

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MACKINNON COUNCIL CHAMBER
MONDAY – May 4, 2009 – 7:30 PM**

A meeting of the Southbridge Council was held on Monday May 4, 2009, in the Robert MacKinnon Council Chambers.

Chairwoman Nikolla called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance-** Chairwoman Nikolla led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Roll Call-**Councilors present: **LOGAN, NIKOLLA, REGIS, VANDAL, and VECCHIA.** Excused: **KING, LAZO, LIVENGOOD and MCDONALD.**
3. **Consider and accept the minutes of the April 27, 2009 meeting-**Councilor Vecchia made a request to add his comments to include the legal fees to Copelman and Paige of \$500,000 as being in excess. A motion was made by Councilor Regis and seconded by Councilor Logan. **VOTE BY SHOW OF HANDS. ALL IN FAVOR.**
4. **Subcommittee Reports:**
 - (a) **General Government-**Councilwoman Nikolla read the minutes of April 28, 2009. No meeting scheduled. It was requested by Councilor Regis that in the future, all sub-committee reports that have a vote by roll call please list all names as they voted.
 - (b) **D.P.W.-**Councilor Vandal had no minutes. Meeting scheduled May 13, 2009
 - (c) **Education and Human Services-**Councilwoman Nikolla had no minutes. No meeting scheduled.
 - (d) **Planning and Development-**Councilwoman Nikolla had no minutes. Meeting scheduled May 7, 2009.
 - (e) **Protection of Persons and Property-**Councilwoman Nikolla had no minutes. No meeting scheduled.
 - (f) **Town Manager-**Councilor Regis had no minutes. No meeting scheduled.
5. **Swearing In Ceremony-**No swearing in candidates
6. **Chairman’s Announcements-** Councilwoman Nikolla had two comments
 - a.) Sat May 9, 2009 the Knights of Columbus will host an evening of festivities to benefit the Laos Association of Southbridge. It will be held 6:30-midnight. Admission for adults is \$10.00 and under 12 years of age free

- b.) On April 14-16, 2009 Town Manager Christopher Clark completed a series of seminars earning his Certified Public Purchasing Official.

7. Town Manager's Announcements-Town Manager Christopher Clark had the following comments:

- a.) Thursday May 7, 2009 at 7:00pm will be the Local Government 101 Basics of Budgeting class
- b.) Second Annual Community Meet and Greet Thursday June 18, 2009 6-8pm at the Southbridge Community Center on Chestnut Street. Call 508-764-5405 or Monique Manna at 508-764-7265 for more information.
- c.) SCAM alert by Attorney General on predatory lending. Information and video link can be found on town website.
- d.) Sturbridge settlement check totaling \$183,000 arrived and was deposited today.

7a. Citizens Forum

- a.) Javier Melendez of 257 Mechanic Street is a 17 year old student who had concerns about the lack of professionalism on the town council in previous weeks. He referenced comments regarding citizens who live on Worcester Street "choose to live there" as being an ignorant statement. He would like these comments denounced. He also asked council to jump start the economy by making summer employment opportunities for Southbridge youth. He feels that council has initiative to make things happen and citizens have an obligation to trust the council on their follow thru. A motion was made by Councilor Regis and seconded by Councilor Vandal to allow additional time to speak. He ended with asking to bring economy back and keep unprofessional comments at home. Chairwoman Nikolla commented that council couldn't create jobs, but applauds his initiative to voice comments. Town Manager Clark referenced a meeting with Workforce Central today that enabled 40-50 possible jobs for youth for 7 weeks over the summer due to allocated funds from the Federal Stimulus package.
- b.) Richard Whitney of 5 Pine Ridge Road announced next Future of Southbridge Meeting to be held May 21, 2009 at 7:00pm on Crane Street at the AO.
- c.) Stephanie DeMartino of 92 Harris Street agreed with Councilor Vecchia's comments on empowering local attorneys for legal matters. She felt that \$500, 000 to Copelman and Paige is an excess burden to tax payers. She is in favor of the access road for new business but questioned why can't be accessed from Route 20. Town Manager Clark responded that can only control within Southbridge borders and much of Route 20 is Charlton property, where Southbridge has no jurisdiction. Town already elected and decided on current location as well.

8. Vote to accept Amendment to Schedule 1 of the Town of Southbridge Revised Personnel Regulations Classification and Compensation Plan as follows: Effective May 18, 2009 (add Health Director position); July 1, 2009 (2% increase) and January 1, 2010 (change to new format). *Received favorable recommendation from subcommittee* A motion was made by Councilor Regis and seconded by Councilor Logan. **VOTE BY ROLL CALL. THOSE IN FAVOR: LOGAN, NIKOLLA, REGIS, VANDAL, and VECCHIA. Excused: KING, LAZO, LIVENGOOD and MCDONALD. MOTION PASSES.**

9. Vote to increase Demand Fees from \$5.00 to \$10.00. *Received favorable recommendation from subcommittee.* Councilor Logan requested clarification of a Demand fee, approximate impact on the citizens and rationale. Town Manager Clark explained that this fee, according to Massachusetts Law, can be issued as a demand of payment with a fee up to \$30.00. Melinda Ernst reported that the Town of Southbridge increase to \$10 was a minimal request, which gave an option to waive the fee for a hardship or determined case by case. As exemplified, 4,000 demand letters were submitted out of 10,000 bills on excise tax last year. A motion was made by Councilor Regis and seconded by Councilor Logan. **VOTE BY ROLL CALL. THOSE IN FAVOR: NIKOLLA, REGIS, and VECCHIA. THOSE OPPOSED: LOGAN and VANDAL. Excused: KING, LAZO, LIVENGOOD and MCDONALD. MOTION PASSES.**

10. Councilor's Forum

- a.) Councilor Logan-Questioned that it is now building season for town renovations, looking for handicap access ramp at Blockbuster Video to be located elsewhere as at the far end of store is inconvenient. Commented that Town Manager Clarks Local Government Class 101 was beneficial.
- b.) Councilor Vandal-Worcester Street across from Texaco Gas needed attention to trash. Would like landlords to receive letters to address the issue.
- c.) Councilor Vecchia-Board of Health Director Position needs to be filled. Complimented Town Manager for his decision to decrease salary for \$12,000 and omit raise increase when Vecchia was seeking a \$10,000 decrease in salary.
- d.) Councilor Regis-Inquired about raise negotiations. Town Manager Clark responded that January 1, 2010 non-union 2% increase was waived. Clerical union not yet discussed. Fire Union settled on 2% increase. Police and DPW are still in negotiations. A recap in 30 days will be provided to Council. Councilor Regis last question was to Town Manager Clark on his involvement with the school negotiations. Town Manager Clark responded that dialogue has been informal with Scott Lazo, but no direct observation.

11. Discussion of next meeting date-Councilwoman Nikolla announced next meeting date as May 18, 2009 at 7:00pm. Public Hearing for Budget will be held Thursday May 21, 2009 at 6:30pm

- 12. Vote to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation and return to open meeting for a possible vote.** A motion was made to enter Executive Session by Councilor Regis at 8:10pm and seconded by Councilor Logan. **VOTE BY ROLL CALL. THOSE IN FAVOR: LOGAN, NIKOLLA, REGIS, VANDAL, and VECCHIA.** Excused: KING, LAZO, LIVENGOOD and MCDONALD. **MOTION PASSES.**
- 13. Vote to approve Consent of Employer to Lump Sum Settlement in the amount of \$25,000 for the incident of March 2, 2005.** *Received favorable recommendation from subcommittee.* A motion was made by Councilor Regis and seconded by Councilor Vandal. **VOTE BY ROLL CALL. THOSE IN FAVOR: LOGAN, NIKOLLA, REGIS, VANDAL, and VECCHIA.** Excused: KING, LAZO, LIVENGOOD and MCDONALD. **MOTION PASSES.**
- 14. Adjournment-**A motion was made by Councilor Regis and seconded by Councilor Logan. **VOTE BY SHOW OF HANDS. ALL IN FAVOR.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Williams MASc Recording Clerk