

**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
April 2, 2018**

Present: Mary Blanchard, Chairman
Priscilla Gimas, Vice Chair
Michael Suprenant
Craig Morgan
Leon Gaumond, Jr. Town Administrator
Colleen King, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Mary Dowling, Clerk

Open Session

Meeting opened at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Donate Life Month Flag Presentation and Proclamation

Chairman Blanchard read the proclamation. Robin Lataille, a representative from Southbridge for the New England Organ Bank was present to present the flag. The Board members signed the proclamation and presented it to Ms. Lataille.

Public Service Announcements

P. Gimas: Reminded the public of the upcoming Election Day ~ Monday, April 9th from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. She also wished residents of the Orthodox faith a joyous Easter this coming Sunday, April 8th

M. Suprenant: Attended a presentation at the Senior Center of a plaque in memory of Paul Louranger. His wife Marsha presented the plaque and stained glass window. M. Suprenant thanked the staff for organizing the event and the Louranger family for the generous donation.

M. Blanchard informed the public that the meeting was being recorded by Craig Semon, of the Worcester Telegram & Gazette.

6:15 p.m. Discussion with Charter Communications Representative – Services & Rates

Charter representative Anna Lucey, Director of Government Affairs, was present to speak with the Board regarding service issues. M. Blanchard stated that there have been a large number of residents who have had many sporadic service outage issues in the past and several during the last storm event.

M. Blanchard stated that her understanding is when equipment is malfunctioning, it is replaced, but is there an upgrade plan for the area? Is the current cable system old and in need of upgrading? Can residents be notified when system will be out? Ms. Lucey responded that line leakage issues are unexpected. Trucks try to monitor in compliance with FCC, but cannot always stay on top of the occurrences. Small leakages versus large could take up to seven (7) days to correct.

P. Gimas stated that she and many other residents were without internet service for 41 hours. She asked why it is that National Grid can give an estimate of outage time, but Charter cannot. Also, when calling customer service, the representatives often are not aware of the service outages. She noted that the last storm event was not significant in comparison with other winter storms experienced this winter. In addition, rebates are not easy to get; effort is on the customer to chase after the rebates. Ms. Lucey

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responded that the regional operation center controls service, which is why customer service representatives who are stationed in many states do not know first-hand of the location of service problems. P. Gimas asked if the regional center tracks the service outages. Ms. Lucey stated she does not know at this time but can find out. C. Moran stated he has tried to change billing from the old owner to himself, and to date, years later, there is still no change. He also does not understand why his multiple TV sets, on the same cable network, act differently, one with problems, the other not. One resident told C. Moran that he has never had problems with Charter, but many more residents do have continual issues. He also voiced concern about the unreliable system with the Charter phones as they go out when the electricity goes out, which is a concern for seniors. Ms. Lucey responded that Verizon is a reliable system for bad weather because of the copper hard wiring, but Charter runs on cable, which is susceptible to weather interruption. P. Gimas stated that 3.5 years ago when Charter was awarded the contract, the same issues then are still with the Town now. M. Suprenant voiced concern regarding the voice modem from Spectrum; the battery back up only has 2 hours of power, why not an 8 hour back up model that is currently available on the market?

Ms. Lucey was asked about Charter taking over the double utility poles. Ms. Lucey stated she was not prepared with a report on that plan, but a notification system will take place with National Grid. Ms. Lucey also stated that the town of Sturbridge is currently all digital and the backbone of system is up to date.

P. Gimas noted that on March 1, evening time, is when the internet outage occurred and Farquhar, Blueberry Lane and Fiske Hill were most affected by the last storm, as well as River Road, and a large part of Route 131. M. Blanchard asked Ms. Lucey if she could get feedback to all the Board members questions and concerns to the Town Administrator; Ms. Lucey stated that she will report back.

Resident Allyn Menard of 9 Lauren Lane asked if he could speak. Mr. Menard stated to Ms. Lucey and the Board members that residents were not notified about the cable being taken down. Cable was out for days; not just one day. Mr. Menard would like to know the reasons behind the lack of quality service? How can residents be credited? There were 14 houses affected, not just his. Notification stickers are required to be posted when work is being conducted, but there were none. Ms. Lucey stated she will look into the matter with Operations. Spectrum is obligated by contract to respond to the complaints of residents. P. Gimas requested Charter get back to the Town Administrator about why they didn't know about the number of outages. Also, what is Charter's definition of outage? Is it defined by hours? Or days? Ms. Lucey responded that line leakage is not technically defined as an outage.

Town Administrator Updates

Notification Right of First Refusal 61A 226 Podunk Rd area. Expect no action at this time. Will get a review from various town departments and boards. Town is notified when there is a bona fide offer on property for board review. The Town has 120 days to consider purchase and to get funding.

Response to MassDOT re: New Boston Rd/Route 20. L. Gaumond will post the study on the Town website. Findings based on crash reports no significant crash history, no changes. No improvements are recommended. Restricting left hand turns could help with future crashes based on crash history. No action by Board required. Board member questioned crash data, 3-4 years not enough span of time especially with most current years not being considered with the increased traffic. M. Suprenant stated that there is increased traffic currently with new hotel and will get worse in the future with Panera Bread coming.

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Requested concurrence to appoint Christopher Trajkovski as Associate Member to the Trails Committee:

Motion: I move to appoint Christopher Trajkovski as an Associate Member to the Trails Committee for a three (3) year term. by: C. Moran

2nd: by P. Gimas

Vote passed 4-0

Announced the resignation Barbara Search from the Elderly & Disabled Tax Assistance Committee

Motion: I move to accept the resignation of Barbara Search from the Elderly and Disabled Tax Assistance Committee. by: M. Suprenant

2nd: by C. Moran

Vote passed 4-0

Announced the resignation of Taylor Plumley as full-time dispatcher from the Police Department.

Motion: I move to accept the resignation of Taylor Plumley as full-time Dispatcher from the Police Department. by: C. Moran

2nd: by P. Gimas

Vote passed 4-0

Informed the Board of Taylor Plumley's request to remain as a part-time dispatcher.

Motion: I move to recommend the appointment of Taylor Plumley as part-time Dispatcher to the Police Department. by: P. Gimas

2nd: by M. Suprenant

Vote passed 4-0

L. Gaumond read a Letter of Recognition for Support Staff sent by Susan Grandone, Chairman of the Council on Aging on behalf of the entire Council Board. The recognition is for Leslie Wong, Outreach Coordinator, Carmen MacGillivray, Administrative Assistant, and Rachel Jalbert, Program Coordinator for going above and beyond in their duties during the three month absence of a Senior Center Director.

Old Business

P. Gimas asked if department head salaries could be presented as a line item in budget as a means of being more transparent per residents' requests. Blanchard stated percentages are surprisingly high. The Town Administrator stated that he provided a breakdown of steps and put them in each of the selectmen's mailbox slots.

New Business

P. Gimas brought up a possible discussion for the future in reference to the Town's health insurance. P. Gimas asked if it is a standard policy for municipalities to provide dental coverage. L. Gaumond stated that it is an optional choice in Sturbridge and that some other towns do not offer the option at all.

C. Moran gave a statement to the Board members that with the upcoming election; tonight's meeting may be his final meeting if not re-elected. He thanked the board for their time and good work during his term.

M. Suprenant followed with a statement that should he not be re-elected; he has enjoyed serving with Board. He also encouraged residents to get out and vote on April 9th at Old Sturbridge Village.

Town Administrator Goals & Planning for Board for 2018. L. Gaumond reviewed the list of goals written for the Board members.

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Correspondence

P. Gimás read the correspondence into the record. P. Gimás stated that when there is a full Board, she would like have further discussion regarding the KP Law memo on marijuana.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of March 19, 2018 as amended. by: M. Suprenant

2nd: by P. Gimás

Vote passed 3-0-1 (C. Moran abstaining)

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of March 5, 2018. by: C. Moran

2nd: by P. Gimás

Vote passed 3-0-1 (M. Blanchard abstaining)

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of January 17, 2017 as amended. by: M. Suprenant

2nd: by C. Moran

Vote passed 3-0-1 (P. Gimas abstaining)

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of February 21, 2017 as amended. by: C. Moran

2nd: by P. Gimás

Vote passed 4-0

November 20, 2017 Minutes

Approval held until all voting members are present.

Citizen's Forum

None

Motion: I move to adjourn. by: P. Gimas

2nd: by M. Blanchard

Vote passed 4-0

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Colleen J. King, Administrative Assistant

Mary Dawkins May 4 '18
BOS Clerk Date

BOS Clerk

Date _____