

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, January 11, 2010
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
AGENDA**

#02-10

#2

Meeting was opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons Patricia Pruitt ; Patricia Allen, Mark Fairbrother, Town Administrator, Frank Abbondanzio; Administrative Secretary, Wendy Bogusz; Jen Audley, Montague Reporter; Arn Albertini, Greenfield Recorder; Jeff Tirrell, WHAI

Approve minutes of January 4, 2010 (if available)

Allen makes the motion to approve the minutes of January 4, 2010. Seconded by Fairbrother approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Pruitt - Abstain

FY2010 CDBG Public Hearing For Grant Application

Pruitt opens public hearing at 7:01 PM

Abbondanzio reads public hearing notice into the record

Abbondanzio gives overview of program. This is a federal grant program that comes from the Housing and Urban Development Department and is administered through the Mass. Department of Housing and Community Development. When we apply for money we have to satisfy national objectives, and the national objective for this grant is to benefit low and moderate income residents of Montague. The Town will contract with the Housing and Redevelopment Authority to administer this grant as they have for approx. 30 years now. HRA on behalf of the town, will contract with the Social Service Agencies.

Bruce Hunter, FCRHRA: Wants to bring the Board up to date on grant that was received in August, 2009. We've made a lot of head way on this grant.

- **Unity Park Improvements Project** we hired a consultant to complete bid ready plans and specifications for the entire project. That project is about 90% complete. We will be meeting with the Conservation Commission later this week and National Heritage is going to make comments within 30 days of December 23, 2009. Should be ready for the application, cost estimates are being finalized and the bid ready plans and specs are almost complete.
- **The Housing Rehab Program**, had a goal of 8 units to fill. As of today we have completed one unit in Lake Pleasant. We were allowed to spend 20% of the total rehab funds on emergencies town wide. The target area for this current grant was Millers Falls and Turners Falls, and with this being outside of those villages, and it was an emergency, we were able to expend money to complete it. There are 12 other households in process, anywhere from having inspections to getting bids. There are currently 4 in Millers Falls (target area 3) and 8 people going through the program in Turners Falls.
- **Two Social Service Programs** were awarded, one was to Montague Catholic Social Ministries, Bridge to Success. The program has started and will assist 55 low to moderate income women in the Town of Montague. The services they are providing under this grant will be computer literacy, web design, budgeting, finance literacy and leadership and meditation skills. The Brickhouses' project name was Montague Green Jobs, the program has started and in late December they were awarded \$12,500 from Community Foundation of Western Mass. which will allow the people they are serving to provide a stipend for their involvement in the program. They hope to provide assistance to 25 low to moderate income youth and young adults 17 years to 25 years old in the Town of Montague. Their program will be a job readiness training program with particular emphasis on green economy jobs.
- The Town is applying for a total of \$1 million, \$800,000 in the single application and \$200,000 in the regional application.

Social Service Program: Susan Mareneck, Montague Catholic Social Ministries: The program primarily has two parts, English for speakers of other languages which we will partner with someone to do that piece. We've gotten a lot of information from The Center for New Americans and will be offered in winter months (mid October through mid March). Another piece is ServeSafe Certification, which is a food safety program. There were quite a number of Spanish speaking people that use MCSM for different programs and we asked them what other types of support we could provide towards self sufficiency. We started out with a GED in Spanish which isn't offered north of Holyoke. As we had more conversations it seemed like the Serve Safe Certification would be something that would serve a broader number of people. It is something people are already somewhat skilled in as food preparation as they work in agriculture and with food production. This seemed like a more appropriate piece for this other piece of the program. The other component we will be in charge of is to mentor the people who participate in this program

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, January 11, 2010
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
AGENDA

#02-10

#2

through the process. The Franklin Hampshire Career Center has offered to do some workshops in Spanish after the ServeSafe and the English as a Second Language courses have finished. MCSM will work with each of the participants in the program to follow up and help them to get to the next step. This will help 20 – 30 people per course offering; We are estimating this will help 8 people per 4 course offerings and 12 people in the English as a Second Language.

Unity Park Improvements Project: Bruce Hunter and Peter Wells (Berkshire Design Group Architect): Anticipate total project cost \$626,000, including the landscape architects fee, which is \$20,720 (fee to do bidding process and the construction oversight, inspection, 2 meetings a month with the contractor, committee and the Town to make sure project is going through.

Wells: Phase 1: Have been working on the master plan for past year. We've met monthly and sometimes twice a month over the past year and have involved the public quite a bit. Phase 1 is coming out to be \$500,000 to \$600,000 for the area around the existing field house. We concentrated on this area because it does not have full accessibility to people with disabilities and has plenty of equipment that is in disrepair and is a safety hazard. Elements of phase 1 that were targeted are: New parking area in gravel for now; with the exception of handicap parking spaces which would be paved; one bay of gravel area, and another area that would be semi graded for future parking between gravel and pavement; a new entrance drive off of First Street and access drive off of Second Street; new plantings though out; a rain garden to collect storm water and filter out contaminants; new walkways and paving areas around the existing field house; new accessibility into the field house; benches; trash receptacles; bike racks; a new access to the walkway off of First Street; a cross walk connecting over to the bike path. In the playground area, we kept some of the existing equipment, and added new items. The playground area is broken down into various age groups, access will be walkways, spray feature to be shaped like fish, rock climbing area, swing area, picnic area and future area for skate park. Will go out to bid with alternates, some equipment will have rubber tiles underneath, another alternate will be gravel parking or more area paved.

Hunter: In the base we included the removal of the pavement around Williams Way. Phase 2 is designed all we'll need is an application for a grant. Next CDBG Application is in December, 2010 and there is also the possibility of a Parks Grant with the combination of the CDBG Application in December. A lot will depend on grants. Parks and Rec did a survey of what people would like to see first and the playground is one of the highest priorities. We hope this will be completed by the end of this year.

Housing Rehabilitation Program (included in a Regional Application): Brian McHugh Construction Coordinator for FCRHA. This is a continuation of 2009 Housing Rehabilitation Program with the exception that this is going to be part of 4 town joint application with the Towns of Northfield, Sunderland and Monroe. This year's target area for Montague will be Montague Center (Census track 4) because we have gotten a lot of interest in Montague Center and we haven't run a rehab program there in several years, we felt we needed to serve the folks in that area this year. The program has been designed to meet HUD's national objective of providing safe, decent sanitary housing to low and moderate income folks by eliminating code violations, improving housing stocks and making these homes more energy efficient. Some of the improvements you can do through this program are: electrical, heating & plumbing repairs, septic system replacements, asbestos and lead paint remediation, painting, insulation, handicap accessibility improvements for elderly or handicap residents, making improvements to existing components of a house and bringing them up to code and using energy star standards and materials when they can be incorporated into the project. The program will utilize 0% deferred payment loans to serve the most severely blighted households in the area. The goal for the total grant is 21 units in 4 the towns for \$691,000 with \$154,000 being targeted towards Montague Center which equals 5 units and it is based on what we have for people on the waiting list and the interest we've received so far. The loan amounts are up to \$35000 depending on the severity of the code violations. Income guidelines reviewed as per handout

Jean Golrick asks question about 2009 Community Development Strategy and Bruce Hunter explains what the document is.

Golrick asks if the property she owns in Millers Falls are what they had in mind when they wrote the CDS and if so, she needs to make the Board aware of the position that they are currently engaged in a serious long legal battle, right

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, January 11, 2010
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
AGENDA**

#02-10

#2

now answer today regarding public parking if your intending to use the land in Millers Falls that I own, the railroad land? Is that where your thinking of putting public parking?

Pruitt: Doesn't have an answer to the question.

Abbondanzio: We had actually applied this past year for a grant under the Community Development Program that would've allowed us to do the kind of studies of need including parking and infrastructure need in Millers Falls and that was not funded. That is still a goal as part of the revitalization in Millers Falls to deal with that issue.

Golrick: I'm going to state for the record: Selectboard you need to take this off the priority list, this is private land, it is in litigation with the Town and myself, it will not be an option on the table for you.

Allen: Isn't this looking at parking in Millers Falls in general, not a specific property, certainly not at this point.

Allen makes the motion to approve and proceed with the FY 2010 CDBG – CDF Grant using the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority to administer the grant and it will include 3 components of Social Service Program through the Montague Catholic Social Ministries at \$40,000, the Unity Park Improvement Project Phase 1 at \$576,000 and the Housing Rehabilitation Program at \$154,000 which would be our portion of the 4 Town Rehabilitation Grant. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Pruitt – Aye

Allen makes the motion to close the hearing at 7:36 pm. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Pruitt - Aye

Liquor License Transfer, Carroll's Market 7:37 pm

Pruitt reads public notice into the record

Allen makes the motion to approve the transfer of Jai Ambe, Inc. at 33 East Main Street, Millers Falls to Sahirat, LLC at the same address with Vidyaben G. Patel as the new manager. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Fairbrother, - Aye, Pruitt - Aye

Public Safety Building Committee Project Report (Pam Hanold)

Hanold: It's less a report than it is a handing over of some documentation to the Town. The Committee was concerned about not holding the project open to long, particularly with the lack of clarity around funding for solar panels. We did decide to go out to bid to see if we could find someone who would give us bid ready documents so if money becomes available, particularly if grant money becomes available where they are looking for shovel ready projects, we'd be good to go if the town decided they wanted to go in that direction. What I have is from Chris Vreeland who is the person who put these together. It has the full bid ready schematics and a lot of documentation. Documents are turned over to the Board of Selectmen. We do have the grant money from the CREBS that we could use that would cover about ½ of it. I Hope to be coming back soon to say the Public Safety Building Committee will be disbanding, but we want to stay with it long enough to make sure everything is done.

FY2010 Tax Classification Hearing (Barbara Miller and Paul Emery)

Miller: As you can see we're having a slight decrease of the proposed tax rates. A good portion of the decrease is due to the fact that First Light had a \$20 Million increase. Miller explains her handout

Allen makes the motion to set the shift of residential factor at .891488. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye. Fairbrother – Aye, Pruitt - Aye

Allen makes the motion to adopt open space discount. Seconded by Fairbrother, Opposed unanimously. Allen – Opposed, Fairbrother – Opposed, Pruitt - Opposed

Allen makes the motion to adopt the residential exemption. Seconded by Fairbrother, Opposed unanimously. Allen – Opposed, Fairbrother – Opposed, Pruitt - Opposed

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, January 11, 2010
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
AGENDA**

#02-10

#2

Allen makes the motion to adopt the small commercial exemption. Seconded by Fairbrother, Opposed unanimously. Allen – Opposed, Fairbrother – Opposed, Pruitt - Opposed

Town Administrators Report

Program Income Hearing (Unity Park CDBG)

Allen makes the motion to allocate \$25,000 of program income monies for unsafe and unhealthy buildings and \$40,000 for Unity Park Construction. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Pruitt - Aye

Hampshire Council of Governments Power Profit Share – FY2009

The Town received a rebate check from the Hampshire Council of Governments in the amount of \$15,122.51 from the profit share rate plan.

Planner Update

The Search Committee met on Thursday night and interviewed 3 candidates from UMASS Masters of Regional Planning Program and came to a conclusion of who we are offering the job to but haven't had a confirmation yet. Person would be working for 18 weeks, part time for 19 hours a week, no benefits; we're calling it Planner Assistant at Grade 3, Step 1 of non union classification schedule at \$14.28/hour no holiday or vacation benefits offered. In April will make and evaluation of what exactly we are going to do in terms of the permanent position, we are probably going to be recommending the full time position, the question is whether the individual we hire under this program will continue in the position. They will have to at least apply and there will be a formal application procedure in the spring. Job description is being scaled back because of the hours.

Allen makes the motion to authorize Frank to hire an individual from the UMASS Graduate Program as our Planning Assistant for 18 weeks beginning January 19 for 19 hours per week, unbenefited at the rate of Grade 3, Step 1, and rate of \$14.28 /per hour on the Non-Union Scale. Seconded by Fairbrother, Approved. Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye, Fairbrother – NO

Updates

Meeting with DESE on February 3 from 1 – 4 PM. Discussion about who will be attending meeting. Marge Levenson would like the meeting televised.

Pruitt has a problem with single members of the committees deciding what size the group was going to be, who would be attending. Doesn't feel this is entirely up to the Finance Committee when it comes to the Selectboard or the School Committee for example. This will most likely be discussed further on Wednesday.

Discussion followed about who will be attending the meeting and what/who will be presented at the meeting

Other

- Levenson: It has always been my issue of "transparency government". Clearly there is some kind of miscommunication when memos and or emails are selectively passed or not passed and it would be better if business were conducted as it is tonight in the public forum. Also, I'm asking the Selectboard that if there is ever a chance when you take your votes and you vote no for a reason, please give an explanation so citizens will be informed as to why the decision was made.
- Fairbrother clarifies his no vote: He is in favor of retaining the planner position, believes he is in favor of hiring one of the 3 people that were interviewed, however he found himself in the position of voting for person X. He is confident this will be a good person and will do a fine job, found himself in the position of giving Frank the authority of hiring person X and I just couldn't do that without a name or any other information.
- Pruitt to Jeff Singleton: I'm going to be absolutely frank with you. I did not like the fact that the suggestion for doing this all in a small group handpicked by whoever it was, came from you who is on the school committee, making suggestions as to how the Town should organize itself for this meeting. I have a little problem

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, January 11, 2010
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
AGENDA

#02-10

#2

with that, maybe I'm being territorial; I had a problem with that. The seconded problem I had was with another member of the Finance Committee deciding who should be selected to go and participate and represent the Selectboard. We haven't even had a discussion that there was going to be a meeting. I have a problem with that; I just think it is all behind the scenes, all kind of back room. I know the intentions are good and I know there is a lot riding on this meeting, I know you're hoping to achieve an awful lot that you had in your five year plan, I'm not opposed to that, but I don't like the way it is being done. It will take us a little longer; maybe it will take us this week and next week to get that together, that is all right as far as I'm concerned. I think we will live through that and come out with a better agenda than we might without the complication of not everyone knowing how it is going on.

Singleton: I am not doing anything behind the scenes. I had a discussion with some people as I have had with many people and as I will say in public but I think it would be better if we had a small group meeting, if you and the majority of the people involved don't want to do that, fine I will lose. I did not make any unilateral decisions, I did not try to hide anything from anybody and I don't like the suggestion that I did. In fact, the Chair of the Finance Committee made a unilateral decision to invite everybody in the world to this meeting. Maybe that is the right thing to do, so it seems to me because I have a conversation with somebody which is totally preliminary, you think I am operating behind the scenes when the Chair of the Finance Committee makes a unilateral decision, that doesn't seem to bother you.

- Allen: Saturday's H1N1 flu clinic at Sheffield was highly successful, there were 366 people received 430 doses of various things and there were over 60 volunteers from the 4 towns.
- *Allen makes the motion to authorize the Chair of the Board of Selectmen to sign the appropriate documents for the CDBG Grant. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Pruitt - Aye*
- Fairbrother: In that circumstances have at the locations have changed, I see not particular reason why Power Street should remain closed and I would move that we instruct the Montague Highway Department to reopen that road at their earliest convenience.

Letter has been received from fire chief that he no longer considers the closing be an emergency situation. Road may have to be shut down for a day or two to complete work. Road has never officially been closed by the Selectmen

Fairbrother makes the motion to authorize Highway Dept. to open Power Street at their earliest convenience. Seconded by Allen. Approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Pruitt – Aye

Golrick: Is this next to the other bridge that is near Esleek?

Fairbrother: It is the Bailey Bridge access, yes.

Golrick: I need to make the Board of Selectmen aware that bridge opens onto private property, the bike path is private property, be aware if you open it, you will receive a letter of such.

Allen makes the motion to go into executive session at 8:29 PM for the purposes of litigation and come out only to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Fairbrother – Aye, Allen – Aye, Pruitt – Aye.

Allen makes the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Pruitt – Aye.