

TOWN OF STERLING
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
January 2, 2013

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING
THE WRS DISTRICT AGREEMENT:

Chairman Sushchuk called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Roll call established that Selectmen Paul Sushchuk, Ron Furmaniuk and Brian Patacchiola were all present.

Also present:

Joseph Scanlon, Wachusett Regional School Dist. Business Manager
Anthony Gasparo, WRSD Interim Superintendent
Norman Plourde, Member Subcommittee to Amend Regional Agreement
Julie Kelley, Member Subcommittee to Amend Regional Agreement
Steven Hammond, Member Subcommittee to Amend Regional Agreement
Robert Dunbar, Member Subcommittee to Amend Regional Agreement
Robert Brown, Finance Committee
John Kilcoyne, Finance Committee
Lisa Call, Finance Committee
Sarah LaMountain, Sterling Wachusett Regional School District Rep.
James Mason, Sterling Wachusett Regional School District Rep.
Lance Harris, Sterling Wachusett Regional School District Rep.
Jack Chandler, Co-chair Sterling Senior Center Building Committee
Maureen Cranson, Co-chair Sterling Senior Center Building Committee

Lois Seifert:

Chairman Sushchuk requested a moment of silence in remembrance of Lois Seifert, who had passed away on December 19th, 2012. Those who spoke of her, reported that she had been a wonderful person, Sterling's longest serving Town Clerk and had been considered the "Mayor" of the Town. Chairman Sushchuk suggested that this year's Town Report be dedicated to Lois. She will be missed.

Selectman Paul Sushchuk read the Public Hearing notice into the record. Chairman Sushchuk declared that the Sterling Lancaster Television as the only official electronic copy of the meeting.

Chairman Sushchuk began by stating the Board's concern that the Town has not historically had enough input in the creation of the school budget.

Mr. Scanlon agreed, stating that the budget book should contain details on every line item. He also stated that the budget should be distributed to Select Board members, as well as the Finance Committees, and be published on the Town websites.

Ms. Kelley voiced the concern that the School Committee is too large,

making it unwieldy and thereby difficult to get things accomplished. It has been suggested that the School Committee membership be pro-rated, based upon each town's total population. This would mean that the Town of Sterling would lose 2 Representatives. The other alternative to be considered is the weighted vote.

Both options were discussed. Mr. Plourde reported that while all of the regional Select Boards had recommended down-sizing, the School Committee had voted to retain 20 members.

Selectman Furmaniuk voiced the opinion that a group of 12 would be best as a smaller group would be less apt to lose track of details. Mr. Kilcoyne agreed with this statement and further added that the Finance Committee is having difficulty comprehending the school budget. They would appreciate a budget book.

Mr. Scannel promised a budget book on March 18th. The Board was informed that the School Principals will be involved in creating this year's budget.

Ms. Call asked if the Town can fund a late bus for students. Ms Kelley explained that it was possible if the Town used a revolving fund. However, she reported that the idea had previously been considered and the cost was \$300.00 per student.

Ms. Call then suggested the possibility of regionalizing the elementary and middle schools in order to save money.

Ms Kelley reiterated that busing is expensive. However, the Select Board supports further consideration of this idea.

Mr. Plourde summed up the potential amendments to the Agreement;

Section 1. Size of the Committee (This needs to be addressed immediately so that it can be voted upon at Town Meeting)

Section 2. Assignment of students (Will investigate the feasibility of busing)

Section 15. Capital threshold of \$100,000 (Should that limit be changed)

Section 18. Regarding terminal benefits, may be deleted, if out of date.

Mr. Brown suggested sharing services within the schools – computers and maintenance. It was determined that items not directly concerning the school agreement, should be discussed at a later date.

Senior Center:

Maureen Cranson and Jack Chandler (co-chairs of the Senior Center Building Committee) were present to give an update on the proposed Senior Center.

- Currently meeting with liaisons
- Interviewed 3 OPMs (from 6 proposals)
- Conducting 2nd interview for 2 of the candidates
- Will have drawings and cost estimates at Annual Town Meeting

The Select Board commended the Senior Center Building Committee for their diligent efforts.

The Board reviewed the Conceptual plan that was presented by Dick Maki. Mr. Maki stated that his was not a professional architectural plan. However, it served as a model to accommodate the 3 core functions of a Senior Center.

- Nutrition (30-40% is dining room/kitchen space)
- Exercise (both mental and physical)
- Socialization

Again Mr. Maki emphasized that his is not an architectural drawing. He concedes that it lacks storage space for coats, custodial supplies, mechanical space and storage for adaptive equipment, such as walkers and wheelchairs which are loaned out through the Senior Center.

Once again, the proposed square footage was addressed. However, the Senior Center Building Committee members hold firmly to their conviction that until a professional, State approved architect considers the building size requirements per the population and State mandates, they can not give a firm square footage proposal.

Mr. Beaupre distributed usage estimates from the Town website and asked that this document be attached to these minutes.

Quarterly update on Goals:

The Town Administrator reported that we are on track on most of the goals. The strategic financial plan will be discussed at the next Selectmen's meeting on January 16th.

The Board was pleased with the fact that the vault project is underway. The board congratulated Dawn Michanowicz, Don Murray, Mike Padula on getting this project passed at Town Meeting. They reportedly have been trying to get a vault built in the Town of Sterling for the past 37 years.

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Town Administrator's update/old business:

The Town Administrator reported that the Policy and Strategy Meetings have been very successful. Substantial progress has been made on the Government Study Recommendations.

140 Rendezvous Club:

The Town Administrator followed up on two items, regarding the 140 Rendezvous Club. She reported that the crosswalk is now removed and that all licensing, including the Common Victualer license, was approved in December.

Selectmen's Revised Budget:

At the last meeting, Selectman Furmaniuk requested that the Town Administrator reduce the Board's budget and resubmit it. The new budget was resubmitted. **VOTE:** Selectman Furmaniuk made the motion to approve this new, reduced budget. Selectman Patacchiola 2nd. All in favor.

Business and correspondence:

Appointment of Sexual Harassment Officer:

This position was discussed. **VOTE:** Selectman Furmaniuk Made the motion to appoint Don Jacobs, Human Resource Director, as the Sexual Harassment Officer. Selectman Patacchiola 2nd. All in favor.

Chairman Sushchuk announced that the Select Board had been invited to attend a Municipal Light Board meeting in order to discuss the P.I.L.O.T. program between the Town and the Light Department. The consensus was that the Board should meet with the Light Board in February after the Town Administrator and Sean Hamilton, the Light Department Manager, have had the opportunity to accumulate the facts and figures.

Selectmen Patacchiola suggested that the Board invite our legislators or their staff to attend the Selectmen's meetings once per month. The Chairman suggested that they be asked to give a 5 – 10 minute update at 7:00, every other month.

Mr. Pineo suggested that congratulatory letters be sent to the recently elected and invite them to give an update at a future meeting.

Adjourned:

Selectman Furmaniuk made the motion to adjourn at 9:22. Selectman Patacchiola 2nd. All in favor.

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Three estimates for predicting usage at new Senior Center in Sterling:

1. **708** Seniors would use the Senior center in the course of a year, according to this estimate. We contacted towns that have the "My Senior Center" software package (cost is approximately \$6,000.) Framingham reports that 50% of their total Senior population uses the center in the course of a year, Holden 33%. This averages 41.5%. Sterling currently has 1725 Seniors. 41.5% of 1707 is 708.
2. **500 to 750** Seniors would use the Senior Center in the course of a year, according to this estimate. According to our low estimate of unduplicated headcount, based on weekly tally sheets (not every customer signs in for each activity), 250 people now use the center in the course of a year. Data from other towns shows that usage doubles and often even triples with the building of a new center. 7
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3. **Approximately 681** Seniors would use the Senior center, according to this estimate. On 11/22/10, a hand count of the Senior Center survey question 10 was performed by two volunteers, each counting independently of the other. Of the 457 people who answered the survey, 287 (63%) checked yes, they would participate in at least 1 activity at a new Senior center. If these respondents are a representative sample of the entire Senior population, we could extrapolate that 63% of the Senior population, or 1,075 people would use a new center. 287 represents the low extreme, 1,075 represents the high extreme. Most likely usage would be closer to the midpoint, which is 681 seniors.

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