

Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, September 23, 1996
Professional Development Room
Page School-Washington St., Ayer, MA

7:30P.M. Open Session

The Board met with Chairman Miller and Selectman Hamel.

The Minutes of 9-9-96 were read and accepted.

The Weekly Warrant was unavailable.

Chairman Miller requested if there was anyone present who wished to speak under Public Input other than those already on the Agenda. Mr. James Hamilton requested to speak re: persecution of him by his landlord and Town Police Officers. Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Stocks, re: Police harassment.

TOWN CRIER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chairman Miller made the following announcements:

1. Representative Robert Hargraves conducting Office Hours this evening at the Page School and welcomed constituents to come in and speak with him re: their concerns or questions re: State and local matters. Also announced was Representative Hargraves next Office Hours in Ayer being 10-21-96 at the Page School from 7-8 pm.
2. Chairman Miller announced the resignation of John Conway from the 4th of July Parade Committee. Chairman Miller congratulated Mr. Conway on an outstanding performance this past 4th of July working in conjunction with the 125th Anniversary Celebration to bring to the Town one of the greatest parades ever. Chairman Miller speaking on behalf of the Town extended the Board's sincerest thanks to Mr. Conway for his many years of dedicated service Chairing this event. Selectman Hamel echoing Chairman Millers comments. The Board welcomed interested citizens to contact the Selectmen's office if they are interested in assuming the parade activity for the town's next 4th of July celebration.

Chairman Miller turned the floor over to Selectman Hamel who requested Jeremy Bowman and Baby Boy Reed step forward to join the discussion concerning the Youth Center. Selectman Hamel advised the meeting to ongoing discussions taking place with Town of Ayer officials, Devens Commerce Ctr., Rev. Gillete from St. Mary's Church and the Young people present this evening. Selectman Hamel opened the discussion by stating planning meetings have been held, rules and regulations discussed, site and building selected. Selectman Hamel stated Jim Hickey, Director of Regional Economic Assistance at the Devens Commerce Center conducted a tour of available buildings at Devens which could be moved to Ayer to serve as the Youth Ctr. Selectman Hamel stated the group was before the Selectmen this evening for a vote of support for the project and to request the Board's endorsement of setting aside \$30,000.00 in UDAG funds for the project. Selectman Hamel reviewed the Park Dept. original request of 10-27-92 whereas the Board of Selectmen agreed in principal the concept for a youth facility at Pirone Park. Selectman Hamel moved the Board support the transfer of \$30,000.00 from UDAG and to move forward with the plan to acquire a building from Devens for use as a Youth Center to get the project going. Chairman Miller 2nd the motion for discussion. Chairman Miller stated his concerns with moving forward without a plan and to be sure that this project compliments the Towns Comprehensive Plan for Open Space and Recreation. Chairman Miller stating his concern that by moving too fast something may be missed referring to permits having to be approved, drawings having to be developed, Supervision, Rules & Regulations as well as Public Hearings being conducted. Chairman Miller stated he is in full support of the concept but raised these matters so as not to dismiss the process which needs to be developed for this project. Marvin McMiller, Director of the Park Dept. suggested the site next to the new basketball courts as a suitable location for the new

youth center which would be near other facilities the Park Dept. oversees. Jeremy Bowman stated concerns re: noise generating from the youth center possibly being a problem to the residents of the elderly housing located nearby. Selectman Hamel stated the group could get a concensus from the Hous. Auth. re: this noise concern but felt this would not be a problem. Selectman Hamel stated an alternate site had been selected near the Dog Pound on Barnum Rd. Chairman Miller requested to amend the original motion to state the Board approved the transfer of \$30,000.00 in UDAG for a Youth Center as a starter fund to get the project moving, 2nd by Selectman Hamel. VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

The Board addressed a letter received from Richard Elliott owner of LaSita Restaurant on Park St. addressing the need for additional crosswalks on Park St. Mr. Elliott stated customers have related to him how dangerous it is trying to cross the street by Duncan Do-nuts and in front of his establishment when they park across the street. Selectman Hamel read into the record the letter from Mr. Elliott. The Board requested Chief Haapakoski and Supt. Ouellette review this request before taking any action, due to Park Street is a State Road and being such would require State approval.

The Board met with James Hamilton of Atherton Street, who stated he was before the Selectmen this evening concerning Ayer Police treating his complaints to lightly re: his landlord. Mr. Hamilton stated his concern for his safety on various occasions and as of most recent by a letter delivered to him which he felt was suspicious appearing to look like a "letter bomb" which he presented to Chairman Miller for his review. Mr. Hamilton stated he has felt threatened on various occasions and solicited Police assistance. Mr. Hamilton felt he was being persecuted for being a "black person". Mr. Hamilton relayed problems concerning his landlord and the landlords maintenance man that he has had in the past, reported and had no action taken by town boards and police which forced him into taking legal action against the Town. The Board to review this matter with the Police Chief.

The Board met with Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Stocks of Snakehill Rd. Ayer, MA Mr. Stocks stated he was here this evening to report to the Board he has been intimidated by what he terms as a slanderous campaign by the Ayer Police Dept. Mr. Stocks related that he has been a resident of Ayer for twelve (12) years is a small business owner with an office in Norwell. Mr. Stocks stated his problem with the Ayer Police Dept. started back in November of 1995 stating he was arrested for substance abuse. Which he admits was wrong. He has four (4) children from the age of 5-17 which have been removed from his home and sent out of State by the Ayer Police Dept. for no reason. This past weekend Mr. Stocks was arrested and locked up from Friday to Monday, arraigned in Ayer District Court for beating up his wife (who is 7 mo. pregnant) which he said was erroneous. Mr. Stocks stated the Ayer Police Dept. lies, manipulates, slanders him & his family constantly he has had forty (40) charges made against him which have all been dismissed. Mr. Stocks stated he has lost his blasting license/bonding due do to this harassment. Mrs. Stocks stated they have been awakened at night from sound sleep and arrested for causing a disturbance. Mr. Stocks stated he was before the Board this evening for assistance stating the Town now has a very young department and the younger officers learn what they see this he felt is where more leadership was needed.. Selectman Hamel stated with two complaints in one evening this behooves the Board to investigate. Chairman Miller also stated he wished to meet with Chief Haapakoski to hear the police side of the story and that the Board would form no response until further discussions were held.

The Board met with the Ayer Board of Assessors, present for the discussion were: Town Accountant-Lisa Gabree, Town Treasurer-Thomas Callahan, Assessors Assistant-David Batchelder, Assessors: Edward Cornellier, Sandra Jones, and Denis Callahan. Chairman Miller opened the discussion by requesting the cause of the delay on the second half of the FY-96 tax bills not being sent out and the effect on the Town due to the delay in the Town's cash flow.

Chairman of the Board of Assessors, Edward Cornellier stated that an error in placement of the figures concerning values established for industrial properties in town has been discovered only after being submitted to the Dept. of Revenue(DOR). A \$3.8 million dollar error in values established for industrial properties last May. The mistake was determined to be "human error" and not a problem created with the conversion of data from the State's software for Assessors (CAMA) to the Town's. The Board was advised that the correction of this mistake moved the actual tax rate set at \$9.33 per \$1,000 valuation for residential property for Fy-96 to \$9.39. The Commercial tax rate originally set at \$17.40 per \$1,000 valuation to \$17.56.

David Batchelder stated the new rate does not require the Selectmen to conduct another Public Hearing and that this change is a matter of computing figures to determine the rates. The Assessors stated that they would contact DOR to defray any doubts as to whether a new Public Hearing is necessary. The Assessors stated now that the error has been discovered the State could certify the rates and within a week new bills could be sent out. The Assessors stated N.E. Hydro is willing to pay their tax bill of \$900,000.00 without waiting for the bill to help alleviate the town's cash flow problem. The Selectmen requested if the Town Treasurer was agreeable to the resolutions presented this evening, Mr. Callahan stated he was satisfied to the arrangements. The Assessors stated in the future procedural changes have been made to address problems such as this from occurring again. The Assessors also stated the first half 1997 taxes should be out by December 1, 1996. The Selectmen expressed their concern re: residents receiving two tax bill a month short of each other as well as just before the Christmas holiday.

Chairman Miller announced the representative re: DEP/Devens Consolidation Plan-Shepley Hill were not in attendance.

The Board met with Diane Sullivan, Economic Development Director, Ms. Sullivan stated she was before the Board this evening to recommend two (2) appointment to the Industrial Development Finance Authority due to the recent resignation of Linda Webster this would bring the Board up to full capacity. Ms. Sullivan recommended the appointments of Paul Bresnahan and Brian Anderson. Selectman Hamel moved the Board approve the appointments of Paul Bresnahan and Brian Anderson to the Industrial Development Finance Authority, 2nd by Chairman Miller, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

1. Town Administrator James Kreidler recommended to the Board that the Town go out to bid re: Janitorial Services for the Town Hall. Mr. Kreidler recommended a part-time agency be considered to clean the building two hours before it opens two or three times a week or even every day. Mr. Kreidler stated this was before the Board this evening due to a increase coming in re: the current janitorial service which services the the building, which is cleaned only once a week. Mr. Kreidler requested the Personnel Board review the grade level and write a job description. The Board took this under advisement pending further information.

2. The Board moved to appoint Mr. Kreidler as the liaison for the Disabilities Commission. Selectman Hamel moved the appointment 2nd by Chairman Miller, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

3. The Board appointed Bruce Paige to the Disabilities Commission per the recommendation of Lori Brennan, Chairman of the Disabilities Commission. Selectman Hamel moved the appointment, 2nd by Chairman Miller, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

4. Ms. Kreidler announced under Chapter 150E the Collective Bargaining Agreements were moving along well with one Union nearing completion.

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5. The Board approved of water & sewer permits, per the approval of the DPW Supt. for Lots 1-6 Long Pond. Selectman Hamel moved, 2nd by Chairman Miller. VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

Selectman Hamel moved the Board adjourn the meeting, 2nd by Chairman Miller, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

8:50p.m. Meeting Adjourned.

Pauline J. Hamel DATE: 10-7-96
Pauline J. Hamel, Chairman