

## **Board of Selectmen's Meeting**

**December 3, 2009**

Present: First Selectman Gayle Weinstein; Selectman David Muller; Selectman Dan Gilbert; Town Administrator Tom Landry; Administrative Assistant Judy DeVito, Press and members of the public.

**This meeting was recorded and video taped and the tapes are available in the Selectmen's office.**

Ms. Weinstein called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

**Pledge of Allegiance-** Dan Gilbert lead the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance

**Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of Patricia Sullivan as the Town Attorney for a term to expire December 31, 2011-** Pat Sullivan said that she has been the Assistant Town Attorney since 2000 and has served First Selectmen Hal Shupak and Woody Bliss with Ken Bernhard from the firm of Cohen & Wolf. They do a lot of attorney work throughout Fairfield and New Haven counties. She has served the town by giving general advice, advice to the Land Use Commissions and had done a lot of litigation for the Town. They have great back-up; it is a large firm with a lot of different expertise and talent.

Ms. Weinstein said that she has particularly enjoyed working with Ms. Sullivan which is why she asked her if we could appoint her as Town Attorney. Mr. Muller made a motion to appoint Patricia Sullivan as the Town attorney for a term to expire December 31, 2011. Mr. Gilbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/decision regarding the reappointment of Margaret Wirtenberg as Weston's SWRPA representative for a term to expire December 31, 2011.** Ms. Wirtenberg said that SWRPA is the voluntary regional planning body for the Towns from Greenwich to Westport and including Wilton. Her job is to represent the Board of Selectmen. She has supervised doing their regional plan. There are 22 members and Weston has two votes.

Mr. Muller asked if there was a mechanism for her to report back to the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Wirtenberg said it is casual since the First Selectman sits on the Metropolitan Planning Organization which is a sister organization to SWRPA. She will come forward if she needs to. Ms. Weinstein said she met with Floyd Lapp, Executive Director of SWRPA today who had wonderful glowing things to say about Ms. Wirtenberg. Ms. Weinstein said that she would give the other Selectmen a report on some of the external committees that she attends so that they know what is going on.

Mr. Gilbert made a motion to appoint Margaret Wirtenberg as Weston's SWRPA representative for a term to expire December 31, 2011. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously

**Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of Steve Ezzes to the Board of Finance to fill the vacancy (David Muller) for a term to expire November 15, 2011.**

(Mr. Ezzes participated via telephone) Mr. Ezzes said prior to moving to Weston about five years ago, he served on the Board of Finance in Westport for 10 years and the last eight as Chairman. He said much of what went on in the ten years in Westport will serve him well in Weston. That was a period of building and refurbishing schools, a senior center was constructed, land was purchased etc. His professional background has been in public and private investment management.

Mr. Muller made a motion to nominate Steve Ezzes as his successor as a member of the Board of Finance for a term to expire November 15, 2011. Mr. Gilbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/Interview for reappointment/appointments on the Commission on Aging for Margaret Anderson; Terry Hully; Susan Moore; Tom Sherman**

**Margaret Anderson-** Ms. Weinstein asked about Ms. Anderson's role on Commission for Aging. She said she worked with Det. Filsinger to come to the senior lunch and talked to them about the domestic violence scams. She thought about joining up with the High School kids and getting them to do a skit about domestic violence for the seniors. They would like to do it sometime in May.

Ms. Weinstein asked what she thought was the number one issue facing our seniors today. Ms. Anderson said the seniors do not understand what is going on with the scams.

**Terry Hully** - She has lived in Weston for 25 years and has been on the League of Women Voters, the Women's Club, and Newcomers. She has been on the Commission on Aging for six years and it is very active now. They have done the new Dial a Ride van, the tax freeze, they use the senior center and attend lunches. The Social Services Director comes and talks to them at their meetings. About 1 ½ years ago she started a book club. There are currently 12 people involved.

**Susan Moore** – She is a registered nurse and has been working as a visiting nurse for the last 20 years. She is currently at Meadow Ridge as their visiting nurse. She saw the ad for members for the Commission on Aging in the paper. Most of her patients are old and she is concerned about the things she sees. Loneliness is a terrible problem for them, finances and health care issues.

Ms. Weinstein asked if she would have an issue attending commission meeting since they are during the day. She said no, she had checked with her company and they were fine with that.

**Discussion/Interview for reappointment on the Building Board of Appeals for David Coprio. David Coprio-**

Mr. Coprio was asked to talk about the Board. He said that the Building Board of Appeals gets involved if a homeowner or a builder has something under construction and has a disagreement or feels that they have not been treated fairly

by the building official. They can then elect to come before the Building Board of Appeals. He said they have had about four people in the last 15 years.

**Discussion/Interview for reappointment/appointments on the Building Committee for Jack Davidoff; Allen Swerdlowe; Raisa Kendall-**

**Jack Davidoff-** He has a couple of companies involved in construction engineering design. He was on the alternative energy committee and has 30 years plus experience in engineer design and construction. He would like to give back to the community and thought this was a good way to do it.

Ms. Weinstein said that Jack had done a great job serving on the Alternative Energy Sub-Committee of the Building Committee. One of the things that impressed her is that he is already familiar with their issues and knows what is going on so it is not going to take much to get him up to speed.

Mr. Muller asked if he saw any potential conflict between his professional experience and what he is doing here in terms of anything that he is doing in the Town, where his company could have an interest. Mr. Davidoff said it was his understanding that he was not allowed to work in the Town.

**Discussion/Interview for reappointment/appointments on the Conservation Commission for Howard Aibel; David Rosenberg; Robert Turner; Joseph Pachman; Cathy Minter.**

**Howard Aibel-** He spent most of his career working for General Electric and ITT. At ITT he was in charge of environmental compliance and mediation. He pursued the idea of working the environmental end on the Conservation Committee. All of the work they have done involved wetlands and waterways. He said there are signs that development in the Town is picking up and he looks forward to a busier time.

Mr. Aibel said that he is working on their regulations. Ms. Weinstein said that getting regulations in place is going to be a big part of what they are going to be focusing on in the next couple of years.

**Robert Turner-** He said implementing good conservation measures with reasonable constraint upon the impact of the home as they interplay all the time. He has talked to other code enforcement officer about the disturbing impact over some of the demands that are placed on people. Influencing state conservation statues is a big thing that they can do. He feels it has to come from the grass roots.

Mr. Turner said he was on P&Z from 1967 to 1980. He was on ZBA for 14 years and Building Committee for 10 years. He was code enforcement officer for ten years and it was very rewarding. That is where he holds his attitude about equal treatment under the law.

**Discussion/Interview for reappointment/appointments on the Historic District Commission for Paul Deysenroth; Carole Baldwin –**

**Paul Deysenroth-** He has been on the Historic District Commission for one year and was elected vice chairman last year and was just re-elected as vice chairman this year. The Historic District Commission is responsible for five different areas in Weston that were declared historic districts. It is their responsibility to ensure that their charge is met. Their mandates are laid out strictly by how Historic District Commissions was commissioned by the State. One of the things they are finding is that people that buy houses in Weston are not informed soon enough as to what they are required to do and not to do in a historic district. That is one of their plans.

Mr. Deysenroth said that he has been in Town for 45 years and has been on the Weston Fire Department and EMS for 45 years. He has been on the Board of Trustees and President of the Weston Historical Society. He is now responsible for the facilities there. He has also been on the Lachat and Morehouse Heady Committee to investigate what can be done and what should not be done to the properties.

**Discussion/Interview for appointment on the Historic District Commission as an alternate for Stuart Mather Gibson III-**

**Stuart Mather Gibson III-** His background is an international consultant dealing with a large cultural organizations and governments during the economic and political crisis. The last 15 years he has been consulting for the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg Russia. He is the secretary to their international advisory board and he has worked in most of the countries in the former Soviet Union. A few years ago he branched out into the Middle East and currently he is consultant to the director of the new Nation Museum in Jordan and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo. He spent a month in Iraq.

He is interested in this because he has gone into semi retirement and will be traveling less. He believes that we should all get involved in some sort of community service. One of the reasons they moved to Weston was that Weston is a city that has been and will continue to be unpolluted by the onslaught of a more commercial world.

**Discussion/Interview for reappointment/appointments on the Library Board for Victor Escandon; Marilyn Parker; Amy Sanborn; Denis Toner.**

**Victor Escandon-** He moved here about a year and a half ago. He was born and raised in Mexico City. He came to the United States and studied at Boston University. He worked in banking in Manhattan for a number of years. He completed his graduate degree and then moved over to the corporate side and worked with PepsiCo for eight years.

He said there is nothing distinct that qualifies him for the Library Board but he feels Weston is a unique place and it is incumbent upon us to get involved to make sure that the Town continues in the right direction.

Ms. Weinstein asked where he saw the library going. He said it was too early for him to tell where it was going. The combination of trends, competitive comparisons to Wilton

and Westport, his point of view has to be developed. It is important to create a dialogue to make sure that it is being looked at as a whole.

Mr. Muller asked if it was possible to run this service more like a business that delivers something to its users. Mr. Escandon said there is always an opportunity to change. The model needs to be set forth in terms of how it is going to be analyzed.

**Marilyn Parker-** She is a single Mom and has lived in Weston for 15 years. She has a daughter in the High School. Prior to that she was in the corporate world where she was the director of marketing at CitiBank. She feels that puts her in a good place for helping to market the library because one of these challenges is to make sure it becomes a vital useful part of the community.

Ms. Weinstein asked what she thought the biggest issue facing the library is today. Ms. Parker said the library should be something that is not just books but more of a place where people gather on an on going base.

**Amy Sanborn-** She has been on the Library Board since May of 2003. She said she comes from a family of service and when she moved back here in 1993 she got involved and has done a lot of different things in the schools and the community.

She views the library as a place where we can come together as a community. When she thought about what the library should be, her answer was it is what the Town should want it to be, and what we can afford. Early on she was pushing for doing a Town wide survey, they did end up doing a survey within the library and the patron's that use the library are pretty happy with the library. The board has done a lot and has implemented a strategic planning committee.

She echoes what has been said, we need to make sure that it is a welcoming gathering place, a destination, that it has social benefits. There are things that she they can do, they have talked about evening hours, that require staff, Wednesday nights are not very well attended now. They need to find mechanisms to figure out what people want them to be.

She is passionate about wanting to continue her service. They have had a lot of turnovers in the last year. They have about 5 members who have been on for 1 year or less. Tuesday night she was unanimously elected chair going forward and she hopes the Board will let her fulfill that honor that the Library board has given her.

Mr. Weinstein asked, with three seats up, why would their Board hold elections for offices then rather than just hold a special meeting afterwards. Ms. Sanborn said that it was required in their by-laws. Ms. Weinstein asked "to hold it by January"? Amy said no their by laws read that the election of officers will happen in December. Ms. Weinstein said there are many more days in December between now and December 31<sup>st</sup>. They could have held a special meeting afterwards with so many seats up. Amy said that nobody proposed that.

David Muller also said he wanted to raise the question of a chairman's election two nights before the hearing to determine the composition of the Board. He said that he did not think it sends the right message. It is poor form for the Board two nights before a public hearing to determine whether it is Democrat or Republican controlled board to elect a new chairman.

Ms. Sanborn said that quite honestly none of them looked at it that way. It is something they always elected in December. There was some discussion as to what was required under the charter, they looked at the charter, they looked at the by laws and honestly, innocently no one in the room made a motion to postpone the vote and have a special meeting and there were nine of them there.

Mr. Gilbert asked what the vote was. Ms. Sanborn said it was unanimous 9 to 0. Ms. Sanborn said she did not want to put people on the spot. If people wanted to vote against her they could have and they did not. She said it was an innocent oversight that was not considered. She said that was all she could tell them was nine of them missed it. Mr. Gilbert asked how many people were in the room. He asked how many voted for her. She said the nine who were authorized to vote.

**Denis Toner-** He has been in Town approximately 10 years with his wife and two daughters. This was the first time he has gotten involved in the Town. He is a huge fan of the libraries and would drag his kids to libraries throughout the region. He is a big believer that a healthy thriving Town at the center has a healthy thriving library.

Ms. Weinstein asked him his view of the library and changes that he feels need to be made. He said the strategic planning committee is a great idea. He said we need to figure out what we think is important, what we think will be most relevant for the Town and then try to figure out within a resource constrained framework how we are able to achieve those objective in the short, intermediate and long term.

Ms. Weinstein asked if we did not have the tough economic climate right now what would be the one addition to the library that he would like to see. Mr. Toner said that there were a lot but whatever we are doing needs to be relevant for people of all ages. Areas that would drive people into the library would be greater more music, videos, which would then expose people to various publications we have. It is a fairly reasonable entertainment value for people in Town.

Mr. Gilbert asked if he had attended any meeting and what was his impression of the people serving. Mr. Toner said there have been some changes but it is an exciting time to be there. There are a number of people who bring new and diverse ideas. Jane has been with the library for some time and brings that source continuity and gives us great insights in the history. The group of people really want to work together to do what we can for the library.

**Discussion/ Interview for reappointment/appointments on the Parks and Recreation Commission for Eric Albert; PJ Dodge; Nancy Babyak; David Juneau; Robert Uzenoff.**

**Eric Albert-** He was appointed in September of this year to fill the vacancy of Pat Kane after Mr. Kane passed away. He said he had explained to the previous board which Ms. Weinstein was a part of, he grew up in Weston and went to school and has been back for nine years.

He was a student in Weston in the late 70's and 80's so he brings that prospective to the board. The peer group of the people in Town that he socializes with has kids in the elementary school and nursery school. He is heavily involved in coaching. It is very important to him that sports are offering in Town because that is a vital part of any child's up bringing.

Mr. Muller said one of his frustrations is inaccessible to fields because of weather. Mr. Albert said the field at Bisceglie are completely water logged and as a coach of the first grade team in the fall there were a few occasions where he got called an hour before his game saying that he could not use the fields unless he could find parents to help rake and put clay. He said he felt they have great fields and maintenance is really a key issue.

Mr. Albert said that he wanted the Board to know that the Chairman of the commission requested that he serve as the Secretary of the commission and he has accepted the request.

**PJ Dodge** – She has lived in Weston for over 21 years. She raised two boys through the school systems. They played many sports and were involved for many years in all sorts of activities sponsored through the Town and through the club. She was involved in the PTO, was president of the elementary school PTO and president of the High School PTO. After her youngest son went to college she took time off and went back to work part-time. She saw the ad for the Parks & Recreation Commission and thought that would be something she would like to get involved in and she wants to get back involved with the Town.

Ms. Weinstein asked if there was anything in her school background that she thought would help to facilitate that relationship with the schools. Ms. Dodge said that she worked with the schools, worked with budgets, her boys all played athletics which she was very involved in. She has been on the Booster Committee for a couple of years. Now that we have the Booster Barn coming maybe we can generate some income.

Mr. Muller said in the current environment many Towns across the country have looked at user fees. He asked if we should be looking at more of that. She said that she did not know. They had started the user fees while one of her children were in High School and she feels it is a hard thing because it is expensive. She can see the pros and cons.

**Nancy Babyak-** She has lived in Town since 1991 and has been on the commission since the fall of 1997. She said she grew up in a Town where there were not sports for girls in

the schools and the only availability was through parks and recreation. She grew up in an environment where it was vital within the Town that you could do other things at a discount cost.

She said in terms of the fields being closed all the time, we are very similar to most of the Towns around here. It is maintenance issue and it is also an issue of traffic. The fields are overbooked and whenever we get rain and get feet on the grass it eats it up. They looked at other Towns and why the fields are better and it has to do with the systematic closing of fields when they are wet. It is frustrating but in the long run it saves the fields.

There are user fees already. Any child who plays a sport that is involved with artificial turf they are charge \$10 per child per season. There are other town organizations that handle it this way as well. Unlike other Towns it is pay to play. None of the activities that Park & Recreation offers are subsidized by the Town.

She loves the commission and would love to continue.

Ms. Weinstein asked about the long lines at sign up for the ski trip and was there anyway to leave it open and we can fill as many buses as we can to try to accommodate all the people that want to participate. Ms. Babyak said that she spoke to her kids and there had been a lot of cafeteria talk going on about the ski trips and it got home to parents. Ms. Babyak said she told her friends everyone will get on. It would help if we could go to an automated system the way Westport does. This also happens with the camps.

**David Juneau-** He has lived in Town since 1996. He got involved with his parish and met Bob Uzenoff there and asked him about a position that he had seen in the paper for a spot on the Parks and Recreation Commission. He got on the commission in late 1997 early 1998. They have seen a nice change in Town from shifting of fields from just school campus to across other parts of the Town.

Ms. Weinstein asked what he felt was the number one issue facing Parks and Recreation given the budget constraints. Dave said that they have been very fortunate in Parks & Recreation to have some wonderful fields and with that they have accomplished what they wanted to do. Maintenance and knowing the standards that you want to use to maintain your asset have become something that they focused on. They realized that on the commission none of them is a soil scientist or a turf expert. They use the advice of professionals to try to set standards and bench marks so that you can measure those things.

Budget wise that becomes an issue, you have to be smart with your assets, you have to manage them appropriately so moving things around a little and making sure the fields get rested, making sure that communication is good becomes key. They worked on a flat budget from last year and it looks like it will be that way again this year. He said they have to work within the constraints and he felt they could do that.

Ms. Weinstein asked if he had any ideas for improving Weston. Dave said during the school construction they were fortunate to be able to construct fields in other places in Town. There was work done in Revson that they did not oversee and they could ask for money to fix that field but sometimes you have to work with what you have.

## **Open Items**

### **Ongoing update**

**Grants- Gayle Weinstein-** The police department received a grant for a comprehensive DUI enforcement program which allows them to do DUI monitoring on our roads. That is a federal grant for \$45,000.

**Fuel Cell- Gayle Weinstein –** No new news

**Booster Barn- Gayle Weinstein-** No new news

### **Tickler file, discuss as updated**

**Reimbursement from State for school projects- Tom Landry-** Mr. Landry said that he updated the selectmen in an email.

**January Tax Collection- Report- Tom Landry-** Mr. Landry said that Charity Nichols, the tax collector had gathered some information this week that showed collections as of the end of November we were spot on. No drop off since last year.

Mr. Muller made a motion to add any other business to come properly before the meeting to the agenda. Mr. Gilbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

There was no other business to add to the agenda.

### **Discussion/approval of the Board of Selectmen's meeting minutes of November 19, 2009 and Executive Session meeting minutes of November 19, 2009.**

Mr. Gilbert made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2009 and the Executive Session meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

At 9:20pm Mr. Muller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gilbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Judy M. DeVito  
Administrative Assistant  
Approved 01/26/2010

