

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
January 10, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Joseph J. Montecalvo at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Collins, Boucher, Mellor, and Ampagoomian.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of Minutes. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to accept the December 6, 2004 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Boucher, Ampagoomian, and Montecalvo. Abstain/Mr. Mellor.

Appointments: Introduction of new Police Recruit – Jeffrey White. Police Chief Thomas J. Melia introduced the Town's newest police recruit, Mr. Jeffrey White, 54 Water Street, Whitinsville, and announced that he would be attending the next police academy sponsored by the Mass. Criminal Justice Training Council tentatively scheduled to begin on February 28, 2005. Chief Melia then provided a brief summary of Mr. White's background and qualifications. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to affirm the appointment of Mr. Jeffrey White, Police Recruit, as recommended by Chief Melia and Town Manager Michael J. Coughlin, Jr. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Public Hearing: 7:05 PM – FY '05 Community Development Block Grant (Proposed Activities). **Present: Ms. Jennifer Dulmaine, Program Director.** Chairman Montecalvo read the public hearing notice aloud. A motion/Mr. Boucher, seconded/Mr. Collins to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. Ms. Dulmaine began her presentation by providing the Board and audience with an update on all ongoing Community Development Block Grant Programs.

FY '01-'02:

a) Downtown Improvements Project Phase I and II: [99% complete]. This project provided new sidewalks, granite curbing, street trees, and drainage for 2,300 linear feet along Church Street.

b) Whitin Community Center Outreach Program: [100% complete]. This program provided youth and family memberships to the WCC to income eligible persons.

c) Mentoring Partnership Program: [100% complete]. This program provided mentors to children and youth ages 8-18 to aid in their need for positive guidance and role models.

d) Downtown Whitinsville Parking Study: [100% complete]. The study analyzed a blighted, partially wooded, open area within downtown Whitinsville for possible redevelopment as a parking area off Church Street. The subject area was unpaved and lacked adequate drainage and the study provided the necessary steps to rid the area of slum and blight and develop a downtown parking lot for customers of local businesses.

FY '03:

a) Sign and Façade Program: [to be completed shortly]. This program provided businesses with the opportunity to improve their storefronts as well as their signage. There are currently two sign cases open but they will be completed in the near future.

b) Whitin Community Center Outreach Program: [100% complete]. This program provided youth and family memberships to the WCC to income eligible persons.

c) Mentoring Partnership Program: [100% complete]. This program provided mentors to children and youth ages 8-18 to aid in their need for positive guidance and role models.

d) Housing & Rehabilitation Program: [3 units are 100% complete / 2 cases still open]. At completion, this program will have provided funding in the form of deferred payment loans to income eligible property owners to rehabilitate approximately 7 housing units – both single and multi-family dwellings.

FY '04:

a) Phase IV Streetscape: [20% complete]. Upon completion, this project will have provided ornamental lighting, benches, and trash receptacles in downtown Whitinsville.

b) Whitin Community Center Outreach Program: [50% complete]. Upon completion, this program will have provided youth and family memberships to the WCC to income eligible persons in order to improve their access to the WCC facilities and programs.

c) Mentoring Partnership Program: [50% complete]. Upon completion, this program will have provided mentors to children and youth ages 8-18 to aid in their need for positive guidance and role models.

d) Housing & Rehabilitation Program: [2 units are 100% complete / 3 cases still open]. At completion, this program will have provided funding in the form of deferred payment loans to income eligible property owners to rehabilitate approximately 7 housing units – both single and multi-family dwellings.

Continuing, Ms. Dulmaine advised that the Town of Northbridge would no longer be guaranteed funding as a mini-entitlement community but rather that the town would have to apply for funding on a competitive basis and added that the FY '04 round was very competitive and that most applications were denied due to the lack of available funds. However, she pointed out that the Town would be guaranteed \$200,000 in Technical Assistance for the FY'05 Grant Program. In addition, she noted that eligible projects must meet one of three national objectives: 1) benefit a majority of low to moderate income persons (51%), 2) aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight, or 3) meet an urgent condition posing a serious threat to the health and welfare of the community and where other financial resources are not available to meet such needs. That third objective, she stressed, is the most difficult to meet and generally is limited to such things as natural disasters. With the FY '05 Grant Application underway, Ms. Dulmaine reviewed the following proposed activities. **1) Whitin Community Center Outreach Program.** Ms. Dulmaine advised that this program has existed since 1997 and that it continues to provide financial assistance in the form of scholarships to youths and families of low and moderate income. Recommended funding: \$50,000. **2) Mentoring Partnership Program.** This program recruits mentors who volunteer to be trained, supported, and supervised role models for youths from families of low to moderate income. Recommended funding: \$10,000. **3) Senior Center/ADA Bathroom.** Ms. Dulmaine said that she received a request for a handicapped accessible bathroom on the second floor at the Senior Center. Estimated cost: \$25,000 + design fees. **4) CDAG/Underground utility program.** Ms. Dulmaine indicated that funding is needed to complete the current CDAG project. What remains to be completed includes the pulling of wires for Verizon and Mass. Electric, new connections to buildings and then removal of the utility poles. Recommended funding: \$64,000. **5) Banner program.** Ms. Dulmaine explained that this program would provide banners for all ornamental poles along Church Street; however, it would only be funded if the Mass. Turnpike Grant did not come through. Recommended funding: \$5,000. **6) Housing & Rehabilitation/10 units.** Ms. Dulmaine advised that these monies would be used to provide deferred payment loans to property owners who live in "The Village" section of Northbridge and who meet the HUD income guidelines for rehabilitation of their homes. Recommended funding: \$300,000. **Comments from those present:** 1) Mr. Brett Magowan, Whitin Community Center, said that the Outreach Program has been very successful and asked the Board to support funding for the Outreach Program for FY '05. 2) Rob Moro, Mentoring Partnership Program, noted that the program was in its 8th year and that during the last eight years the program has provided mentors to 150 Northbridge youths. Mr. Moro expressed his desire to receive more grant funds and asked the Selectmen for their continued support. 3) Mrs. Gail Anderson, Senior Center Director, mentioned that the request for a handicapped accessible bathroom was actually put forth by the seniors themselves due to increased participation at the Center. She also noted that there is a small room on the second floor that can be converted into a bathroom. There were no further comments from those present. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to continue the public hearing to Monday, January 31, 2005 at 7:05 PM. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Special Town Meeting Warrant/Vote positions on articles. Present: Financial Team Members: Theresa Cenedella/Town Accountant, Robert Fitzgerald/Principal Assessor, Robert Thayer/ Systems Administrator, and Joyce Morin, Treasurer/Collector. Ms. Cenedella presented the Financial Team's proposed solution to the Town's \$1.2 million shortfall. Proposal: Approximately one third would come from old accounts [capital projects, special revenues, and receipts reserved], one third from stabilization, and one third from municipal turn-backs. Mr. Fitzgerald addressed the transfer from the overlay account to the overlay surplus and advised that the Board of Assessors voted in favor of the transfer in the amount of approximately \$151,964.27. Lastly, Ms. Morin added that if the Town were to do a short term borrowing, the interest rate would be 2.5%, however, she stressed that would only be the case if revenue does not come in. She also mentioned that voluntary tax payment notices went out and that the Town has collected about \$15,000 more than they did for the same period last year. In closing, Ms. Cenedella reiterated that fact that the Team is committed to the solution and to set a tax rate and

send the tax bills out. **Article 1:** A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to support Article 1. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 2:** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to support Article 2. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 3:** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to support Article 3. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Citizens' Comments/Input: **Denis Latour, 88 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville,** inquired about the various athletic achievement signage posted at several Northbridge town-line locations and why after so many years were they still up. He suggested that they be removed or at least changed as they are now 6-7 years old. Chairman Montecalvo said that decision should be up to the School Department, however, a policy could be adopted for future signs.

Selectmen's Concerns. **1) Selectman Collins** reported [for the record] that with respect to the Ethics issues mentioned at the last meeting that he again checked with the Ethics Commission and that they are of the opinion that his son's employment with the Town of Northbridge was not affected by his being a member of the Board of Selectmen. **2) Selectman Montecalvo** announced that a flu clinic will be held on January 13, 2005, from 2-4 p.m. at the Milford Senior Center. Additional information can be obtained from the Northbridge Board of Health at 508-234-3272.

Town Manager's Report. Mr. Coughlin reported that he recently attended the Mass. Municipal Association's Annual Trade Show with Selectmen Montecalvo, Boucher, and Ampagoomian. He stated that Governor Romney announced a 4.3% increase in aid to cities/towns (Lottery Aid/Chapter 70 Aid). He also mentioned that every city and town will have a chance to have the Red Sox trophy visit their town and that Northbridge is scheduled to have the trophy here on March 5, 2005.

Items For Future Agenda. Chairman Montecalvo reminded everyone that Representative George N. Peterson, Jr. will hold office hours at 7:00 PM at the Northbridge Town Hall on Monday, January 31, 2005.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:51 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Mellor, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
January 31, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Joseph J. Montecalvo at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Collins, Boucher, Mellor, and Ampagoomian.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of Minutes. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the December 20, 2004 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Resignations: 1) **Kevin D. Quinlan, Zoning Board of Appeals/Associate Member.** Chairman Montecalvo read Mr. Quinlan's letter of resignation and disclosure statement aloud. The disclosure was relative to his recent employment with Lane & Hamer, P.C. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to accept the resignation of Kevin Quinlan as noted above and to send a letter of appreciation for his service to the Town. Vote yes/Unanimous. 2) **Steve Falconer, Historical Commission.** Chairman Montecalvo read Mr. Falconer's letter of resignation aloud. In the letter, Mr. Falconer cited time constraints as the reason for his resignation. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to accept the resignation of Steve Falconer and to send a letter of appreciation for his service to the Town. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Representative George N. Peterson, Jr. was present to inform the Board of Selectmen that the Governor's proposed budget [House 1] came out on Wednesday. The overall picture is that Northbridge's Chapter 70 Aid will increase approximately 6.7% to \$12,964,638, Lottery Aid will increase approximately 11.6% to \$2,214,906, and Payment In Lieu of Taxes will increase 20% to \$26,000. The Town Manager thanked Rep. Peterson and acknowledged that the Town's MBTA Assessment went up \$17,000 and that that will be something that will have to be worked on. In addition, the Town Manager announced that Senator Moore will be holding a Local Aid Summit at Northbridge High School on February 8th from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Public Hearings:

1) 7:05 PM Continued – FY '05 Community Development Block Grant (Proposed activities).

Ms. Dulmaine began by informing the Selectmen that there would be funds remaining in the FY 04 CDBG – Phase IV Streetscape line item and requested that the Board vote to support a program amendment to use those funds for the underground utilities program. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to support the above program amendment as recommended by the Office of Community Development. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Ms. Dulmaine advised that the following proposed activities have been submitted for consideration for funding from the FY 05 Community Development Block Grant: Parks and Recreation Summer Program, Whitin Community Center, Mentoring Partnership Program, Senior Center Bathroom (ADA Accessible), Housing & Rehabilitation Program, and Underground Utilities program. She indicated that the Parks and Recreation Summer Program was an ineligible program because it is locally funded. Next, Ms. Dulmaine presented her recommended preliminary budgets [for guaranteed funding and competitive funding] for the Board's consideration. For the record, she noted that she included the social service programs in the guaranteed funding budget as opposed to the competitive funding budget as the Town could risk losing 100% of the funding for those programs.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET	
\$200,000 GUARANTEED	
Whitin Community Center	\$50,000
Mentoring Partnership Program	\$10,000
Senior Center ADA bathroom	\$35,000
Underground Utilities	\$69,000
General Administration	\$36,000
	\$200,000
PRELIMINARY BUDGET	
\$600,000 COMPETITIVE	
Housing Rehabilitation Program	\$450,000
General Administration	\$150,000
	\$600,000

In closing, Ms. Dulmaine pointed out that the Town is eligible to apply for \$600,000 in competitive funding for the FY 05 Community Development Block Grant and not \$400,000 as was originally thought. (See preliminary budget above). A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to accept the above recommendations as presented by the Office of Community Development. Vote yes/Unanimous.

2) 7:15 PM – FY '06 Community Development Action Grant. Present: Ms. Jennifer Dulmaine, Program Director. Chairman Montecalvo read the public hearing notice aloud. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. Ms. Dulmaine began by updating the Board on the previous CDAG award that the Town received. She explained that the next round of funding to apply for would be to continue the project down Memorial Square with ornamental lights. The project would include installing conduit, ornamental lights, pulling utility wires, and removing the wooden poles. The ornamental lights would extend around Memorial Square to Linwood Avenue. The preliminary budget for the project is \$444,000.

Continuing, Ms. Dulmaine added that the FY '06 round is going to be very competitive. She also presented to the Board the requirements necessary to apply for the CDAG grant and how the Town has met them: 1) The proposed project must leverage a minimum of 1:2 local to CDAG funds. This criterion has been met through our CDBG funds for Phase IV, in addition to other public funds. 2) The proposed project must leverage private investment in the project area at a minimum of 2.5:1 private to CDAG funds and result in job creation and retention. These criteria have been met with the significant investment within the downtown over the past 12 months and the amount of proposed investment is at a phenomenal amount. Job creation and retention is inevitable with the amount of investment and reinvestment into the downtown.

There were no comments from those present. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous.

3) 7:25 PM – Tax Rate Classification Hearing. Present: Robert Fitzgerald, Principal Assessor and Varkis Arakelian, Member-Board of Assessors. Chairman Montecalvo read the public hearing notice aloud. A motion/Mr. Boucher, seconded/Mr. Collins to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. Mr. Fitzgerald provided a handout to the Board which showed a comparison of FY '04 assessments to FY '05 assessments. He explained that the average assessment for a single family home in FY '04 was \$195,200 and that the FY '05 average assessment for a single family home is \$284,900—a 47% increase. Continuing, Mr. Fitzgerald informed the Selectmen that they have to select a Residential Factor of "1" or less. If a factor of "1" is adopted, then there would be a single tax rate for all residential, commercial, industrial, and personal property. On the other hand if a factor of less than "1" is adopted, there would be a shift from the residential property class to the other remaining classes to make up the difference. With that being said, he pointed out that based on a factor of "1" the tax rate would be set at \$9.06 per thousand. Mr. Arakelian interjected and stated that the Board of Assessors recently voted to make a recommendation to the Selectmen for the adoption of a single tax rate. The Principal Assessor further noted that the Selectmen would also have to vote whether or not to adopt a residential exemption and whether or not to adopt a small commercial exemption. He explained that in order to qualify for the latter exemption, a business operating as of January 1, 2004, must have less than 10 employees, and have a total assessed value of less than one million dollars. For the record, Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the excess levy capacity was at \$1,587. There being no comments or questions, a motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to maintain a residential factor of "1". Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher not to adopt a residential exemption. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher not to adopt a small commercial exemption. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Special Town Meeting: 1) Vote to call a Special Town Meeting for Tuesday, March 15, 2005. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to call a Special Town Meeting for Tuesday, March 15, 2005 at 7:00 PM at the Northbridge Middle School Auditorium. Vote yes/Unanimous. **2) Vote to place article(s) on the Special Town Meeting Warrant.** A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to place Article 1 on the Special Town Meeting Warrant. Vote yes/Unanimous. **3) Vote to close the Special Town Meeting Warrant on Friday, February 11, 2005 at Noon.** A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to close the Special Town Meeting Warrant on Friday, February 11, 2005 at Noon. Vote yes/Unanimous.

FY 98 and FY 99 Housing and Rehabilitation Program/Subordination Agreements – 69 Plantation Street, Northbridge, MA. Present: Ms. Jennifer Dulmaine, CDBG Program Director. Ms. Dulmaine advised that the homeowner was a participant in the FY 98 and FY 99 Housing and Rehabilitation Programs and that the purpose for the subordinations was so that the homeowner could refinance their mortgage. As such, she recommended that the Board of Selectmen grant the subordination as the homeowner has met all program guidelines. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to grant the subordination and sign said agreements for property located at 69 Plantation Street, Northbridge, MA, as recommended by the Office of Community Development. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Sparetime Recreation (Wayne D. Couture)/Sunday State License (Video Machines) Annual Renewal. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to approve the above renewal of Sparetime Recreation's Sunday State License (Video Machines) subject to the payment of any outstanding monies. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Citizens' Comments/Input. 1) Thomas Perkins, Chairman-Disability Commission, and members Michael Genest, Gail Arnold, and Russell Conlon. Mr. Perkins spoke on behalf of his committee and urged the Selectmen not to close out the Handicapped Access Project Accounts that are on the warrant for the upcoming March 15, 2005 Special Town Meeting with the intent to close out the two accounts and use the funds to help solve the Town's \$1.2 million shortfall. He recommended and the Commission members concurred that the monies be used to fix the main entrance doors to Town Hall. As Mr. Perkins was not satisfied with the way things were going for his committee, he resigned effective immediately and the other commission members present followed suit. Selectman Ampagoomian agreed that it was very difficult for a disabled individual to enter Town Hall by them self, however, he informed Mr. Perkins that the doors do meet the minimal requirements of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and that the Building, Planning & Construction Committee was aware of it. Mr. Perkins continued to complain that his requests were never followed up on and no action ever taken with respect to his committee's requests. The Board informed him that he should put all requests in writing because verbal requests are hard to keep track of and a casual conversation is not considered to be a formal request. **2) Phil Cyr, Rumonoski Drive,** reiterated for Mr. Perkins benefit how important it is to put everything in writing. He explained that his committee [Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials] has had great success in getting things done because of the fact that they put all their requests in writing. **3) Sharron Ampagoomian, Henry Street,** asked the Selectmen to look into getting automatic door openers for the main entrance to Town Hall. **4) Lee Hebert, Heights of Hill Street,** suggested that it's time the Town pull together and do away with "double standards". As such, he asked Selectman Collins to seek a written opinion from the Ethics Commission with respect to his son's employment with the Town of Northbridge. Mr. Hebert also pointed out that there was no such disclosure on file in the Town Clerk's Office contrary to what Mr. Collins has previously

stated. **5) Jack Davis, Benson Road**, provided a handout to the Selectmen that contained written requests for information. Mr. Davis stated that he would appreciate the Board answering at least the first two questions for now. **a)** How will cuts to balance the FY 05 budget impact the FY 06 budget? The Town Manager responded that because Article 1 was not passed at the January 25th Special Town Meeting, that the FY 06 budget was in limbo, however, Mr. Coughlin did say that some cuts would be temporary and some would be permanent. **b)** What is the status of the snow removal account and how will it impact the FY 06 budget? First, Mr. Coughlin commended the DPW for their efforts during the last two storms. He then indicated that there would be a 75% reimbursement for storm-related costs, however, he did not know whether the Governor would include the last two storms or just one; that it all depended on the declaration and the timing of same.

Selectmen's Concerns. **1) Selectman Boucher** asked about the status of bringing the Red Sox trophy to town. Mr. Coughlin responded that the trophy is scheduled to be here on March 5, 2005 during the Blackstone Valley Business Expo at Northbridge High School. **2) Selectman Ampagoomian** reported that funding for the National Heritage Corridor is coming to an end and as a result a grass roots organization [Corridor Keepers] is being formed to continue to keep the Commission active and to seek funding. More information is available at www.corridorkeepers.org. **3) Chairman Montecalvo** remarked that he has heard comments about a cable program called the "Dudeula Connection" and that it was a little risqué. He suggested that it be put on a future agenda for discussion.

Town Manager's Report. **1)** Mr. Coughlin thanked the DPW again for their fine work during the last couple of storms. **2)** He also announced that the National Guard Unit from Lake Street was deployed to Athol to help clean up after the overflow of the Millers River. **3)** Mr. Coughlin also thanked Chairman Montecalvo for taking him to the hospital for his latest medical emergency. As a result, he was admitted to the hospital and missed the January 25th Special Town Meeting and apologized for that. He also expressed his gratitude to those who sent well-wishes. **4)** Thanked Phil Cyr for his words to the Disability Commission. **5)** Reported that Powers and Sullivan [Auditors] have completed their report with respect to the investigation of the Treasurer/Collector's Office and that it will be available in the Town Clerk's Office tomorrow. He also advised that the Auditors will deliver their audit report next Monday and do a full presentation on February 28th.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:37 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Mellor, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
February 14, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Joseph J. Montecalvo at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Collins, Boucher, Mellor, and Ampagoomian.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of Minutes. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to accept the January 10, 2005 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Boucher, Ampagoomian, and Montecalvo.

Appointments: Stephanie Alix, Historical Commission. Ms. Alix briefly introduced herself to the Board and told them that she studied History for four years in college. Continuing, she noted that her interests involved having an appreciation for history and preservation. She also thought that her interests and experiences could benefit the Historical Commission. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Mellor to appoint Stephanie Alix to the Northbridge Historical Commission for a three-year term. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Jon Frieswick, Disability Commission.** Mr. Frieswick stated that upon his appointment he would be willing to answer phones and/or do some computer work for the Disability Commission. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to appoint Jon Frieswick to the Northbridge Disability Commission for a three-year term. Vote yes/Unanimous. **For the record, it is duly noted that the other four candidates [Patti Lynn Adams, Rachel Genga, Paula Derderian, and Lynn Barbadora] withdrew their applications for appointment to the Disability Commission.* **Resignation: Stephen Walker, Board of Health.** Mr. James Marzec, acting Chair – Board of Health, read a letter from Mr. Walker aloud. The letter was a formal request to the Board of Selectmen asking them to offer a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person who recently threatened Mr. Walker's family. Selectman Boucher voiced his full support if such an idea was allowed. He stated that no volunteer should have to withstand threats; that it was disgusting and appalling that someone would do such a thing. Chief Melia responded that he has heard of other cities and towns doing similar things. Town Manager Coughlin also stated that it was worth pursuing; that it was not a question of money--just a question of policy. In addition, he said that it was unfortunate this incident occurred because this sort of thing [threat] is what stops people from coming forward to volunteer. Chairman Montecalvo expressed the importance of developing a policy to deal with such matters in the future. Chief Melia then offered to take the information to the District Attorney's Office to establish an acceptable policy because it has to be very particular. He stressed that it is very important as to how the policy is set up. Ms. Mary Frances Powers voiced her agreement with the above concept and said that she would support every effort to bring this case to a conclusion; to catch the perpetrator and get a conviction. She suggested that the Town Manager look into getting a ruling on using the reserve fund for such purposes. Following discussion, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to accept the resignation of Stephen Walker from the Board of Health. Vote yes/Unanimous. After discussion, the Selectmen agreed to wait for additional information from Chief Melia with respect to developing a particular policy with respect to offering rewards. Mr. Marzec mentioned his concern with waiting for two weeks. Mr. Coughlin assured him that everyone's safety was important and that the investigation was in full swing and to this date the Northbridge Police Department has followed up on every lead. Mr. Marzec then expressed his appreciation to the Selectmen for their support.

Special Town Meeting [3/15/05] – Vote to sign the warrant. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to sign the March 15, 2005 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Spring Annual Town Meeting/Vote to delay the SATM until June 7, 2005. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to delay the Spring Annual Town Meeting until Tuesday, June 7, 2005. Vote yes/Unanimous.

MLJJ, Inc. d/b/a The Gray Barn [License Transfers]:

1) Transfer Common Victualler License from The Gray Barn, Inc. (Robert M. Mellor, Mgr.) to MLJJ, Inc. d/b/a The Gray Barn (John H. Mellor, Mgr.). A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the above transfer. Vote yes/Messrs. Boucher, Collins, Ampagoomian, and Montecalvo. Abstain/Mr. Mellor. **2) Transfer Pool Table License from The Gray Barn, Inc. (Robert M. Mellor, Mgr.) to MLJJ, Inc. d/b/a The Gray Barn (John H. Mellor, Mgr.).** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the above transfer. Vote yes/Messrs. Boucher, Collins, Ampagoomian, and Montecalvo. Abstain/Mr. Mellor. **3) Transfer Automatic Amusement License from The Gray Barn, Inc. (Robert M. Mellor, Mgr.) to MLJJ, Inc. d/b/a The Gray Barn (John H. Mellor, Mgr.).** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the above transfer. Vote yes/ Messrs. Boucher, Collins, Ampagoomian, and Montecalvo. Abstain/Mr. Mellor. **4) Transfer Sunday State Pool Table License from The Gray Barn, Inc. (Robert M. Mellor, Mgr.) to MLJJ, Inc.**

d/b/a The Gray Barn (John H. Mellor, Mgr.). A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the above transfer. Vote yes/Messrs. Boucher, Collins, Ampagoomian, and Montecalvo. Abstain/Mr. Mellor.

Village Congregational Church/1) Request to use the Town Common for the Annual Harvest Festival, 10/1/05 from 9AM – 3PM (Rain date: 10/2/05 from 12 Noon to 3PM). 2) Request to block off Church Street from in front of the Church to the intersection of Park Street. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the above requests subject to the safety requirements of the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Powers and Sullivan – Distribution of Audit Report. The Town Manager distributed the “Draft” audit report to the Selectmen. He explained that the Auditors have rendered a comprehensive Management Letter and announced that Mr. Jim Powers would be at the next Selectmen’s meeting on Monday, February 28th to give an in-depth presentation on the report. Continuing, Mr. Coughlin noted that there was not anything new; that there were many of the same problems that have shown up in previous audits but never corrected. He also stated that all items identified will be corrected and stressed his commitment to correcting such deficiencies.

Financial Team/Presentation of FY '06 Revenues. Present: Theresa Cenedella, Town Accountant, Robert Thayer, MIS Director, Robert Fitzgerald, Principal Assessor, and Joyce Morin, Treasurer/Collector. Ms. Cenedella advised that the purpose of the Financial Team’s appearance before the Selectmen was to discuss potential revenue streams. She explained that the Town was attempting to shift costs to self-supporting funds such as the Sewer/Water Enterprise Funds and the Ambulance Reserves in an effort to pay for more municipal services. She also stated the Team would make sure that the Town remained in compliance with Department of Revenue guidelines. Mr. Thayer remarked that the Financial Team has taken a good look at legitimate costs to be shifted to the Enterprise Funds such as building and vehicle insurance costs; personnel costs, and administrative overhead costs. Before concluding the discussion, Selectman Collins asked the Treasurer/Collector how tax collections were going. She responded that for the period of Jan/Feb 2005, the town was behind approximately \$1.2 million compared to the same period last year. Ms. Morin also noted that the Town has not yet had to borrow but may have to within six weeks.

Granite Hill Development Corporation/Letter of Eligibility. Town Manager Coughlin explained that despite intense lobbying efforts by the Town and residents of Rumonoski Drive, that Granite Hill had received project eligibility. He has since contacted state officials to discuss the matter and to set up a meeting with Mass. Housing. Mr. Coughlin further expressed his concern that environmental officials were not involved in the granting of this determination and remained hopeful that the Town could get Mass. Housing to reconsider their decision.

Trustees of Soldiers’ Memorials/Policy re: homecoming of Veterans. Present: Phil Cyr, Andy Williamson, and Spaulding Aldrich. Mr. Cyr presented a proposed policy to the Selectmen with respect to the homecoming of Veterans. Chairman Montecalvo informed the Trustees that the Board would review the proposal and place it on the next Selectmen’s agenda for a decision.

Citizens’ Comments/Input. 1) Jeannine Gilmore, 387 Rumonoski Drive, Whitinsville, asked when the Granite Hill project would be going before the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Coughlin replied when the developer is ready to file with the ZBA. Selectman Boucher interjected and said that abutters would be notified when the time comes. Ms. Gilmore remarked that the last time this happened the abutters were not notified. **2) Walter Drew, 169 Rocky Road, Whitinsville,** asked when the FY '06 budgets would be ready as his written request for the same information had not been acknowledged. Selectman Collins explained that until FY '05 is settled how could we deal with FY '06. The Town Manager concurred and advised that he has not acted on all departmental requests at this time. Adding, that until FY '05 is closed and until he has a starting point for FY '06 that he is in no position to consider FY '06 at this time as it is premature. **3) Jim Marzec, 221 Samuel Drive, Whitinsville,** [speaking as a citizen], asked for clarification with respect to envelopes which have been disseminated to the Selectmen at the last couple of meetings. Mr. Coughlin advised that at the last meeting, the envelopes contained the report concerning the investigation into the Treasurer/Collector's Office, which was also given to the Town Clerk to be made available to the public. Tonight, the envelopes included the audit report, which will also be made available to the public tomorrow. **4) Sharron Ampagoomian, 41 Henry Street, Whitinsville,** a) suggested that if all Boards/Committees want their meetings videotaped then people need to step forward and learn how to do the videotaping. In addition, she would also appreciate receiving advanced notice for taping such meetings rather than the 10-15 minutes she generally gets. b) also inquired about the status of the main entrance doors to Town Hall. The Town Manager advised that it is being looked into.

Selectmen’s Concerns. 1) Selectman Ampagoomian/a) asked whether there was any news from Mass. Highway with respect to Plummer's Corner. The Town Manager responded there was no further information at this time. b) also asked whether the Town had an emergency plan relative to disasters such

as derailments, chemical spills, etc. and suggested that the public be made aware of such a plan so they know what the procedures were in case that sort of disaster were to occur. Chairman Montecalvo responded that many town officials [Public Safety and Local Emergency Planning Officials] have had training with respect to such things. He also noted that the Town has a decontamination trailer for use if needed.

Town Manager's Report. Town Manager Coughlin announced that he filed his marriage intentions today [Valentine's Day] and that he will be married by former Town Clerk, Muriel Barry, at Town Hall on Friday, February 18th at Noon. As a result, he will be away on vacation the following week and announced that Chief Melia and Sharon Susienka will be in charge during his absence.

Executive Session. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation), and under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #6 (Land acquisition), not to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Collins/Yes, Mr. Boucher/Yes, Mr. Mellor/Yes, Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes, and Mr. Montecalvo/Yes.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Mellor, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
February 28, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Vice-Chairman Timothy L. Boucher at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Collins, Mellor, and Ampagoomian. Chairman Joseph J. Montecalvo was absent and it is duly recorded.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of Minutes. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to accept the January 31, 2005 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Ampagoomian, Mellor and Boucher.

Appointments: Patrick O'Connor Smith, Building, Planning & Construction Committee. Mr. Smith explained that while he was a new resident in town he wanted to be involved, and decided to apply for the vacancy on this committee. Selectman Collins commented on Mr. Smith's great resume and the fact that he would be an asset to the committee. Selectman Ampagoomian thanked Mr. Smith for coming forward to serve. Mr. Smith inquired about the time commitment and Mr. Coughlin offered to meet with him to provide some additional information. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to appoint Mr. Patrick O'Connor Smith to the Building, Planning & Construction Committee for a three-year term. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Ampagoomian, Mellor and Boucher.

Resignation: Michelle Muscatell, Recycling Committee. Ms. Muscatell's letter of resignation indicated that she was resigning from the recycling committee in order to return to school. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to accept Ms. Muscatell's resignation and send a letter of thanks and appreciation for serving the Town. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Ampagoomian, Mellor and Boucher.

2004 Road Acceptances: A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to sign three (3) Acceptances of Deeds of Easements for Samuel Drive, Shannon Drive, and Delwyn Barnes Drive. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Ampagoomian, Mellor and Boucher.

Safety Committee Minutes [February 16, 2005]. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to accept the Safety Committee minutes of February 16, 2005 as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Ampagoomian, Mellor and Boucher.

Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials/Policy re: homecoming for Veterans. Present: Phil Cyr and Andy Williamson. Mr. Cyr noted that at the previous Selectmen's meeting of February 14th, his committee presented a proposed policy to the Board with respect to the homecoming of Veterans from areas of conflict. To put it briefly, the policy suggested that any family member could contact a member of the Board of Selectmen and arrange for the veteran and his/her family members to attend a Selectmen's meeting for a formal welcoming home. Mr. Cyr further stated that the Trustees would also provide returning veterans with packets of information about available benefits, etc. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the above homecoming policy for Veterans as presented by the Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Ampagoomian, Mellor and Boucher.

Audit Report Presentation by Powers & Sullivan, Town Auditors. Present: Jim Powers, Auditor, and Financial Team Members - Theresa Cenedella, Robert Thayer, Robert Fitzgerald, and Joyce Morin. Mr. Powers presented a comprehensive overview of the Management Letter that he submitted to the Board of Selectmen this evening. The Management Letter pointed out various deficiencies within several Town departments and, in addition, provided recommendations for improvements, which would provide for better control of the Town's finances. Among the items discussed in detail were: Role of the Town Accountant, Reconciliation of Treasurer/Collector's Cash and Receivables to the General Ledger, Student Activity Accounts, Chapter 90, Reconciliation of the Detail Receivable Ledgers to the Collector's Control Accounts, General Journal Entries, Automation of Treasurer's Office, Maintenance of a Comprehensive Debt Schedule, Betterment Receivable Maintenance, Treasurer/Collector's Pursuit of Tax Foreclosures, Oversight of the Whitinsville Water Company, Use of a Lockbox to Process Municipal Payments, Internal Control Policies and Procedures Manual, Budgeted Estimated Revenues, Fixed Asset Account Maintenance, Chart of Accounts, Bank Accounts Using the Town's Federal I.D. Number, Excess Bank Accounts, Police Special Detail, Tailings, Planning Board Deposits, Withholding Accounts, General Long Term Obligations Account Group, Security of the Town Hall Mailroom, Town Clerk's Office Pre-numbered Documents, and Statement No. 45 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. At the conclusion of his presentation, the Board thanked Mr. Powers and members of the Financial Team for the information. After that, Mr. Coughlin reiterated the fact that most of the items have appeared in previous Management Letters but were never corrected. As such, he again stressed his commitment to correcting all the findings detailed in the report.

Thomas Melia, Police Chief. 1) Report concerning cash rewards for crimes. Chief Melia advised that at the last Selectmen's meeting of February 14th, a request was made by Stephen Walker, former Board of Health Chairman, asking the Board of Selectmen to offer a reward in the amount of \$5,000 for the arrest and conviction of the person responsible for making a threat against Mr. Walker's family. As such, upon further investigation of such practices, the Chief found that rewards for detecting or giving information for crimes committed was referenced under MGL's C. 276, §10. Chief Melia stated that the statute clearly indicates that a reward of not more than \$500 may be offered by the Board of Selectmen in hopes of detecting or securing a person who has committed a **felony**. [For the record, the threat made against the Walker family is considered a misdemeanor]. In addition, the Chief also contacted Sandra Hautanen of the Worcester County District Attorney's Office and Det. Captain Thomas Greene of the MA State Police and both agreed that the referenced chapter is very explicit and would not pertain to the threat made against Mr. Walker's family, which is a misdemeanor and not a **felony**. Continuing, Chief Melia noted that it is important to understand that the above chapter and section refers only to rewards funded by municipalities and not by private individuals/organizations. In conclusion, Chief Melia's opinion is that a reward cannot be offered for the crime, which is currently being investigated by the Northbridge Police Department with respect to Mr. Walker's family. He also advised that in the event a "private" reward was offered for any crime, that strict guidelines and policy govern who will oversee the rewarding of the cash award. **2) Report on Plummer's Corner.** Chief Melia stated that he contacted Mr. Bernard Plante, Administrative Manager, Mass. Highway (Worcester Office) with respect to the status of the Plummer's Corner re-design and construction project. Mr. Plante informed the Chief that the Worcester Office forwarded the Plummer's Corner project to the Boston Office as a "priority project" on two separate occasions and both times the Boston Office rejected it. Chief Melia further mentioned that Mr. Plante told him that the Worcester Office supports the Plummer's Corner project and is aware of the safety and traffic issues involved. In addition, Mr. Plante recommended that the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, and the Police Chief as Chairman of the Safety Committee write additional letters requesting the urgency of the re-design and construction project. In closing, Chief Melia further recommended that the Town request assistance from our two state legislators.

Citizens' Comments/Input. 1) James Marzec, Board of Health Chairman, 221 Samuel Drive, Whitinsville, stated that he was pleased to hear that some individuals have come forward to help with the reward relative to the threat made against Mr. Walker's family. He also inquired about the vacancy on the Board of Health and requested all talent bank forms be shared with his Board. The Town Manager responded that the forms would be forwarded to the Board of Health before their next meeting. With respect to the Granite Hill Development, Mr. Marzec mentioned that he recently spoke with someone familiar with 40B developments and was advised by that person to have the safety issues of the area investigated thoroughly. He also pointed out that the 40B code says that the Town is responsible for maintaining the roads in a safe condition and that perhaps the town could request the developer to make road improvements in the area. Selectman Ampagoomian expressed the fact that the Safety Committee recommendations were completely ignored by the State when they made their determination and granted them project eligibility. **2) Denis Latour, 88 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville,** inquired about the strategy for town meeting and asked why we would use the same strategy that failed at the last Special Town Meeting of January 25, 2005. Town Manager Coughlin advised that there are two articles on the March 15, 2005 Special Town Meeting Warrant; one strategy (article) presented by the Board of Selectmen and one strategy (article) presented by the Finance Committee. He also hoped to meet with the Finance Committee on March 7th to discuss both strategies; however, Ms. Powers came forward to say that she was unavailable but that the other committee members were welcome to meet with him. She also reminded everyone that the town meeting booklets were due in the homes one week from tomorrow. Mr. Latour expressed his dissatisfaction with the process and went back to his seat.

Selectmen's Concerns. 1) Selectman Ampagoomian mentioned his concerns with respect to programming content on Cable and asked how the Town would go about developing a policy to deal with programming content. Mr. Coughlin suggested that the Cable Advisory Committee be asked to draft such a policy and then make their recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. He also indicated that Chairman Montecalvo wanted Bob Spain to come in and discuss these issues with the Board.

Town Manager's Report. Town Manager Coughlin thanked those who attended his wedding at Town Hall and especially to those who sent well wishes.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Mellor, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
March 14, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Joseph J. Montecalvo at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Collins, Mellor, Boucher, and Ampagoomian.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Presentation of Proclamation to Sgt. Richard Menard. Present: Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials Members: Philip Cyr, Joseph Williamson, and Thomas Farley. Mr. Phil Cyr announced that Sgt. Menard recently returned from Iraq where he had served for 16 months. On behalf of the Trustees, Mr. Cyr thanked Sgt. Menard for his service to his country and welcomed him home. In addition, each member of the Board of Selectmen personally thanked Sgt. Menard and Chairman Montecalvo then presented to him a certificate of appreciation for his military service during the Iraq conflict.

Uxbridge Rotary Club: Presentation of Centennial Bench. Present: Karen Albright, Garry Armstrong. Ms. Albright reminded the public that the Uxbridge Rotary Club was celebrating their 100th Anniversary this year and to that honor they planned to present each of the surrounding towns a Centennial Bench to be displayed in the respective Town Halls and enjoyed for generations to come. The Board thanked Ms. Albright and Mr. Armstrong for the gift.

Approval of Minutes. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to accept the February 14, 2005 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to accept the February 28, 2005 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous.

7:15 PM Public Hearing:

Transfer of Wines and Malts License from Cat-Ray, Inc. d/b/a The Trading Post (Raymond D. Miller, III, Manager) to Trading Post Market, Inc. d/b/a Trading Post Market (John America, Manager). Present: Attorney William Goldberg, John America, and Bishnu Mani Acharya. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. Chairman Montecalvo read the public hearing notice aloud. Mr. Goldberg introduced his clients, John America and Bishnu Mani Acharya to the Board and stated that both men have prior experience with selling alcoholic beverages and never had a problem. There being no further questions or comments, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the above transfer as noted. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Boucher, Collins, and Montecalvo. Abstain/Mr. Mellor.

Transfer of Common Victualler License from Cat-Ray, Inc. d/b/a The Trading Post (Raymond D. Miller, III, Manager) to Trading Post Market, Inc. d/b/a Trading Post Market (John America, Manager). A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the above transfer as indicated. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Boucher, Collins, and Montecalvo. Abstain/Mr. Mellor.

7:25 PM Public Hearing:

Mass. Electric Company/Verizon New England – Petition for Joint Pole Relocations covering one pole on School Street and one pole on Taft Street (P05-17). Present: Roger Cox, Engineering Manager, Mass. Electric. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. Chairman Montecalvo then read the public hearing notice aloud. Mr. Cox was present to explain the reason for the pole relocations and indicated that the primary purpose for the relocations was for Mass. Electric to realign everything properly and correct any clearance issues in the area. There being no comments, a motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to grant permission for joint pole relocations covering one pole on School Street [#335] and one pole on Taft Street [#4] dated February 23, 2005, to erect and maintain poles and wires, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as they may find necessary, said poles to be erected substantially in accordance with the plan filed herewith marked--Massachusetts Electric and Verizon New England, Inc., No. D05-13 dated February 16, 2005. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Appointments/Board of Health. Chairman Montecalvo advised that the Board of Health currently has one vacancy; however, three candidates have applied for appointment. He then asked the three candidates to introduce themselves and to give a brief summary of why they wanted to be appointed to the Board of Health. **1) Paul McKeon**, 500 Benson Road, noted that he previously served on the Board of Health for 10 years without any problems; no conflicts as far as he knew. **2) Steven Garabedian**, 53 Theresa Circle, mentioned that he was a life-long resident; that he currently works for the Milford and Douglas Boards of Health in addition to being Northbridge's former Health Agent. **3) Christopher Cella**, 36

Samuel Drive, stated that he is a Pharmacist registered in both Massachusetts and New Jersey and felt that his medical knowledge and experience would be an asset to the Board of Health. Chairman Montecalvo called for motions. **Motion #1:** A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Mellor to appoint Paul McKeon to the Board of Health for a three-year term. **Motion #2:** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian to appoint Steven Garabedian to the Board of Health for a three-year term. No second – motion dies. **Vote on motion #1 to appoint Paul McKeon:** Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Mellor, Boucher, and Montecalvo. Vote no/Mr. Ampagoomian.

Special Town Meeting (March 15, 2005)/Vote position on articles. Chairman Montecalvo read the text of Article 1 and Article 2 aloud and advised that the purpose of the Special Town Meeting tomorrow evening was to close the remaining \$727,000 gap in the FY '05 budget. Continuing, the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee Chair debated the fundamental differences between the two articles that appear on the Special Town Meeting Warrant. In a nutshell, Article 1 [Selectmen's version] would maintain a balance of \$200,000+ in Free Cash and Article 2 [Finance Comm. version] would leave no available funds in Free Cash. **Article 1:** A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to support Article 1. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 2:** A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher not to support Article 2. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Spring Annual Town Meeting/Vote to close the warrant Friday, April 22, 2005 at Noon. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to close the Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant on Friday, April 22, 2005 at Noon. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Milford Savings & Loan Association – Future Expansion. Present: Attorney Henry Lane, who advised that his client, Mr. Edward Renaud, recently purchased the Wing Tavern property on Providence Road. Continuing, he noted that the property was currently zoned Residential, however, he felt that the best use for that property would be of a commercial nature. He also reported that he has met with the Planning Board over the last three (3) months and that they were currently reviewing proposals but that they were not ready to sponsor any rezoning articles at this time and therefore he was forging ahead independently. Representatives from Milford Savings & Loan Association were present with Mr. Lane and expressed the fact that their current location in Shaw's Plaza was inadequate and that they would be interested in moving to the Wing Tavern location if the rezoning of that area was approved. For the record, it was noted that the bank would maintain the historic character of that site. Mr. Lane advised that he was here to request a Special Town Meeting as soon as possible due to contractual obligations. Selectman Collins asked who would pay for the Town Meeting expenses and Mr. Lane responded that his client would cover all expenses. Town Manager Coughlin informed Mr. Lane that May 10, 2005 would be the earliest date we could hold a Special Town Meeting due to bylaw requirements. Mr. Lane concurred. That being said, Chairman Montecalvo said that he would place the Special Town Meeting request on the next agenda for decision.

Citizens' Comments/Input. 1) James Marzec, Board of Health Chairman, 221 Samuel Drive, Whitinsville, advised that he was taken a back by the Board of Health appointment earlier this evening. Although he respects the Selectmen's vote, he questioned their reasoning. Mr. Marzec came close to accusing the Board of being "political." Chairman Montecalvo assured Mr. Marzec that the Selectmen do not discuss appointments ahead of time. He said that the Board voted in the best interest of the Town and nothing more. **2) Richard Sasseville, DPW Director,** announced that there would be a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day held at the Northbridge Middle School, Linwood Avenue, on Saturday, April 16, 2005. He also said that it would be restricted to Northbridge residents only and that a flier with all the appropriate information will be mailed to all households in town. **3) Lee Hebert, 151 Heights of Hill Street, Whitinsville,** voiced his opinion with respect to the Board of Health appointment. He thought a registered Pharmacist would have been a better candidate for that Board. **4) Kenneth Couture, Hill Street, Whitinsville,** provided a brief summary of all the problems there have been with his properties on Church Street with respect to the Streetscape project. Chairman Montecalvo requested Mr. Couture to put everything he has told the Selectmen this evening in writing and to submit it to the Town Manager. **a)** Gas trucks have trouble delivering gas to 194 Church Street, **b)** parking/loading area at 117 Church Street has been eliminated and the shifting of the road in that direction is very dangerous due to the large number of children frequenting the bowling alley and/or walking along that area, **c)** the grading of the sidewalks has changed drastically and therefore has created poor drainage, and **d)** the contractor still has not fixed the damage done to his building at 117 Church Street. Mr. Couture further indicated that overall the project is different from what was originally presented to the business owners on Church Street prior to construction. In closing, Mr. Couture asked that the traffic be shifted back to where it was prior to construction and that all damage to his properties be fixed; wants all wrongs to be righted. Selectman Ampagoomian stressed the fact that the project was designed with "safety" in mind as well as handicapped accessibility.

Selectmen's Concerns. 1) Selectman Boucher asked about the status of the Disability Commission and whether the remaining member had resigned. Mr. Coughlin responded not as of this date.

Items for Future Agenda. Selectman Ampagoomian asked for an update on the findings in the Management Letter. Chairman Montecalvo stated that he would have Mrs. Susienka organize them into groups for follow-up periodically. Town Manager Coughlin interjected and said that the Financial Team will be providing an interim report on March 28th.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Mellor, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
March 28, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Joseph J. Montecalvo at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Collins, Mellor, Boucher, and Ampagoomian.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Chairman Montecalvo called for a moment of silence for former Selectman Ross Rajotte who passed away over the weekend.

Safety Committee Minutes [March 16, 2005]. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the March 16, 2005 Safety Committee Minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Operation Graduation: Request to conduct a toll booth fundraiser at Memorial Square on Saturday, April 10, 2005 from 9 AM – 12 Noon [Rain date: Saturday, April 17, 2005]. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the above request as noted subject to the safety requirements of the Police Chief. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Petition for Selectmen to call a Special Town Meeting [May 10, 2005]. A petition signed by 200+ voters of the Town and certified by the Town Clerk's Office was presented to the Selectmen by Attorney Henry Lane. Mr. Lane requested the Selectmen to call a Special Town Meeting for Tuesday, May 10, 2005 @ 7:00 PM at the Northbridge Middle School Auditorium. The Board directed the Town Manager to check on the availability of the Town Moderator. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to call a Special Town Meeting for Tuesday, May 10, 2005 @ 7:00 PM at the Northbridge Middle School Auditorium. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Financial Team Presentation/1) Tax Rate/Tax Bills 2) Corrective Measures re: Management Letter. Present: Robert Fitzgerald, Principal Assessor and Robert Thayer, Systems Administrator. Mr. Fitzgerald began by announcing that the tax rate has been set and certified at \$9.06 per thousand and that tax bills were mailed out on Friday. Since then the Assessor's Office has received many phone calls concerning tax bills. Continuing, Mr. Fitzgerald noted that both Mr. Thayer and Ms. Morin, Treasurer/Collector were instrumental in completing the tax bill process and getting all the bills out. As a result, he advised that the last day to file tax abatements would be May 2, 2005. Mr. Fitzgerald commented that the preliminary 2006 bills would be going out in about a month; that the file is in the process of being prepared. When asked if an error such as the \$1.2 million shortfall that occurred during FY 05 could re-occur, Mr. Fitzgerald assured the Board members and the public that such an error would not happen again. The Selectmen thanked both men for the information. Town Manager Coughlin stated that due to the absence of the other two Financial Team members [Town Accountant and Treasurer/Collector] that the corrective measures portion of the presentation would be postponed until the next Selectmen's Meeting on April 11th. That being said, he commended the entire Financial Team for their hard work in this process.

Citizens' Comments/Input. 1) Dean Fortin, 56 Evergreen Circle, Whitinsville, brought forth a complaint about the Town's snow removal operations. He advised that on March 17th, he observed Highway Division employees removing snow from the cul-de-sac where he lives and that some of the snow was trucked away, however, huge amounts of snow removal debris were dumped on his property. Mr. Fortin then called the DPW and reported it to Richard Sasseville who in turn informed Arthur Magowan, Highway Superintendent. Mr. Magowan then went to observe the area but never returned Mr. Fortin's phone call. Mr. Magowan explained that the Town tries to clean up cul-de-sacs as much as possible. Mr. Fortin interjected and said that pushing the snow back 6 ft. to 20 ft. onto someone's property is unacceptable. Selectman Collins advised that he recently received a complaint of a similar nature from someone in his neighborhood. When asked what corrective measures would be taken with respect to this matter, Mr. Magowan explained that the DPW would remove the snow from Mr. Fortin's property. Mr. Fortin stated that he would prefer to be told that this would never occur again. Mr. Magowan assured him it would not. The Town Manager advised Mr. Magowan to review correct snow removal procedures with all plow operators. **2) James Marzec, 221 Samuel Drive, Whitinsville,** asked about the status of the threat to former Board of Health member Stephen Walker and whether any private donations had been received. Town Manager Coughlin assured Mr. Marzec that the police department was actively investigating the case but that there was nothing to report at this time. **3) Denis Latour, 88 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville,** asked about the status of the outdated athletic signs in Town. Mr. Coughlin reported that the Athletic Director would like to keep the signs up as they are important events and are part of the Town's history. That being said, he announced that the Whitinsville Christian School captured the basketball championship over the weekend and would like their championship noted as well.

Mr. Latour offered to follow up on that matter with the Christian School. **4) Kenneth Couture, 426 Hill Street, Whitinsville,** reported that he heard on the "3 on 11" cable show that the streetscape contractor would be coming back to Town to answer any questions or concerns that people may have with respect to that project and asked that he be notified when the time comes. Mr. Couture then inquired as to who was actually in charge of the streetscape project and Chairman Montecalvo replied that the Building, Planning & Construction Committee was. In addition, Chairman Montecalvo advised that there was still a small punch list of items to be addressed and/or completed by the streetscape contractor. The Town Manager informed Mr. Couture that because there was a claim by him with respect to the project that it had to go through the proper channels. Mr. Couture noted that he never filed the claim and that he would prefer just to get things fixed. Chairman Montecalvo suggested that he contact the Building, Planning & Construction Committee with respect to his claim because they managed the project. **5) Sharron Ampagoomian,** suggested that the area around Electric Pond be transformed into an animal sanctuary in memory of Ross Rajotte who passed away over the weekend. She reminded everyone how passionate Mr. Rajotte was about getting a public pool established at Electric Pond but was unsuccessful during his many attempts. Therefore, she thought that it might be a nice gesture to do something at that location in his memory. Chairman Montecalvo asked whether there were other people interested in that sort of project and if so, then they should form a committee for that purpose.

Town Manager's Report. **1)** Mr. Coughlin advised that he would be meeting with Robert Spain of Charter Communications on Thursday, April 3, 2005 with respect to programming issues as well as problems in getting prompt cable service to the Shining Rock Development. **2)** Also announced that Student Government Day will take place on Tuesday, April 12, 2005 from 8 AM – Noon, ending with lunch and a mock town meeting.

Items for Future Agenda. Selectman Ampagoomian asked for an update on the 40B Granite Hill Development. Mr. Coughlin informed him that he has been in contact with both Senator Moore and Representative Peterson about setting up a meeting, however, he is getting resistance from Mass. Housing.

Executive Session:

8PM: Joint Session with Building, Planning & Construction Committee. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation), not to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Collins/Yes, Mr. Boucher/Yes, Mr. Mellor/Yes, Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes, and Mr. Montecalvo/Yes.

A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation), not to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Collins/Yes, Mr. Boucher/Yes, Mr. Mellor/Yes, Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes, and Mr. Montecalvo/Yes.

Open Session Adjourned: 7:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Mellor, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
April 11, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Vice Chairman Timothy L. Boucher at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Mellor and Ampagoomian. For the record, it was announced and duly noted that Chairman Montecalvo and Selectman Collins would be arriving in a short while.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of Minutes. 1) A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Mellor to approve the March 14, 2005 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Mellor, and Boucher. 2) A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Mellor to approve the March 28, 2005 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Mellor, and Boucher.

Special Town Meeting [May 10, 2005]/Vote to sign warrant. Selectman Ampagoomian noted that the signature page of the warrant was incorrect at which time it was immediately corrected and returned to the Board. That being done, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Mellor to sign the warrant for the May 10, 2005 Special Town Meeting. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Mellor, and Boucher.

Spring Annual Town Meeting [June 7, 2005]/Vote to place articles on warrant (Draft #4).

Selectman Ampagoomian asked if the purpose of this action was to save a place for articles on the warrant and Vice Chairman Boucher indicated that it was. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Mellor to place articles on the June 7, 2005 Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Mellor, and Boucher.

Armenian Apostolic Church/Request to hang a banner over Church Street. A motion/Mr.

Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Mellor to grant permission to the Armenian Apostolic Church to hang a banner over Church Street from April 12, 2005 to April 25, 2005 in honor of "Martyr's Day". Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Mellor, and Boucher.

Flutterby Wishes [Tricia Johnston]/Request to use the Whitinsville Town Common on Saturday, May 21, 2005 [Rain date: June 12, 2005] for an Arts and Crafts Bazaar. A motion/Mr.

Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Mellor to grant permission for Ms. Johnston, Flutterby Wishes, and other Church Street merchants to use the Whitinsville Town Common on Saturday, May 21, 2005 [Rain date: June 12, 2005] for an Arts and Crafts Bazaar subject to the safety requirements of the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Mellor, and Boucher.

Financial Team Presentation/Corrective Measures re: Auditor's Management Letter. Present: Theresa Cenedella, Town Accountant; Robert Thayer, Systems Administrator; Robert Fitzgerald, Principal Assessor; and Joyce Morin, Treasurer/Collector.

Ms. Cenedella spoke on behalf of the Financial Team and acknowledged that they have responded to each item in the Management Letter. She also noted that they would provide periodic updates to the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen as to progress in each area. Selectman Ampagoomian asked for clarification with respect to Student Activity Accounts. The Town Accountant advised that the former Town Auditor said that the Town did not have to record Student Activity Savings Accounts—only the checking accounts. Ms. Cenedella then reported that the savings account issue has recently been corrected via journal entry; however, she further stated that she needs clarification from Powers and Sullivan regarding the savings and checking accounts procedures. Selectman Ampagoomian also requested an update on Chapter 90 information at the next Selectmen's meeting on April 25th. When questioned about automation in the Treasurer/Collector's Office, Mr. Thayer explained that the Auditor's had recommended that the Treasurer implement an automated cash book system, i.e. Quicken, to maintain the Town's cash and investments, however, he advised that before the Town installs a separate software application for that purpose, the Financial Team wished to investigate the ability for the Town's existing financial application [MUNIS] to perform that function. Ms. Cenedella interjected and said that she would like the new Treasurer/Collector to have some input in that area. Town Manager Coughlin added that the Financial Team would provide more detailed information in the future and reminded everyone that this was a work in progress; an ongoing daily process. With respect to the Fixed Asset Account Maintenance, Ms. Cenedella stated that she was not clear on this procedure and added that in the future Fixed Asset procedures would be formalized, then reviewed and distributed to Department Heads.

7:25 PM – Selectman Collins arrived.

Continuing, Mr. Coughlin noted that during the next audit Powers and Sullivan would provide a benchmark as to how the Team has addressed these deficiencies.

7:28 PM – Chairman Montecalvo arrived.

Due to his late arrival, Selectman Collins asked for an update relative to cash reconciliation. The Town Accountant acknowledged that as of December 2004, the cash was out of balance by just over \$1,000. In addition, she reported that cash reconciliation should be up to date by the next meeting. Selectman Collins stressed the fact that he wants the cash issues resolved and brought up to date as soon as possible. When asked the status of real estate taxes received at this time, Ms. Morin responded that the Town was behind approximately \$1,000,000 as compared to the same time last year.

FY '06 Town Manager's Budget Presentation. Town Manager Coughlin provided an overview of the Town's FY '06 Budget. As such, he noted that the FY '06 budget is proposed to be \$34,018,656. *Please see attached budget message for details.*

Citizens' Comments/Input. **1) Patrick Smith, 300 Shining Rock Drive, Northbridge,** announced that he would like to implement an experimental wireless network in the Shining Rock Development as a result of the continued delays in getting cable service to that area and wanted to know who he should talk to and what procedure(s) would be required of him in order to offer a sampling of public access programming [from Channels 11, 12, and 13] on his wireless network. The Selectmen suggested that Mr. Smith speak with Harry Berkowitz, Chairman – Cable Advisory Committee. Continuing, Mr. Smith mentioned that he would be interested in obtaining/using any helpful information as well as airing videos of various Board/Committee meetings. He then inquired as to who would provide copyright information, etc. Chairman Montecalvo reiterated to Mr. Smith that he should go before the Cable Advisory Committee to present his plans to them and then that Committee would appear before the Board of Selectmen and advise them as to what was going on. Selectman Ampagoomian further recommended Mr. Smith contact Andrew Shanley at Charter Communications for additional information.

Selectmen's Concerns. **1) Selectman Boucher** asked about the status of the rededication of the Lake Street Armory and the Ross Rajotte Bridge in memory of Ross Rajotte who passed away recently.

Town Manager's Report. **a)** Reported that a meeting regarding the Granite Hill 40B Development has been scheduled for May 4, 2005 at 3:30 PM in Boston with senior officials from Mass. Housing as well as representatives from the Board of Selectmen, the Town of Northbridge, and our State Legislators – Senator Moore and Representative Peterson. **b)** Advised that the snow/ice deficit was now at \$304,000 but that the Town would receive \$36,000 in Federal Assistance.

Executive Session. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Boucher to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation), not to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Collins/Yes, Mr. Boucher/Yes, Mr. Mellor/Yes, Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes, and Mr. Montecalvo/Yes.

Open Session Adjourned: 8:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Mellor, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
April 25, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Joseph J. Montecalvo at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Mellor, Ampagoomian, and Collins. Vice Chairman Timothy L. Boucher was absent and it is duly recorded.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION TO JEREMY BLOOD. Mr. Spaulding Aldrich, member of the Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials, introduced Mr. Jeremy Blood and announced that he recently returned from Iraq. Each Board member welcomed Mr. Blood home and thanked him for his service to the country during the Iraq Conflict. On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, Chairman Montecalvo read aloud and presented a proclamation to Mr. Blood. Next, on behalf of the Veterans' Council, Mr. Andy Williamson, Commander, Oliver Ashton Post #343, also presented Mr. Blood a proclamation in honor of his military service in Iraq.

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION TO DAWN PERKINS. In honor of Childhood Stroke Awareness, Chairman Montecalvo read aloud and presented a proclamation to Dawn Perkins, mother of a childhood stroke survivor, proclaiming Saturday, May 7, 2005, as Childhood Stroke Awareness day in the Town of Northbridge.

Approval of Minutes. 1) A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Mellor to approve the April 11, 2005 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Mellor, Montecalvo, and Ampagoomian.

Safety Committee Minutes – April 20, 2005. Prior to offering a motion, Selectman Collins asked for clarification on the Streetscape portion of the minutes. Chairman Montecalvo assured him that the matter(s) was taken care of and that progress was being made. That being said, a motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the April 20, 2005 Safety Committee minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Ampagoomian, Mellor, and Montecalvo.

Annual License Renewals – Bowling, Billiards, Pool Tables. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the above mentioned license renewals subject to the payment of all taxes, etc. Vote yes/Messrs. Collins, Ampagoomian, and Montecalvo. Abstain/Mr. Mellor.

Janyce Murray/Request to hang a banner across Church Street from May 1st – May 15th [*Bone Marrow Drive for Claire Lachapelle on Sat. May 14th & Sun. May 15th*]. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to approve the above banner request as noted. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Collins, Mellor, and Montecalvo.

Whitin Community Center/Request to hang a banner over Church Street from June 4th – June 18th to advertise the annual "Picnic in the Park" [Saturday, June 18th]. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to approve the above banner request as noted. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Collins, Mellor, and Montecalvo.

Spring Annual Town Meeting [June 7, 2005]/Vote to sign warrant. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to sign the Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Collins, Mellor, and Montecalvo.

FY'06 Budget. Mr. Coughlin offered some remarks with respect to an article that appeared in the press recently. He stated that the article had questioned his approach, type of planning, and the initiatives involved in the preparation of the FY '06 budget. With respect to several statements in the press referring to the Town Manager's lack of a comprehensive approach and lack of planning, the Town Manager vehemently disagreed and provided the Selectmen with documentation to prove otherwise. Mr. Coughlin reminded everyone that the FY '04 budget message introduced some pretty significant "firsts" for the Town of Northbridge, i.e., that the Board of Selectmen sit in negotiations with the School Department; that there be non-binding line item recommendations regarding the School budget, and the establishment a dedicated revenue stream. The Town Manager emphasized the fact that he felt it was a very comprehensive approach; the problem being that some folks just did not like his approach. He went on to mention that new revenue streams were solidly researched by the Financial Team but some people did not like that proposal either [Education Stabilization Fund]. With respect to capital planning issues, he recommended some changes to the bylaw in place—again some people did not like that proposal. Continuing with his FY '06 budget comments, Mr. Coughlin stressed that in every budget debate the Town must support education. That being said, he shared a Department of Education [DOE] report with the Board that outlined funding trends over time, which in fact demonstrated that in FY '05 the Town of Northbridge was \$2 million [11.4%] above minimum spending requirements for Net School Spending [NSS]. In fact, he noted that Department of Revenue [DOR] and Department of Education [DOE] reports both showed that actual expenditures [overall NSS] have consistently increased overtime. Too, he explained that the municipal side of the house has only increased their support because Chapter 70 has gone down. To that end, Mr. Coughlin advised that the FY

'06 budget is a very comprehensive budget that provides for both municipal and school needs and that it is designed to provide the people with the ultimate decision of how to fund the town. Selectman Collins asked when the Board would be meeting with the Finance Committee to review the FY '06 budget. Selectman Ampagoomian inquired about the snow and ice deficit (\$300,000+). The Town Manager responded that there were two options: **1)** use one-time resources or **2)** pass it on to the taxpayers on the recap sheet. In response to the DOE report that Mr. Coughlin shared with the Board, Chairman Montecalvo remarked that Superintendent O'Donnell's comments are in deep contrast to that report; that the Town of Northbridge has consistently exceeded NSS minimum requirements. In closing, Mr. Coughlin reiterated the fact that he has undertaken a very comprehensive approach to the budget and in fact has introduced several new proposals a couple of which have sparked some debate. With respect to comments about the Selectmen not wanting to support various items, he also remarked that just the opposite was true—in fact it was the Selectmen's idea to look for land for a new elementary school. As far as the capital planning process, Mr. Coughlin explained that the Board put forward a suggested bylaw change; however, it did not go forward. He further indicated that he would rather hear that people do not agree with his plan, approach, or proposal rather than people saying that there has not been a comprehensive plan or approach to the budget. The Town Manager's last comment was that the municipal '06 budget was pretty much down to essentials [bare bones], and noted that the school's entire request was funded except new positions, which was an across the board initiative.

Citizens' Comments/Input. **1) Lee Hebert, Heights of Hill Street,** agreed that Education was a very important matter; however, he voiced his concerns about the total picture, especially the Middle School Roof. Mr. Hebert was concerned that the children were being subjected to mold, etc. The Town Manager explained to Mr. Hebert that air quality samples were taken by the State and they said there were no air quality issues at the Middle School. On that note, Mr. Coughlin stated that contrary to rumor, the \$50,000 appropriated last fall was not being held back—it was being spent on repairs as necessary. He also advised that the replacement of the Middle School Roof was on the Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The Town Manager then noted that he met with Peter Barbadora, Chair, Building, Planning & Construction Committee, who seemed to be on board with the plan, and that they were going to take the next step in the process. Mr. Hebert felt that the Town Manager was putting the cart before the horse. Mr. Coughlin disagreed and pointed out that the article on the warrant [sponsored by the Selectmen] was broad enough to encompass as much or as little as need be—as it was whatever the Building, Planning & Construction Committee advised. Mr. Hebert continued to accuse the Town Manager of not following proper procedure. Chairman Montecalvo interjected and stated that money must be appropriated before any work can be done. Mr. Hebert once again referred to the \$50,000 and said that we already have some money. Selectman Collins said that money was appropriated specifically for repairs and cannot be used for any other purpose. Again, Mr. Hebert said that we should start now otherwise the roof would not be done until 2006 because of State Law requirements [advertisement, bid process, etc.]. Selectman Collins declared that we were following state law. After further discussion on this matter, Mr. Hebert recommended that the Selectmen start abiding by what people [some in attendance] say. He then accused Board members of continuing to alienate people. Chairman Montecalvo took offense to that statement and in turn, mentioned that anytime Mr. Hebert or anyone else came forward to speak during this portion of the meeting, they have always been allowed. In his closing remarks, Mr. Hebert stated for the record that he did not support the roof project article [sponsored by the Board of Selectmen]. The Town Manager reminded Mr. Hebert that Chairman Montecalvo and he recently met with the Building, Planning & Construction Committee Chairman and believed that he was on board with the project.

Selectmen's Concerns. **1) Selectman Ampagoomian** inquired about Plummer's Corner again and said that it was just going to get worse with a new housing development being built. **2) Chairman Montecalvo** advised that the Board must do something about the Union Street Brook—especially with a new housing development going in.

Town Manager's Report. Mr. Coughlin announced that Student Government Day is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, April 27th.

Executive Session. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation), not to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Collins/Yes, Mr. Mellor/Yes, Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes, and Mr. Montecalvo/Yes.

Open Session Adjourned: 7:43 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Mellor, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
May 9, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Joseph J. Montecalvo at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Mellor, Ampagoomian, and Boucher. Selectman Russell Collins was absent and it is duly recorded.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of Minutes. 1) A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Mellor to approve the April 25, 2005 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Mellor, and Montecalvo. Abstain/Mr. Boucher.

Special Town Meeting [May 10, 2005] / Vote position on petition article. Petitioner Henry Lane explained that the purpose of the petition article was to rezone some land along Providence Road [Wing Tavern area] from R-3 to B-3. He also pointed out that the petition was a result of the Planning Board not being ready to move forward with the rezoning issue because they hoped to bring forth a future warrant article that would permit them to do a comprehensive rezoning of the entire Plummer's Corner area. Mr. Lane further indicated that the Planning Board voted not to support the petition article by a vote of 3-2, but that the Finance Committee voted unanimously to support it. That being said, a motion/Mr. Boucher, seconded/Mr. Mellor to support the petition article submitted by Attorney Henry Lane. Vote yes/Messrs. Boucher, Mellor, Ampagoomian, and Montecalvo.

Blackstone Valley Community Church/Request to use the Town Common on Saturday, July 9, 2005 from 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM for the third annual "Uncommon Day on the Common." A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the above request subject to the safety requirements of the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Boucher, Mellor, and Montecalvo.

Office of Community Development/Request to execute a Discharge of Certificate Not to Encumber (14-16 Leland Road, Whitinsville, MA). Wayne Darragh, Community Development Program Administrator, sent the above request via memo to the Board of Selectmen. The memo advised that the program participants have met all program requirements therefore the Discharge of Certificate Not to Encumber should be executed. That being said, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher, to sign the above Discharge of Certificate Not to Encumber per recommendation of Wayne Darragh, Community Development Program Administrator. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Boucher, Mellor, and Montecalvo.

Fire Department/Request to hang a banner over Church Street from May 16th to May 21st to advertise the annual Spaghetti Supper. Selectman Ampagoomian urged everyone to attend the spaghetti supper because the funds are put towards the July 3rd fireworks display. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to approve the above request. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Boucher, Mellor, and Montecalvo.

Skateboard Park: Presentation by Northbridge Middle School Students [Matt Perry, Kate Sullivan, Justin Varteresian and Amanda Zanotti]. Town Manager Coughlin welcomed the students and their advisor, Sherri Travers, to the meeting and noted that the group has worked hard for approximately a year and a half researching and gathering information on the skateboard park project. The students presented packets of information to the Selectmen and Town Manager regarding what it would take to build a skateboard park in the Town of Northbridge. In preparation for their presentation, the students surveyed 600 Middle School Students to see how much interest there was in developing a skateboard park in Northbridge. The results showed that 84% of students surveyed supported the idea of building a skateboard park. Next, the students met with the Playground & Recreation Commission to present their ideas and to find out the next step in the process. As a result, it was decided to investigate the Linwood ball field as a possible location for a skateboard park. The students indicated that a 100' x 100' parcel of land would be needed. When asked about a cost estimate, Mr. Perry said it would be about \$30,000 just for the park and roughly the same amount to pave the area. At the conclusion of their presentation, *the Board of Selectmen advised the Middle School students to refer their skateboard park project to the Building, Planning & Construction Committee for further review. The Town Manager and Board of Selectmen thanked the students for their fine work.

Granite Hill Development/Present: Jeannine Gilmore, 387 Rumonoski Drive, and Phil Cyr, 285 Rumonoski Drive. Town Manager Coughlin announced that he along with Chairman Montecalvo, Selectman Ampagoomian, Ms. Gilmore, and Mr. Cyr attended a meeting in Boston with Senator Moore, Representative Peterson, and Mass. Housing officials. Mr. Coughlin began by publicly thanking Senator Moore and Representative Peterson for organizing the meeting with state officials. He stated that Mass. Housing advised it was in the Town's hands to see how the Granite Hill site would be developed. In addition, the Town Manager pointed out that Mr. Gleason made the decision [granted eligibility] without actually viewing the property beforehand and therefore due diligence was not afforded this matter especially given the public safety issues. Further, he indicated that Mr. Gleason said if he was to change his mind now that it would invite a lawsuit to the agency to which Mr. Coughlin responded that the agency would be buying a lawsuit anyway by the Town of Northbridge. To that end, Mr.

Coughlin recommended that the Town should seek legal recourse in this matter and to have Kopelman & Paige send a letter to Mass. Housing advising them of same. Comments from meeting attendees: **Selectman Ampagoomian** said that he felt the Town was being dictated to; that he came away from that meeting with the feeling that Mass. Housing did not care and that they would push the project through at any cost. In addition, he concurred with Town Manager Coughlin with respect to a letter being sent by Kopelman & Paige to Mass. Housing advising them that the Town of Northbridge would be taking legal action. **Ms. Gilmore** could not believe that safety issues were not taken into consideration and when asked about it Mr. Gleason neglected to answer those particular questions. **Mr. Cyr** suggested that the Town pursue all options available to them. He also thanked the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Senator Moore, and Representative Peterson for their assistance in this process. **Mr. Coughlin** noted that when Mr. Gleason's assistant tried to stop the meeting, that Town officials persevered and Mr. Gleason left the meeting a bit "rattled." With no further comments, a motion/ Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Boucher to authorize the Town Manager to request Kopelman & Paige send a letter to Mass. Housing advising them that the Town would be seeking legal recourse in this matter. Vote yes/ Messrs. Ampagoomian, Boucher, Mellor, and Montecalvo.

Sharron Ampagoomian reminded everyone that the canoe race would take place on Saturday, May 14, 2005.

Selectmen's Concerns. Chairman Montecalvo announced that it was Selectman Mellor's last Board meeting after serving 12 years, and wished him well in all his future endeavors. Chairman Montecalvo then presented Selectman Mellor a proclamation from the Town Manager and fellow Board members in honor of Mr. Mellor's 30+ years of dedicated service on several town boards and committees. Selectman Mellor said he enjoyed his many years of service to the Town and wondered aloud whether he had made the right choice in not seeking re-election to the Board of Selectmen. Richard Sasseville, DPW Director, also presented Mr. Mellor a proclamation on behalf of the Department of Public Works. At the conclusion of the meeting, a small reception was held in Selectman Mellor's honor.

Executive Session - CANCELLED.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Mellor, Clerk

s/

*** At the Selectmen's meeting of 5/23/05, Selectman Ampagoomian suggested the May 9, 2005 minutes be amended by inserting the following language: "to advise the Middle School students to refer their skateboard park project to the Building, Planning & Construction Committee for further review."**

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
May 23, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Selectman Russell Collins [Senior-most member of the Board] at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, and Audette. Selectman Joseph Montecalvo was absent and it is duly recorded.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

Selectman Collins welcomed the two newly elected members of the Board—John A. Davis and William Audette.

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

Selectman Collins turned the gavel over to Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager, to proceed with the reorganization of the Board. Mr. Coughlin polled the Board of Selectmen for **Nominations for**

Chairman:

A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to nominate Russell D. Collins as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Hearing no further motions for the position of Chairman, a motion was made and seconded to close nominations. The Town Manager called for a vote on the motion: Vote yes [to elect Russell D. Collins as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen]/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Audette, Davis, and Collins. Chairman Collins assumed the Chair and called for **Nominations for Vice-Chairman:** A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to nominate Charles Ampagoomian, Jr., as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Hearing no further motions for the position of Vice-Chairman, a motion was made and seconded to close nominations. Chairman Collins called for a vote on the motion: Vote yes [to elect Charles Ampagoomian, Jr. as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Selectmen]/Messrs. Davis, Audette, Collins, and Ampagoomian. Chairman Collins called for **Nominations for Clerk:** A motion/Mr. Audette, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to nominate John A. Davis as Clerk of the Board of Selectmen. Hearing no further motions for the position of Clerk, a motion was made and seconded to close nominations. Chairman Collins called for a vote on the motion: Vote yes [to elect John A. Davis as Clerk of the Board of Selectmen]/Messrs. Audette, Ampagoomian, Davis, and Collins.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of Minutes/May 9, 2005. Selectman Davis 1) Asked whether a letter had been sent to Mass. Housing with respect to the Granite Hill 40B Development. Town Manager Coughlin responded that the letter was being drafted by Town Counsel. 2) Questioned why the advice given to the Middle School students at the last Selectmen's meeting [with respect to the skateboard park project] was not included in the minutes. Mr. Coughlin explained that the minutes are prepared in a summary fashion; however, he stated that he thought a motion was made to refer the project to the Building, Planning & Construction Committee and if that was the case, the minutes could be amended to reflect that action. As Selectman Ampagoomian was the only standing Board member in attendance at the previous meeting, he suggested the May 9, 2005 minutes be amended by inserting the following language: "to advise the Middle School students to refer the skateboard park project to the Building, Planning & Construction Committee for further review." The Board agreed with the amendment as offered by Selectman Ampagoomian. **Note: Upon further review of a portion [Skateboard Park Presentation] of the videotape of the May 9, 2005 Selectmen's meeting, the tape demonstrated that the Town Manager suggested a motion be made directing this matter be referred to the Building, Planning & Construction Committee. However, Chairman Montecalvo said a motion was not needed; that the Board of Selectmen would refer it [the project] automatically to the Building, Planning & Construction Committee.**

7:05 PM – Massachusetts Electric and Verizon New England/Petition for Joint or Identical Pole Locations covering three poles on Ash Street (P05-36). Present: Roger Martinson, Mass. Electric. Chairman Collins read the public hearing notice aloud. Mr. Martinson explained that the reason for the petition was for a new housing project to be located in the cul-de-sac on Ash Street, Northbridge. He advised that the petition called for Mass. Electric to install new poles #8 and #9 and to remove and relocate pole #7 as shown in the sketch provided to the Board in their agenda packets. There were no comments from those present. Selectman Davis asked whether abutters were notified. Chairman Collins responded that they were in fact duly notified. That being said, a motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to grant permission to locate poles, wires, and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures to be owned and used in common by your petitioners, along and across the following way: Ash Street [two pole locations and one pole relocation]. Relocate pole #7 in a westerly direction 99'. Starting at new location of pole #7 in a westerly direction to new poles #8 and #9 as per plan (P05-36). New poles are needed for a new housing project located at the cul-de-sac. Said poles to be erected substantially in accordance with the plan filed herewith marked--Massachusetts Electric and Verizon New England, Inc., No. D05-26 dated April 7, 2005. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Audette, Ampagoomian, and Collins. Selectman Davis then asked Mr. Martinson if he could provide an update on

the Streetscape Project with respect to the burying of wires. Mr. Martinson replied that he was not involved in that particular project and suggested that the Town Manager contact Mike Peterson for an update on that issue.

Appointments: Recycling Committee – Lisa Laflamme. Ms. Laflamme, 353 Pollard Road, Northbridge, introduced herself to the Board of Selectmen and explained that she grew up in Northbridge, left town to attend college in Connecticut, but has since returned to Town. She noted that both her career and her passion are environmental issues and as such, she wished to get involved in anyway possible. Selectman Audette stated that he reviewed her talent bank form and that her qualifications make her an ideal candidate for the Recycling Committee. Selectman Davis concurred. There being no further discussion, a motion/Mr. Audette, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to appoint Ms. Lisa Laflamme to the Recycling Committee. Vote yes/Messrs. Audette, Ampagoomian, Davis, and Collins. The Selectmen thanked Ms. Laflamme for stepping forward to volunteer.

Safety Committee Minutes – May 18, 2005. Selectman Davis inquired as to why the Selectmen approved the Safety Committee Minutes when they do not attend the Safety Committee meetings. Chairman Collins explained that the Board of Selectmen must approve any recommendations made by the Safety Committee and therefore can vote to reject and/or revisit any issue they feel necessary. He pointed out that the Selectmen may also vote to amend the Safety Committee minutes. In addition, he clarified the fact that the Selectmen do not vote to "approve" the minutes, they only vote to "accept" them [if they agree with the recommendations outlined in the minutes]. Continuing, Selectman Ampagoomian reminded Mr. Davis that Selectman Montecalvo sits on the Safety Committee as the Selectmen's representative. That being said, a motion/Mr. Audette, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to accept the May 18, 2005 Safety Committee minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Audette, Ampagoomian, Davis, and Collins.

Citizen's Comments/Input. 1) **Ann Williams, 428 Jessica Way, Northbridge**, was present to discuss her concerns with respect to the new bussing policy adopted by the Northbridge School Committee. **New policy:** *Children must take the same bus home that they take to school—no exceptions!* Ms. Williams strongly encouraged the Board of Selectmen to work closely with the School Committee because she believes the new bussing policy does not allow for flexibility and could possibly lead to liability issues because many children may be going home to empty houses and left alone unsupervised until the parents returned home from work. Ms. Williams also stressed the fact that the new policy does not fit with today's society because most families have two working parents, or single moms that have to work too. She reiterated that it is very important for the Board of Selectmen to work closely with the School Committee, current Superintendent O'Donnell, and incoming Superintendent Soojian to encourage them to implement a policy that meets the needs of parents and students. Chairman Collins asked Ms. Williams whether she had spoken to the School Committee and she replied that she called Mr. O'Donnell's office and was told that a decision had been made and the issue would not be discussed again. Selectman Audette asked whether the School Committee had voted on the new policy. Ms. Williams responded yes. She indicated that upon finding out about the new policy, a group of parents went to the last School Committee meeting to discuss their concerns and waited for a vote, however, she subsequently found out that the vote took place after the parents left the meeting. In addition, Ms. Williams explained that she was told the policy was a result of four (4) issues: overcrowding, liability, logistics, and cost. Selectman Davis asked how long the current policy had been in effect. Sandra Phillips, Whitin Community Center Daycare Director, answered that the policy had been the same for the last 20 years—as long as she has been at the Whitin Community Center. When asked how many children would be affected by the new bussing policy, parents in the audience responded that hundreds would be involved. **Dara Dowd, 382 Jessica Way, Northbridge**, said about 30% of students would be affected by the new policy. Town Manager Coughlin advised that he would be meeting with Superintendent O'Donnell tomorrow to see what the rationale was for the change. He further suggested that the Selectmen meet with the School Committee for the same reason. In addition, he mentioned that citizens could have an impact on this particular issue at the Spring Annual Town Meeting as they will be voting on a \$962,000 School Transportation budget. 2) **Ken Taylor, Chairman/Playground & Recreation Commission, 9 Central Avenue, Northbridge Caryn Gagner, Member, 22 Piedmont Street, Whitinsville, and Craig Bachman, Member, 36 Cedar Street, Linwood**, were present to express their concerns with respect to the condition of the Town's parks and fields. Mr. Taylor pointed out that there are safety concerns that need to be addressed as soon as possible. He felt the problems were a result of the parks/fields not growing along with the Town. In addition, Mr. Taylor stated that a new Parks & Recreation project has not been put on in at least 15 years. As such, he advised that he would like to coordinate the efforts of many Town Departments [Planning, Conservation, DPW, etc.] in order to expand the Parks in the future. Some issues facing the Parks & Recreation Department: **a)** in need of money for engineering services to learn which parks are viable and how they can be expanded, **b)** the Town's parks are not ADA compliant [handicapped accessible], and **c)** leagues have been forced to turn away residents due to unavailable field space/time. That being said, Chairman Collins suggested that the Playground & Recreation Commission get together with the Planning Board and Building, Planning & Construction Committee for additional input.

Selectmen's Concerns. 1) **Selectman Audette** reminded everyone that Memorial Day Exercises would take place in Rockdale on Sunday, May 29th @ 1:00 PM and in Whitinsville on Monday, May 30th @ 10:00 AM. He also mentioned that in case of inclement weather, Memorial Day exercises would be held indoors at the American Legion Post/Rockdale, and the Town Hall/Whitinsville. 2) **Selectman Ampagoomian** announced that Amanda Lavallee, and members of the 181st Battalion / National Guard Unit located at the Ross Rajotte Armory on Lake Street, Whitinsville, would be going to Iraq in the very near future. He requested that the Town Manager contact the unit for additional details so that the Selectmen can go and wish them luck. 3) **Selectman Davis** brought up the March 9, 2005 budget reports and asked when the reports would be brought up to date. Mr. Coughlin stated that they continue to reconcile and work on things on a daily basis. 4) **Chairman Collins** said that the Board looked forward to meeting with the Finance Committee in order to finalize details for Town Meeting on June 7th. Mary Frances Powers, Finance Committee Chairman, indicated that her committee was still in need of financial information in order to complete their town meeting budget recommendations.

Town Manager's Report. Town Manager Coughlin congratulated the two newest members of the Board of Selectmen—William Audette and John A. Davis. He also congratulated the Town Clerk and her staff for running a great election. Mr. Coughlin further reported that the Town Clerk was currently in the process of researching the legal parameters for doing a recount election. Lastly, the Town Manager once again thanked the Northbridge Fire Department for their fine professionalism during his stepdaughter's recent emergency--being injured during a softball game.

Meeting adjourned: 7:53 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
June 6, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of Minutes. Selectman Davis asked why the previous minutes were not on the agenda for approval and quoted Town of Northbridge bylaw Section 4-210 which states: "Certified copies of the minutes of all meetings of all multiple-member bodies shall be filed with the Town Clerk within five days following the next meeting of the multiple-member body after the meeting was held, at which meeting said minutes shall have been approved by the multiple-member body.....". Selectman Montecalvo reminded Mr. Davis that the Town Manager/Selectmen's Office is short on staff. Selectman Davis, however, stated that we are still obligated to meet the bylaw.

Spring Annual Town Meeting/Vote positions on articles. Chairman Collins announced that because the Finance Committee was not present that he would defer this matter until later in the meeting.

Trinity Episcopal Church (Reverend Charles F. Sutton, Jr.)/Request to use the town-owned "Tot Lot" from June 27th through July 1st, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM to conduct an Outreach Program. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve the above request subject to the safety requirements of the Police Department. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Playground & Recreation/Request to use the Town Common from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM on Thursday evenings (7/14, 7/21, 7/28, 8/4, 8/11, and 8/18) for their Summer Concert Series. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve the above request subject to the safety requirements of the Police Department. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Animal Control Officer/Vote to issue and sign dog warrant. Selectman Ampagoomian asked whether this was an annual request and Chairman Collins responded that it was. Mr. Ampagoomian further asked if the Town has been provided with any reports as outlined in the dog warrant. Not knowing, Chairman Collins suggested that this matter be deferred until July and recommended that the Town Manager send a letter to Mr. Chauvin about this matter. Town Manager Coughlin concurred and noted that as of July 1st, the Animal Control Officer would be under the direction of the Northbridge Police Department. There being no further discussion, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to defer this issue until July 11, 2005, pending further information on this process. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Spring Annual Town Meeting/Vote positions on articles. (Finance Committee not present).

Chairman Collins announced that because the Selectmen did not have any information on Article 1: FY '05 Budget adjustments and Article 2: FY '06 Omnibus Budget, that the Board would begin voting their positions with Article 3.

Article 3 (Override): Mr. Coughlin reported that the School Committee unanimously voted not to support Article 3. He explained that the reasoning behind the override was due to the fact that the School Dept. submitted a \$19.4 million budget request and that he tried to support and accommodate their request as best he could. To that end, the Town Manager came up with \$17.2 million (\$800,000 over FY '04) plus \$962,000 for transportation; a \$1.2 million difference. Continuing, the Town Manager pointed out that as of last Thursday, the Superintendent said that he would not need an override as he could accommodate the School Department at the \$17.2 million plus \$962,000 transportation with some degree of difficulty. Mr. Coughlin reminded everyone that back in January [with respect to dealing with the \$1.2 million deficit], we did not touch the School Department, however, the municipal departments turned back \$444,000. He also noted that the Town has consistently been well above the minimum net school spending. For example: FY '02 = \$670,000; FY '03 = \$800,000; FY '04 = \$1.3 million; and FY '05 = \$2.0 million. Further, the Town Manager advised that the indirect costs have been significant and that money has never been deducted from the School's budget like it should have been. For example: FY '02 = \$2.8 million; FY '03 = \$3.3 million; FY '04 = \$3.8 million; and FY '05 = \$4 million. In conclusion, Mr. Coughlin pointed out that in order for him to accommodate the School's original \$19.4 million request, he had to level fund the entire municipal side of the budget. As a result of that, the Town Manager said he was flabbergasted when the School Superintendent said that he didn't need the override and therefore recommended the Selectmen not support Article 3. There being no further comments, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo not to support Article 3. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 4 (Sewer Enterprise Operation):** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to support Article 4. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 5 (Water Enterprise Operation):** A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 5. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 6 (Compensating Balance Agreements):** A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to support Article 6. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 7 (Quaker St. Landfill):** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette

to support Article 7. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 8 (Chapter 90):** A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 8. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 9 (Recycling Comm. Revolving Acct.):** A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 9. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 10 (Title V):** A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to support Article 10. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 11 (Middle School/Police Station Roofs):** Town Manager Coughlin advised that he was aware the motion for Article 11 would be amended to include \$200,000 for designer services and associated work. That being said, a motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to support Article 11 as amended. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 12 (Unisex Bathroom):** Selectman Davis was concerned that the funding [\$100,000] would not be adequate for this project due to the fact that seven-year-old numbers and plans were used as a starting point. The Town Manager referred to a memo from the previous Town Manager that stated complete plans, drawings, and design services were in fact already done for this project. Selectman Davis suggested appropriating money for architectural/design services in order to get a more accurate and up-to-date estimate. The Town Manager assured Mr. Davis [without jeopardizing any possible litigation] that funding was adequate because there was also an additional \$60,000 available from the original Town Hall ADA project that can be used for this purpose. There being no further comments, a motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to support Article 12. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 13 (Parks & Rec. Improvements - \$50,000):** Mr. Coughlin advised that this article will get some discussion on Town Meeting floor because the parks and recreation people are very passionate about this issue. He further mentioned that the \$50,000 was a starting point; that it would get them up and running and allow for some maintenance to be done to the fields. Chairman Collins suggested passing over this article for now and take it up at the Fall Annual Town Meeting as it would allow the Parks and Recreation Commission to meet and communicate with the Building, Planning & Construction Committee and/or the Department of Public Works about their proposed uses for the money. There being no further discussion, a motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to pass over Article 13 and defer it until the Fall Town Meeting per the recommendation of Chairman Collins. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 14 (Delwyn Barnes Drive):** Denis Latour, Planning Board Chairman, reported that the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend acceptance of Delwyn Barnes Drive as a public way. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to support Article 14. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 15 (Tipperary Drive):** Denis Latour, Planning Board Chairman, reported that the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend acceptance of Tipperary Drive as a public way. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to support Article 15. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 16 (Recision to borrow for Rockdale Sewer Proj.):** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to support Article 16. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 17 (Prior year bill/Sewer Div.):** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to support Article 17. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 18 (Petition-Naming streets, buildings, etc. after Veterans of declared wars):** Phil Cyr, Chairman-Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials, advised that his committee had no knowledge of this petition article and for the record stated that the Trustees were not in favor of the article as written. He indicated that if the article passed as is, the Town would not be able to recognize any other person(s) worthy of such an honor. That being said, Mr. Cyr requested that the petitioner contact him to discuss the petition and together develop more appropriate wording. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo not to support Article 18. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 19 (Petition-Amend Zoning Map- 40 Plummer Ave.):** Mr. Latour advised that the Planning Board voted to support this article due to an oversight that occurred several years ago. He said that the Planning Board thought this parcel was included in a rezoning of that area several years back but somehow was left out. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 19. Vote yes/Unanimous. **Article 20 (Petition- Middle School/Police Station Roofs):** *As the petitioner of Article 20, Mr. Davis advised that depending on the outcome of Articles 11, 12, and 13, he would be willing to pass over Articles 20, 21, and 22. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to pass over Article 20. Vote yes/Messrs. Montecalvo, Audette, Collins, and Ampagoomian. Abstain/Mr. Davis. **Article 21 (Petition-Unisex Bathroom):** *As the petitioner of Article 21, Mr. Davis advised that depending on the outcome of Articles 11, 12, and 13, he would be willing to pass over Articles 20, 21, and 22. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to pass over Article 21. Vote yes/Messrs. Montecalvo, Audette, Collins, and Ampagoomian. Abstain/Mr. Davis. **Article 22 (Petition):** *As the petitioner of Article 22, Mr. Davis advised that depending on the outcome of Articles 11, 12, and 13, he would be willing to pass over Articles 20, 21, and 22. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to pass over Article 22. Vote yes/Messrs. Montecalvo, Audette, Collins, and Ampagoomian. Abstain/Mr. Davis. **Article 1 (FY '05 budget adjustments) and Article 2 (FY '06 Budget Article).** Selectman Ampagoomian announced that the Finance Committee was still not ready to go over Articles 1 and 2. With respect to Article 2, Town Manager Coughlin explained that within the FY '06 budget, which was introduced by him and supported by Henry O'Donnell, Line item 20A – School Transportation—was funded in the amount of \$962,000. With respect to Education Reform, he advised that the Selectmen are allowed to make non-binding recommendations on **any** line item within the School Department budget; however, the school is free to spend within the bottom line amount. **Ann Williams, Jessica Way, Northbridge,** thanked the Board of Selectmen for their support and for honoring their promise to work with other Boards. Continuing, she noted that the School Committee meeting last week was considered a budget meeting, and therefore, those [parents] that attended were only allowed to speak about bussing issues within the confines of the budget. However, she did say that School Committee Chair, Carroll Paine, promised the new bus policy would be brought up for discussion at their meeting on June 14th. Ms. Williams stated she felt confident the School Committee was not being insensitive to the needs of the kids and/or parents and hoped a compromise could be reached so as not to sacrifice the safety of the children. Chairman Collins stated that Mr. Coughlin, Selectman Montecalvo, and he attended that same meeting to try and get a dialogue started [with respect to the new bussing policy] but were verbally accosted by Superintendent O'Donnell. Town Manager Coughlin interjected and stated that he was accused of "grandstanding" because he and two Selectmen were present to advocate on behalf of the children. He suggested

that the Selectmen make a recommendation to support the transportation budget in the amount of \$962,000 with the caveat that the School Committee and new Superintendent revisit the bussing policy. Mr. Coughlin also brought forth the fact that the vote on the policy change was taken in December 2004; however, the notice to parents [letter] was dated May 17, 2005—five months after the vote. There being no further comments, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to support the School Transportation budget in the amount of \$962,000 with the caveat that the School Committee and new Superintendent revisit the bussing policy. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, Audette, and Collins. Vote no/Mr. Davis.

Citizens' Comments/Input. 1) **Phil Cyr, 285 Rumonoski Drive, Northbridge**, thanked everyone involved with the organization of and participation in the Memorial Day activities especially Senator Moore, Representative Peterson, Mr. Coughlin, the Board of Selectmen, and Jim Knott [vehicles].

Selectmen's Concerns. 1) **Selectman Audette** reported that a citizen from Nolet Street, Linwood, contacted him with respect to ongoing flooding issues in that area including the presence of large snakes and snapping turtles. The resident indicated that the problems stemmed from the building of a housing development nearby as well as the construction of the new High School. The resident further indicated to Selectman Audette that a letter was sent to the Conservation Commission but no response was received. Selectman Audette voiced his concern that the issue was not going to go away and suggested that the Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission do a site review to see what is going on. Chairman Collins recommended that a date be set for the site review with the Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, Selectmen, the Railroad, and concerned residents. 2) **Selectman Davis** inquired about: a) the status of the letter to Mass. Housing advising them of legal action by the Town. Mr. Coughlin stated that the letter was in the process of being reviewed by Town Counsel. b) also asked about the status of the streetscape project with respect to the burying of wires by Mass. Electric. Town Manager Coughlin responded that he had an email regarding that issue and he would share it with Selectman Davis. c) advised that a bylaw review committee was supposed to be established every five years and requested that item be placed on a future agenda for discussion. d) requested a joint meeting with the Building, Planning & Construction Committee, Finance Committee, as well as a representative from the School [Superintendent or George Murray] to prioritize the Town's capital planning projects. Due to the number of persons involved, Selectman Montecalvo suggested that the Chairpersons of those committees meet first. Selectman Davis concurred. 3) **Selectman Audette** said he would like to revisit the placement of "Citizens Forum" on Selectmen's agendas; recommended putting it back where it was due to lengthy meetings. Chairman Collins stated that it would be put on the next Selectmen's agenda [June 20th] for discussion. 4) **Selectman Ampagoomian** reminded everyone that fireworks are scheduled for July 3rd at Lasalle field.

Town Manager's Report. Town Manager Coughlin reported that a 5-page letter of complaint was sent to the Mass. Office on Disability [MOD] by a member of the Building, Planning & Construction Committee with respect to a legal pending matter. In addition, he pointed out that because the individual did not follow the proper chain of command, it could jeopardize the Town's legal position in this matter. That being said, Mr. Coughlin stated the Board of Selectmen should take action as the appointing authority of that individual. Chairman Collins recommended that the individual come before the Board in executive session. Mr. Coughlin again stressed the fact that the Town's credibility has been affected by the accusations in the letter sent to MOD.

Selectman Ampagoomian announced that the Finance Committee would not have the [budget] numbers ready tonight. Chairman Collins suggested that the Selectman vote on Article 1 and 2 tomorrow evening before Town Meeting.

Before adjourning, Selectman Davis asked if there was any way that the Selectmen could give the Playground & Recreation some money in expenses in order to get going on some of their projects. Town Manager Coughlin said that the Selectmen voted to pass over Article 13 and defer it to the Fall Annual Town Meeting, however, town meeting participants still have a say—they can either agree with passing over Article 13 or vote against passing over Article 13.

Chairman Collins read a letter from Kenneth Nydam commending Detective Donald Roy for his work regarding the apprehension of suspects that stole money from the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church.

Meeting adjourned: 8:42 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

s/

***At their meeting of 6/20/05, the Selectmen voted to amend the June 6, 2005 minutes as follows: Under the section: Spring Annual Town Meeting/Vote Positions on Articles, by referring to Mr. Davis as "Petitioner" and not as a "Selectman".**

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
June 20, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:07 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Chairman Collins presented proclamations to three Girl Scouts [Caitlin Shaughnessy, Sarah Derderian, Leah Cameron and two Eagle Scouts [Jason Warchol and Michael Killeen] with respect to their work towards the Girl Scout Silver Award and Eagle Scout Awards respectively. Kenneth Warchol, Historical Commission Chairman, explained that the local historical commission was contacted by the State Historical Commission relative to having each of the Town's three historic cemeteries fully documented. As a result, he approached the scouts to take on that task and guided them through the process. Mr. Warchol noted that the scouts were responsible for diagramming each of the Town's three historic cemeteries [Northbridge Center Cemetery, Carr Street Cemetery, and Friends Cemetery (Quaker Street)]. Their work also involved photographing, inventorying, and measuring each gravestone including the number and location of each gravestone together with the name, date of birth, and date of death of the deceased.

Approval of Minutes. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve the May 23, 2005 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Audette, Davis, and Collins. Abstain/Mr. Montecalvo.

Appointments: [Joint Re-appointment by the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen].

Planning Board: Roger Dionne, Associate Member. Present: Denis Latour and Barbara Gaudette.

Planning Board Chairman Denis Latour advised that the Planning Board voted at their May 24, 2005 meeting to reappoint Mr. Dionne as an Associate Member on the Planning Board for a three-year term. That being said, a motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to reappoint Mr. Roger Dionne as an Associate Member to the Planning Board for a three-year term ending June 30, 2008. Vote yes/Unanimous.

FY '05 Miscellaneous Annual Reappointments/By the Board of Selectmen. The Board was provided with a list of persons who wished to be reappointed to their respective boards/committees as well as those who requested not to be reappointed. Selectman Davis requested that a hold be placed on the appointment of Kopelman & Paige as Town Counsel. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve all other annual reappointments by the Board of Selectmen [as indicated on the list provided in the agenda packets]. Vote yes/Unanimous. When asked about the reappointment of Kopelman & Paige, Mr. Davis said he would prefer to go out to bid for new legal services. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to reappoint Kopelman & Paige as Town Counsel. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Audette, Montecalvo, and Collins. Vote no/Mr. Davis.

FY '05 Miscellaneous Annual Reappointments/By the Town Manager. Selectman Davis requested his name be added [as Asst. Plumbing Inspector] to the Town Manager's list of annual reappointments. He then distributed a letter to the Selectmen and read aloud that letter which addressed his not being reappointed as Asst. Plumbing Inspector. The letter also made note of the Town Manager's reasons for not recommending Mr. Davis for reappointment even though he received a favorable verbal ruling from the State Ethics Commission. Town Manager Coughlin responded by reiterating his reasons why he declined to reappoint Mr. Davis as Asst. Plumbing Inspector. He advised that besides the fact that their respective roles could get mixed up [as a Selectman, Mr. Davis is Mr. Coughlin's boss, however, as Asst. Plumbing Inspector, Mr. Coughlin is Mr. Davis' ultimate boss] that it just does not look good; that the perception of a conflict could exist. Selectman Davis then appealed to the Board of Selectmen and asked them for consideration of his past service in order to be reappointed as Asst. Plumbing Inspector. Again, the Town Manager pointed out there is no provision for the Selectmen to override the Town Manager's decision with respect to his annual reappointments. Selectman Montecalvo concurred and added that the Selectmen do have the ability to question the Town Manager's appointments. Continuing, he mentioned that just the fact that Mr. Davis was offering his name for a paid position within town government and utilizing his chair as a Selectman to advocate for that position as a town employee was not right. Mr. Coughlin stressed that that in itself was inappropriate and that is why he chose not to bring Mr. Davis' name forward for reappointment. There being no further discussion, a motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to affirm the annual reappointments by the Town Manager [as indicated on the list provided in the agenda packets]. Vote yes/Unanimous. A point of order was made by Selectman Davis requesting that the Board relieve him of his duties [as Asst. Plumbing Inspector] immediately due to there being a conflict. Selectman Montecalvo reminded him that his term expires June 30, 2005. Selectman Davis stated that if he was in conflict on July 1st then he is in conflict now. Town Manager advised Mr. Davis that he could tender his resignation; however, Mr. Davis responded that would not happen.

Fire Department/Request permission to hang a banner over Church Street from June 21st to July 4th to advertise the annual July Fireworks Event to be held July 3rd. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to grant permission to the Northbridge Fire Department to hang a banner over Church Street from June 21, 2005 to July 4, 2005 in order to advertise the annual Fireworks Event to be held on Sunday, July 3, 2005 at Lasalle Field at the Northbridge Middle School. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Flutterby Wishes [Tricia Johnston]/Request to use the Whitinsville Town Common on Saturday, August 13, 2005 [Rain date: Sunday, August 21, 2005] for an Arts and Crafts Bazaar. Comments from those

present: James Lafleur, 94A Fletcher Street, Whitinsville, MA, was opposed to this event due to his claim that Flutterby Wishes owed people money for items that are left on consignment in that shop. The Selectmen felt that issue needed to be resolved and therefore they wished to table this request for now and bring Ms. Johnston before them on July 11th. That being said, a motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to defer this request until their next meeting on July 11th with Ms. Johnston present. Vote yes/Unanimous.

With respect to the above request, Denis Latour asked that a restriction be placed on such requests not allowing any vehicles on the common. He noted that sometimes damage was done to the grounds and there were monuments that could potentially be damaged as well. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, to amend the policy with respect to using the Town Common to disallow any vehicles. Selectman Montecalvo interjected and stated that he would rather see a list of guidelines established with respect to usage of the common, which could include a vehicle restriction. That being said, Mr. Ampagoomian rescinded his motion.

Safety Committee Minutes [June 16, 2005]. Selectman Davis pointed out a minor typographical error in the very last sentence on page three and recommended that the word "so" be changed to the word "no" so that the sentence reads as follows: This matter was for "discussion purposes only" no action was taken. A motion made and seconded to approve the June 16, 2005 Safety Committee minutes as amended. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Citizens' Forum (Discussion). Selectman Audette offered a motion to move the "Citizens' Forum" portion of the Selectmen's meeting back to the original place it appeared on the agenda [beginning of the meeting] for many years. Discussion: Selectman Montecalvo pointed out that one of the reasons "Citizens' Forum" was moved to after "Discussions" was in case a citizen wanted to discuss something that was placed under "Discussions" but the Board had not yet discussed. Chairman Collins explained that the original purpose of Citizens' Forum was for citizens to bring forward any issues, problems, or questions they may have and/or to have a particular item addressed that did not make it on the agenda—not for commenting on how and what the Board was doing. Selectman Montecalvo concurred and added that it has since evolved to be something it was not intended to be. However, he expressed the fact that he would like "Citizens' Forum" to remain near the end of the meeting so that the Selectmen's business could be completed without disruption. Selectman Audette stated that by placing "Citizens' Forum" back at the beginning of the meeting, people could say what they wanted and then leave. He also agreed with Chairman Collins that the purpose of "Citizens' Forum" was not to critique the Selectmen—as one citizen pointed out, they liked to do. Selectman Davis asked for clarification with respect to changing policy and whether the Board required a second meeting to enact a policy change. Selectman Montecalvo explained that the Selectmen usually discuss an item first and then place it on the next agenda under "Decisions" for a vote. With that being said, Selectman Davis said that he is comfortable with "Citizens' Forum" remaining where it is on the agenda. Selectman Ampagoomian agreed with Chairman Collins about the purpose of "Citizens' Forum" and said it was up to the Chairman to maintain control of it. There being no further discussion, Selectman Audette decided to withdraw his motion and advised that he would wait and see how things go for awhile.

School Transportation. Karen Ivey, 286 Union Street, Linwood, advised that parents met with the School Committee last week to discuss the new bus policy, but they were not very well received. She felt their concerns fell on deaf ears and pleaded with the Board to see if there was a way that everyone could come to a compromise. Ms. Ivey felt that the School was shutting off access to daycare for children because of the new single pick up/drop off policy. Chairman Collins voiced his hope that with the new Superintendent coming on board the bus policy issue could be redressed. In addition, he directed the Town Manager to get a copy of the new bus policy. Charles Thompson, Executive Director, Whittin Community Center, indicated that there has been a lack of willingness [on the part of school officials] to have a dialogue about the new bus policy with him or anyone else and therefore no solution has been achieved. He feels that this is going to be a huge problem because many parents are unaware that this was going to happen. Mr. Thompson requested the Board, as citizen representatives, to state their concerns to the School Committee due to the fact the decision was made without input from parents and/or daycare providers, etc. Ms. Ivey indicated that her major complaint about the whole issue was the fact that the policy was voted on December 18, 2004, but never made public until five months later. When asked if a compromise was offered, she replied that the parents were told to charter a bus. Selectman Davis reported that he was at the same meeting and thought the parents were very well received; that School Committee Chairman Carroll Paine apologized for what happened at the last meeting [with respect to not allowing the new bussing policy to be discussed] and that it was made clear he wanted to hear their concerns. Mr. Davis stated he left that meeting with a sense that the school officials were listening to the parents' concerns; however he expressed disappointment in finding out tonight that the decision was final and the new bussing policy would go into effect as is. Mr. Thompson noted that at his facility alone, the new bus policy would affect 50-60 children. He then brought forth another of his concerns – the Rockdale Youth Center, which provides after school activities free of charge [funding is provided by fundraisers totaling \$60,000 to \$70,000 per year] mainly because many families cannot afford daycare. Continuing, Mr. Thompson said he also looked into renting a bus, however, at \$160 per day -- that cost would have to be passed along to the families. Selectman Ampagoomian suggested a dialogue be started with the new Superintendent and the School Committee since they were responsible for the new policy. He also announced that Education Reform was going to be evaluated beginning in the Fall with public hearings, etc. and suggested that parents pay attention because that would be the best opportunity for everyone to use that public forum to address these types of issues with area legislators. Mr. Ampagoomian explained to those present that at the local level, the Selectmen have no jurisdiction over the School Department. Selectman Montecalvo agreed and further emphasized the fact that it was up to the individuals [who would be affected by the new bussing policy] to bring it to Town Meeting to speak on this matter. He also mentioned that it was up to the School Committee whether or not to place an issue on their agenda because the Selectmen have absolutely no say in the matter. **Ann Williams, Jessica Way, Northbridge,** brought up the fact that a motion was made to form a subcommittee to explore other options, however, the motion failed and they are back to square one. Chairman Collins stated that the Board of Selectmen would explore the possibility of starting a

dialogue with the School Committee. Town Manager Coughlin pointed out that the Selectmen and the Town Manager have not given up on this issue and assured the concerned parents that they would do everything they could to get some relief on this matter. In addition, he stated that the way the School Committee has dealt with this issue has not been in the best interest of the schoolchildren. **Kelly Donahue, Clover Hill Road, Whitinsville**, stated that the negative effect the new bussing policy will have on her children would make it more difficult to support a tax override.

FY'06 Budget Deficit. Town Manager Coughlin advised that the FY '06 budget recently passed at Spring Annual Town Meeting [as recommended by the Finance Committee] was not balanced and further noted that it was not fiscally responsible to wait until the Fall Annual Town Meeting to address a budget deficit. As a result, the Town Manager prepared an outline of a series of steps to proactively deal with that issue and the need for new revenue. First, he commended the Finance Committee for their hard work, however, he noted that there was a significant policy difference between the budget he introduced in the spring and that recommended by the Finance Committee. Mr. Coughlin recommended that the FY '05 Snow & Ice deficit be addressed under Article 1 so as not to adversely impact the FY '06 budget; however, despite the Town Manager's recommendation, the Finance Committee decided to pass the deficit onto the tax recap sheet and in essence created a deficit going into FY '06. Continuing, he advised that the Financial Team provided a revised revenue budget and as a result projected a FY '06 budget deficit of \$830,000. The Town Manager also stated that he felt that some budgets were under-funded especially Unemployment Compensation. The Town Manager instituted a spending/hiring freeze with the exception of necessary expenditures [existing contracts, collective bargaining agreements, utilities, and emergencies] and explained that the duration of the freeze would depend upon how and when the deficit could be adequately addressed. Too, the Town Manager advised that he intends to sit down with the incoming Superintendent to come together to present a responsible budget picture to the Finance Committee. Further, Mr. Coughlin mentioned that in addition to his concern about the size of budget deficit, he was also concerned that the only position cut from the FY '06 budget was from his office and that no other positions in the Town or the School were looked at. In addition, he pointed out that he was troubled by the fact that cost control measures were eliminated from the FY '06 budget with respect to School Transportation as a result of the Finance Committee including those funds in the School Department's operating budget. Therefore, on account of those funds not being kept as a separate line item [as in the FY '05 budget], any leftover transportation money would not get returned to the General Fund. Continuing, Mr. Coughlin noted that the municipal departments have always had to be fiscally responsible and the School Department has always benefited from it. Thus, the Town Manager stated it was time that the School Department shared in being fiscally responsible. He reiterated that he was looking forward to meeting with the new School Superintendent to begin dialogue in order to develop and present an honest operating budget to the Finance Committee. Due to the lengthy presentation and in order for the Board members to review and absorb the information, Chairman Collins recommended this matter be included on the next few agendas for further discussion.

A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to move Executive Session #2 [Complaints concerning a public official] out of Executive Session and into Open Session. Vote yes/Unanimous. Present: Neal Mitchell, Member-Building, Planning & Construction Committee, Attorney Edward J. Collins, and Thomas Perkins. Chairman Collins announced that the reason Mr. Mitchell was present tonight was due to the fact that he had contacted the State with respect to the Town's Streetscape Project as well as various other projects about issues that were out of his realm and therefore potentially putting the Town at risk of being heavily fined by the State. Mr. Mitchell advised that he contacted the state and requested that they visit Northbridge to look at the Streetscape project to make sure that it met the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. He further explained that he would periodically contact Mr. Bruneau [Mass. Office on Disability] to provide updates on various projects and over time had developed a close relationship with him. In addition, Mr. Mitchell pointed out that over the years he had done approximately \$150,000 worth of engineering work for the Town at no charge all the while hoping to keep it confidential. Continuing, he repeatedly stated that all correspondence sent to the state and the work he performed was done by Neal Mitchell Associates and that he was extremely careful not to involve the Building Committee in any of his company's work. Selectman Audette thanked Mr. Mitchell for all his hard work on behalf of the Town; however, he suggested that it would be better to meet with the Town Manager privately to hash out any issues. Selectman Montecalvo also mentioned that the Board should be kept in the loop as to what is transpiring with Mr. Perkins' Community Access Monitor Group because it makes things very difficult when all communication was with the State and not with the Board of Selectmen. In closing, Chairman Collins stated that the Board would take Mr. Mitchell's comments under advisement.

Citizen's Comments/Input. 1) **Todd Buckley, Sprague Street, Northbridge**, who expressed his concern about the fact that the Town Manager did not reappoint Selectman Davis as the Asst. Plumbing Inspector. 2) **Mary Frances Powers, 6 Elm Street, Whitinsville**, voiced her disagreement with the Town Manager's comment about the only position that had been cut from the Town budget was from his office. She stated that was not true that other departments also had positions that were not funded. She also commented on the Unemployment Budget, School Transportation Budget, and a School Department Override. 3) **James Marzec, Chairman-Board of Health, 221 Samuel Drive, Whitinsville**, remarked about a letter he received from the Department of Occupational Safety concerning the condition of the Main Fire Station and issues that could adversely affect the health and safety of the firefighters that worked in it. Chairman Collins reminded Mr. Marzec that Chief Nestor was in charge of his building and that he would be developing an action plan to correct the items listed in the letter. Town Manager Coughlin also assured Mr. Marzec that Chief Nestor was the right person to respond to the letter and that he would contact any other departments for information if need be. 4) **Shelley Buma, 40 Heritage Drive, Whitinsville**, inquired about who the Town was currently in litigation with. Chairman Collins responded that the Board could not divulge who the Town was in litigation with. 5) **Sharron Ampagoomian, 41 Henry Street, Whitinsville**, mentioned that the Main Entrance door was inadequate [with respect to access for disabled individuals]; however, she was hopeful that there would be a push button installed in the future.

Selectmen's Concerns. **1) Selectman Audette/a)** Publicly thanked the Valley Airs for their participation in certain Town events. **b)** Noted that he received a citizen complaint about a cable program called the Dujela Connection. **c)** Asked whether a site visit had been planned for the Union Street neighborhood. The Town Manager responded that he was working on it. **2) Selectman Ampagoomian/a)** Asked that a letter to be sent to Mass. Highway with respect to Plummer's Corner especially since Hess Gas Station will begin building very soon. **b)** Mentioned his concern about all the farmland that was being sold [Kroll's Farm and Watson Farm] and suggested that the Board of Selectmen consider doing something to prevent all this farmland from being developed into residential developments. He also said that the Board should consider increasing lot sizes in Town. **c)** Directed the Town Manager to contact W.S. Development to see how Wal-Mart was coming along now that the last lawsuit was being withdrawn. **d)** Requested an update on streetscape project regarding the removal of the electric poles. **3) Selectman Montecalvo** reported that the DPW Director and he were in Boston this date to discuss the Douglas Road bridge and that Mr. Sasseville would be sending a letter recommending the type of bridge to be installed. **4) Selectman Davis/a)** Stated that he would not accept the Selectmen's stipend. **b)** Would like to hear from Mass. Electric [Mike Peterson] about the streetscape project. **c)** Appointing of a Bylaw Review Committee should be taken up soon. **d)** Inquired about the status of the Town Hall handicapped bathrooms. **e)** Stated that he recently asked the Town Manager for a document and was told to go through the Chairman for such requests. As such Mr. Davis requested to get a copy of the law and/or bylaw that applies to this situation. Chairman Collins responded that it was just parliamentary procedure.

Executive Session. A motion made and seconded to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation), not to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes, Mr. Davis/Yes, Mr. Audette/Yes, Mr. Montecalvo/Yes, and Mr. Collins/Yes.

Open Session adjourned: 9:44 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

s/

Board of Selectmen's Meeting
July 11, 2005

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.
Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager, Chairman Collins sent along well wishes to the Susienka family and their son Michael who recently suffered severe leg injuries as a result of a boating accident.

Whitinsville Sewer Interceptor Easements/Vote to sign Order of Takings for permanent utility easements.
Present: Richard Sasseville, DPW Director, who explained that back in 2003, Town Meeting passed an article to fund the upgrade of the Whitinsville Sewer Interceptor, which included the authorization to take whatever easements and other required actions to secure proper right-of-way for the installation of the upgrade. Mr. Sasseville further advised that the documents required to execute the installation and upgrade [Order of Takings] were prepared by Town Counsel and as such, require a vote by the Board of Selectmen. Continuing, he said the project was progressing nicely and should be completed well before September 2005. Selectman Ampagoomian noted a couple of errors in addresses on the documents. The DPW Director assured the Board that corrections would be made before the documents were sent back to Town Counsel for recording. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to sign the Order of Takings for permanent utility easements as required for the Whitinsville Sewer Interceptor Project. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Proposed FY '06 Water and Sewer Utility Rates/Vote to set FY '06 rates. Present: Richard Sasseville, DPW Director. Mr. Sasseville gave a brief overview of the current water and sewer rates and then provided his recommendations for FY '06 water and sewer utility rates. With respect to the FY '06 water rates, Mr. Sasseville recommended no change. As far as the FY '06 sewer rates, he proposed a slight decrease [25%] in the rates for users over 4,000 cubic feet and noted that all other sewer fees would remain the same. Mr. Sasseville advised that the reduction in the rate over 4,000 cu. ft. was intended to be a way of extending an abatement for those who use water outdoors. That being said, he has also proposed a change in the utility abatement policy by including it in the rate change [as indicated above] thereby doing away with the application process. For the Board's benefit, Mr. Sasseville reviewed the current abatement policy and recommended that the process be amended as discussed above by decreasing the rates for high-end users. At the conclusion of his presentation, Director Sasseville requested that the Selectmen, as Water and Sewer Commissioners, vote to set the FY '06 water and sewer utility rates and vote to amend the abatement policy per his recommendations. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to set the following FY '06 sewer utility rates as recommended by the DPW Director. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to set the following FY '06 water utility rates as recommended by the DPW Director. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to amend the utility abatement policy as further recommended by the DPW Director. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Chairman Collins thanked Director Sasseville for the hard work on his presentation.

TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE
SEWER SYSTEM
SCHEDULE OF RATES FOR SEWER SERVICES
QUARTERLY BILLING CYCLE

Effective Date: July 1, 2005

QUARTERLY RATES:

The rates for sewer services that are billed quarterly will be:

For the first 2,000 cubic feet used or fraction thereof	\$ 55.84
For each additional 100 cubic feet thereafter	\$3.44
For residential customers only, the rate for each additional 100 cubic feet used in excess of 4,000 cubic feet shall be	\$2.58

Each sewer service shall be billed in accordance with the above rate schedule. Quarterly usage shall be determined using 100-percent of the quarterly metered water consumption figure to arrive at sewer usage.

CONNECTION FEES FOR NEW SERVICES:

A connection fee for a new service connection to Residential, Commercial or Industrial premises will be charged by the Northbridge Sewer System at the time application is made for service, as follows:

<u>Type of Connection</u>	<u>Fee</u>	
Existing single family residence	\$ 700.00	
Existing multi family residence (first unit)	700.00	
Each additional existing unit	400.00	
New single family residence	6,000.00	
New multi family residence (first unit)	6,000.00	
Each additional unit	5,000.00	
Commercial or Industrial (minimum)	7,000.00	
Commercial or Industrial (whichever is greater)	350.00	per fixture

The term “fixture” as used above is defined as: water closets, urinals, lavatories, service sinks, laundry sinks, washing machines, dishwashers, garbage disposal units, etc.

The term “existing residence” as used above is defined as one that was occupied prior to July 1, 1997.

Whenever a commercial or industrial premise is served by more than one connection to the Town’s mains, the connection fee schedule above shall apply to each connection. The total number of fixtures will not be added together to determine the connection fee.

TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE
WATER SYSTEM

SCHEDULE OF RATES FOR WATER SERVICES
Effective Date: July 1, 2005

RATES FOR METERED SERVICE

QUARTERLY METER RATES:

Subject to the minimum quarterly charges as specified below, the meter rates for water sold quarterly will be:

Per Hundred Cubic Feet

For the first 1,000 cubic feet per quarter or portion thereof	\$2.890
For the next 14,000 cubic feet per quarter	2.786
For all in excess of 15,000 cubic feet per quarter	1.561

Minimum Quarterly Charge Per Meter:

<u>Size of Meter (Inches)</u>	<u>Water Allowance (Cubic Feet)</u>	<u>Minimum Charge Per Quarter</u>
5/8	1,000	\$ 28.90
¾	2,200	55.37
1	3,600	86.26
1-1/4	4,500	106.11
1-1/2	7,000	161.26
2	11,500	260.53
3	27,800	618.75
4	50,000	965.29
6	110,000	1,901.89
8	180,000	2,994.59
10	265,000	4,321.44

Each meter shall be billed in accordance with the above rate schedule. Whenever a customer is served by more than one connection to the Town’s mains, the consumption as shown on the meter on each service connection will not be added together under one billing, but will be billed separately in accordance with the above rate schedule.

MINIMUM CHARGE FOR SHUTTING OFF OR TURNING ON WATER SERVICE
\$25.00

RATES FOR PRIVATE FIRE SERVICES:

AVAILABILITY:

These rates are available to customers of the Northbridge Water System for Private Fire Service. For purposes of this rate, the term fire protection valve shall mean and include either: a) any gate valve attached to any pipe that has the purpose of delivering water to one or more sprinkler heads; and/or any post indicator valve.

<u>RATES</u>	<u>Per Quarter</u>
For each 4” or smaller fire protection valve	\$ 156.51
For each 6” fire protection valve	250.11
For each 8” fire protection valve	344.00
For each 10” fire protection valve	625.27
For each private hydrant	141.13

CONNECTION FEES FOR NEW SERVICES:

A connection fee for a new service connection to Residential, Commercial or Industrial premises will be charged by the Northbridge Water System at the time application is made for service, as follows:

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Fee</u>
5/8 Inch up to 2 Inch (160 gallons per minute)	\$ 1,800.00
3 Inch (315 gallons per minute)	2,363.00
4 Inch (500 gallons per minute)	3,750.00
6 Inch (1,000 gallons per minute)	7,500.00
8 Inch (1,600 gallons per minute)	12,000.00
10 Inch (2,300 gallons per minute)	17,250.00

The connection fee for a new service connection for an existing residential premise occupied prior to July 1, 1997 is \$150.00.

TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE
WATER SYSTEM
SCHEDULE OF RATES FOR WATER SERVICES TO
MUNICIPAL OR DISTRICT WATER SYSTEMS

Effective Date: July 1, 2005

RATES FOR METERED SERVICE:

This rate schedule is applicable to the sale of water by the Northbridge Water System to other municipal, public, or private water systems located outside the limits of the Town of Northbridge.

MONTHLY METER RATES:

Subject to the minimum monthly charges specified below, the meter rates for water sold monthly will be:

Per Hundred Cubic Feet

For all water sold per month \$ 2.786

Minimum monthly charge per meter:

The minimum monthly charge per meter shall be \$139.30, which will include an allowance of 5,000 cubic feet of water per month. This minimum shall apply regardless of the size of the meter.

Each meter shall be billed monthly in accordance with the above rate schedule. Whenever a customer is served by more than one connection to the Town's mains, the consumption as shown by the meters on each service connection will not be added together under one billing, but each meter will be billed separately in accordance with the above rate schedule.

St. Patrick's Church/Request to hang a banner across Church Street from September 1, 2005 through September 18, 2005 to advertise their annual Fall Festival. A motion/Mr. Audette, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to grant permission to St. Patrick's Church to hang a banner across Church Street from September 1, 2005 through September 18, 2005 to advertise their annual Fall Festival to be held Saturday, September 17, 2005. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Slope Easements Quaker Street (Request by Mr. Joseph Leonardo). Mr. Leonardo provided a handout to the Board of Selectmen and explained that he was present to request the Board's help with respect to an easement on his lot on Quaker Street. He began by providing the Selectmen with some background information on this matter and stated that back in 1997 he applied for a permit to build on his lot, however, he then went to China on assignment for 7 years and therefore did not build on the lot at that time. When he applied for a new building permit, the building inspector informed Mr. Leonardo that he had a nonconforming lot and so he went to the Zoning Board of Appeals and subsequently received approval to build. In the end, he said that the slope easement came in to play again but he felt as though there was a misreading of the plan—that the Town was led to believe that the entire surface area was at risk when actually it was only the shaded area on the handout in question—an abandoned strip of land. As he is not building on the easement, his surveyor said there should be no concerns. Mr. Leonardo pointed out that currently, there are four properties on the other side of the road that **have** built on slope easements. He then explained that his lot is assessed as a "buildable lot" and he pays taxes on it as a "buildable lot." Mr. Sasseville was called upon for his opinion and he advised that because the Town planned to upgrade Quaker Street in the future he didn't feel that it was in the Town's best interest to abandon the easement. and in his capacity as DPW Director, he does not have the authority to give up easements. When asked by Chairman Collins about how much land would Mr. Leonardo lose if and when Quaker Street is widened, Mr. Sasseville responded that the road would probably be widened within the 60-foot right-of-way that exists, however, he was uncertain as to how that would affect the slope easement. After discussion, the Board decided to make a visit to the area in question and to put this matter on for a decision at the next Selectmen's Meeting on July 25, 2005.

Citizens' Comments/Input. 1) **Shelley Buma, 40 Heritage Drive,** followed up on a question she asked at the last Selectmen's meeting, which was: Whom was the Town currently in litigation with, who was the Town suing, and/or who was suing the Town. Ms. Buma stated that because the Selectmen were not forthcoming with a response, she performed her own search and found that the Town was not currently in litigation with the developer of Granite Hill and therefore, she wondered why, if the Town was not currently in litigation with respect to Granite Hill, would the Board choose to go into Executive Session on a matter that was not in litigation and felt that the Board violated the open meeting law because of that. On another matter, Ms. Buma pointed out the fact the Town Manager's appointments have not been posted on the Town Hall bulletin board as stated in the Charter. The Town Manager remarked that with respect to the appointments, he does not even need the approval of the Selectmen, however, he chooses to involve them in the appointment process. Mr. Coughlin further explained that he was just following the past practice regarding the appointment process and said he will post the appointments in order to be in compliance with the Town Charter. In response to Ms. Buma's remarks about Executive Session matters, the Town Manager said there are many different levels of litigation involve many different things. Chairman Collins responded that the issue would not be discussed any further tonight. 2) **Sharron Ampagoomian, 41 Henry Street, Whitinsville,** cautioned everyone to be careful when entering the parking area behind the Pythian Building. 3) **Paul Buma, 218 Hill Street, Whitinsville,** a) Questioned whether the invoices for public hearings held relative to the Medical Waste matter had been paid as of this date.

Selectman Montecalvo and Town Manager Coughlin responded that they were paid. **b)** Also mentioned the topic of meeting minutes and noted that the regulation of filing minutes applies to all committees.

Selectmen's Concerns. **1) Selectman Audette** brought up the concern of a town resident with respect to some blasting that was going to occur at Plummer's Corner in preparation for the construction of Hess Gas Station. Their concern was that they were contacted by a company called Seismic Solutions, however, the people have not been able to get back in contact them and wondered whether they were a legitimate company. Mr. Audette hoped that someone from the Town would look into the situation. **2) Selectman Davis** suggested that a new category be added to the agenda outline called Old Business/New Business. Continuing he inquired about the following items: **a)** Whether a ruling was received from Town Counsel that confirmed that all requests for information must go through the Chairman and not directly to the Town Manager. Chairman Collins answered that that policy was not a law but a long time protocol of the Board of Selectmen. **b)** When would the walkthrough take place relative to the Union Lane flooding problem. The DPW Director responded that it would take place on Friday, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM and everyone interested in taking part should meet at the new fields at the High School. **c)** The status of the Town Hall handicapped bathroom project. Mr. Coughlin replied that the Town would not be fined if they went beyond the due date for compliance. He also indicated that Town Counsel was looking over the documents. **d)** Has the Fire Chief submitted his report/letter to the Division of Occupational Safety and what is the timetable for corrective measures? Mr. Coughlin reported that Chief Nestor submitted his report one week in advance of the deadline and was under the impression that the Division was willing to work with the Town. **e)** When will the Finance Committee, School Committee, and Board of Selectmen meet to discuss the large deficit? The Town Manager responded that he and Selectman Montecalvo attended the School Committee meeting last week to inform them of the shortfall and to present their plan to cover the deficit. He also stated that Mr. Soojian was willing to look at the School Department budget to see what cuts he could make to assist the Town in covering the deficit. **f)** Status of appointments to the Playground & Recreation Commission, Council On Aging, and the Animal Control Dog Warrant. The Town Manager noted that the appointments have been deferred until the next Selectmen's meeting. As far as the Dog Warrant, he advised that Animal Control was now under the supervision of the Police Department; that they have defined his job description and that a contract was signed between Animal Control and the Town of Northbridge. Mr. Coughlin stated that he just wanted to make sure that everything was in order prior to signing the Dog Warrant. **g)** Status of the Streetscape Project. The Town Manager indicated that the project was 80% complete but should be 100% complete between September and October 2005. **h)** Status of the *Bylaw Review Committee. Chairman Collins responded that no date had been set as there were no applicants. **i)** Stated that he turned over his paycheck to the Treasurer/Collector after speaking with the Ethics Commission. Selectman Davis again stated that he would not accept **any** salary for his service while a member of the Board of Selectmen.

Town Manager's Report. Mr. Coughlin announced that Town Accountant Theresa Cenedella has tendered her resignation. Ms. Cenedella came forward and thanked everyone and further acknowledged that her 6+ years of service to the Town of Northbridge have been truly enjoyable.

Meeting adjourned: 8:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

s/

***At their September 26, 2005 meeting, the BOS voted to amend the minutes by changing the words Capital Planning Committee to Bylaw Review Committee.**

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
July 25, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of Minutes. Selectman Davis requested that the portion of the June 6, 2005 minutes [**Spring Annual Town Meeting/Vote positions on articles**] be amended to reflect that he as the "petitioner" not as "Selectman" would be willing to pass over Articles 20, 21, and 22 depending on the outcome of Articles 11, 12, and 13. A motion/Mr. Audette, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to accept the minutes of June 6, 2005 as amended. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Appointments/By the Town Manager: Neil Vaidya, Acting Town Accountant. The Town Manager acknowledged that in order to remain in compliance with the Town bylaws, all appointments would be properly posted on the Town Hall bulletin board in advance of the appointment including the annual reappointments. Continuing, Mr. Coughlin advised that due to the resignation of the current Town Accountant Theresa Cenedella that he was recommending Mr. Neil Vaidya to be the Acting Town Accountant upon her departure. That being said, he introduced Mr. Vaidya. Mr. Vaidya said he looked forward to the challenge ahead and hoped to one day be appointed Town Accountant. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to affirm the appointment of Neil Vaidya as Acting Town Accountant per the recommendation of the Town Manager. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Appointments/By the Board of Selectmen: 1) Bridget Curley, Playground & Recreation Commission. The Board commented that Ms. Curley had an impressive resume. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to appoint Bridget Curley to the Playground & Recreation Commission for a three-year term. Vote yes/Unanimous. **2) Republican Town Election Officers/Annual Reappointments/New Appointments.** A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to reappoint the Republican Town Election Officers as listed in the Selectmen's agenda packets. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Animal Control Officer/Dog Warrant. Chief Melia was present to provide an overview of the newly revised Animal Control Policy in Town now administered by the Police Department. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to authorize Chairman Collins to sign the Dog Warrant. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Flutterby Wishes [Tricia Johnston]/Request to use the Whitinsville Town Common on Saturday, August 13, 2005 [Rain date: Sunday, August 21, 2005] for an Arts and Crafts Bazaar. Ms. Johnston was not present; however, Selectman Montecalvo mentioned that it was not a good idea to allow for-profit groups to use the Town Common. Chairman Collins suggested that a policy be developed for use of the Town Common and limit the use to non-profit groups. Selectman Audette concurred. Chairman Collins then directed the Town Manager to draft an appropriate policy for use of the Town Common and present it to the Board at the next meeting on August 8, 2005. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to deny the request of Flutterby Wishes to use the Town Common as noted above. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Linda Usher, Race Director/Request to hold the 17th Annual Whitin Five Mile Road Race, Thursday, November 24, 2005 (Thanksgiving Day). Chairman Collins asked Police Chief Melia about this request and he responded that Ms. Usher runs a well-organized event. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to approve the above request subject to the safety requirements of the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Whitinsville Woman's Club/Request to use the Town Common on Saturday, September 10, 2005, from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM [Rain date: 9/24/05] for their annual yard sale. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the above request subject to the safety requirements of the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Slope Easements [Quaker Street] – Request by Mr. Joseph Leonardo. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to grant the Leonardo's permission to build within the slope easement on their property located on Quaker Street, Northbridge. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Office of Community Development – Request to amend the easement behind the Baker Building. Present: Jennifer Dulmaine, Program Manager, who provided some background information about this issue and noted that the purpose of the easement amendment was to allow the owner [Jeff Dufficy] to install an exterior elevator on the building to permit handicapped access to his building. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to grant permission to grant an easement amendment on property behind the Baker Building to allow for a 20 x 20 elevator addition. Vote yes/Unanimous.

The Meadows/Present: Gary Bechtholdt, Town Planner, who was present to give an update on the proposed 80-lot subdivision to be located on the former Kroll's Farm property. He advised that the Planning Board opened their public hearing last week regarding the proposed development and numerous residents and abutters were present to voice their concerns about traffic, etc. Mr. Bechtholdt explained that the land was previously under

Chapter 61A but was withdrawn approximately 2½ - 3 years ago. Chairman Collins suggested that the Town investigate the possibility of pursuing a land trust. The Board thanked the Town Planner for the update.

Citizens' Comments/Input. 1) **Richard Sasseville, DPW Director**, reported that he has noticed a trend around Town regarding the dumping of furniture and other items [left on the side of the road] with the word “free” written on them. He requested that citizens refrain from this activity.

Selectmen's Concerns. **Selectman Ampagoomian** asked about Plummer's Corner. Selectman Montecalvo remarked that the Plummer's Corner project was slated to be done in 2007. The Town Manager stated that he sent yet another letter to Commissioner Cogliano today with the hope that all the correspondence would help bring this project to the forefront. **Selectman Audette** mentioned that he received an email from Robert Parker thanking the Selectmen for looking at the water problems in the Union Street area of Linwood. Mr. Parker also requested that the Conservation Commission make another inspection of the area. Selectman Davis stated that he spoke with Andrew Chagnon, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, who recommended they look at the plans to make sure the detention basins were built properly and further inquired as to whether the Planning Board approved the areas when the roads were accepted as public ways. **Selectman Davis(1)** reiterated his request to add a new category to the agenda called Old Business/New Business. Chairman Collins said he would put it on the next agenda for discussion. 2) asked whether a meeting has been set up with the Chairs of the School Committee, Finance Committee, and Building Committee regarding the Capital Plan. Chairman Collins replied that he spoke with Peter Barbadora and they will meet first before the group gets together. 3) inquired about the status of the Bylaw Review Committee. Chairman Collins responded that no one has come forward as of yet. 4) any feedback from the Superintendent with respect to the budget deficit. Chairman Collins stated that the Superintendent has directed his staff not to spend more than 75% of their budgets. 5) when will the Board be meeting to discuss the budget deficit facing the Town. Mr. Coughlin advised that he did not want to meet until both he and Mr. Soojian had a plan in place to deal with the deficit. 6) did Town Counsel rule on the procurement method used to procure for services with respect to the handicapped bathroom project. The Town Manager noted that Mr. Barbadora was allowed to select an architect for the project. 7) status of the payment due to the Superintendent of Schools. The Town Manager advised that he would not comment publicly.

Town Manager's Report. Mr. Coughlin presented a Certificate of Recognition to Theresa Cenedella in honor of her six years of dedicated service to the Town and wished her well in her new job. On behalf of the employees of the Department of Public Works, the DPW Director also presented her a Certificate of Appreciation. Continuing, Mr. Coughlin reported on an incident, which occurred recently involving the questionable payment to a vendor that had been investigated by the Inspector General, and as a result, payment was stopped.

Executive Session. A motion made and seconded to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #6 – Land Acquisition (Fire Station), with out return to open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes; Mr. Davis/Yes; Mr. Audette/Yes; Mr. Montecalvo/Yes; and Mr. Collins/Yes.

Open Session adjourned: 8:06 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
August 8, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Appointments/1) Playground & Recreation: John Phelan. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to appoint John Phelan to the Playground & Recreation Commission for a three-year term. Vote yes/Unanimous. **2) Cultural Council: Amy Stark.** As Ms. Stark was on vacation and unavailable to attend this evening the Board decided to defer this appointment until their next meeting on August 22, 2005. **3) Democratic Town Committee/Election Officers:** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to reappoint the Democratic Town Election Officers as recommended by the Town Clerk and per the list provided in the Selectmen's agenda packets. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Fall Annual Town Meeting – October 25, 2005/Vote to close the warrant on Friday, September 9, 2005 at Noon. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to close the Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant on Friday, September 9, 2005 at Noon. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Safety Committee Minutes – July 20, 2005. Selectman Davis asked Chief Melia whether last month's Safety Committee Minutes had been corrected as voted by the Board of Selectmen. Chief responded in the affirmative. Continuing, Chief Melia provided an overview of the continuing complaints with respect to Arthur Drive. He noted that the Safety Committee deemed there to be a safety issue on that road and therefore installed no parking signs from Route 122 to the cul-de-sac on Arthur Drive and unfortunately the residents are not in favor of the change. There being no further discussion, a motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve the Safety Committee Minutes of July 20, 2005. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Armenian Apostolic Church/1) Request to hang a banner over Church Street from August 9, 2005 to August 22, 2005 to advertise their Annual Picnic to be held Sunday, August 21, 2005. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve the above request as presented. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Davis, Collins, and Audette. Abstain/Mr. Montecalvo. **2) Request for one-day Wines and Malt Liquor License for the Annual Picnic, August 21, 2005.** A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve the above license request. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Davis, Collins, and Audette. Abstain/Mr. Montecalvo.

Tipperary Drive/Vote to sign the Acceptance of Easement. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to sign the acceptance of easement for Tipperary Drive. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Sportsminded Plus [Brian Labonte]/Request to hold a sidewalk sale on Saturday, August 20, 2005 from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Chairman Collins requested Chief Melia's opinion on this matter. Chief explained that the sidewalk sale has been scaled down over the past few years and there have been no problems. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the above request as presented. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church/Request to hang a banner over Church Street from September 4, 2005 to September 18, 2005 to advertise an Alpha Course. Chairman Collins announced that there was a conflict with the dates of this request and therefore suggested the Board vote to approve the request for the following two weeks, which the Church [as stated in their letter] would not have a problem with. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve the request from Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church to hang a banner over Church Street from September 18, 2005 to October 2, 2005. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Proposal to amend the agenda outline. Selectman Davis suggested that the agenda outline be revised by adding an "Old Business/New Business" category in order to minimize the amount of issues he would bring forth during Selectmen's Concerns, which he deemed to be "Old Business." As several board members were not in favor of Selectman Davis' suggestion, after discussion, he agreed to leave the outline of the agenda as is.

Rocky Ridge Estates Sewer Connections. Present: Scott Medeiros, P.E., Andrews Survey & Engineering, Inc., who was here on behalf of his client, Mr. Edward Renaud. Mr. Medeiros explained that the overall purpose of his appearance before the Board was to present an alternative proposal for compliance with the Town's Inflow & Infiltration requirements [Sewer Connection Policy] with respect to Rocky Ridge Estates. He noted that they would be required to remove 31,680 gpd for the Rocky Ridge Estates project, however, the problem was finding locations in Town where large I & I reductions could be achieved and as a result, he and Mr. Renaud developed an alternative proposal they hoped the Board would take action on. Mr. Medeiros further explained that Mr. Renaud was involved with another project in Town [Pine Knoll] where he was required to remove 60,000 gpd of I & I, however, when all was said and done, they had removed 124,000 gpd. Seeing that they removed twice as much as required under the Town's Administrative Consent Order [ACO], he proposed that the Board allow the use of the 124,000 gpd be applied to both Pine Knoll [60,000gpd] and Rocky Ridge Estates [31,680gpd] for a total of 91,680 gpd. The net result would still yield a credit balance of 32,320 gpd to be applied to the Town's sewer bank balance. The proposal still achieves the required results and would not compromise the ACO in place with DEP. Following a brief discussion, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to move this topic from discussions to decisions at this time. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr.

Audette to grant Rocky Ridge Estates Sewer Connections. The DPW Director interjected and recommended that the Selectmen's decision this evening only be applicable to the Rocky Ridge Estates project and that all other projects should still be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. That being said, Mr. Ampagoomian amended his motion to reflect the DPW Director's suggestion. Amended motion: A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to grant Rocky Ridge Estates sewer connections; that this decision be applicable only to the Rocky Ridge Estates project and that all other projects would still be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Citizens' Comments/Input. – None.

Selectmen's Concerns. **Mr. Collins/a)** Turnpike Grant: Revealed that Mr. Amorello, Mass. Turnpike Authority, was in Town today to announce that a grant has been awarded to the Town in the amount of \$10,000, which was the result of very hard work by Gary Bechtholdt and Jennifer Dulmaine. **b)** Fire Station: Reported that the Town was moving forward with the acquisition of land for a new Fire Station and that a local group would be donating their work for engineering services. **c)** Noted that he and Mr. Coughlin have met with Building Committee about capital projects, and the Conservation Commission to review other issues. **Mr. Ampagoomian/a)** Reported that he received a call about cars [unregistered?] on Sutton Street in the area of the Railroad tracks. **b)** Lack of cell phone service.: Stated that the Town should contact Verizon. **c)** Thanked Gary Bechtholdt and Jen Dulmaine for their efforts with respect to applying for and obtaining the Turnpike Grant. **d)** Should recognize hard working volunteers in Town, i.e., Paula McCowan, Barbara Gaudette, and Denise Bilotta for the maintenance of flowers in Memorial Square. Chairman Collins concurred. **Mr. Davis/a)** Advised that the Union Street flood issue has been turned over to the DPW Director but that he would like the notation of a date to move forward. **b)** Inquired about the emails going back and forth between the Board of Health Chairman and the Town Manager and said he would like to know what was going on with the BOH issue [Hiring of Health Agent]. Mr. Coughlin pointed out that proper procurement was not followed and as a result his services were terminated until the time that Health Agent services could be properly procured for under Chapter 30B. **c)** Would like to be involved in negotiations [new High School] in Boston. **Mr. Audette/a)** Had questions regarding Executive Session and whether they could get the material ahead of time. **b)** Announced that the Vanguard Drum & Bugle Corps was in town and encouraged everyone to stop by and watch them perform.

Town Manager's Report. **1)** Mr. Coughlin commended Mr. Bechtholdt and Ms. Dulmaine with respect to their hard work on the Turnpike Grant. **2)** Privileged group of municipal reps would be meeting with Lt. Gov. Healy about Health Insurance budget issues and education reform. **3)** Advised that an expenditure issue at the School Department has been resolved with respect to ownership of the items [backup documentation was provided to the Selectmen]. The Town Manager asked the Selectmen to support him in referring the issue back to the School Committee for final disposition. Chairman Collins stated that he would like to know what the School Committee decides. Selectman Davis said that the town should have given the Superintendent the furniture for his years of service to the Town. **4)** Reported that the Department of Housing and Community Development [DHCD] assured the Town that they were following proper guidelines with respect to returning funds to the state for a bill that was paid with grant funds but should not have been. **5)** With respect to the issue regarding custody of taxpayer agreement files, Mr. Coughlin indicated that he would continue to retain those agreements until the issue was fully resolved.

Items for Future Agenda: Representative George N. Peterson, Jr. – Office Hours to be held at Northbridge Town Hall on Monday, September 12, 2005 @ 7:00 PM

Executive Session. A motion/Mr. seconded/Mr. to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #6 [Land Acquisition – Fire Station]-without return to open session. Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes; Mr. Davis/Yes; Mr. Collins/Yes; Mr. Audette/Yes; and Mr. Montecalvo/Yes.

Open Session adjourned: 8:18 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
August 22, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

The agenda has Correspondence listed after Executive Session and the policy manual states that it is correct. Mr. Coughlin would like the Selectmen to vote to change the order of items so that Correspondence is scheduled before Executive Session.

Presentation by Trustees of Soldier's Memorials to Stanislaw Chmielewski

Spaulding Aldrich gave a brief history of Mr. Chmielewski's career and World War II. Following Mr. Aldrich's remarks, a poem was read and awards were presented to Mr. Chmielewski by the Board of Selectmen and the Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials.

I. Approval of Minutes

There are no minutes to approve at this meeting.

II. 7:05 PM - Public Hearing Class II License (Used Car Dealer) Bill's Radiator Service (William Frowein), 36 Providence Lane, Linwood, MA

A. Mr. Collins read the Public Hearing Notice aloud. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to open the Public Hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. Mr. Frowein stated that the reason he applied for a Class II License was so that he and his son could buy a few cars at the auction, fix them up and then sell them at the above location—the same location as his Radiator Service business. He also mentioned that there would be no banners, signs, etc. There being no further comments, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to close the Public Hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to grant a Class II – Used Car Dealer's License to Bill's Radiator Service [William Frowein] with the stipulation that no more than 10 cars be on the lot at one time [per Special Permit 9-SP-2005 granted by the ZBA 5/18/05]. Vote yes/Unanimous.

III. Appointments by the Board of Selectmen

B. 1) Council on Aging: Serge Grandoni

Mr. Grandoni gave a brief history of his life/business career. The Board noted that he had a very impressive application and that he should be able to help Gail Anderson [Senior Center Director] with the writing of grant applications. At the conclusion of his summation, Mr. Grandoni was welcomed to the Council. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to appoint Mr. Grandoni to the Council on Aging for a three-year term. Vote yes/Unanimous.

2) Cultural Council: Amy Stark

Ms. Stark gave a brief history of her career and how it relates to the Cultural Council. The Board welcomed Ms. Stark to the Council. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to appoint Ms. Stark to the Cultural Council for a three-year term. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Resignations:

3) Plumbing Inspector: Clarence Lachapelle

A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to accept Mr. Lachapelle's resignation due to health reasons and to send a letter of appreciation to him for his years of service. Vote yes/Unanimous.

4) Zoning Board of Appeals: David Fields

A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to accept Mr. Fields' resignation and to send a letter of thanks for his service to the Town. Vote yes/Unanimous.

IV. Decisions

C. FY'95 Housing Rehabilitation Program – Discharge of Lien on property located at 49-59 D Street, Whitinsville, MA.

It was noted that all the grant requirements had been met and the paperwork was all in order. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to discharge the lien on the above-mentioned property. Vote yes/Unanimous. Doreen Cedrone was present to witness the Board members' signatures and notarize all documents.

D. Fall Annual Town Meeting (October 25, 2005) – Vote to place Selectmen's articles on warrant (Selectmen to vote their positions on articles at a later date)

A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to place the Board of Selectmen's Articles 1-11 on the Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Vote yes/Unanimous.

V. Discussions

E. Alternatives (Dennis Rice) – Project Update

Mr. Rice reported that it had been a year since he last updated the Board with a project update and since that time, Alternatives has raised their first million in funding, however, they need approximately \$2,000,000 more. He also mentioned that they hope to break ground in mid-winter to begin demolition and in the spring begin renovations. Mr. Rice said that the project was estimated to take about 12 months while Consigli Construction did the renovations. In

addition, he advised that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission [FERC] application had been submitted. In closing, Mr. Rice reminded the Board of the types of activities and businesses, etc. that would be included in the finished project. He also informed them that Alternatives was working with Mass. Highway to get the Douglas Road Bridge replaced.

F. Trust for Public Land (Chris Lapoint)

They are looking for alternatives with respect to land development in town besides housing developments. Mr. Bechtholdt attended a conference on this subject. Mr. Lapoint gave an overview of what the Trust for Public Land is, what they do and how they assist communities across the country. Their mission is to conserve land for people including pocket parks, farms, forests, and large wilderness areas. They will negotiate with the landowner, go to the local Board of Selectmen, and present a deal. If they get a yes to pursue, they will do due diligence and structure the contract to get through the town meeting process. Sometimes they can use their capital to buy and hold property until the funding becomes available. Mr. Lapoint answered the questions that the Selectmen had. Barbara Gaudette spoke on behalf of the Open Space Committee. She also made a suggestion to look into the possibility of taking any monies paid on a property taken out of 61A and using the back taxes that are paid to purchase and/or maintain open space property. Ms. Gaudette suggested looking into having the town accept the Community Preservation Act. The next step is to get a letter from the Board of Selectmen to the Trust for Public Land so that they can prove they are not working alone. Then they can address property in general or a particular piece of property in Northbridge at the Selectmen's request. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to work with Mr. Chris Lapoint of the Trust for Public Land for technical advice and assistance to the Town with respect to acquisition of properties, securing state and private funding, and seeking approval at town meeting. Vote yes/Unanimous.

G. Community Development Plan -- Update

Mr. Bechtholdt gave a summary on the Community Development Plan that was started about a year ago. The document is finished even though it will be a working document. The next step is to implement the plan. An ad-hoc committee is needed to start implementing the plan. Mr. Coughlin gave a verbal approval and the Selectmen are behind the project.

H. Union Street Drainage

There was a discussion on what if anything can be done to alleviate the problem at Union Place. The site walk done concludes that what was designed and approved by the Town is what is actually there. No actual measurements were done, they just visually looked at it. The question is, is it adequate? Has the construction of the athletic fields at the high school had any impact? Mr. Sasseville and Mr. Bechtholdt viewed the fields and are not in a position to comment on whether what was approved by the Town is what is actually there. The issue needs to be addressed completely and not just piecemeal. It needs to be looked at from square one and go from there. There are other agencies that need to be involved besides the Town, such as the Providence & Worcester Railroad (P & W) and Mass Highway. The Conservation Commission will need to be involved with any modifications as one of the ponds is in the replication area. Mr. Bechtholdt will contact the Conservation Commission and see if this is any modification they are qualified to make a decision on and go from there. A representative from the P & W Railroad will be contacted to see what can be done on their culvert that is too high.

I. Plummer's Corner

The Town Manager sent a letter to Mass. Highway requesting their immediate attention to this intersection.

VI. Citizen's Comments/Input

Mr. Tom Farley of 401 Fowler Road stated that there are two roads that come onto Cooper Road (Brenda Drive and Kelly Road) that have no stop signs. Most people do stop before making their turn, but there is lots of traffic up there now and it could pose a big problem if no one stops. Kelly Road does not have a stop sign onto Hill St. either. There is also no white line in the road. Mr. Montecalvo who is the Selectmen representative of the Safety Committee took down the information and it will be brought to the Safety Committee. If there is a safety issue, it will be addressed at that time.

Gary Ampagoomian of 841 Providence Road has a concern and wants to clear the air about the property he owns with his sister. He has no intention of selling the land to any party, Town or otherwise. An anonymous letter was sent to Selectman Ampagoomian that speaks of the Board of Selectmen and conflicts of interest. Mr. Gary Ampagoomian thinks it is unfair that stuff like this happens. Chairman Collins stated that the writer of the letter is a coward for not signing the letter and Selectman Ampagoomian did disclose his relationship to the property owner when it was discussed in Executive Session. Mr. Coughlin then addressed several other letters received that basically questioned conflicts of interest with certain matters and others who were trying to discredit Mr. Coughlin.

Mr. Sasseville has items of information: Starting tomorrow, August 23, 2005, they will be replacing a culvert on Lake Street and Crescent Street; Reconstruction of a section of Swift Road between Dover and Hickory Drive will be starting on August 29, 2005; also on August 29, 2005, stone sealing work will begin on 15 streets. The streets involved will be listed on the cable channel.

Georgette Bishop of 80 Hillview Lane spoke regarding the Santa Clara Camp Vanguards. They are nationally known and due to a lack of communication, she found out about them coming to Town at the last minute. The high school was not going to let them stay there because of liability, but whomever they spoke to stated that they are fully insured so any damage done would be covered. Many other people were also upset that they did not know anything about this including the Valley Airs. On one of the practice days, Mrs. Bishop was having no luck getting something simple like popsicles donated by a business in town and then she called Hannaford's in Uxbridge. Not only did they donate the popsicles, they also donated Gatorade for all band members. A copy of the tape of their practice session will be sent to Hannaford's and also to the Vanguards themselves. The Vanguards were in town for the Drum Corp. International Competition being held at Gillette Stadium. The Selectmen thanked Ms. Bishop as she quickly stepped in and represented the Town. Mr. Coughlin sent a letter to them and it will be published in the paper as a letter to the editor. Better communication is being put in place with the new Superintendent so public relation items like this do not fall through the cracks.

VII. Selectmen’s Concerns

1. A status report from the Fire Chief to the State Office of Hygiene that listed 7-8 items that were to be completed this summer is needed. 2. The Town Hall accessibility is moving forward. The architect has signed the contract and was here a few weeks ago. 3. The Middle School roof and Police Station roof projects are being pushed ahead by the architect. The school has some air quality issues, but no mold growth has been detected. A timetable will be requested. 4. There were meetings with Alternatives Unlimited on their project and with Heritage Design Group for fire station project. Everything is progressing well.

VIII. Town Manager’s Report

Presentation: Letters/Gifts From Japanese Exchange Students

Two letters were received from Japanese exchange students and Mr. Coughlin presented them to Chairman Collins as the “Mayor of Whitinsville.” The letters thanked the Town of Northbridge for their hospitality. Unfortunately, they could not attend tonight’s Selectmen’s meeting as they were scheduled to make their return flight home to Japan. Earlier, the students had presented the Superintendent of Schools with cultural gifts so that our students could view/use them in their studies.

The Selectmen welcomed new Superintendent of Schools Paul Soojian, to the Town.

Health and safety issues are being addressed community wide. This statement is made to dispel any rumors that these issues will not be addressed during the summer vacation season. A local resident who is also the Health Inspector for Milford will help the Town out on a temporary basis. Jim Sheehan, the Building Inspector, will be answering any calls that come into his office. Mr. Coughlin is answering any calls for the Town Manager’s Office as well as the Board of Health since Jeanne Gniadek has forwarded her phone to the Town Manager’s Office while she is out and Sharon Susienka is also out this week. The issues will be addressed on a priority basis.

The public records request from Mr. Todd Buckley has been found baseless. The Secretary of State has ruled in the Town’s favor. A charge for the time expended and the copies made of any future public records request will be issued for any requests that are extensive.

IX. Items For Future Agenda

Announcement: Rep. George N. Peterson, Jr. – Office hours to be held at Northbridge Town Hall on September 12, 2005 at 7:00PM.

X. Executive Session

A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to go into Executive Session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #6 (Land acquisition), under the auspices of the fire station--not to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Collins/Yes; Mr. Davis/Yes; Mr. Audette/Yes; Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes; and Mr. Montecalvo/Yes.

XI. Correspondence

This item will be put above executive session on the next agenda.

Open Session adjourned: 9:27PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

bak/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
September 12, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Selectman Davis noted for the record that he had a conversation with Mr. Coughlin and it was promised that the Selectmen's meeting minutes would be brought up-to-date.

Representative George N. Peterson, Jr., was present to provide the definitive numbers for Local Aid that Northbridge would be receiving from the State. **Chapter 70 Aid:** \$12,970,825; **Lottery Aid:** \$2,214,906; **Payment in Lieu of Taxes:** \$28,088; and **Additional Assistance:** \$3,071 for a total of \$15,216,890, which Rep. Peterson pointed out, was about \$1 million more than last year. The Board asked several questions with respect to various topics including Lottery Aid formula, Local Aid issues, and the Gas Tax. At the end of Rep. Peterson's presentation, Selectman Audette requested a breakdown of Lottery Aid numbers by Town. Before leaving, Chairman Collins announced that Rep. Peterson would hold office hours out in the hall for a short time.

7:05 PM - Public Hearing:

E. Osterman Gas Service, Inc., - Underground Storage Tank Application for 25 underground storage tanks (25 – 1,000 gal. tanks) for propane storage located on Gendron Street, Northbridge, MA [Pine Knoll Development]. Present: Fire Steve Browning, E. Osterman Gas Service, Inc. Chairman Collins read the public hearing notice aloud. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Unanimous. Mr. Browning explained the reason for his appearance before the Board was for their consideration of an underground storage tank license as outlined above. He noted that Chief Nestor had already signed off on the application. Continuing, Mr. Browning stated that all work will be done according to Fire Code and that no tank will be buried until each and every one has been inspected by the Fire Chief or his designee. Chief Nestor advised that this is allowed by law as long as they meet the required distances from property lines, buildings, electrical hazards, etc. He also confirmed that inspections [by the Fire Department] will be performed before any tank is back-filled with dirt and that the Gas Inspector will inspect all lines from the tanks to the houses. Comments from abutters: **Mr. Joseph Rabaoli, 63 Gendron Street**, inquired about truck traffic regarding tank refills. Mr. Browning replied that the propane tanks would need to be filled about once a month, which would equate to about one truck per week. **Nola Stefancyk, 406 Sutton Street**, asked about the location of the tanks. Mr. Browning said that he did not have a plan with him; however, he explained that the tanks would be located in clusters and away from any wetlands. There being no further discussion, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to close the public hearing. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to grant an underground storage tank license for up to 25 underground storage tanks (25 – 1,000 gal. tanks) to E. Osterman Gas Service, Inc., to be located in the Pine Knoll housing development on Gendron Street in Northbridge. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Appointments/By the Town Manager: 1) Richard Wunschel, Plumbing Inspector 2) Larry Wiersma, Asst. Plumbing Inspector. Present: James Sheehan, Building Inspector. Mr. Coughlin advised that he had directed Mr. Sheehan to begin the process of finding experienced individuals to fill the vacant positions of Plumbing Inspector and Asst. Plumbing Inspector. To that end, he noted that Mr. Sheehan properly advertised and posted the vacant positions and upon completion of the search process had recommended the above individuals to him for appointment. That being said, the Town Manager asked the Board to consider the appointments of Richard Wunschel as Plumbing Inspector and Larry Wiersma as Asst. Plumbing Inspector as recommended by the Building Inspector. At this time, Mr. Sheehan introduced the applicants to the Board and provided a brief summary of their experience and qualifications. There being no further discussion, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to affirm the appointments of Richard Wunschel as Plumbing Inspector and Larry Wiersma, as Asst. Plumbing Inspector per the recommendation of the Town Manager. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Appointments/By the Board of Selectmen: Cultural Council: Caroline Ramian. Present: Nola Stefancyk, Chairman-Cultural Council. Ms. Ramian introduced herself to the Board and mentioned that she is currently involved in the arts through the School system. She also indicated her interest in getting involved in securing grants for cultural purposes especially for teens. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette to appoint Caroline Ramian to the Cultural Council for a three-year term. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Safety Committee Minutes [August 24, 2005]. Selectman Davis brought up the Arthur Drive issue and stated that he spent about 1½ hours with the neighbors and that they just are not happy with the decision of the Safety Committee with respect to the installation of no parking signs. **Present: Mr. and Mrs. Hartland, 51 Arthur Drive.** Selectman Montecalvo reported that when the Safety Committee inspected Arthur Drive, they thought there was a safety issue and as a result the Committee voted to install no parking signs on one side of the road. Town Manager Coughlin explained that the Hartlands were advised by Selectman Montecalvo to take the democratic approach to try and resolve the issues. As a result, Arthur Drive residents have submitted a petition to be voted upon at the Fall Annual Town Meeting on October 25, 2005, which would involve the widening of the road and installation of sidewalks. At this time, Chairman Collins asked if there were any more questions with respect to the Safety Committee minutes and asked for a motion to approve. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr.

Montecalvo to approve the August 24, 2005 Safety Committee minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous. Continuing, the Hartlands presented their reasons why they went forward with the petition for Town Meeting: road extremely narrow; two cars cannot pass at the same time; unsafe for the children due to lack of sidewalks, water problems, etc. They also presented pictures to the Selectmen for their review. The DPW Director came forward and expressed his agreement with respect to the road being narrow. In addition, he explained that in order to bring the road up to standard it would have to be widened—including the construction of sidewalks, the sidewalks would have to meet ADA requirements, drainage would have to be installed, maybe some partial reconstruction of the existing road, and the road must conform to the requirements of the storm water system. The Selectmen requested the DPW Director to put a cost estimate together for the upgrade of Arthur Drive as outlined above. Selectman Audette asked about road requirements regarding width. Mr. Sasseville responded the required width depends on the classification of the road and volume of traffic. He also noted that the standard road width used in Town is 24 feet. Selectman Davis inquired about whether it was possible to have an area cleared and graded just to make the area passable with two lanes. The DPW Director responded that he would look into it. Chairman Collins reiterated that Mr. Sasseville would put together an estimate of the cost to upgrade Arthur Drive in order to move forward with the petition process.

Subordination of Lien [Sewer Betterment] – Courville. The Town Manager recommended that the Board approve Mr. Courville's request in order to allow him to go forward with a refinance on his mortgage. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve the above subordination of lien for Mr. George Courville. Vote yes/Unanimous.

American Legion/Request to hold a toll booth fundraiser on Saturday, September 24, 2005 from 10 AM to 3 PM to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Present: Philip Cyr and Andy Williamson, Trustees of Soldiers' Memorials. Mr. Cyr requested permission to conduct a tollbooth fundraiser at Plummer's Corner, Memorial Square, and at the intersection of Providence Road/Sutton Street in Rockdale if there are a sufficient number of people to staff all locations. He further noted that this fundraiser would run in conjunction with the food and clothing drive currently being run weeknights from 5 PM to 9 PM at the American Legion in Rockdale. Mr. Cyr also explained that all volunteers would be outfitted with orange safety vests and orange pails for donations as well as to be instructed not to be out in the active roadway while traffic was moving. Chairman Collins stated that he was concerned about the volunteers' safety. Mr. Cyr was willing to promise that the volunteers would stay out of the left turn lanes at Plummer's Corner and would only accept donations from passenger side windows. Discussion ensued back and forth between Selectman Audette and Mr. Cyr about safety issues. The Town Manager interjected and recommended that this request be approved subject to the safety recommendations of Chief Melia. That being said, a motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette to approve the above request subject to the safety requirements of the Police Chief. Vote yes/Unanimous.

At this time, Mr. Coughlin pointed out that certain relief organizations have requested persons with specialized skills to assist in their recovery efforts and as such, announced that he has given permission to one of the Town's Sewer Division employees to head to Louisiana in order to assist them with sewer issues.

Request to convene a license revocation hearing on 9/26/05 -- Classic Car Sales II [James Smith].

A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to convene a license revocation hearing on September 26, 2005 with respect to Classic Car Sales II [James Smith, Owner]. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Utility Abatements. Present: Richard Sasseville, DPW Director. The Town Manager noted that since the change in the Town's utility abatement policy in July 2005, he has received many complaints about the new abatement process and thus he requested the presence of Mr. Sasseville at tonight's meeting to once again explain the change in the Town's utility abatement policy. At the conclusion of the DPW Director's explanation, it was decided that any citizen wishing to appeal the abatement process should send a letter to the attention of the Town Manager for his review. The Board agreed that the Town Manager would review each situation on a case-by case basis and render his decision.

Selectman Davis asked Mr. Sasseville about the status of the streetscape project with respect to removal of the electric poles. Mr. Sasseville replied that he would meet with Jen Dulmaine in order to be briefed on the project and report back to the Selectmen.

Citizens' Comments/Input. Shelley Buma, 40 Heritage Drive, asked when the Selectmen were going to review the Town Manager's performance. Chairman Collins responded that the Town Manager would be reviewed at the first Selectmen's meeting in November to coincide with his anniversary date.

Selectmen's Concerns. Selectman Davis/a) mentioned that the exit from Friendly's Plaza needs to be looked at; **b)** asked about the status of personnel in the financial offices. The Town Manager responded that he was in the process of restructuring the Financial Offices. That said, Mr. Coughlin said that he would not search for a new Town Accountant as Neil Vaidya had been appointed Acting Town Accountant and that it was only right to give Mr. Vaidya a fair chance since he had expressed his willingness to take on and learn the job. In addition, he stated that the Auditors would also be assisting the Town Accountant's Office. With respect to the Treasurer/Collector's Office, Mr. Coughlin stated that he had solicited quotes and at the conclusion of his review, hired Financial Advisory Associates to provide supervision and prepare the year-end financial information for submission to the DOR. **c)** advised that he spoke with the Town Moderator about the Bylaw Review Committee as there was some confusion about the terms of the appointments and when they expired. That said, Mr. Davis mentioned that he would be interested in serving on the Bylaw Review Committee if other people do not come forward. He also requested that the vacancies be posted as soon as possible. Lastly, he said that he would like to see the appointments made by the next Selectmen's meeting. **Selectman Montecalvo** announced that the Mass.

Municipal Association was holding a conference on Friday, September 23 and Saturday, September 24 at the Sheraton Lincoln in Worcester. He would like to see all Board members attend.

Correspondence. Selectman Davis(1) mentioned that he recently saw an event on Cable TV where the Mass. Turnpike Authority [Matthew Amorello] presented the Town a check in the amount of \$10,000. Mr. Davis noted that all Selectmen were present except himself because he was not invited. That said, he expressed his disappointment about not being kept informed of such events and that he would like to be the one to decide whether or not he can attend such events. **2)** Asked about a letter received by the Playground & Recreation Commission with respect to Bennett's Pasture off Fowler Road. Chairman Collins responded that he and the Town Manager are working on gathering the information for the Playground & Recreation Commission. **3)** Informed the Board that the Building, Planning & Construction Commission would like to be involved in the build-out of the Fire Station. Chairman Collins said that they would be involved at the proper time. **4)** Has questions concerning the letter from Chief Nestor to the state regarding the Fire Station violations but will submit them to the Town Manager to be given to Chief Nestor.

Town Manager's Report. Thanked Chief Melia and Sharon Susienka for their assistance during his recent vacation. He also commended the staff in the Treasurer's Office.

Selectman Davis announced that the St. Patrick's Fall Festival will take place on Saturday, September 17, 2005.

A motion/Mr. Audette, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to adjourn. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Meeting Adjourned: 915 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

s/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
September 26, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:03 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Awards for Distinguished Service Presentation

James Madigan - Mr. Madigan came forward and Mr. Collins presented him with a plaque and certificate for 40 years of service.

Edwin Bodwell - Mr. Arthur Magowan accepted the plaque and certificate on Mr. Bodwell's behalf for 50 years of service.

I. Approval of Minutes

A. 1. June 20, 2005

No additions or corrections. Motion to approve June 20, 2005 minutes made by Mr. Montecalvo and seconded by Mr. Ampagoomian. The Board voted all in favor.

A. 2. July 11, 2005

Mr. Davis had one correction and he already sent it to Ms. Susienka. Under Selectmen's Concerns, Item H. [under Davis], changed Capital Planning to Bylaw Review. Motion to approve July 11, 2005 minutes as amended made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Ampagoomian. The Board voted all in favor.

A. 3. July 25, 2005

No additions or corrections. Motion to approve July 25, 2005 minutes made by Mr. Ampagoomian and seconded by Mr. Montecalvo. The Board voted all in favor.

II. Public Hearing

There were no public hearings for this meeting.

III. Appointments/By the Board of Selectmen

B. Cultural Council: Pamela Siderewicz

Ms. Siderewicz gave a brief summary of her career to the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen welcomed Ms. Siderewicz to the Council. Motion to appoint Ms. Siderewicz to the Cultural Council made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Ampagoomian. The Board voted all in favor.

IV. Decisions

C. Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant/Vote to Sign

Motion made by Mr. Audette and seconded by Mr. Davis. The Board voted all in favor to sign the warrant for the Fall Annual Town Meeting.

D. Safety Committee Minutes – September 21, 2005

Motion to accept the September 21, 2005 Safety Committee Meeting minutes made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Audette. The Board voted all in favor.

E. BOS Policy Handbook/Vote to Amend Agenda Outline (Correspondence)

Mr. Davis explained the reasoning behind the change. Correspondence does not get looked at when the Board of Selectmen goes to into Executive Session and do not come back to Open Session. Motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Montecalvo. The Board voted all in favor to amend the agenda outline and move Correspondence before Executive Session.

V. Discussions

F. Bylaw Review Committee

The Selectmen received a copy of the letter from Kopelman & Paige. Mr. Coughlin gave a brief summary of the questions surrounding the term of a bylaw review committee member. The Selectmen's appointments to this committee would have to be posted and new talent bank forms solicited. New appointments would be made from these talent bank forms. The Bylaw Review Committee is not the same as the Charter Review Committee.

A bylaw was submitted by the Board of Health to change the appointment powers from the Town Manager to the Board of Health for the Health Agent and this is coming up at the Fall Annual Town Meeting (FATM). This is more of a charter change than a bylaw change and a second follow-up opinion has been received that it could be deemed invalid and could be advisory only. A change of that magnitude would need to be a charter change. The Bylaw Committee should convene, but there will be limitations on what they can do. The Selectmen should be very judicious in filling its two slots on the Bylaw Review Committee. The members are appointed as follows: two members by the Moderator, two members by the Selectmen and the Town Clerk serves as the statutory member.

The Selectmen will review the documents received and discuss it more at the next meeting.

VI. Citizen's Comments/Input

Shelly Buma of 40 Heritage Drive had questions on the Executive Session topic of #3 Litigation and wanted to know who they are in litigation with and the subject of that litigation. Mr. Collins explained that they couldn't divulge that information until it is complete and that is why it is under Executive Session. Mr. Coughlin explained that the litigation is with the closeout of Northbridge High School and a mediation session has been scheduled.

Mr. Coughlin also commented on the complaint that was brought up regarding the Executive Session on Granite Hill. The District Attorney has ruled that the Selectmen have acted properly in convening that session.

Ms. Buma also wants to know what the status of the handicapped bathrooms/renovations is in the Town Hall. It is her understanding that under discussions at the Spring Annual Town Meeting that the renovations should be in process or completed at this point in time. Mr. Coughlin stated that the bid package has been advertised and the bids are due to be received or have been received. The concerns and potential fines that could be assessed by the Architectural Access Board (AAB) has a deadline of September 15, 2005. As a precautionary move, Mr. Coughlin appealed the AAB's order, requesting more time. The appeal does not question the decision. The proper engineering steps and the appropriate legal steps have been taken to protect the Town. The AAB has granted a waiver and no fines should be paid. The architect hired hopes to have the bathroom/renovations completed by the Holiday Season.

A discussion continued on Mr. Coughlin and the title of CEO of the Town. It was explained to Ms. Buma that Mr. Coughlin is the Chief Procurement Officer and is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the Town. The Selectmen are the policy-making body of the Town and, as such, are the CEO of the Town.

VII. Selectmen's Concerns

Mr. Davis has three concerns:

- 1) What is the status of the Playground and Recreation's request to take over the Bennet parcel of land? Has it been decided by the Selectmen? Mr. Coughlin is researching the matter with the Town Planner.
- 2) How are the consultants working out in the Accounting and Treasurer's Office? Mr. Coughlin will address that later in more detail, but they are working out well.
- 3) Has the conflict been reconciled between Neil Vaidya, the Acting Town Accountant, and the former Treasurer on the matter of the information that the Acting Town Accountant says has not been turned over? Mr. Coughlin stands by the representations made by the Acting Town Accountant. It is a personnel issue that is being dealt with. It concerns a former employee and certain representations are being bantered around and do not appear to be true. It should not be discussed in open session, as Mr. Coughlin is concerned with any potential litigation in the future and protecting the Town. Mr. Vaidya is working with the Acting Treasurer and is getting the information needed to move forward.

VIII. Town Manager's Report

G. FY'06 Budget Review

Mr. Coughlin made two announcements before getting into the budget review.

- 1) He has made two emergency appointments so the Town would not lose a step with Maureen Kemp as the Acting Town Treasurer and Laura Woeller as the Acting Collector. Mr. Coughlin noted that these are temporary positions and commended both Ms. Woeller and Ms. Kemp on the good job they are doing to work out any problems/issues so things move smoothly.
- 2) In response to the anonymous complaint sent to the District Attorney's Office, Jim Johnson, Director of Accounts, of the Department of Revenue (DOR) called stating that they received an anonymous complaint that the way we are going to set up the financial office in the interim was wrong. Mr. Coughlin explained the situation to Mr. Johnson and he whole-heartedly agreed with the way the matter is being handled. The Attorney General has stood by the Town's determinations. The Inspector General, Department of Housing and Community Development, Secretary of State on Public Records, and the District Attorney has stood by on public meeting law. The DOR is standing by us on the interim period.

The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan was asked to be looked into by Selectman Davis and Mr. Coughlin met with the department heads (Fire Chief, Police Lieutenant, DPW Director, and the Emergency Management Director). The plans were looked over and the Town is well prepared to deal with any emergency issues covered in the plan. It has a proven track record dealing with winter emergencies, fire emergencies, flooding emergencies, etc. Some areas will be fine-tuned. A grant for personal protective equipment has been awarded to the Town's Fire Department for \$220,000.

The actions of the Spring Annual Town Meeting (SATM) created a deficit of \$830,000. \$280,000 of snow and ice deficit was present even before the SATM. Mr. Coughlin implemented a spending and hiring freeze. He has a plan to close the deficit. The FY'07 challenge will be a revolutionary new effort.

The School Department will have a \$2,000,000 deficit. The Department of Education's analysis of Town spending of \$2,000,000 is above the foundation set by the state. It has been funded by School Choice and other one-time revenues. These monies are now declining. No plan has been made to address a permanent strategic plan to fund the revenues needed to sustain the investment. A report issued in October 2000 by the DOR reminded the School Department that the indirect costs associated with the schools can be deducted from the budget amount needed to be raised to its foundation spending. The past Superintendent never fully mapped out

these costs and capitalized on them, which amounts to just over \$4,000,000 for FY'05. School spending has been allowed to grow beyond state levels without a full public discussion on the long-term ramifications to the Town. The Town has never deducted these indirect costs, so the taxpayers have been investing far more money into the school system.

In the past, many checks and balances in the governmental budgetary process designed to protect the taxpayer and allowing the public to decide important spending decisions are missing from the budget debate. The decisions were made by a privileged few, Public Officials were excluded, and often citizenry was left out of the process.

The increase for FY'06 will be approximately \$900,000 to the school department and that includes step increases and educational benefits. 80% of the school budget is personnel and the current Superintendent cannot be faulted, as he was not involved in these negotiations. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) were excluded from the negotiations even though they had a right to be there. Why?

The ramifications go even further and under the former Town Manager, William Williams, the BOS tried to get a handle on the health insurance costs, which are a budget buster. Despite assurances of the former Superintendent, the BOS still had no seat at the School Department bargaining table when health insurance issues were brought before the union. Mr. Williams had success with the Fire Department and DPW union contracts.

The Board was never notified on Certain Real Estate matters and procurement issues, the Town Attorney was never consulted and a required request was never before the citizens at Town Meeting. Lawsuits were never disclosed to the Town's insurance carrier. Leases were entered into often on unfavorable terms to the taxpayers because these decisions were not made openly and properly. Some examples were given.

Mr. Coughlin offered the following steps to assure uniform procedures for all committees, departments, etc.

- 1) All members are to file full disclosures with the Town Clerk.
- 2) The initial test will be closing the present budgetary deficit. Mr. Soojian is new friend/person with an open mind that will help implement the new strategy. We must utilize our revenues and resources wisely. Superintendent Soojian is breaking new ground and offering Medicaid reimbursement, which was diverted for the benefit of a single department and never utilized town-wide before. Each year, Medicaid sends reimbursement for services rendered and already budgeted for our students of the system. The estimate for this year is about \$250,000. The DOR has ruled this general fund revenue available for any municipal purpose. Unfortunately, only \$186,000 can be listed on the sheet this year, as they need to use the previous year's figure on the sheet. This will help offset the school deficit.

Also, Bob Fitzgerald, Principal Assessor, aggressively pursued supplemental billings and the Town will recognize \$100,000 more in revenue in supplemental taxes for FY'05. To increase revenue and offset appropriation, we will also allocate a greater amount of parking ticket receipts and wetlands fees. The Finance Committee identified and suggested a revenue source at the Spring Town Meeting, but Mr. Coughlin was reluctant to use until further clarification was received from the DOR. The Finance Committee at the June meeting identified Ambulance Reserve Receipts to fund employee benefits. At the June Town Meeting, it was not acted on. Nothing written has been received yet, but the DOR has opined that use of this source is permissible and it will be included in the deficit reduction package. This goes a long way to fix the deficit, but there is still the matter of the \$281,000 snow and ice deficit and it will be in the tax recap sheet. Funds from the stabilization fund are proposed to fix this.

According to the Mass Municipal Association, free cash and the stabilization fund balance should be at least 5% of total revenue, the amount in the fund is approx. 1.9 million and after the transfer, the balance is nearly 5% of total revenue. Add to that what is expected in free cash and we are in adequate shape as to bonding. Due to turnover in the Accounting and Treasurer/Collector Offices, the DOR certification will not be in hand for the October FATM. A supplemental budget of free lottery aid for snow and ice assistance, if any, would not be in hand for October 25, 2005 to close the budget. The tax rate needs to be set, so the deficit must be acted on at that time and not postpone the Town Meeting. Over \$440,000 was turned back in January 2005 by budget reductions for free cash already. That amount will not figure into this year's free cash certification. Some additional aide for snow and ice may be available if the state aide is based on last year's extraordinary season. Any additional amount should be turned back into the stabilization fund to make up for amounts requested in October 2005. If additional aid is given, then it can be used for heating costs or to build up free cash for next year. Total revenues add up to 33,537,000 available to support FY06 budget.

At the June 7 meeting, \$33,721,000 was the budget, leaving gap of \$184,000, which needs to be addressed by budget cuts. Working as a team, the School Department has pledged an additional \$56,000 from school choice and tuition. The DOR lists \$186,000 rather than the \$250,000 listed at the School Committee presentation, so the \$56,000 will be used to close the budget gap. The Police budget has been reduced by \$54,000. The Finance Committee should also share in the effort by getting on board and reduce the reserve fund by \$50,000. It would pass the DOR as an emergency as the Building, Planning & Construction Committee maintained this amount for engineering assistance, but it would not constitute an emergency for rising fuel costs. Notice has been sent to every community in Massachusetts. A Special Town meeting would be held, if needed, to deal with those contingencies. Vacancies were created with the leaving of the Town Accountant and the retirement of the Treasurer/Collector, so a budget reduction in the Accounting Office with Neil Vaidya as Acting Town Account of \$20,000 has been realized and a budget reduction in the Treasurer/Collector's Office with Maureen Kemp as Acting Treasurer of \$10,000 has been realized. A reduction of \$7,500 of DPW has been realized with the leaving of a worker and the

elimination of Administrative Support for the Building, Planning and Construction Committee of \$34,000 for the fiscal year will reduce the FY'06 budget by \$17,000. The remaining \$17,000 will be used to restore a position in Town Manager's Office, which was not funded at SATM as recommended by the Finance Committee. The plan is to fill the position by January 1, 2005 and will start the process after the Fall Annual Town Meeting, if approved.

The budget reductions along with savings incurred by the spending/hiring freeze allows the town to support a cost-of-living adjustment for all town employees including much overlooked non-union personnel. The Selectmen are striving for across the board parity for all departments. Everyone will get the same increase totaling 33,535,000 compared to total revenues of 33,537,000. This is a significant reduction from the Spring Annual Town Meeting.

If any version of the health care cost legislation is passed, then the plan is to negotiate with all unions simultaneously with the hope of attaining savings. The plan is to allocate the \$280,000 requested from stabilization to balance the budget. The building blocks in place, the deficit will be closed in a responsible fashion, and the concerns for FY'07 need to be set out. The Town must look to future for answers with open, inclusive and ethical decision making with a commitment to proper policy and procedures.

Mr. Montecalvo commented that the biggest thing was to close the deficit and that seems to be in hand. Mr. Davis commented that he is not sure if it is in best interest to do all the unions together. The Town has worked hard to separate them, but he is willing to try it again. The plan is to keep separate union contracts, but have them expire simultaneously for better savings on some issues such as health care. Mr. Davis is also concerned with not having the DOR certification by October 25, 2005. Personnel turnover is the biggest problem and the Selectmen are trying to work out the issue, but this will not be addressed at this time. There will be no certification on that date, but once free cash is certified, then the accounts can be replenished as needed. Mr. Collins contacted the DOR and is getting a written confirmation that this is not a problem as other communities are going through the same thing and it is not a big deal. Mr. Davis asked when the certification can be expected. The new consultant is looking things over and will advise us on that when the review is complete. The amount will not be as robust as last year as some was turned back in January 2005. Mr. Coughlin should have a better guesstimate on when the certifications will be at the next meeting. Mr. Audette is glad to hear about the teamwork between departments. He also thinks a COLA is way overdue for non-union employees.

IX. Items For Future Agenda

Mr. Davis has items for a future agenda and will submit them in writing to the Town Manager and they are basically all the ongoing issues.

X. Executive Session

H. 1. Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #6 – Land Acquisition

H. 2. Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #3 – Litigation (Possible return to Open Session)

A motion made by Mr. Montecalvo and seconded by Mr. Ampagoomian to go into Executive Session at 8:20PM under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #6 (Land Acquisition) and under MGL Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation – N.H.S. Close Out) with a possible return to open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes; Mr. Davis/Yes; Mr. Montecalvo/ Yes; Mr. Audette/Yes; and Mr. Collins/Yes.

Open session adjourned at 8:14PM.

Executive Session convened 8:20 PM.

Executive Session adjourned at 9:18PM.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION:

A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to reconvene in open session at 9:21 PM. Vote yes/ Messrs. Audette, Davis, Montecalvo, Ampagoomian, and Collins.

A motion/Mr. Audette, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to authorize the Chairman and to accept the detention pond/basin settlement for the portion that was the detention basin at the Northbridge High School on Linwood Avenue. Vote yes/Messrs. Audette, Davis, Montecalvo, Ampagoomian, and Collins.

A motion/Mr. Audette, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to adjourn the meeting at 9:25PM. Vote yes/Messrs. Audette, Davis, Montecalvo, Ampagoomian, and Collins.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

bak/

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
October 3, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

I. Approval of Minutes

A.1. August 8, 2005

No additions or deletions. Motion made by Mr. Ampagoomian and seconded by Mr. Montecalvo. The Selectmen voted unanimously to approve the August 8, 2005 minutes.

A.2. August 22, 2005

No additions or deletions. Motion made by Mr. Ampagoomian and seconded by Mr. Audette. The Selectmen voted unanimously to approve the August 22, 2005 minutes.

II. Public Hearing

There are no Public Hearings for this meeting.

III. Appointments

There are no appointments for this meeting.

IV. Decisions

The Selectmen passed on the decisions item of the agenda.

V. Discussions

B. Fire Department Presentation

Mark Anderson of Heritage Design and Chief Gary Nestor of the Fire Department gave a presentation on the proposed new fire station. The building would be 20,000 square feet with a 10,000 square foot footprint on several parcels of land informally known as the West End School lot and adjoining property. This is near the present fire station. It would be six bays wide and two bays deep with drive through capability. The dispatch office and some day rooms would also be on the first floor. The second floor would house an administration training area. There are full service turn around areas and a large parking lot, which also can be used for visiting firefighters and for training or emergency purposes. There is a separate employee parking area. The lot(s) work well. The school lot is about one acre and an additional acre of Arcade Realty land is needed for this project. There is some land that would be a field and could be used for training and also used by the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Chief Nestor stated that this site was studied about four years ago and this is the second best location that they came up with under the study. Chief Nestor has approved the design.

Mr. Audette wanted to know if Mr. Anderson thinks there will be a need for lights at the intersection of Main Street. Mr. Anderson has not looked at that closely yet, but that is one of the next things that they are doing. Mr. Audette also wanted to know if they thought about what kind of building they would put there yet? Mr. Anderson stated that has not come up in discussion yet. The sight visibility is great coming onto Main Street. Also if you're traveling on Main Street, you have great visibility to see the approaching building/fire facility.

Mr. Davis had a question regarding the square footage. In Maguire Group's report, it stated 41,000 square feet. How does that compare to the proposed 20,000 square feet? The Building, Planning & Construction Committee (BP & C) has not reviewed any of this yet and it will be addressed then. A written request has been received by the BP & C suggesting that they be involved in this phase of the design as they have already done a preliminary study and have ideas of the size of the fire station and want to make sure that the footprint will fit properly on the lot.

Mr. Coughlin explained that what they are negotiating in the Executive Sessions is the donation of a piece of land from Arcade Realty Trust to fit the future needs of the Town for a fire station. Heritage Design is only demonstrating that the land has the potential for a fire station at this point. The BP & C will get involved once construction is authorized. They do not want to be involved before. The BP & C Committee needs to be reformed to operate under the bylaw. This will clarify their roles, as they do not have clarity now.

Mr. Montecalvo wants to know the linear feet (depth and width) of the whole project. Mr. Anderson stated that it is almost 300 feet by 300 feet (just shy of two acres). Mr. Montecalvo wanted to know what the next step is. Mr. Anderson stated the Chief and he will look at it again in more detail and there will be some minor changes made. Site distances and traffic will be looked at in more detail and it will then be brought before the Board of Selectmen again. Arcade Realty Trust is amenable to the project and thinks it's a wonderful idea. He does not mind giving up the land past the West End School Property for this project.

C. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is here to respond to the manager's budget review presented at the last meeting. They are committed to working with the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to close the budget deficit. The Finance Committee feels that it is being harassed on ethical questions and Ms. Powers cited a few examples. An independent investigation was conducted and a report was submitted to the Ethics Commission for some possible action. The Finance Committee received a written response and they found no fault on any part of the Treasurer/Collector, Joyce Morin, or herself. Language was included that in the future if a similar situation arises, then a disclosure should be filed to protect oneself. Ms. Powers continues to receive correspondence addressed to herself, the Finance Committee, and in some instances State Agencies. This correspondence states that the Ethics Commission found fault and has issued a warning. At some point, this needs to stop so everyone can move on.

On September 15, 2005, a letter went to Harold Gould suggesting that he speak to Finance Committee members about disclosures of personal involvement in nonprofits. A letter was sent to the Finance Committee on September 26, 2005 suggesting that every member file a disclosure on past matters. That is not what the law states and it needs to stop, per Ms. Powers. Disclosures are for current matters that you may be involved in that you may have a conflict. Ms. Powers received a letter in which Mr. Coughlin referenced to the appointing authority the necessity for her to disclose any connection or interaction with she might have with certain nonprofits. She wanted to know what it would ever have to do with her serving on the Finance Committee? In a letter dated September 29, 2005 she received a letter that she believes was an attempt to implicate her in a negotiated lease agreement between the School Department and her place of worship. She believes that is sacred ground and no one has the right to intrude there. The Finance Committee has nothing to do with any department's expenditure of money. It is time to clear the slate and move ahead.

Per Mr. Coughlin, the cornerstone of going forward is adherence to ethical standards and ethical disclosures. It is clear in the Ethics Committee letter that the Finance Committee has some degree of influence over the Town's budgets and some parts of that budget you may have a personal interest in, so it needs to be disclosed. In the information materials, a general rule of thumb is that a member of the Finance Committee should not hold any other office in the Community. A disclosure would clarify any issue. For example, the previous week, the Housing Authority of which Ms. Powers is a member, had an issue with the Planning Board. She has influence over the Planning Board's budget and she has influence over the Town Planner's salary. A disclosure is needed to point out any personal connections to matters that you may have influence over so everyone can move forward. All budgets pass through the Finance Committee, so disclosures need to be made to protect the Town in order to know what the interests are.

Connie Valois stated that under the charter, financial information must be submitted immediately upon request to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee has issues with the fact that the budget information was two months late for two years in a row and the books will not be closed on time. Also, the warrant closed on September 9, 2005 and they did not receive the articles until September 28, 2005. As the articles are submitted, they should be forwarded to the Finance Committee and the Town Moderator, per Ms. Valois.

Sal D'Amato read a letter he sent to the Ethics Commission and is waiting for their written response before filing his disclosure with the Town Clerk. He wants to set up a meeting with Mr. Coughlin to discuss the disclosure so he can understand why he needs file one.

He then passed out some pages on the Medicaid services from the past few years. He gave brief history of how the Medicaid services with reimbursement from the State has worked in the past. He then discussed the past few years from the pages handed out and pointed out that the School Department has given back almost every year to the Town budget. To say that they have not is unfair. Mr. D'Amato then commented that he is glad that Mr. Soojian is able to give back the amount stated at the last meeting to help balance the budget.

He then went onto his next issue with the statement made that the school budget is operating \$2,000,000 over the school's spending. He provided a Schedule 19 that is filed every year with the Department of Education (DOE) that allows fixed costs to be added to the formula so that the Town meets the school spending requirements. They are not costs that help educate the children in the School Department. The reason that the school costs have risen is that there are 900 more students in four new developments. He cannot be held responsible for this. The fixed costs will rise with new students and the fixed costs are not part of the operational budget. He appreciates that the Town contributed an additional \$4,000,000 to total fixed costs so they can meet their Chapter 70 requirements for reimbursement.

Jim Baron gave a brief summary of what was already discussed above. The State has established a minimum that is to be spent on education. A quality education system is the key to any community's future and a failure to invest in education is a guarantee of failure to succeed. They need all the information available to make the best recommendations possible, which is hopefully more than the minimum for education. He wondered why the School Department, as a team player, was not asked in the past to open their coffers and give back. The answer is that the school money was not to be touched, as it would directly impact the students. The winds have now changed and the leaders are now saying we spend too much on education.

Jim Ouellet then spoke about postponing the FATM to a later date so that the free cash will have been certified and a clearer picture of the Town's finances can be presented to the community before they are asked to vote on the Town budget. Hopefully, after this Town Meeting, everyone can begin working on a capital budget.

Walter Drew then wanted to address a comment made by the Town Manager that stated as a consequence of the recommendations of the Finance Committee, the Town Meeting passed an unbalanced budget with a deficit of \$830,000 at the June Town Meeting and that a large part of the source of the deficit was because the Finance Committee recommended not to deal with the FY'05 snow and ice deficit. The Finance Committee went through the budget line-by-line and the floor passed it unanimously. Mr. Coughlin told Mr. Drew, prior to the meeting, that he fully supports that budget. The Finance Committee only makes recommendations and Mr. Coughlin is responsible for the financial matters. Mr. Drew then commented on the amount of time taken to review the budget of the Town Offices versus the School Department. The issue was the clarity of the budget. Information was cut and pasted from the prior year's budget and the items did not line up so it was difficult to decipher what was needed to be in the budget and what did not.

Andrew Todd mentioned a concern of the Finance Committee is the October 25, 2005 date for the Fall Annual Town Meeting (FATM). There is too little time for the Committee to review the budget, prepare a written statement and have it sent by mail, as it would need to be done by this Friday, October 7, 2005. The Finance Committee also does not have the figures to do so. The Town books have not been closed, critical financial data has not been provided to them, the warrant articles were presented to the Finance Committee 19 days delinquent, so they are requesting a delay of the FATM until the critical information has been received and the Finance Committee can make recommendations to the residents of the Town.

The discussion continued back and forth between the Finance Committee and the BOS. The BOS wanted to discuss the proposed budget to close the deficit and the Finance Committee did not want to review or comment on it until they know what the certified free cash amount is. Mr. Audette then stated that this letter writing, newspaper releases, etc. on both sides needs to stop now. He then commented that if the Town Manager is persistent and feels that the disclosures are needed, then they should just be provided. Mr. Audette went on to state that if you feel personally that you don't have to disclose it, keep in mind that in the end if something happens to the Town, everyone will pay, then don't disclose it. The Town Manager will only give his opinion on what needs to be disclosed, the rest is up to the Committee members.

Motion made by Mr. Audette to postpone the October 25, 2005 FATM until free cash is certified and the Finance Committee has all the figures they need to proceed at the FATM. Motion was seconded by Mr. Davis. Discussion continued on the budget and the shortfall as well as whether or not to postpone the FATM. The biggest impact to postponing the FATM is that the Assessor's Office will not be able to set the tax rate, so the tax bills will go out late. Mr. Coughlin reiterated that the free cash amount will be negligible and will not be a major player in balancing the budget. When free cash is certified, it can then be retained to offset next year's snow and ice or it could be put back in the stabilization fund as well as any supplemental aid given to us from the State. That would make up for part or all of the money that will be used to balance the budget now. No vote was taken after the discussion.

Ms. Powers wanted to add that last November an issue of concern was Chapter 90 money. FY'04 shows some \$400,000 plus in the minus column indicating that the invoicing was not done yet at the close of the fiscal year. The DPW stated that all invoicing had been done for FY'04, which means it should have been a receivable instead of a payable. Ms. Powers stated that it will need to be looked into. The Finance Committee has heard nothing. It was not used in any calculations for last year. The Finance Committee would like this resolved so that they know the actual financial figures before making any decisions. Was all Chapter 90 money for FY'05 submitted and are we carrying it appropriately? These need to be answered as they impact the revenue for FY'06. There is a bond issue on the warrant that means if the residents do not have the booklet in their hands seven days prior to the Town Meeting, Palmer & Dodge, the bond counsel, will not let us go forward if the article passes and not every requirement of the bylaws have been met. The Finance Committee will provide a list to the BOS on what they need to move forward.

Motion amended by Mr. Audette to postpone the October 25, 2005 Town meeting to November 15, 2005. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Davis. The Selectmen voted 4-1 with Mr. Montecalvo opposed.

Mr. D'Amato suggested that going forward for FY'07 that both the Selectmen and the Finance Committee meet jointly using zero based budget approach for the entire municipal budget including the School Department. Discussion continued back and forth on whether or not to use this method.

Mr. Davis requested a joint report from the Town Manager and the Chair of the Finance Committee for the BOS meeting of October 24, 2005 on the status of where the Town Meeting lies.

VI. Citizens' Comments/Input

Ken Warchol stated that the Northbridge Historical Commission, requested the Town Hall for the "Footsteps in History" Program. The National Heritage Corridor Commission has their heritage homecoming each year at this time and has asked each town to do something for the "Footsteps in History" Program. The program for

Northbridge will be a tour of some of the historical sites in the historical district and they would like to include the Town Hall. It would be on Saturday, October 8, 2005, from 11:00AM to 3:00PM with tours of Fletcher House, the little brick mill, Town Hall, Community Center, Library, and Memorial Square. Mr. Warchol and another member of the Historical Commission will be at the Town Hall for the tour of that building. A historical/architectural type of narration will be presented along with the walking tour brochures.

Carroll Paine, Chairman of the School Committee, read a statement concerning the comments made by the Town Manager at last week's meeting. He would like to correct the public record regarding comments on the last round of negotiations with the School Committee and the Teacher's Association. The inaccuracies are: 1) the Selectmen and the Town Manager were not given input in the last round of negotiations; Mr. Paine can attest that this was not the case. Two meetings were held with the Selectmen and the Finance Committee prior to start of the negotiations to discuss Town priorities for the pending negotiations and strategies to reach these goals. The meetings were posted. Executive Session minutes of the School Committee of October 8, 2002 and November 12, 2002 demonstrate clearly that Mr. O'Donnell brought forth the Town Manager's desire on behalf of the Selectmen to gain increases in the teachers' contributions to health insurance. The push on these health insurance issues resulted in an impasse, which resulted in a long mediation and the teachers working without a contract for a number of months. The municipal side of the Town is entitled under the law to have a representative attend School Committee meetings and discussions when negotiations of contracts are taking place, as well as a vote with the School Committee on ratification of the contract proposal. This opportunity was afforded the Town under Executive Session on March 9, 2004 and Mr. Coughlin was present and voted in the affirmative. Mr. Paine appreciated the comments on the cooperation of the School Committee and the Selectmen that now exist.

Paul Buma, 218 Hill Street, was here about a year ago and spoke about the failure of the Town to close the books and get them into the Department of Revenue (DOR) on time at that time. He was not aware of the Finance Committee being there tonight and hopes his comments are timely. He read that the reason the Town books were not turned over to the DOR by September 15, 2005 and we also missed the 15-day grace period was due to the turnover of key personnel (primarily the leaving of the Treasurer/Collector). The Treasurer/Collector tendered her resignation in December 2004 (almost 10 months ago). Her last day was to be June 30, 2005 (6 months notice) with no action taken in preparation of this upcoming event, no job posting and no plan submitted to the Board of Selectmen. At the end of June 2005, the Town Manager requested she stay on another two to three months, to which she agreed. There was still no plan for her replacement. Here is a case of no process at all. Mr. Coughlin went on vacation September 3, 2005 to September 12, 2005. When he left, there were eight business days left until the filing due date with only two days left upon his return. The Treasurer/Collector left on September 6, 2005, which is eight days before the filing due date. As CFO, the Town Manager is responsible to make sure all work is on schedule for it to be sent on September 14, 2005 for arrival on the September 15, 2005 (due date). Mr. Buma was then told it will take at least six weeks to complete the work that should have been done in eight days. It is clear we would have never been able to file on September 15, 2005. The Town is again spending and one can only guess at the cost, on a consultant. The whole process is clearly a case of gross financial mismanagement on both the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen (BOS). The taxpayers of this town deserve better. Too often the blame game is being played and it must not happen this time. The Townspeople can only surmise that financial crisis management process is in use. Mr. Buma calls upon the BOS to make a full investigation and find the true reasons for this management and make a report to the taxpayers. Open government demands that action and he asks that a member of the BOS make that motion now so that this process does not repeat itself. The taxpayers need to understand why and how the process failed.

Shelly Buma, 40 Heritage Drive, was present three weeks ago and the BOS stated that they would be reviewing the performance of the Town Manager at their first meeting in November 2005. According to the calendar, that will be November 7, 2005 and she wanted to know if that is still the intention of the BOS. Mr. Collins stated yes. In advance of that review, she would like the BOS to consider three major points:

- 1) The financial mismanagement under Mr. Coughlin. Specifically, since he's been here, free cash has declined 85% and the stabilization fund has declined 46%. Before Mr. Coughlin, the Town had no deficit and is struggling with an \$800,000+ deficit now.
- 2) The 14 apparent violations of the town charter, town bylaw and other violations on Mr. Coughlin's watch. Specifically, his failure to close the books on time two years in a row, failure to submit the budget on time to the Finance Committee, failure to submit a capital improvement plan two years in a row, failure to submit the warrant articles on time to the Finance Committee, and failure to submit financial information to the Finance Committee forthwith requiring the Finance Committee to appeal to the Secretary of State's office for those numbers. Ms. Buma has month-by-month documentation on the violations.
- 3) Lastly, consider for the review the apparent untruth that he told the Town Manager Search Committee during his interview. When asked if he was in litigation with his former employer, Town of Southbridge, he stated he was not. He then went on to make the same untruth ...

At this time, Mr. Collins interrupted Ms. Buma and asked her to stop. Mr. Collins does not want to go into anything with the Town of Southbridge. Mr. Collins will take any paper she wants to give him, but he wants to move on. Mr. Collins stated that every week she comes and states something negative about the Town Manager or himself. The Citizen's Forum is based on the concept of bringing forth something new and/or you have a question that you want handled. Ms. Buma tried to continue on the same topic and Mr. Collins stopped her and told her he will look into Mr. Coughlin's contract and that it is time to move on. Ms. Buma passed out some documents to the Selectmen.*

VII. Selectmen's Concerns

Mr. Audette asked Mr. Coughlin to get whatever numbers and/or line items the Finance Committee needs to them so we can move forward. Mr. Audette then asked if it was true that Mr. Coughlin's evaluation should have been done in June 2005. The answer is yes, that is when it is usually done, but Mr. Collins asked if it could be postponed until November 2005 because there are two new Selectmen and it would not have been fair to them to conduct it in June 2005.

VIII. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Coughlin asked each of the department heads to provide responses on the eight or so issues that were brought up at the last meeting either under Selectmen's Concerns or Town Manager's Report (not sure which). Mr. Coughlin then passed out these written responses to the Selectmen and stated that these responses should provide all of the information that was originally requested. One of the responses will be updated in Executive Session and Mr. Coughlin is still working on the Town Common policy.

Mr. Coughlin believes that the cornerstone to good government is ethical decision-making and adherence to the high standards and is glad that some of the issues were aired tonight. These issues will allow a framework for discussion. There are many positive things with respect to the way we've done business in the past. One department head has been the epitome of doing things right, doing things proper, adhering to the highest standards, integrity second to none and has announced his retirement, the Police Chief Tom Melia. Mr. Coughlin praised Chief Melia for the fine work he has done for the Town. The process of replacing Chief Melia has begun. Mr. Coughlin has requested from civil service a certified examination list with the respect to selecting the next Chief of Police for the Town of Northbridge. Once the list is received, Mr. Coughlin will assemble an interview panel of three distinguished law enforcement Chief Officers and hopefully a high-ranking State Police Officer to convene an interview of those candidates on the list. He will be asking candidates to submit extremely detailed plans on their vision for the future of the Northbridge Police Department and particularly some other things that will be part of the discussion at meetings such as budget matters, personnel, and strategies with respect to collective bargaining. Selecting a new chief is a high responsibility and we will do this right to make sure there is a smooth transition when Chief Melia retires on January 7, 2006.

Since the meeting where Mr. Sasseville went over the new abatement policy, Mr. Coughlin has requested that citizens aggrieved with the abatement policy submit letters. Once all letters are received, then they will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The cut off date is October 25, 2005 and then he will start to review them and then announce our policies with respect to dealing with those individual requests. The policy could be reinvestigated as the Selectmen are the Water and Sewer Commissioners and they delegated to Mr. Coughlin to deal with the letters that are sent in. He has about 20 of them now and they are trickling in. Once Mr. Coughlin has reviewed all letters, he will update the BOS at that time.

IX. Items For Future Agenda

Mr. Davis would like to put on a future agenda a discussion on the policy of late payments of the water/sewer bills. Also, he would like to see fairly soon the appointment to the bylaw review committee and if no one comes forward to serve, Mr. Davis would be interested in serving on that committee. A discussion on the release of Executive Session minutes should also be on a future agenda.

X. Correspondence

No correspondence to be discussed at this time.

XI. Executive Session

1. Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #3 – Litigation (NHS)

2. Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #3 – Litigation (Listerud vs. Town)

A motion/Mr. Davis seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to go into Executive Session under MGL Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation – N.H.S. Close Out) and M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation – Listerud vs. Town) with a possible return to open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes; Mr. Davis/Yes; Mr. Montecalvo/ Yes; Mr. Audette/Yes; and Mr. Collins/Yes.

Open Session Adjourned: 9:13PM.

Executive Session Convened: 9:18PM.

Executive Session Adjourned: 9:50PM.

The Selectmen will not return to open session.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

Bak

***At their meeting of November 7, 2005, the BOS voted to amend the minutes as suggested by Selectman Davis by adding the following comments from Chairman Russ Collins: "Stop. Stop. Stop. Stop. I'm not going to recognize you ever again if you don't stop. Okay. That is none of our business at this point. It is none of our business at this point. I'm not going to let you give. I am not going to let you give a**

dissertation about what your opinion is. If that is in his contract. If that is in his contract, I will look at it. Stop or I'm going to have you removed. I will have the Chief send someone down and have you removed. I'm not going to allow this to go on any longer. I will look into the things that you brought forward. I will look into that and see if that is true and then we'll deal with it. We're done. We're done. We are done."

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
October 24, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:03PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Audette, and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

I. Approval of Minutes

A.1) September 12, 2005

No additions or corrections. Motion to approve made by Mr. Ampagoomian and seconded by Mr. Audette. The Selectmen voted unanimously to approve the September 12, 2005 minutes.

A.2) September 26, 2005

No additions or corrections. Motion to approve made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Montecalvo. The Selectmen voted unanimously to approve the September 26, 2005 minutes.

II. Public Hearing

There were no public hearings to be heard at this meeting.

III. Appointments

B.1) Playground & Recreation (2 vacancies):

a. Bruce Frieswick

The Selectmen have his information packet. Mr. Frieswick gave a brief summary of himself.

b. Michael R. Wytenus

The Selectmen have his information packet. Mr. Wytenus gave a brief summary of himself.

Mr. Ampagoomian thanked them both for coming forward. He asked the both of them what kind of funding do they see going after outside of the Town monies. Mr. Frieswick answered that he sees maybe some donations from businesses, grants and some turning back of money from the programs since they are using the Town fields. Lots of avenues could be explored. It is the plan that needs to be put together first, then the people need to be brought in with ideas on how to get things done. The issue of funding should not be the first concern.

Mr. Wytenus agrees with Mr. Frieswick that the plan must be in place first as it would be very tough to get the funding on something that does not really exist yet. There are several sports programs in Town that are self funded by collecting fees throughout the year and there are usually funds available for any additional expenses that the program feels it needs. Opportunities exist with using that money to compliment the Town money across the board. Better communication between the programs is needed so that savings can be realized.

Mr. Frieswick made a statement that the Department of Public Works has supported his needs at the Balmer School and they are great at keeping the fields mowed and raked.

Mr. Montecalvo wanted to know if Mr. Frieswick has a conflict with the Playground & Recreation Commission. Mr. Frieswick answered that he does not. There may have been something said in the past that was misconstrued, but he has apologized for that. He handles the Joe LaFleur Baseball League (13 - 19 years old), but does not have a conflict with that because the only connection they have with the Playground and Recreation Commission is asking for their permission to use certain fields.

Mr. Montecalvo made a motion and it was seconded by Mr. Audette. The Selectmen voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Wytenus and Mr. Frieswick to the Playground and Recreation Commission.

B.2) Bylaw Review Committee (2 vacancies)

a. Todd Buckley

Mr. Buckley gave a brief history of himself.

b. Paul Murray

Mr. Murray gave a brief history of himself.

c. Barbara Gaudette

Ms. Gaudette gave a brief history of herself.

d. Timothy Boucher

Mr. Boucher gave a brief history of himself.

e. Kathleen Michniewicz

Ms. Michniewicz gave a brief history of herself.

Mr. Montecalvo wanted to know if there was any bylaw(s) that stuck out to each of them that need(s) to be changed, improved, etc. Mr. Buckley started out by saying that since he did review the bylaws before coming here, the one that stood out to him was Chapter 7, regulation of use of private property with regards to business that could do biotech/biomedical type research. That kind of research is happening in this area. The bylaw might be a bit dated and probably should be expanded upon. Research is needed into what the current guidance the

National Institute of Health (NIH) is giving. Some other general things are defining the interrelationships between Boards and Committees with specific language. Mr. Boucher stated that as the Town grows, the one thing that strikes him is the need to change the bylaw so that residents who are being affected by the projects have other Boards/Committees to go to and voice their opinions and have a say other than just the Planning Board, which does the initial screening of the project. There are also other things that will come up during the growth of the Town that will need to be made into bylaws. Ms. Gaudette stated that one of the things that caused problems is the inconsistencies and conflicts between what one Committee/Board requires and what another one requires. There are still references to Road Commissioners, which is kind of bizarre, as it does not exist. She also agrees that biotech does need to be addressed. Also, an outline of what needs to be done in the future should be included in this review. Mr. Murray stated that he thinks the interrelationships between Committees and Boards is the main thing to address, but all the bylaws should be looked at closely. Ms. Michniewicz said the last time she was on the Committee they read each bylaw and made changes in the language. This time she feels that changes need to be made to reflect the growth in the community.

Mr. Ampagoomian wanted to know that as a member of the bylaw review committee would you accept input from citizens, other boards and commissions, etc.? Ms. Gaudette stated absolutely. Ms. Michniewicz said she always listens to the public. Mr. Buckley would like to take it one step further and solicit responses. Ms. Gaudette agrees that it is essential to get the input because you may look at it from one perspective and if that is not the broad perspective and/or the perspective of the particular group that it concerns, then you will miss something and get it wrong, so what would be the point. Mr. Boucher agreed and there are two sides to every story and you may hear a complaint, but you need to get input from the people who deal with it every day and they may have an idea to facilitate the bylaw being made. Mr. Murray stated that it would be foolish not to consult with the people that actually do the work. Mr. Boucher stated that the Bylaw Review Committee is not there to micromanage. It is there to find out what exactly is going to work.

Mr. Ampagoomian asked Ms. Gaudette about the master plan and when is it due to be updated. She replied that it was due to be updated in 2004. It was done last in 1994 and it is good for 10 years. They have the open space plan that was done in 2002 and they were given a date of 2006 before it needs to be updated again. Ms. Gaudette is frustrated that the work has not been done. It is very difficult to do in-house, but it perhaps might be easier to do once it has been done in-house. The problem lies in getting a group of people to give that kind of commitment. Mr. Ampagoomian then asked if Ms. Gaudette would be interested in working on that committee. Ms. Gaudette then stated that she would be willing to contribute to that committee as she has a lot of the groundwork such as computer files that could be updated. The open space work took Ms. Gaudette a whole year of computer work and getting the information from the State.

Mr. Collins then stated they are a great group of people, but unfortunately there are only two slots to be filled. For anyone not appointed, Mr. Collins will send their information over to the Town Moderator as there are several positions that need to be filled over there. He then asked for nominations: Mr. Montecalvo nominated Mr. Boucher and was seconded by Mr. Davis. Mr. Davis nominated Mr. Buckley and was seconded by Mr. Ampagoomian. Mr. Audette nominated Mr. Murray and was seconded by Mr. Ampagoomian. Mr. Collins then took them on a voice vote: Mr. Boucher, the vote was 4-1 with Mr. Davis voting nay; Mr. Buckley, the vote was 1-4 with Mr. Davis voting in the affirmative; Mr. Murray, the vote was 5-0. The nominations are Mr. Boucher and Mr. Murray.

Announcement: under Discussions after D.1, the Finance Committee will be penciled in as they requested to be put on the agenda but the request was not received in time to be put formally on the agenda.

IV. Decisions

C.1) Szerlag Property: Confirmatory release of lien and waiver or right of first refusal

Mr. Timothy Wickstrom, 246 Hill Street, was present representing Martin Szerlag and Frank Szerlag. Prior to the meeting, a letter was sent to Mr. Coughlin outlining the case. The request tonight is for the Selectmen to sign a confirmatory waiver of a right of first refusal that has already been signed. It is purely a ministerial act. The title company representing the buyer of some lots that were retained by the Szerlags requested this information and he is asking for this confirmatory waiver. Mr. Collins clarified that this is still on the eastern side that was voted on at the Town meeting in the past. Motion made by Mr. Collins and seconded by Mr. Montecalvo to approve the signing of the document. Mr. Montecalvo had a question on if they were the lots near the house and they are. Mr. Wickstrom clarified that the western side will be maintained as the farm and that on the eastern side there were certain lots that were approved for the subdivision but were retained by the Szerlags as part of the deal for the children. Mr. Collins then explained that the lots about Hill Street on the right side if you are heading towards Grafton. Mr. Montecalvo did not understand why they needed to sign again and Mr. Wickstrom explained that there are four lots that the Szerlags retained the option to buy within a certain period of time. Those options have been exercised, the title company is looking at the title to the property, and they want some confirmatory language in the waiver so that any potential title issue would be clarified.

Barbara Gaudette made a comment that part of that eastern side is to remain open space and she suggested that the Selectmen look at a plan to make sure they know exactly where these lots lie and that the open space is still there. Mr. Wickstrom assured everyone that the plan has not changed and that the original waiver has already been signed. The motion is on the floor and the Selectmen voted all in favor to sign the waiver.

C.2) Town Common: Girl Scouts requesting use of common on November 11, 2005 from 9:45AM to 11:00AM
Mr. Collins read the notice and it explained that the Girl Scouts would like to use the common for a flag ceremony and then move along Church Street with signs alerting citizens to the special day. Mr. Audette believes that there may be a change to the program as the Trustees of the Soldier's Memorial are rededicating the War

Memorials and are trying to combine this service with the Girl Scouts on the following day November 12, 2005. Mr. Montecalvo made a motion to pass on this until the dates are straightened out. Mr. Collins moved it to the November 7, 2005 agenda. Mr. Davis wanted to know if they could also have the policy regarding the vehicles on the common for this meeting. Mr. Collins said yes.

V. Discussions

D.1) Flood Recovery Efforts

Mr. Coughlin wanted to bring the department heads of the recovery effort before the Board to brief them on the response to the flood that occurred on October 15, 2005 and the ongoing recovery efforts. Those that have been part of the effort are truly amazing with their true can-do attitude. They have ventured onto new ground and thrown away the rulebook in trying to get a speedy recovery. Those efforts are ongoing.

Chief Melia then gave a brief summary of the role the police played in this effort as they were the first on the scene. Commendation letters were issued to Patrolman Stephen Buma for his rescue efforts on Gendron Street and also to Patrolman Dan Lamoreaux for his arrest of the breaking/entering suspect at Village Variety on D Street. The total cost of the storm in overtime at the Police Station is approximately \$7,000 and the damage to the roof is still incomplete. Chief Melia then commended everyone who helped out in the flood recovery efforts including the police, fire, and DPW to name a few.

Chief Nestor gave a summary of how the fire department contributed to the recovery efforts. They were many calls to pump out cellars, gas leaks, etc. Fire personnel went door-to-door on Saturday morning around 6:00AM, October 15, 2005, on the east side of Providence Road in Rockdale asking residents to move their vehicles because of the flooding. All available fire personnel were called in on Saturday in help in the recovery efforts. The surrounding towns were put on stand-by as parts of Northbridge were cut off from the Northbridge emergency personnel/equipment. Upton was called upon to respond to the call with cars in the Blackstone River at Church Street Extension. Chief Nestor then commended everyone on their help with the recovery efforts.

Deputy Steve Dupre then gave a brief summary of the recovery efforts from Sunday, October 16, 2005 through Friday, October 21, 2005 because Chief Nestor was on vacation. He also thanked all the departments for their efforts in the recovery. The costs associated with the Fire Department for this effort is: personnel \$9,198; fuel 268 gallons costing \$769 after adjustments; total \$9,967. Mr. Coughlin stated that there are additional costs that are recoupable such as detailing of cruisers that were contaminated, damage to the ladder truck, and damage to a DPW truck that could not lift its load when filling in a pothole.

Mr. Davis then asked about the roof leak and wanted to know if there was any interior damage and if the roof could wait until spring if needed. Chief Melia responded that some ceiling tiles were damaged and a small amount of other damage is inside, but no one has been on the roof yet. He had hoped to have the roof done before winter, but he hopes it can wait to spring if needed. Mr. Coughlin then stated that they are awaiting a federal decision that it is a disaster, and if so, we can recoup certain costs including manpower, equipment and damage to any public facility in addition to the businesses that are involved. Mr. Coughlin asked that any damages to the police station and the middle school be documented, as those emergency costs could be recoupable.

Mr. Coughlin stated that per the Governor's Office, if President Bush does not declare any federal assistance, then the State would do a supplemental budget on storm related damages. The State Legislature appropriated \$25,000,000 to house Hurricane Katrina victims in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and only a portion of that money has been used. The rest will be cut loose in the supplemental aid package, which is designed to recoup all sorts of municipal loss. There was a discussion on how the money would go from the State to the individual budgets in the Town. Mr. Davis then asked if the Fire Department roof leaked and could it wait until spring for repairs. Chief Nestor answered that it did leak minimally and it can wait until spring. The major concern is the Rockdale Fire Station that had three to four feet of water in the basement. Everything in the basement had to be thrown out. The Town's consultant advised the town about four years ago that a major flood in that area could damage the structural soundness of that station. Chief Nestor commented that he is comfortable that the structure of the station is sound at this time.

Arthur Magowan gave a summary of what the DPW (highway) did to handle the events as they took place during the flood and the recovery afterwards. Mr. Magowan does not have a breakdown and total costs yet, as there are still items that they are addressing such as broken drainage pipes, Upton Street needs work, etc.

James Madigan reported on the events that the DPW (sewer) handled during this flood and the recovery period. By manning the plant around the clock once the water started rising, they were able to keep the plant running within permit the whole time by monitoring and manipulating valves. They even had to keep starting the pumps as they kept shutting down because they were working at their maximum. The Whitinsville interceptor performed magnificently. There is no way to tell if the Rockdale interceptor had any leaks as it was under water most of the time. They assisted the fire department in pumping out cellars as they have the larger pumps. The costs are estimated at \$60,000 to repair the pipe under the Sutton Street Bridge, \$2,000 per week to run the pumps to bypass this area until it is fixed, and \$160 for an arrow board per week. Not all the costs are in yet, but he knows he spent at least \$5,000 on overtime for the weekend.

Mr. Sasseville showed a graph from the USGS website that shows the river at the height of the flood at the Sutton Street Bridge. He then gave a brief explanation of it. The Blackstone River rose seven and a half feet in less than 12 hours.

Richard West gave a brief summary of that department's role and they put in for a State of Emergency at 7:00AM Saturday morning, October 15, 2005. They helped with the evacuations and worked with the Red Cross to find people housing. They are still working with the Red Cross as there are many people with damages from the flood. They also contacted the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) and toured the flood area with representatives from the State House and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Association (MEMA). Mr. Sullivan of MEMA praised the local MEMA officials as they came through with flying colors during first 18 hours that they were left alone and that can happen in any emergency. Since the Red Cross would not be able to make it here for the first 24 hours, local church groups pitched in and provided food, blankets, etc. Donna Rose and another representative of the Red Cross came down and sought out local businesses to provide pizza, shampoo, toothpaste, etc. for the evacuees.

Mr. Coughlin passed out letters to the Selectmen that the Governor and the Congressional Delegation sent to the President along with the Town's own letters. The Town has been very proactive with the State and Federal governments to make sure we are not overlooked. Mr. Coughlin offered the Small Business Association the use of the Town Hall free of charge to process individual applications to the businesses affected by the flood. Mr. Coughlin contacted Jen Dulmaine of our local Community Development Office with regards to the CDAG grant. If no federal aid comes through, then they will need to refocus this housing rehab grant and other funds. She is already doing the research on how this can be accomplished if needed. A special task force headed by Lt. Warchol and including the Town Accountant has been formed to make sure MEMA and FEMA have all the numbers and information they need to process the forms. Anyone affected by the flood should contact the Town Manager's Office to begin the process. Mr. Coughlin praised the people involved in the emergency for their quick response.

Mr. Audette then commented on how amazing it is that everyone pulled together and addressed the immediate concerns of the residents that were affected by the flood. He then thanked the department heads and asked that they thank their departments for all the work they did during the crisis.

Mr. Montecalvo commended the department heads too. Mr. Ampagoomian commended them too and also the unsung heroes that offered food and beverages to the police and firefighters while they were working the long hours to address the flood and the recovery. Mr. Davis thanked everyone too and wanted to know if the propane tanks were ever found. It is unclear if they were.

Mr. Collins stated that he spoke to the Governor's Office and they are not going to let this go and will keep it in the forefront until relief is received.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee thanked all of them for doing a job extremely well. Ms. Powers stated that they were before the Board of Selectmen (BOS) on October 3, 2005 and expressed a need for more information before they could make any recommendations on the articles on the warrant. They submitted a list of what was needed on October 4, 2005. On October 14, 2005 when they still had no additional information, Ms. Powers emailed the Town Manager and reminded him that they needed the information and added a couple more questions to it. Mr. Coughlin responded that he and others would be at the Finance Committee meeting of October 19, 2005 to answer any questions. To this date, they really have not received any of the information requested, per Ms. Powers. Ms. Powers stated that they did receive a year-to-date budget report from accounting and she is mentioning this as she then explained how frustrating the lack of information is, as they don't know where the Town is financially. They just received the final report for FY05 from accounting that contains one page for all municipal appropriations so there is no detail to what they requested. There are 13 pages of bottom line item appropriations for the school department. Ms. Powers does not understand the report and it does not help them. Mr. Coughlin stated that the budget deficit reduction package with revised revenues, a line-by-line adjustment of the budget, and the summary of the budget deficit plan was sent on September 26, 2005. The reports sent by the Town Accountant were not sent in response to what was requested. They are reports generated by the Accounting Office, which they have done so for years and in the same format that has been used for years. Mr. Coughlin mentioned that some of the information asked for, such as the tax qualifier sheet couldn't be prepared until there is a balanced budget. He then stated that the breakdown of revenues was provided in the same format that the Finance Committee submitted to the Spring Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Powers stated that on the sheet they received the numbers have not been adjusted for the new growth. Mr. Coughlin explained that the numbers submitted were based on what was provided from the Assessor's Office and he will be happy to appear before the Finance Committee and explain the numbers. Ms. Powers argued that that format is provided for the Town Meeting, but a more detailed format is needed for the working Finance Committee to advise from.

Sal D'Amato then gave an example to help everyone understand what the Finance Committee is getting at. If we reduce the stabilization fund and it falls below the five percent of revenue that the Department of Revenue (DOR) states should be in the fund, how will the bonding company view this and will it affect the bond rating as the bonding companies look at it a little differently. Mr. Coughlin then stated that the Finance Committee has a number of articles to make recommendations on and the BOS have not made any yet. Mr. Coughlin then stated that he is ready to pass over all the articles except the use of stabilization to eliminate the budget deficit. When the free cash is certified, it can be transferred into stabilization to repay or help repay the amount transferred out. The Finance Committee must look at each article as a certain value and decide whether the article should be supported or not supported, per Mr. D'Amato, and the detailed backup information is needed to make that decision. The Town Accountant will file with the DOR on Friday, October 28, 2005. With that filing, you get a couple of items requested such as balance sheets and the debt. With respect to the certification of free cash and retained earnings, Kathy Reed of the DOR will be here on Tuesday, November 1, 2005. The DOR has a two week turn around time so the guesstimate is November 15, 2005 so Mr. Coughlin suggests that the Fall Annual

Town Meeting (FATM) be postponed to November 22, 2005 so that it will be assured that the certifications are in place for the deficit reduction mix.

Mr. D'Amato asked to have the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) explained for this year and next year and how it will affect next year's budget. Mr. Coughlin explained that what he's strived to do is an across the board parity that every department will get the same (2 + 2). Two percent on July 1, 2005 and two percent on January 1, 2006.

Mr. Audette was not sure what was on the list, but wanted to know what else the Finance Committee needed once they have free cash and all the certifications. The sewer and water enterprise accounts are what they will still need. That will be in the complete package that is submitted to the DOR per Mr. Coughlin.

Sal D'Amato has received his letter from the Ethics Commission and has filed it with his appointing authority, which was recommended. He is waiting word from the appointing authority as to what, if any, disclosures he needs to file. He will let the BOS know when that happens.

Mr. Davis then asked if a motion needs to be made regarding the change of date for the FATM. He is concerned as the date was already moved once and it was mentioned that the articles on the warrant from the Planning Board may be in jeopardy by postponing them and they are moving the date again. Mr. Collins stated that they already voted to move the town meeting and they are just changing the date now. The discussion continued on changing the date. Barbara Gaudette explained that the Planning Board has two articles on the warrant to change the regulations on lot size and frontage requirements. Every day that the meeting is postponed is another day that a person or developer can lock in under the current regulations. She was speaking as the Vice Chair of the Planning Board and they are disappointed that the non-financial articles will not be voted on at the meeting on October 25, 2005. Mr. Collins stated that this is the first that he is hearing about these articles and the importance of them. Ms. Gaudette explained in detail what the articles intend to do to the BOS. Discussion continued with Ms. Gaudette and Harry Berkowitz on how they think the residents will vote tomorrow night and would the Planning Board push for those articles to be voted on. The consensus is that the meeting will be opened and just voted to postpone the whole warrant.

Motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Audette to move the FATM to November 22, 2005. The Selectmen voted unanimously to approve.

D.2) Building, Planning & Construction Committee(BP&C): Middle School Roof and Police Station Roof Projects

Mr. Morrow sent a letter to the Town Manager a few weeks ago after his consultant did a survey of the two roofs and it is a pretty big number. He has copies of the report in detail for the BOS members if they want it. The middle school problems are mostly where the roof meets the brick and where the terminations were done originally. The police station is pretty cut and dry. It is about 20 years old and it is time for a new roof. Mr. Davis wanted to know if the schools can make it through the winter and do we have the time to do the roofs now? No, there is no time to do the roofs now so they will have to make it through the winter. Money needs to be appropriated and drawings and specifications are not completed yet. A contractor will be hired probably late winter. Mr. Davis suggested that they find out who installed the police station roof and make sure they are not on the bid list as the roof has leaked from day one. Mr. Murray commented that the school will not fare well through the winter as there has already been leakage. A heavy snow load and a quick melt will cause serious problems. Some money has been appropriated for emergency repairs at a Town Meeting and through the Town Manager a roofing company has been contacted twice to do emergency repairs. They are trying to stay on top of it as much as possible. Mr. Coughlin stated that there might be some money coming from the disaster relief of the October 15, 2005 storm/flood that would be used on these roofs to get them through the winter.

Mr. Coughlin stated that there are two things he wants to mention that are unrelated to the roofs. He has received a letter from Peter Barbordora on the fire station and Mr. Anderson is present tonight. The BP&C definitely needs to be involved in the process of the new station. The second item is in regards to the capital plan he hopes the Bylaw Review Committee puts in place. The interrelationships need to move forward on this issue positively. Mr. Anderson gave a brief summary of what has been done to-date and will come back before the BOS when the information is complete. Mr. Murray's concern is that the reports for the site selection of a fire station done several years ago were never completed as there were fiscal problems and they were told to stop the process and a complete site selection was never presented to the BOS. While the piece of property being reviewed was one of the sites being considered, the report was never completed so the BP&C sent a letter so that they can be put back in the process. They want to make sure it is the right piece of property for the fire station before the BOS enters negotiations for the buying of the property. Mr. Anderson will forward what has been done so far to the BP&C for their review and they can prepare any questions for Mr. Anderson.

Three bids for the accessible bathrooms were received on October 13, 2005. The lowest bidder, Antonelli Construction of Worcester was recommended to do the work. Approximately it will cost \$35,000 for one bath and an alternative for a second bath at \$5,000 for a total of \$40,000. The BOS will need to decide on which way to go. The \$40,000 is per plan and specifications. The architect, etc. is a separate cost making the total \$46,000 unless unforeseen changes, costs, etc. arise. A discussion on what money is available and how the balance gets back into the general fund if not all of it is used took place. Mr. Davis suggested that with any left over monies that maybe the outside door could be looked at as it is still hard to open and maybe a push button could be installed. An article on a warrant in the past to do the automatic doors was passed over, but certainly it can be looked at again. Mr. Murray wanted to know the process for the bonding and borrowing for the roof at the middle school. That will be handled under a special town meeting probably in January 2006. Mr. Morrow suggested that

a schedule be put in place because it is easier to get contractors to bid on a project if the funding is already in place. The bathrooms issue can be voted on by the BOS on the November 7, 2005 agenda.

D.3) Town Manager Performance Evaluation

The BOS members received the form to fill out for the Town Manager's performance evaluation. Mr. Collins asked that the forms be returned at the November 7, 2005 meeting. Mr. Collins will compile the results and they will discuss them at the November 21, 2005 meeting. The rating is 5 for the best and 1 for the least and there is room for comments at the end of each section.

VI. Citizens' Comments/Input

Pam Laporte of 640 Church Street built a stonewall in the front of her house last year and put lights on it because there is a lot of foot traffic there year round. One of the lights was knocked over and she filed a police report and everything was fine. Last night, sometime between 11PM and 5AM, all four of the lights and one of the columns were knocked over. The Laportes want to press charges and prosecute and so they want to offer a reward of \$200 for information to achieve this goal. The Chief of Police has spoken to Mr. Collins and the Chief will contact Mr. Laporte to put together a program to process through the proper channels. There is an investigation going on. She brought pictures of the damage and showed the BOS.

Richard Reynolds of 4 Gendron Street passed out paperwork and approximately a two-minute video of the wall of water from the flood. He stated that Gendron Street was always prone to wash outs and when Pine Knoll was under review, residents of Gendron Street expressed concerns regarding much needed upgrades on Gendron Street and inadequate drainage on Sutton Street. Sutton Street was to be improved when federal funds were made available. Paragraphs F2, F4 and F5 of the certificate of granting the variance for special permit dated October 19, 2004 by the Planning Board for Pine Knoll generally states that Gendron and Smith Streets will be brought up to standard. He then gave a brief history of what occurs on his property and how he has been handling it for years. He comes now before the Town with a recommendation to address the drainage problem noted and solve those problems in the very near future. He recommends that the Town reallocate the monetary contribution in paragraph F1 of the above mentioned document of \$30,000 towards the improvements to the Sutton Street/Providence Road (Route 122) intersection to a complete upgrade to grade and repair Sutton Street in the area directly across Brian Circle and the drainage systems on and directly across Brian Circle and any other area towards Hill Street that the Department of Public Works deems necessary. This and the many improvements to Gendron Street will satisfy the many residents affected for so many years and will insure public safety. He feels that the Sutton Street/Providence Road upgrade can be satisfied when the federal funds are released for the Sutton Street upgrade. Mr. Collins stated that there have been discussions with the powers that be during the flood that a great emphasis was put on the much-needed upgrade to Sutton Street. The discussion continued on the problems in that area. The BOS will review it with the DPW director and will be in touch with district 3 highway to push it forward. A copy of the video has been given to FEMA.

Sharron Ampagoomian stated that this is a minor situation in comparison to everything else that has happened in Town and she has debated on how to handle this. She stated that it was a great privilege to tape and walk around with the various representatives from the various organizations that came to inspect the damage from the flood and as well as tape the Vietnam Vets on Saturday evening. She has been reminded of her inadequacies on her videotaping and would like to say that her family comes first and if anyone has problems with that then take the cable course and come down and do some of the taping. She then briefly described what goes into the actual taping and the preparation that goes into it. She apologized for when she turned down the volume at a meeting for the first time and explained why it was done and that she would make the same decision again. She also explained that technical difficulties do happen such as power outages, etc. She makes \$25.00 to tape a meeting. Per Mr. Collins, "It is not your privilege. It is our privilege." The Town owes Ms. Ampagoomian a debt of gratitude for the amount of videotaping done and the amount of work done on her time for the Town on different events. Mr. Collins stated that what she did was correct and he has a ruling on it from the attorneys. Mr. Audette also commended her on her many contributions to the community. Mr. Montecalvo told Ms. Ampagoomian that anytime someone calls her at home pertaining to the Selectmen's meeting to have them call the Chair of the BOS and not get involved herself.

VII. Selectmen's Concerns

Mr. Collins stated that the BOS presented a document congratulating the Blackstone Valley Vietnam Veterans, the John E. Fitzgerald Post, in recognition of 20 years of dedicated service to the Vietnam Vets and for all the steadfast devotion to the term "never forgotten." Mr. Collins then presented the document to Mr. Audette for all his tireless efforts with the Vietnam Vets all these years.

Mr. Collins stated that on the list of questions/concerns from Mr. Davis, that several items have been answered, i.e., the emergency flood deficit has been answered and they will get that soon. Mr. Collins then put the list aside. Mr. Davis then stated that he has 33 items of concern and that many have been answered and some will be added to. The discussion continued on whether or not there should be an old business category on the agenda and how the concerns should be handled.

Mr. Ampagoomian wanted to know about the streetscape project and how is it coming with Mass Electric. Mr. Collins had a conversation with Ms. Dulmaine and she been contacting Mass Electric every other day and she gets the same answer that they are very busy with issues at hand. Once it is completed, they will sit down, formalize the end of the contract and go forward and not until then.

VIII. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Coughlin spoke very briefly on those 33 questions. A lot were answered in the past and some were answered tonight. Of the 33 submitted by email, he asked the respective department heads to respond and he cited two examples of the responses received. Mr. Coughlin then explained that it is sometimes difficult to get a quick response as the department heads have other duties to perform. He thinks the better way to handle this is for Mr. Davis to come in and sit down with him and he won't have to disturb the department heads and take them away from their other duties. Mr. Davis then stated that he was appalled that Mr. Coughlin insulted his intelligence and the intelligence of the people watching by saying the questions are redundant and they have been answered. Mr. Collins then stated that he would get the answers and Mr. Davis is appreciative of that.

Mr. Coughlin stated that there are many unsung heroes with respect to the flood, but in particular some private businesses really stepped up to the plate. Mr. Collins presented the Town of Northbridge Community Service award to Thomas Berkowitz who was directly affected by the flood, but also stepped up to the plate to help others.

IX. Items For Future Agenda

There are no items for a future agenda at this time.

X. Correspondence

Mr. Davis has a letter dated July 28, 2005 and it was sent to the individual involved in the certification of plumbing inspectors. He stated that he is uncomfortable doing this. It was sent about six weeks after Mr. Davis was not reappointed. He then read the letter out loud. Someone is checking on his record as Assistant Plumbing Inspector and he is no longer in that capacity. Mr. Davis has accepted this and moved on. Mr. Davis addressed Mr. Collins who was named in the letter. Mr. Collins explained that Mr. Davis did not know the timeline and that the question came up when Mr. Davis was going to be reappointed. Someone came to Mr. Collins and stated that Mr. Davis is not even certified. Mr. Collins called to see if there was a certification issue and could not get an answer no matter how many times he asked. Mr. Collins wanted to know the final answer and asked Mr. Coughlin to write a letter as they were stonewalling them on the answer. The Head Plumbing Inspector in Boston would not give the information on whether or not you were certified. Mr. Davis wants the copies of the similar letters on the two inspectors that were just appointed and the replies.

XI. Executive Session

1. Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #3 – Litigation (NHS)

2. Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #3 – Litigation (JMJ Realty Trust)

A motion/Mr. Davis seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to go into Executive Session under MGL Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation – N.H.S) and M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B #3 (Litigation – JMJ Realty Trust) and they will not be returning to open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes; Mr. Davis/Yes; Mr. Montecalvo/ Yes; Mr. Audette/Yes; and Mr. Collins/Yes.

Open Session Adjourned: 9:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

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**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
November 7, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Ampagoomian, Davis, and Montecalvo. Selectman William Audette was not present and it is duly recorded.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

I. Approval of Minutes:

A.1. October 3, 2005

Selectman Davis requested that the October 3, 2005 minutes be amended by inserting Chairman Collins' comments with respect to having Ms. Shelley Buma removed from the meeting if she continued to make certain comments. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the October 3, 2005 minutes as amended by Selectman Davis. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins.

Before continuing, Selectman Davis questioned an Executive Session item [Leased Premises] and why it was not being held in Open Session. He wished to know whether it was about the lease payment being withheld or land acquisition. Town Manager Coughlin explained that because the initial lease [with St. Patrick's Parish] was an improper transaction conducted by the School Department as it was not within their authority, that this matter would be categorized as land acquisition.

II. Public Hearing:

7:05 PM – Massachusetts Electric and Verizon New England/Petition for Joint or Identical Pole Location covering one pole on Wolfe Hill Road (P05-86). Present: Roger Martinson, Mass. Electric. Chairman Collins read the public hearing notice aloud. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. Mr. Martinson explained that the reason for the petition was to install a new stub pole on Wolfe Hill Road. He advised that the petition called for Mass. Electric to install new pole 10s (10-84) as shown on plan #D05-53 provided to the Board in their agenda packets. There were no comments from those present. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. That being said, a motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to grant permission to locate poles, wires, and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures to be owned and used in common by petitioners, along and across the following way: Wolfe Hill Road [one pole location]. Starting at existing pole #10 in an easterly direction 32' to new pole 10s (10-84) as per plan P05-86. Installing new stub pole in need of guying pole #10, which has a temporary rope tying off pole. Said pole to be erected substantially in accordance with the plan filed herewith marked--Massachusetts Electric and Verizon New England, Inc., No. D05-53 dated October 17, 2005. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Davis, Ampagoomian, and Collins.

III. Appointments:

None.

IV. Decisions:

Girl Scouts/Request to use the Town Common for a Veteran's Day Celebration on Friday, November 11, 2005 from 9:45 AM to 11:00 AM. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the above request subject to the safety requirements of the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins.

V. Discussions:

Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant/Articles 10 through 26. The Board decided to vote their positions on the following articles: **Article 10 (Bylaw Amendment – Illegal discharges and Stormwater Connections).** A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 10. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. **Article 11 (Bylaw Amendment – Removal of Snow and Ice from sidewalks).** A motion/Mr. Davis to pass over Article 11. No second, motion dies. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 11. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. Vote not to support/Mr. Davis. **Article 12 (Scenic Roads Bylaw).** A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 12. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. **Article 13 (Bylaw Amendment – Aquifer Protection / Delete use regulations within Accessory Uses and Other Uses).** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian to pass over Article 13. No second, motion dies. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Collins to support Article 13. Vote yes/Messrs. Montecalvo and Collins. Vote not to support/Messrs. Davis and Ampagoomian. There being a tie vote, the Board decided to vote their position on Article 13 at their next meeting November 21, 2005. **Article 14 (Delete –Limited Redevelopment Overlay District Bylaw).** The Board will vote their position on Article 14 at their next meeting November 21, 2005. **Article 15 (Bylaw Amendment – Increase minimum lot area where serviced by public sewer in R1, R2, R3).** The Planning Board informed the Selectmen that they would be offering an amendment to Article 15 on the Town Meeting floor. The intent is to increase only the minimum lot area and not the width or set back requirements. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 15. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. **Article 16 (Bylaw Amendment – Increase minimum lot area where serviced by public sewer in R4, R5).** The Planning Board informed the Selectmen that they would be offering an amendment to Article 16 on the Town Meeting floor. The intent is to increase only the minimum lot area and

not the width or set back requirements. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 16. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. **Article 17 (Bylaw Amendment – Increase minimum lot area where not serviced by public sewer in R1, R2, R3).** The Planning Board informed the Selectmen that they would be offering an amendment to Article 17 on the Town Meeting floor. The intent is to increase only the minimum lot area and not the width or set back requirements. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 17. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. **Article 18 (Bylaw Amendment – Increase minimum lot area where not serviced by public sewer in R4, R5).** The Planning Board informed the Selectmen that they would be offering an amendment to Article 18 on the Town Meeting floor. The intent is to increase only the minimum lot area and not the width or set back requirements. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 18. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. **Article 19 (Bylaw Amendment –Nonconforming Structures).** The Planning Board informed the Selectmen that they voted to pass over Article 19. A motion made and seconded to pass over Article 19. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. **Article 20 (BOH – FY '06 budget amendment).** A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, not to support Article 20. No second, motion dies. Selectman Davis suggested they wait until their next meeting November 21, 2005 to vote their position on Article 20. The Board concurred. **Article 21 (BOH – Bylaw Amendment 4-311).** The Board decided to vote their position on Article 21 at their next meeting November 21, 2005. **Article 22 (Master Plan – Town Fields).** The Playground & Recreation Commission members advised that the total cost of this article was approximately \$110,000. They also announced that Phase I work [in the amount of \$15,000] was donated by Heritage Design Group and Carr Engineering. After discussion on various ways to deal with the vast scope of this article, and the amount of work required to upgrade the town's parks/fields, the Board agreed that the best way was to do it in phases. That being said, a motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 22 in the amount of \$35,000 for Phase II work. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. Phase III will be the schematic design. **Article 23 (Petition – Design/Construction Skateboard Park).** Northbridge Middle School students provided supplementary information to the Board with respect to the design of two differently constructed skateboard parks. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 23 in the amount up to \$25,000. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. **Article 24 (Petition – Arthur Drive Improvements).** Due to the excessive cost of improvements needed to upgrade Arthur Drive, the Board agreed to pass over Article 24. A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to pass over Article 24. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins. **Article 25 (Petition – Rezone property on Prov. Rd. from I1 to I2).** Due to the petitioner not being present, the Selectmen did not take a vote on this article. The Board will vote their position on this article at their next meeting November 21, 2005. **Article 26 (Petition – Rezone property on Lasell Rd. from R2 to B3).** Attorney Henry Lane advised that the subject property consists of about 60 acres; 40 acres in Sutton and 20 acres in Northbridge. He also informed the Selectmen that the Town of Sutton had already voted to rezone the portion of the property that lies in their jurisdiction. In addition, it was noted that the Northbridge Planning Board voted in support of Article 26. That being said, a motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to support Article 26. Vote yes/Messrs. Davis, Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, and Collins.

Town Manager's Performance Review. Chairman Collins collected the Selectmen's individual performance reviews of Mr. Coughlin and announced that after he compiles the results, that they will be made public at the next meeting on November 21, 2005.

VI. Citizens' Comments/Input. Phil Cyr and Thomas Farley, Trustees of Soldier's Memorials, announced that the rededication of the WWII and Korean War Memorials would take place on Saturday, November 12, 2005 at 10 AM on the Town Common; the public is invited. **Barbara Gaudette, 500 Hill Street,** again suggested that any back taxes paid to the Town upon agricultural property being withdrawn from 61A tax exemption should be used for open space acquisition and maintenance [trails, fencing, clearing of brush, etc.] Continuing, she stated that she would like to see the Town adopt the Community Preservation Act [CPA], a tool that can help communities preserve open space and historic sites, and create affordable housing and recreational facilities. Ms. Gaudette said that the CPA allows the Town to add a certain percentage to the tax rate, usually 1% to 3% and that it works to the Town's advantage when writing and submitting grant applications. The additional revenue would provide a new funding source that can be used for acquisition and preservation of open space; creation and support of affordable housing; and the acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes. **Jeannine Gilmore, 387 Rumonoski Drive,** advised the Board of a serious problem affecting Rumonoski Drive—the emergence of huge sinkholes. She stated that some, which have already been repaired, are beginning to reappear. DPW Director Richard Sasseville stated that he suspects the road is failing due to pre-blasting when the roadway was being built, which may have fractured ledge in that area and as a result, groundwater is traveling under the roadway. The Planning Board determined that the road is an accepted road, however, the developer has since gone bankrupt, and most likely, there is no bond on file. **Phil Cyr, 285 Rumonoski Drive,** read a personal statement to the Board about all the nonsense being stirred up by a mean-spirited group of people who continually try to undermine the Town Manager and then blame him for not doing his job. Continuing, Mr. Cyr reported that in response to the "no confidence in Town Manager" petition that has been circulating around town and in the schools and signed by many high school students, he decided to circulate a petition, which simply asked citizens "Do you believe the Town Manager deserves a fair and balanced evaluation?" Mr. Cyr said many citizens responded with an overwhelming YES and as a result, he turned in a petition with 307 signatures of registered voters indicating that they believe Mr. Coughlin deserved a fair evaluation.

VII. Selectmen's Concerns: Selectman Ampagoomian: In support of a tax relief program [work off a portion of your real estate taxes]; Quaker Street [Scenic Road]. **Selectman Davis:** Will provide a list of 29 items to Town Manager for follow-up. Inquired about the status of the Szerlag Confirmatory Waiver of Right of First Refusal; asked what numbers were submitted to Department of Revenue [DOR] for certification. Mr. Coughlin reported that Neil Vaidya, Acting Town Accountant, submitted the following estimates to DOR for certification--\$250,000

free cash, \$800,000 Sewer Enterprise, and \$1,000,000 Water Enterprise. He expects those numbers to be certified in about two weeks. Status of contacting Providence & Worcester Railroad on Union Street problem – Letter was sent on September 29, 2005 and awaiting a response. Status report on the Police and Middle School Roof Projects; Town Common Policy [draft provided to the Board by the Town Manager]; License Revocation Hearing [Classic Car Sales II]– Mr. Coughlin advised that it has been deferred until 11/21/05 so that proper notice could be given to the licensee.

VIII. Town Manager’s Report. Town Manager Coughlin thanked Mr. Cyr and others for their support. Chief of Police interviews to be held on 11/9/05; Veterans Director now serving four towns: Northbridge, Uxbridge, Douglas, and Sutton; Bylaw Review Committee to hold first organizational meeting on November 28th; School Committee will be discussing a change in warrant process at their next meeting; Flood recovery—Sheriff’s Office to provide a 6-man crew to clean up debris; Lt. Gov. Healy will tour Rockdale on November 18th; sent letter to the Attorney General due to slow response from insurance companies for flood victims.

IX. Items For Future Agenda

Selectman Davis: Affordable Housing Committee discussion.

Selectman Ampagoomian: Plummer’s Corner.

X. Correspondence

No correspondence to be discussed at this time.

XI. Executive Session

1. Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #6 – Land Acquisition [JMJ Realty Trust]

2. Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #6 – Land Acquisition [Puccio Property]

3. Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S. 23B, #6 – Land Acquisition [Lease premises]

A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to go into Executive Session under MGL Chapter 39, S. 23B #6 Land Acquisition - JMJ Realty Trust; Land Acquisition – Puccio Property; and Land Acquisition – Leased Premises; not to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes; Mr. Davis/Yes; Mr. Montecalvo/Yes; and Mr. Collins/Yes.

Open Session Adjourned: 9:21PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
November 21, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Ampagoomian, Davis, Audette and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Before getting started, Mr. Davis had one question on the process of how to get an item on the agenda for a member of the Board and a citizen of the Town. He has sent in seven items and only one is on the agenda at this meeting and his email has not been answered. Selectman Collins explained that the agenda is busy with the Town and the other items will get on the agenda as the agendas allow. He is not going to overburden a meeting just to have everything on one agenda.

Mr. George Peterson reported that at a past meeting he thought that there would be additional monies for snow and ice, but the Capital Supplemental Budget has been in the House and they would not allow or discuss any amendment for snow and ice for the communities. The Senate budget has been done and he doesn't know if there is any snow and ice money there. However, there is a bill in the Senate to release the monies left from Hurricane Katrina Relief for possible supplemental aid to communities for snow and ice. He thanked all public safety workers who helped during the extreme hardships during the October flood throughout the valley. FEMA has finally recognized the need for assistance and that should be forthcoming soon. Mr. Montecalvo wanted to know about the State surplus money. The Governor's Department of Revenue (DOR) has adjusted the target revenue figure for this fiscal year from \$17.1 billion to just short of \$18 billion. The House put some additional Chapter 90 money in the capital supplemental budget, but the capital supplemental budgets that have been approved in the House and Senate are two different versions and they are now in conference to make them one. Mr. Ampagoomian wanted to know if there was anything that Representative Peterson could do to have Mass Highway relinquish the funds to renovate Plummers' Corner? Representative Peterson can certainly push and he has already spoken to Mass Highway in the Central Office and the Mass Highway Commissioner. The problem is there may be a lot of property takings to make this project happen. They are not willing to move forward with projects of that size and scope with the number of property takings involved at this time. Mr. Ampagoomian also asked Mr. Peterson to see what he can do for the Sutton Street upgrade as taxpayers have already expended money to do the property takings, legal easements and engineering. Mr. Peterson will try to set up a meeting with the Commissioner to come out to Northbridge and address these issues.

I. Approval of Minutes:

There are no minutes to approve at this meeting.

II. Public Hearing:

A.1) 7:05 PM – FY'06 Tax Rate Classification Hearing

The DOR requires this hearing each year. Handouts were passed out. It allows the Selectmen to decide whether or not to shift the tax allocation between the classes of property. It will not increase the revenue, just shifts the tax burden. There is an 11% percent increase over last year. The handouts were explained in detail. The idea is to shift some of the tax burden away from the residential and move it to the commercial and industrial classes. It lowers the residents' taxes and can have greater revenue to the Town. However, the commercial and industrial classes decreased slightly in the last year. The Board of Assessors recommends not shifting the tax rate this year. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian for the community to maintain its residential factor of 1, Vote yes/Unanimous.

Selection of residential exemption distributes the taxes between the residential class. It is up to a 20% discount and is based on the average valuation of a home. This year the average is \$317,000. Single-family homes under this amount would get the discount, but it is made up by all the properties that are over this amount. There are several cities and towns in the Commonwealth that are doing this discount. The Board of Assessors reviewed this and feels that it is not worthwhile to do this in Northbridge at this time. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian not to adopt this exemption. Vote yes/Unanimous.

The small commercial exemption would give a tax break of up to 10% of the valuation for the small commercial properties. The definition to qualify is less than 10 employees and valued at less than \$1 million. Around 100 businesses qualify. If you give the tax break for them, than it needs to be made up by the businesses that are over \$1 million. There are only two communities in the Commonwealth that use this exemption. The Assessors Office does not recommend this exemption. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian not to adopt a small commercial exemption. Vote yes/Unanimous.

In regards to the excess levy capacity, the exact amount will not be known until after the town meeting. It looks to be about \$2,000. Translated into taxes is about one-hundredth of a penny. A memo will be sent when the exact amount is known.

A.2) 7:15PM – Classic Car Sales II [James Smith] – Class II License Revocation

Mr. Smith failed to comply with MGL Chapter 140 §58. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Montecalvo to revoke Classic Car Sales II – Used Car Dealer's license and notify proper authorities that Town is doing so. Vote yes/Unanimous.

III. Appointments:

None.

IV. Decisions:

B. Town Manager's Performance Review

Mr. Collins explained the process for filling out the forms. Since the ratings were to be 1 (worst) to 5 (best), 4 out of 5 Selectmen participated, so the evaluation is being based on the 4 completed forms. There will be no discussion. The comments will be discussed with the Town Manager and the Selectmen that submitted the comments. Mr. Collins read the totals from each section of the evaluation: I. Management of Day-to-Day operations 3.875; II. Constituency Services 3.957; III. Development of Budget and Management 3.83. Mr. Coughlin's overall performance is 3.88. Copies are available of what each of the Selectmen submitted. Mr. Davis stated that he did turn in a completed form and all the grades were zero and he does not feel that Mr. Coughlin belongs as Town Manager in the Town of Northbridge. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian that the agreement with the Town Manager and the Town of Northbridge dated July 26, 2004 be continued in effect from November 12, 2007 through November 11, 2009. The extension includes the provision of negotiation of reasonable terms and conditions subject to mutual consent of the parties. Vote yes/Messrs. Ampagoomian, Montecalvo, Audette, and Collins. Vote no/Mr. Davis. Mr. Coughlin thanked the Board for their confidence and the extension of his contract.

C. Fall Annual Town Meeting/Vote positions on Articles 1-9, 13-14, 20-21, and 25

There is \$752,000 in certified free cash and Mr. Coughlin recommended that the stabilization fund not be used but to use \$200,000 in free cash to balance the budget. \$108,000 to be used from free cash to pay a prior year bill from the Fire Dept., snow and ice equipment, parks and recreation master plan for the town fields and the skateboard park. The balance would be about \$417,000 in free cash. It will be left up to the Board on whether to return it to the stabilization fund. Mr. Coughlin suggests that at least a portion of it is returned. About \$200,000 should remain in free cash to deal with the snow and ice. It was suggested that maybe \$150,000 should be returned to the Stabilization Fund and the balance left set aside for snow and ice. Motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Davis to support Article 1. There was a discussion with the Finance Committee on what the actual deficit is and how come there is such a big difference between what was estimated for free cash and what was actually certified for free cash. The Finance Committee wants to understand this so they can forecast the budget into the future.

Article 1 (FY'06 budget amendments): A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Davis to support with amendments. All in favor.

The Finance Committee voted to support Article 1 as it was presented to them with the following changes: Line 23A (Waste Collection and Disposal Expenses) to reduce the appropriation to \$126,728.17 (the FY'05 amount); Line 40 would be a transfer from free cash in the amount of \$250,000; Line 44 would remain at \$100,000; and Line 43 should be \$150,000 plus the difference on the tipping fees (\$182,000 total). Mr. D'Amato suggested transferring \$200,000 to free cash to the Stabilization Fund. The Selectmen agreed.

Article 2 (Bill of a prior year – DPW): Motion to support/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian. All in favor.

Article 3 (Bill of a prior year – Fire Dept.): Motion to support/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian. All in favor.

Article 4 (Upgrade sludge management system): Passing over. Motion made and seconded. All in favor.

Article 5 (Dump truck – Sewer Div.): Motion to support/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette. All in favor.

Article 6 (two sander bodies/installation – Hwy. Div.): Motion to support/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded Mr. Ampagoomian. All in favor.

Article 7 (Heavy duty dump truck – Hwy. Div.): Passing over. A motion /Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette. All in favor.

Article 8 (Water main extensions – Church, Quaker and Union Sts.): Passing over. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette. All in favor.

Article 9 (Comp. water management plan): Passing over. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette. All in favor.

Article 13 (Bylaw amendment – Aquifer protection – delete use regulations within accessory uses and other uses): No one present from the Planning Board, so a determination by the Selectmen will be made Tuesday evening, November 22, 2005.

Article 14 (Delete – Limited Redevelopment Overlay District Bylaw): No one present from the Planning Board, so a determination by the Selectmen will be made Tuesday evening, November 22, 2005.

Article 20 (BOH – FY’06 budget amendment): The Board of Health took a vote at their meeting and stated that they are supporting passing over this article at this time, but it may come back in a future Town Meeting due to the financial situation of the Town. Motion made and seconded that the Selectmen are passing over this article.

Article 21 (BOH – Bylaw amend. 4-311): The Board of Health took a vote at their meeting and stated that they want to move forward with this article. They do not agree with M.G.L. Chapter 111, §27. There was no health agent over the summer because they were noncompliant with Chapter 30B and they worked long and hard to bring them into compliance. The Board of Health never received a response from Town Counsel with regards to the issue at hand. Mr. Doneski from Kopelman & Paige (Town Counsel) stated that the charter is what will govern the issue in this matter. A Board of Health member argued that that is only for W-2 hired employees that have all the benefits and the Board of Health Agent is a 1099 employee, also known as a subcontractor. If this article passes at the Town Meeting, Mr. Doneski suggests that the Town Clerk file some language with the packet she sends in so that the Attorney General will make a determination on this matter as to who has authority to govern the health agent. A motion/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian not to support Article 21. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Article 24 (Arthur Drive improvements): The petitioners from Arthur Drive are disappointed that the Selectmen passed over this article at the last meeting. They discussed how the narrow road has been made narrower by certain things. The Selectmen will look into this matter, see what is available for Chapter 90 money, and see what can be done in the future. The matter needs to be more fully researched before they can recommend any money be appropriated. The petitioners will still present it at the FATM on November 22, 2005. They will see Mr. Collins at the beginning of the meeting and he will have the article printed for them. All they will need to do is read it and then hand it in to the Town Moderator.

Article 25 (Rezone property on Providence Rd. from I-1 to I-2): A motion to support/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Audette. All in favor.

D. Winter Parking Ban/Vote to approve

Lt. Walter Warchol stated that it is the customary winter parking ban to facilitate snow removal. The hours are from 1:00AM to 6:00AM [December 1 – April 1] on most streets with a few exemptions. Lt. Warchol gave the list to the Selectmen and it will also be listed on the local cable channel. Motion to approve/Mr. Montecalvo, seconded/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

E. Safety Committee Minutes – November 10, 2005/Vote to accept

A motion/Mr. Davis, seconded/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor to approve the minutes.

V. Discussions:

None.

VI. Citizens’ Comments/Input.

Barbara Gaudette is concerned because several weeks ago when the Town Manger’s evaluation forms were passed out it was stated that the form would be collated and discussed at a future meeting. She is very upset at what happened earlier this evening when one Selectman’s forms was not counted, as they were all zeros. There was also no discussion. Mr. Collins responded that the forms were to be filled out using numbers 1 being the worst and 5 being the best and any comments. He then stated that it was outside the realm of what is allowed by law to use zeros. These forms are available to the public for anyone who would like a copy.

Bill Cundiff of 168 Windsor Ridge Drive collected signatures from residents as a vote of no confidence for Mike Coughlin. He gave his reasons and is disappointed with the BOS. He also wanted to know when the BOS voted to file a lawsuit against the Architectural Access Board for their decision to levy fines against the Town. Mr. Collins stated that he did not know the answer at this time, but he would find out for the next meeting.

VII. Selectmen’s Concerns

Selectman Ampagoomian attended the Open Space Committee meeting and is concerned about any parcel of land that is under 61A, B or C and might be taken out of it. Is it possible to take those tax dollars and put them into an account to be used for the finance and purchase of a piece of property to preserve open space (per the recommendation of the Open Space Committee)? The legality of this issue is being looked into by the Town Attorney. **Selectman Davis** has 27 questions tonight, but will wait for a response from the Town Manager. **Selectman Audette** thanked the 8th grade advisory group at the Middle School for the Veteran’s Day breakfast they coordinated; thanked the Boys and Girls Scouts for the service they participated in at the Common; and thanked the Trustees of the Soldiers’ Memorials for the rededication on the World War II Memorial. In looking at the signs attached to the fence, etc. around the Town Hall, he suggests that the Town get a bulletin board so it will look better.

VIII. Town Manager’s Report

Mr. Coughlin thanked all the citizens in the community who have approached him and endorsed what has been done so far in the community. It means a lot to him. He then thanked the Board for his contract extension, as he wants to continue to do this work and it gives an endorsement to his family who has had to endure the criticism publicly and in other venues where it should not be.

IX. Items For Future Agenda

There are none.

X. Correspondence

No correspondence to be discussed at this time.

XI. Executive Session

F.1) Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, §23B, #6 – Land Acquisition [Leased premises]

F.2) Under M.G.L. Chapter 39, §23B, #3 – Litigation [W/S Development]

A motion made and seconded to go into Executive Session under MGL Chapter 39, §23B #6 Land Acquisition – Leased Premises and MGL Chapter 39, §23B #3; Litigation - W/S Development, not to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes; Mr. Davis/Yes; Mr. Audette/Yes; Mr. Montecalvo/Yes; and Mr. Collins/Yes.

Open Session Adjourned: 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
December 5, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Ampagoomian, Davis, Audette and Montecalvo.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Sheriff Guy Glodis was present and the Selectmen presented him with an award for his service in the flood recovery effort in the Blackstone Valley and the village of Rockdale. They also gave him a wish list for the Town of Northbridge that under community service, the inmates could provide their services. Mr. Glodis thanked the Selectmen for the award and spoke a little about the community service program.

I. Approval of Minutes:

A. October 24, 2005

Under the minutes of October 24, 2005, page 2, second paragraph, 4th line to the end, eliminate the second of Mr. Ampagoomian for the motion of Mr. Davis for Mr. Buckley. Motion to approve as amended/Mr. Audette, seconded/Mr. Davis. All in favor.

II. Public Hearing:

None.

III. Appointments:

None.

IV. Decisions:

B. Town Common Policy/Vote to approve

Mr. Davis suggested adding a sentence that there will be no vehicle traffic without prior approval from the DPW Director or the Police Dept. Motion to approve/Mr. Montecalvo, second/Mr. Ampagoomian. All in favor.

C. Building, Planning & Construction Committee/Handicapped Bathrooms

The lowest bid came in at \$35,000 for the first bathroom and \$5,000 for a second bathroom. The total of \$40,000 is still under what has been budgeted. Motion to approve both bathrooms at \$40,000/Mr. Davis, second/Mr. Audette. All in favor.

D. Monique Burchard/Request use of Town Common for tree lighting ceremony, Saturday, December 10, 2005

This has been asked to be removed from the agenda by the applicant. Mr. Audette wanted to know if the Town was doing anything for the holidays. Mr. Coughlin stated that the lights will be strung in the trees at Memorial Square and will be lit. He was not sure of the details.

E. FY'99 Community Development Block Grant Program/Subordination of Lien, 420-422 Church Street, Whitinsville, MA

Motion to approve/Mr. Montecalvo, second/Mr. Ampagoomian. All in favor.

F. FY'85 Community Development Block Grant Program/Discharge of Lien, 93 Providence Street, Uxbridge, MA

Motion to approve/Mr. Davis, second/Mr. Montecalvo. All in favor.

G. Department of Public Works/Vote to Establish and Set the Fees for Sanding and Plowing of Unaccepted Subdivision Roadways

Motion to approve/Mr. Audette, second/Mr. Davis. All in favor.

H. Massachusetts Electric/Joint Pole Relocation covering one pole on Thurston Avenue, (P05-89)

Roger Martin of Mass. Electric proposes to move the pole about eight feet in the southerly direction to move it out of the middle of a proposed road. Motion to approve/Mr. Davis, second/Mr. Audette. All in favor.

V. Discussions:

I. West End Dairy, LLC

Greg VandenAkker wants to take the West End Creamery out of 61A. The letter presented is asking the Town to waive the option to purchase the land under 61A. It is the 1.34-acre parcel that is depicted on the map the Selectmen have before them. The area will be for a gravel parking lot and a miniature-golf course. Motion to approve the waiver/Mr. Davis, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

J. Community Preservation Act

Sharron Ampagoomian gave a brief summary that the Community Preservation Act is the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space, historic places, etc. She suggests that the Selectmen do more research on the matter that is more in depth than what she has done. A Community Preservation Act Committee would need to be formed with 5 to 9 members. A member from the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Housing Authority, Historical Commission, and the Parks and Recreation Commission are required. Mr. Coughlin

suggests action at the annual town meeting with a follow up voter referendum question probably at the fall election. Mr. Coughlin thinks that an advisory committee should be established containing a member from the Selectmen, the Finance Committee, the Planning Board, the Housing Authority and the Board of Health. It needs to be weighed in with the upcoming fire station land acquisition and the roofs debt exclusion, as it is a tax surcharge as well as the potential asking for an override in the future. This Committee should contact the Sutton Committee to get guidance on what they did to proceed forward. The Selectmen agreed to put it on the December 19, 2005 agenda for discussion, so the Selectmen will have time to look into it further.

VI. Citizens' Comments/Input.

A resident wanted to know if there was any progress on the sewer abatements? The DPW is looking into whether or not it can go back to the way it was, but they won't have the report together until probably the spring. Mr. Coughlin stated that the individuals that submitted requests for abatement will be notified this week or next on the appeal. Each letter will be acted upon individually.

VII. Selectmen's Concerns

Mr. Davis had 28 questions and this is now down to 14 after communications with Mr. Coughlin. They will continue to work on them. Mr. Montecalvo wanted to know the timeline for hiring a new Treasurer/Collector and Mr. Coughlin stated that two jobs were posted last Thursday, December 1, 2005, and he expects to have someone in that position in January 2006. The Acting Town Accountant has proven himself so Mr. Coughlin will not be seeking to post that position. The other position that was posted was the position of the Town Manager Assistant that was restored in the Town Manager's Office. Ms. Kinney will be returning full-time to the Planning/Conservation Office when the new person is hired.

VIII. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Coughlin recognized Lillian Madigan for her donation of the wreaths for the entrances of the Town Hall. They really make the Town Hall look nice during the holiday season.

IX. Items For Future Agenda

Mr. Davis would like Mr. Coughlin to remind the Building Committee that a schedule is needed for the roof. Mr. Coughlin is meeting with Federal Officials for funding on both projects under the US Agriculture Rule of Economic Development Service. If it is granted, there will be no need for the private bond market or a prospectus. FEMA reimbursement for emergency repairs of \$17,000 should be forth coming with the stepping up to the plate on the flood recovery. The Union St. and Gendron St. problems could be covered under the FEMA mitigation projects. The DPW is meeting with FEMA, then the Dept Heads to alleviate the recurring flooding on these streets.

X. Correspondence

No correspondence to be discussed at this time.

XI. Executive Session

None.

Motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor to adjourn.

Open Session Adjourned: 8:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
December 19, 2005**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Russell Collins at 7:00PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Ampagoomian, Audette and Montecalvo. Mr. Davis was absent.

Also present: Michael J. Coughlin, Jr., Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

I. Approval of Minutes:

A. November 7, 2005

Motion to approve/Mr. Collins, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

II. Public Hearing:

None.

III. Appointments:

B. Northbridge Police Department

1. By the Town Manager:

Timothy Labrie, Police Lieutenant: Mr. Coughlin gave a brief summary of the events leading to Timothy Labrie making Police Lieutenant. Lt. Warchol also recommends that Mr. Labrie be promoted to Lieutenant. Motion to approve appointment/Mr. Ampagoomian, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor. Mr. Labrie made a few remarks to the Selectmen.

John Ouilette, Police Sergeant: Mr. Coughlin gave a brief summary of the events leading to John Ouilette making Police Sergeant. Lt. Warchol also recommends that Mr. Ouilette be promoted to Sergeant. Motion to approve appointment/Mr. Audette, second Mr. Ampagoomian. Voted all in favor. Mr. Ouilette made a few remarks to the Selectmen.

2. By the Selectmen:

Lt. Walter Warchol, Safety Committee: (Fill vacancy caused by retirement of Chief Melia) Motion to appoint Lt. Warchol to Safety Committee/Mr. Ampagoomian, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

C. Northbridge Financial Team

1. By the Town Manager:

Deborah Kristoff, Treasurer/Collector: Mr. Coughlin asked the Board of Selectmen to affirm the appointment of Deborah Kristoff as Treasurer/Collector for the Town of Northbridge. Motion to affirm/Mr. Montecalvo, second/Mr. Ampagoomian. Voted all in favor. Deborah Kristoff thanked the Board of Selectmen and stated that she looks forward to serving the Town.

IV. Decisions:

D. FY'06 Tax Rate/Announcement by Financial Team

From the votes taken at the Fall Annual Town Meeting, the budget has been balanced. The Financial Team has submitted the tax rate and tax recap sheet to the Department of Revenue. It was approved in early December 2005 and the rate is \$8.62. The tax bills will be mailed this week. Mr Collins would like to see a letter from the Board of Selectmen to each member of the Financial Team commending them on the fine job they did on getting the tax rate set with a short staff. Motion made to accept the tax rate/Mr. Montecalvo, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

E. Firefighter's Contract/Vote to support

Mr. Coughlin is please to offer the contract to the Northbridge Fire Department. It is a giant step forward to better serve the community. The areas of most interest in the contract were the reorganization and staffing. This contract will allow for better firefighter safety and public safety. Mr. Ampagoomian would like to make the correction to have the gender base consistent throughout the document. Motion to ratify the contract with the correction/Mr. Montecalvo, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

F. US Department of Agriculture Rural Economic Development Community Facility Funding Program:

Mr. Coughlin, Mr. Nestor, Mr. Sasseville, and Mr. Murray met with representatives of the US Department of Agriculture Rural Economic Development Community Facility Funding Program. About one year ago, our congressman come into Town and toured the fire station, DPW facility and other municipal facilities. He suggested that the Town apply for grants and/or low interest loans under this program. The plan is to have the funding approved this fiscal year. The following the first step in the process:

1. Middle School Roof/Police Roof: Vote to authorize pre-application. Mr. Murray stated that it looks like a very attractive program. The school roof is about 75% complete on the drawing specifications and the actual work will take about five to six months to complete so we need to keep moving as quickly as possible on this project so additional emergency repairs will not be needed during the approval process. Motion made to authorize the pre-application for the middle school roof/police roof/Mr. Montecalvo, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

Fire Station: Vote to authorize pre-application. The existing fire station does not meet today's needs for the community. The land has been located for the new station and now the funding is needed. This program allows not only for the new fire station, but also for new equipment. The amortization would be 40 years for the station

and 20 years for the equipment. Motion to approve the pre-application for the fire station/Mr. Ampagoomian, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

G. Hess Gas Station: Gift for improvements to Plummer's Corner/Vote to accept

A \$61,250 gift from Amerada Hess for their 25% contribution to the design improvements to Plummer's Corner has been received. Motion to accept the gift/Mr. Montecalvo, second Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

H. 1. 2006 Selectmen's Meeting Schedule

Motion to approve/Mr. Ampagoomian, second/Mr. Montecalvo. Voted all in favor.

2. 2006 Holiday Schedule

Motion to approve/Mr. Montecalvo, second/Mr. Ampagoomian. Voted all in favor.

I. 2006 Miscellaneous Annual License Renewals (Alcohol, Common Victualler, Class II, Class III, Automatic Amusement Devices, etc.)

The Selectmen will do all the licenses in bulk with the understanding that all taxes are paid. Motion to renew in total all licenses for these establishments as long as the taxes are paid/Mr. Montecalvo, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor. The Selectmen must stop in the office during the next week and sign all the licenses.

V. Discussions:

None.

VI. Citizens' Comments/Input.

None.

VII. Selectmen's Concerns

Mr. Collins wishes Mr. Davis and his family all the best, as he is absent tonight due to an illness in his family. Mr. Collins then stated that our prayers and thoughts are with the Davis family and hopefully he will be back at the next meeting. Mr. Ampagoomian wants to know when the Mass Highway meeting can be rescheduled to look at Plummer's corner, as it was canceled due to inclement weather. Progress needs to be made on this matter, as it is a public safety concern. Mr. Audette is concerned with the businesses that were affected by the flood in Rockdale. Mrs. Audette spoke with the owner of the nail salon and was told that all applications submitted to FEMA were denied. In her case, she was told that because her husband worked and made over a certain sum of money, she was not eligible. She was directed to contact the Small Business Bureau. Mr. Collins has heard this from more than one person. The assistance for the Town expenses has been approved such as fire, DPW, road repair, etc. Unfortunately, the individuals' expenses have not been approved. Mr. Coughlin will continue to try and get help for these individuals and wants the support of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Collins suggests that each member of the Board call the State Representatives and put pressure on them to get the approvals. Mr. Ampagoomian pointed out that the DPW needs to look at which developers are responsible for remedying the freezing over of certain areas, as it is costing the DPW precious man hours and money to handle these problems.

VIII. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Coughlin commended the firefighters that are in the audience for the other important job they do each year in bringing Santa around on the ladder truck. He also thanked Evergreen for their Christmas wreath located over the main door of the Town Hall. He then thanked Sheriff Glodis for his inmates that prepped the fire station in Rockdale for painting. The actual painting will take place next week. The youth center will open tomorrow with a formal reopening in January 2006. He thanked the DPW for their work, which has often been overlooked. A top to bottom review of the DPW is taking place including staffing and funding with a report to be given to the Board of Selectmen on January 23, 2006.

IX. Items For Future Agenda

None.

X. Correspondence

None.

XI. Executive Session

None.

The Board of Selectmen and Mr. Coughlin wish everyone safe and Happy Holidays.

Motion to adjourn/Mr. Ampagoomian, second/Mr. Audette. Voted all in favor.

Open Session adjourned at 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Davis, Clerk