

## **POLISHING A TURD**

**It is with unbelievable amazement and wonderment that a person (Gerald P. Skelton) can apply for a \$1,980,500.00 USDA loan without any authorization; without a vote by the BOS; without being a member of the BOS.**

**It is with unbelievable amazement and wonderment that the procurement of the building at 252 Baldwinville Road for a Municipal building was finalized without a written building inspection. How could our former Town Counsel, the prestigious law firm Kopelman & Paige, allow the purchase and sale agreement for this building to proceed without a thorough building inspection?**

**It is with unbelievable amazement and wonderment that the overriding motivation for the purchase of the building at 252 Baldwinville Road is so the parade route for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Templeton can be finalized rather than a thoughtful cost/benefit analysis of the property itself.**

## Brief History of \$400,000 Override Question

In May 2010, Article 64 passed at Town Meeting. Article 64 states: "...for the purchase and renovation of 252 Baldwinville Road ...and to meet such appropriation, to authorize the **Treasurer**, with the approval of the **Board of Selectmen**, to borrow such sum under G.L. 44, section 7...and to authorize the **Board of Selectmen** to apply for, accept and expend any grants or loans in connection therewith...". It is worth noting be that Article 64 does **NOT** authorize Gerald P. Skelton to apply for a USDA loan.

The purchase and sale agreement for 252 Baldwinville Road was executed on November 3, 2010. On January 9, 2012, the Board of Selectmen was informed by the Municipal Building Committee that no building inspection was done on 252 Baldwinville road building prior to its purchase.

The winter after the purchase of 252 Baldwinville Rd was severe. The Mass. building Code was revised. The roof at 252 Baldwinville Road does not meet the new Mass. building code. The municipal building committee is faced with a setback for the project.

On September 26, 2011, the former town coordinator is placed on paid administrative leave. On October 5, 2011, the Board of Selectmen receives a letter from James Lavin regarding a USDA loan for the Municipal Building project and a projected shortfall of \$962,000. Until the arrival of this letter, I was unaware of any USDA loan for this project. I do have an e-mail request to the former town coordinator for information regarding a USDA loan from June 2010, but I was not given any information regarding any USDA loan applications; not from the Municipal Building committee, not from the former town coordinator, not from the Board of Selectmen representatives on the Municipal Building Committee. As a duly elected member of the Templeton Board of Selectmen, I find that disturbing.

The October 4, 2011 letter from James Lavin, Area Specialist USDA, sparks an intensive search for the USDA loan application. It took two months before the Board of Selectmen obtained a copy of the USDA loan – a loan application completed and signed by Gerald P. Skelton. It is also disturbing that the Board of Selectmen's office does not have a complete set of records for this project which is paid for with public funds....your tax dollars.

## **WARRANT ARTICLES**

The Board of Selectmen(BOS) schedules a Special Town Meeting(STM) for November 7, 2011. The Board of Selectmen met on October 17, 2011 to discuss and vote on articles for the November 7<sup>th</sup> STM. The Municipal Building Committee submitted an article for STM. The wording of this article was discussed at length. The initial vote by the BOS failed to place this article on the warrant. The Municipal Building committee article was reconsidered by the Board of Selectmen and was placed on the warrant for the November 7<sup>th</sup> STM.

The discussion by the BOS regarding this article concerned whether the dollar amount of the override would be included in the article. The article also including a request for all of the remaining funds in the Pajari capital stabilization account. Both the override request and the Pajari request require a successful 2/3 vote at town meeting to pass. I asked the members of the building committee, repeatedly, if they wanted two separate articles – one for the Pajari money and one for the override. It was stated at that meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup> that if the Municipal building committee members wanted two separate articles, they would bring forward a substitute motion on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

In order to prepare for the STM on November 7<sup>th</sup>, I contacted Town Counsel on more than one occasion. As chairman, it was my responsibility to ensure that the motions were worded correctly. I asked town counsel to make sure the wording for the municipal building committee motion was worded correctly. I wanted to make sure the release of the Pajari funds was contingent upon the successful passage of the override. I was trying to ensure that that vote could not be challenged due to the fact that the Pajari money and the override money both require a 2/3 vote at town meeting.

At the STM on November 7<sup>th</sup>, there was lengthy discussion about the article for the Municipal Building. The motion was read by Selectman Bennett. The wording for this motion was written out for each selectman. Two members of the Board of Selectmen are also members of the municipal building committee; they also had the wording of the motion in front of them. No one, not one person made a substitute motion for this article. No substitute motion was made when the article failed to pass. No substitute motion was made during reconsideration of the article.

## **Cost/Benefit Analysis 252 Baldwinville Road**

The anticipated cost of the Municipal building project is over \$2.5 million dollars. \$1,980,500 will be funded with some type of loan that will need to be paid back under the levy limit. The town paid \$400,000 for the property. \$500,000 to bring the roof up to code. There has been little discussion about the floor of the building and the black mold in the building.

To an average citizen like myself, the floor at 252 Baldwinville Road appears to have settled significantly. A non-load bearing wall has a major crack; it appears the shifting of the floor caused that crack. The floor itself looks like it has a crown...like a road surface crowns to shed water. Having visited the building itself, I would also like to know what the plans are for cleaning up the black mold in the building.

\$400,000 override in addition to the \$157,000 Pajari funds seems like a whole lot of taxpayer dollars to me.

**DO NOT RECALL...REMEMBER !**

**\$557,000 is a lot of polish!**