advising the Board to Ms. Brissette filing the vacated seat of Ann Farrow which has been vacant since 11-9-08. Chief Murray advising the Board to Ms. Brissette completing the ten (10) week training program and certified EMT/CPR Safe Instructor, graduate of Ayer Police Academy. Selectman Fay moved the Board vote to appoint Ms. Brissette to the full-time Police-Fire Ambulance Dispatcher's position contingent upon satisfactory physical/screenings by Town Physician per the recommendation of Chief Murray, 2nd by Selectman Sullivan, VOTE: unanimous, so moved. Ms. Brissette's first day of employment to be determined by Chief Murray.

Agenda Item #2. Manny Velez, Veteran's Agent-Leave of Absence request- The Board met with Manny Velez re his request for a medical Leave of Absence from January 3, 2009 to April 9, 2009 without pay. Mr. Velez introduced Michael DeTillion Town of Shirley's Veteran's Agent who will be filling in for him during his absence. Mr. DeTillion advising to his hours at the Ayer Town Hall being Monday evenings from 5:30p.m. to 7:30p.m. Selectman Fay encouraging Mr. DeTillion to participate in the Memorial Garden Committee Meetings at the Ayer Town Hall the first Monday of each month at 7:00p.m. Chairman McCreary called for a motion. Selectman Luca moved the Board vote to

approve Mr. Velez's unpaid Leave of Absence from 1-3-09 to 4-9-09, and approve Mr. DeTillion to serve as the Town of Ayer's Veteran's Agent during this period, 2nd by Selectman Sullivan for discussion, advising to the Board approving this request due to Mr. Velez having a 100% disability rating, VOTE: unanimous. So moved.

Agenda Item #3. Margaret Scarsdale-CDBG –The Board met with Margaret Scarsdale, Grant Administrator re the Fy-09 Community Development Block Grant. Ms. Scarsdale reviewed with the Board the recommendations for Ayer's CDF II Application: Two projects packets: 1. **Housing Rehabilitation Program** \$332,500.00 (14 housing units located in approved target area census tract 3251 block groups 3,4,5 and 7). 2. **Pleasant Street Infrastructure Project** \$245,00.00 (approximately 1500 linear feet of sidewalk in front of the Pleasant St. School, new granite curb, new cement concrete walk and cement wheel chair ramps). Total Grant request approximately \$777,934.00 which includes \$200K Administration costs. Ms. Scarsdale stated the CDBG –Community Development Division has determined this recommended program the most reasonable pathway to reestablish the Town's CDBG funding which is due to the devastating need-based score which renders a CDF I application unobtainable. Ms. Scarsdale stated she will be dedicating most of her allotted time for the rest of the year to this application. Ms. Scarsdale updated the Board as of Jan. 1st her hours will be reduced from 32 hours per week to 20 hours per week any residual projects related to energy, economic development or researching any other grants will cease. Selectman Gilles moved the Board support the Fy-09 CDBG Application submitted by Ms. Scarsdale for Housing Rehabilitation and Pleasant Street Infrastructure, 2nd by Selectman Sullivan VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

Agenda Item #4. Energy Optimization & Localization Proposal–Chairman McCreary opened the discussion re the proposal's goal is to ensure compliance with emerging sustainable thresholds that serve both as prerequisites for existing and emerging grant opportunities that help transition Ayer to a sustainable, resilient community capable of providing for the ongoing energy needs of its people. Chairman McCreary stated the two (2) main goals being:

1. To pave Ayer's transformation to a green community and to transition Ayer towards local energy independence, self-sufficiency and sustainability. Reduce Energy consumption 20% within the next five years, alternative energy identification and adoption, alternative fuels-explore use of bio-fuels, conservation
2. Identify other services or practices that will address enhance energy generation and conservation.-Municipalization of street lights. Chairman McCreary presented preliminary budget & task re this proposal of \$12,500.00 noting that the Board of Selectman has already authorized \$30K of UDAG money to fund such an energy project which reduces this amount significantly. The Board reviewed other surrounding Town's i.e. Groton, Littleton, energy savings through municipalization of electric and preliminary budget proposed as well as Grant opportunities available. Chairman McCreary advising to anticipated areas of cost savings to the Town: Electricity conservation of 20-50%, HVAC savings-actual savings to be developed, and vehicle fuel savings-to be developed. Selectman Fay moved the Board to go forward with sustainable alternatives as presented funding to be determined in Budget Hearing in January 2009, 2nd by Selectman Sullivan VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

Agenda Item #5. Selectman Luca re Fy-10 State Local Aid Cuts–Selectman Luca opened discussion by addressing House Speaker Salvatore DiMasi's message to Cities & Towns re possible additional 10 percent local aid cut. Selectman Luca urging the Board to be more pro-active with Budget message by looking into further reductions of 1-2% in operational budgets. The Board reviewed looking into potential saving re cuts to personnel/hours. Selectman Luca reiterated earlier discussions re regionalization of services i.e. Police, Fire, DPW, School redistricting regional purchasing of fuel, supplies. Selectman Luca suggesting to have Town Clerk look into taxing hotels, motels & restaurant tax. The Board to look at survey re prioritizing services-town-wide, 4-day work week, look into re-opening contracts, receive comments-what community wants. Mr. Suhoski advised to the Town renegotiating its health insurance contribution with 8 of its 10 unions; reducing the Town's contribution from 90 to 75% estimated savings \$2.5 million over the next 10 years, switching from semiannual tax payments to quarterly is expected to save up to \$160K, also screening discretionary spending and putting in place a temporary hiring freeze has helped the Town wrestle with reduced revenues. The fear that the Governor may have to cut local aid again in January places more emphasis to look again on further reductions.

Agenda item #6 JBoS Update–Selectman Luca reiterating need for Board's consideration re intermunicipal collaboration re accelerating some of the savings the Town will see by regionalizing services with Towns that border Ayer, stating there is a tremendous opportunity and the Town needs to act sooner than later. Collaborative purchases could be seen with the school districts and other Town costs such as fuel and energy as well as service contracts. Selectman Luca stating the Board owes it to our community to maximize our possibilities to provide the greatest of services at an affordable cost, while the speaker has indicated the possibility of increased taxes lets try not use more taxes as an option.

Selectman Fay also elaborating on potential of regionalizing of Police, Fire, and DPW suggested for small Towns/Cities.

Agenda Item #7. Town Administrator's Report-

1. No Water/Sewer reports before the Board this evening.
2. Supt. of Public Works Update-Mr. Suhoski advising the Board to Leo Blair, Chairman of the Harvard Board of Selectmen advising in a letter dated 11-6-08 to the Harvard Board of Selectmen voting unanimously to support the idea of shared DPW management and services between Ayer and Harvard. The Board requested a Public Hearing be conducted re intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Harvard for DPW Services to receive public input from residents. The Board thanked Mr. Suhoski for working dual role Town Administrator/DPW Director for past few months.
3. WWTP repair ratification -Mr. Suhoski requested the Board vote to ratify the emergency repair to the main drive at pump station presented and recommended by John Loomer to trouble shoot drive problem on Vertical Hollow Shaft Pump Motor to remove Siemens drive and install First Elec. Rental drive model CIMR G50403. Labor \$2,544.75, New Yaskawa drive Model #P7U4030-\$3,614.39, charge for rental drive per day -\$60.00 Total repair ratification \$6,159.00. Selectman Sullivan moved the Board vote to ratify agreement for the purchase, installation and repair/replacement of UFD for main pump station set forth in a PO dated 12-19-08 not to exceed \$6,159.14, 2nd by Selectman Fay, Vote Unanimous, so moved. Selectman Luca stating his dismay for need to approve of purchase prior to official vote of full Board. Selectman Fay advising to malfunction of motor-time line sensitivity and in the past the Superintendent would have signed off. Selectman Gilles stating build up could have caused overflow/backup glad foreman stepped in. Selectman Luca feeling Board should have pulled an emergency meeting together needs to be in public view, nothing hidden be up front.
4. Budget Message- Mr. Suhoski updated the Board to staff meeting scheduled for Jan. 30, 2009 at 11:00am to discuss the overall budget picture. Mr. Suhoski updated the Board to All Town Department Heads, Boards and Committees to submit to Town Accountant no later then Friday, Jan. 2, 2009 their proposed Fy-10 operating budgets reflecting a one (1) percent cut from their Fy-09 budget along with a two and a half (2.5) percent cut from Fy-09 appropriation, no COLA, wage adjustments from approved Collective Bargaining agreements, itemize by priority required cuts to personnel & services. Mr. Suhoski ran through probable range of State Aid cuts (1.0% to 4.0%). Town Departments also requested to eliminate all raise articles, unless emergency/required, All Fy-10 non-enterprise fund capital projects to be via debt or capital exclusion vote. The Board reviewed reduction in Town Hall office hours to 4 days a week 40 hours/save on utility/energy freeze wages eliminate COLA, Selectman Gilles wishing to explore all options before getting ahead of self. Selectman Sullivan's concerns re utility savings without staff cuts not included in Collective Bargaining i.e. Police, Fire, DPW, Schools and suggested eliminating evening meetings. All options are on table and residents need to be made aware of cuts to services ahead.
5. Friday, January 2, 2009 Town Hall Closing-limited staff working for short period of time on Friday i.e. payroll-Treasurer's Office, Town Accountant. Board advised to employees utilizing vacation day. The Board approved and requested doors be posted.
6. McDonalds Restaurant- Mr. Suhoski advised the Board to his meeting with Manager and addressing trash in neighborhood surrounding McDonalds and assuring Mr. Suhoski to area to be kept free of litter from their restaurant in the future. Mr. Suhoski requesting if this suffices release of Common Victueller's License. Selectman Sullivan also advising to his speaking with owner Peter Napoli re same clearing issue.

Agenda Item #8 Selectmen's Questions/New Business - Selectman Gilles moved the Board vote to approve the minutes of 10-27-08, 11-5-08 and 11-18-08, 2nd by Selectman Fay, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

Selectmen's Questions-Selectman Luca taking opportunity to wish every one a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. Selectman Sullivan-Requested snow piles be removed from Main Street to Park St. by DPW advising to people cannot get into stores. Mr. Suhoski advising the Board to clean up of sidewalks/snow being done this evening by DPW crews. Selectman Fay-Took this opportunity to publicly thank Police & Fire Departments re dangerous situation in his neighborhood which left him stranded for a couple of hours due to electric line laying across road from tree which toppled and special appreciation to Mr. Hemmingway for providing access across his property for his vehicle traffic. Thank you's also extended to Council on Aging for providing warm place for elderly and town residents during power outage.

9:00p.m. Selectman Gilles moved the Board adjourn the meeting, 2nd by Selectman Fay, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

Richard Gilles, Clerk

DATE: 1-20-09