

Westbrook Board of Selectmen

SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, June 27, 2011

Mulvey Municipal Center, 866 Boston Post Road, Westbrook

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Bishop called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

A quorum was established with the following Board members present: First Selectman Bishop, Selectman Hall and Selectman Ehlert.

Also in attendance: Members of the Press, residents, Andrew Urban, Director of Finance and, Meg Parulis, Planner.

Mr. Bishop requested a moment of silence for two Westbrook residents who recently died; Bob Lagasse, and Red Dubord.

Mr. Bishop reported that today's Special Meeting will recess and reconvene to interview the two candidates for the Treasurer's position.

BUSINESS

Endorsement of Draft Plan of Conservation and Development – Meg Parulis

A copy of an Addendum to the Draft POCD dated 6/22/11 was distributed and reviewed.

Mr. Parulis reported that the Planning Commission held a Public Information Meeting at the Library on May 23, 2011 to elicit feedback to the draft POCD. This feedback has been incorporated into the Addendum presented this evening. The Planning Commission will hold the Public Hearing for adoption this evening (June 27, 2011) and will vote on the POCD at a Special Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 30, 2011.

Several letters regarding the Plan were included in the BOS packets for Selectmen review. Ms. Parulis reported that the nature of changes to the Plan were mainly in the form of clarifications.

The three topics generating the most concern included: Tourism, Affordable Housing and Town Center.

Town Center

Concern was raised that the Town Center boundary contains residential areas and that there was an interest in expanding development in these areas. Ms. Parulis reported that this is not the intent of the Plan. Explicit language to clarify has been added under the "Town Center Commercial Area" heading, characteristic clarification has been added and the heading has been changed on page 99 of the Plan to read: "Preserve the Town Center as the Civic, Social, Residential and Commercial Core of the Community". Also the Addendum proposes that the boundary be modified as shown in the Addendum consistently throughout the document on plans, maps etc.

Ms. Parulis clarified that South Main Street is shown on the future Land Use Map as a residential area.

Ms. Parulis reviewed several additional areas of the Plan that have been modified for clarification. She commented that the POCD is meant as a guidance document and must be kept in context.

Tourism

Ms. Parulis reported that in order to protect neighborhoods, the Commission re-focused the Tourism Chapter to emphasize a balance on tourism efforts so to not adversely impact residents.

To reflect full time residents, the term "coastal cottages" was changed to "beach community". There was discussion regarding the percentage of full time "beach" area residents. Ms. Parulis reported that it is difficult to determine the number of year round beach homes. Both census figures and Water Company data have been reviewed to determine the percentage of full time beach area residents.

Ms. Parulis reported that language was added to ensure public access areas have sufficient parking. She continued that the “Blue Way” shown on the Open Space Vision Map was adjusted to not touch land. The Coastal Management Plan will address these issues further.

The Beach Community expressed concern that Seaside Ave. was designated as a “scenic road”. They contend that Seaside Ave. was not designed to carry the current traffic to Pilot’s Point Marina. To allay their concerns, this designation will be removed.

Under the “Support the Marina District”, the following sentence will be added, second paragraph: “It will be important to protect the character of the existing residential properties as part of this change. A special zone is appropriate.”

Ms. Parulis reported that the Open Space portion of the Plan was “tweaked” to include management plans for town owned property.

Ms. Nancy Moore expressed concern that a proposed modification indicates that all B&B’s should be designated as commercial. Ms. Parulis responded that the existing land use map shows some B&B’s as commercial and some residential. The land use map is based on the Assessor’s coding for that property. The Assessor agreed that they should be considered commercial as an income is generated on the property. We do have commercial properties in residential areas that are grandfathered. The Assessor has corrected records and this will be reflected in the revaluation.

Ms. Parulis reported that as part of the statutory adoption process, the Plan was referred to the Regional Planning Agency and the DEP Office of Long Island Sound. A letter of support from these agencies has been received.

Selectman Hall expressed concern with the portion of the Plan referring to “Through Roads”. Mr. Hall gave a history of the Toby Hill sub-division, Halls Road and Pond Meadow Road areas. The difficulty in creating more East/West connections, due to topography and ownership issues in the area, was discussed.

Selectman Hall suggested that the following language be inserted on Page 100, RE: Town Center: “and protect the integrity of the existing residential neighborhoods.”

**Mr. Bishop made the following motion: In accordance with CGS 8-23, the BOS hereby endorses the draft Plan of Conservation and Development dated 4/21/11 and subsequent Addendum dated 6/22/11 subject to the following recommended changes: that the recommended road connection between Halls Road and E. Pond Meadow Road may need further study before being included in the Plan and add the following language to page 100, RE: Town Center: “and protect the integrity of the existing residential neighborhoods.” Mr. Ehlert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Grants – Ms. Parulis reported that a STEAP Grant was submitted for Town Center in the amount of \$315,000.00.

#### Clarification of Volunteer Deputy Fire Marshal Position

Mr. Bishop reported that he discussed the issue with Attorney Wells. It is permissible to have a Deputy Fire Marshal as a volunteer and other Deputy Fire Marshals receive compensation.

#### Space Coordination Between the Town and Schools

Mr. Annino, Director of Park & Rec., gave an overview of the space constraints he is faced with when scheduling programs. When school is in session, the school has full use of the facilities until 6 or 7 p.m. During the winter months, the schools use the high school and middle school gyms until 9:00 p.m. The only gym Park & Rec. has access to is the Daisy Gym but Park & Rec. must share this gym with Vista on Monday and Wednesday. Rich continued that his programs are significantly hampered due to lack of space.

Mr. Ehlert reported that the “Community Center” project must be properly termed to reflect that the facility would be a gathering place for the youth of the town, particularly the middle school aged children.

Appropriations - None

Status of Bills/Invoices – None

Vacancy/Nominations – Mr. Bishop reported that a nomination for the Traffic Authority was received and will be on the next agenda.

Treasurer's Report – The Treasurer was not present at the meeting. A written Treasurer's Report was included in the BOS packet.

Director of Finance Report

\*Mr. Urban reported on the Town's financial position. He anticipates a budget surplus of approximately \$135,000 and the Town has exceeded estimated revenues by approximately \$300,000.

\*This \$135,000 budget surplus reflects a 2 to 3% by department savings. There has been consistent savings in the past two to three years in the municipal budget.

\*The new copy machines will be installed tomorrow, June 28, 2011.

\*In order to insure a smooth transition, Mr. Urban has notified the banks that the Town will have a new Treasurer. Mr. Urban suggested that the Town Clerk may take deposits from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. daily and verify funds.

\*A "pre-install" meeting for the new financial system is scheduled for next week.

Selectman's Report

**Mr. Bishop made a motion to thank Darlene Jones for her service as Town Treasurer. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

\*The Wounded Warrior event sponsored by the Elk's Club was a success. Both Congressman Courtney and Senator Blumenthal were present.

\*The BOE will act on the Southern Connecticut Gas Contract next week at a Special BOE meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 30, 2011.

\*The BOS discussed the possibility of a joint meeting with the BOF in July to accommodate the "tight" schedule for the boiler project at the school and to set a date for a Town Meeting (July 26, 2011).

\*A copy of the court ruling in the Assessor's case was included in the Board packet. The Town prevailed.

Minutes

**Mr. Bishop made a motion to approve the May 26, 2011 BOS meeting minutes. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Mr. Ehlert made a motion to approve the June 13, 2011 BOS meeting minutes. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Executive Session

**Mr. Bishop made a motion to move into Executive Session at 4:57 p.m. for discussion and review of applicant resume(s) concerning the appointment of an Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Ehlert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Regular session resumed 5:21 p.m.

**Mr. Bishop made a motion to appoint Suzanne Helchowski to the newly created position of Administrative Assistant in the Selectmen's Office; further to authorize the First Selectman to determine the beginning date of employment, salary compensation, and any matters related to the administration and employment of this position. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Treasurer Resignation

**Mr. Hall made a motion to accept the letter of resignation submitted by Darlene Jones, Treasurer. Mr. Ehlert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting recessed at 5:22 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 5:32 p.m.

Mr. Bishop reported on the documentation that was sent to the Chairs of both political parties outlining the protocol for replacement of the Treasurer. A copy of this memo was also included in the Board's packet. The State Statute regarding the Treasurer and Treasurer job description were available.

Mr. Bishop reported that two candidates submitted letters of interest for the Treasurer position; Jane Butterworth and Mark Lynskey. Additionally, there were letters of support for each individual from the respective town parties. These candidates will be interviewed in public session. The entire process was reviewed by Attorney Wells and his communications were available to the public. Five questions were developed for the interviews and each candidate will be asked the same questions.

#### Mark Lynskey Interview

**Question 1 – Highlight for us your specific credentials and especially your financial experience that you believe qualifies you to be Westbrook's Treasurer.**

Mr. Lynskey responded that he has a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry. He has worked in corporate America for 25 years and as a supervisor has created budgets annually. He has built his career interacting with other departments and has built relationships to get things done. He views the Town as a company and he understands how companies work. While he has no financial background other than budget preparation, he is willing to learn.

**Question 2 – If appointed, what hours would you be available, on a weekly basis, to perform the duties of the Treasurer as defined by State Statute?**

Mr. Lynskey responded that his current position as a Realtor provides for flexibility.

**Question 3 – How do you see your role as Treasurer in relationship to the Finance Director's position?**

Mr. Lynskey responded that his family has lived in Town since 1966 and he graduated from Westbrook High School. In his opinion, the best thing the Town has done is to hire the Director of Finance. He has seen a big difference in the past several months and views the Treasurer as supplemental support to the entire Finance Department.

**Question 4 – What kind of written reports would you provide monthly to the BOF/BOS that would augment the reports provided by the Finance Director?**

Mr. Lynskey reported that he has been writing reports for 30 years and feels he could learn (in a timely manner) what reports are required.

**Question 5 – If a financial dispute were to arise regarding your role as Treasurer, how would you address the issue?**

Mr. Lynskey responded that he feels an audit would verify any dispute. He added that now that Westbrook has a Director of Finance, he feels disputes would be unlikely.

Mr. Bishop commented that the Treasurer does not report to the First Selectmen. As with all elected positions, the Treasurer reports to the voters. He continued that the Treasurer in surrounding towns typically works 8 to 10 hours per week. A Deputy Treasurer may also be appointed by the Treasurer to act in his/her absence.

Mr. Urban briefly outlined the duties of the Treasurer.

Mr. Lynskey reported that he would be willing to resign from the Charter Commission if appointed Treasurer. He also reported that he knows of no reason that he could not be bonded.

Mr. Bishop asked how Mr. Lynskey would organize his first month. Mr. Lynskey responded that he would go through files and familiarize himself with protocol.

The BOS thanked Mr. Lynskey for his interest in the Treasurer position.

#### Jane Butterworth Interview

**Question 1 – Highlight for us your specific credentials and especially your financial experience that you believe qualifies you to be Westbrook's Treasurer.**

Ms. Butterworth responded that her entire professional life has been in finance. She holds a degree in Finance, has worked in Fortune 500 companies as well as for the Mashantucket Indians. It is through the Mashantucket Indians that she received her government experience. She is currently on the Board of Trustees at her church (First Congregational Church of Westbrook) and is a current member of the Board of Finance.

**Question 2 – If appointed, what hours would you be available, on a weekly basis, to perform the duties of the Treasurer as defined by State Statute?**

Ms. Butterworth responded that she is unaware of a specific number of hours but is willing to do “whatever it takes to get the work done”. Her work schedule is such that she is available for business hours.

**Question 3 – How do you see your role as Treasurer in relationship to the Finance Director’s position?**

Ms. Butterworth responded that she sees this relationship as a collaborative relationship. She will work in conjunction with the Finance Director in an open manner.

**Question 4 – What kind of written reports would you provide monthly to the BOF/BOS that would augment the reports provided by the Finance Director?**

Ms. Butterworth responded that she will provide the BOS and BOF with the Cash Reports to insure that the Boards know the cash position of the Town at all times.

**Question 5 – If a financial dispute were to arise regarding your role as Treasurer, how would you address the issue?**

Ms. Butterworth responded that as long as reports are accurate, she would be happy to sit with an individual to review the reconciliation to resolve any issue.

Ms. Butterworth thanked the BOS and the Republican Party for the opportunity. She reported that if appointed Treasurer, it is her intent to appoint a Deputy Treasurer. She added that she is willing to resign from the BOF and was not intending to run again in November for a seat on the Board of Finance. She is bondable.

**Mr. Hall made a motion to appoint Jane Butterworth to the position of Treasurer. Mr. Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT

**Mr. Bishop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 p.m. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Attest,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk

Noel Bishop  
First Selectman