

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2019
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**



Present: Nicholas O'Connor, George D. Archible, Gail Gramarossa, Ed Boscher
Absent: Brenda Q. Aldrich

Call to Order: Chairman O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Sign Documents:

- a) Warrant #1931 was signed for \$881,906.88.
- b) Routine documents
- c) Approval of Minutes: None.

3) Additions to the Agenda:

4) Appearances Before the Board:

- 7:03 p.m. Jim Barry, Green Communities Regional Coordinator – Solarize Mass 2019 Program and RFP Launch: A review of the prior discussion was held regarding the opportunity to participate in the program. The Selectmen were provided with a handout regarding the Solarize Mass 2019 Program and FRP Launch. It is a State sponsored solar program that is offered to municipalities. The town has to vote to participate and have at least one town employee be involved in it. Doug Albertson, Town Planner has volunteered to be that person.

This program is about educating residents and small business owners of the pros and cons of having solar photovoltaic electricity on their homes and the prices of it. If you get a lot of people together there can be a discount on the pricing.

The State will help the Town with the RFP that needs to be done in order to choose an installer. The State has a list of installers that they have been dealing with for years and have been vetted. The State will also provide \$5,000 to help the Town with marketing, hosting meetings, printing brochures, etc.

Mr. O'Connor asked for clarification on some issues as he was not present for the first presentation. Mr. Barry confirmed that this program is only for home owners. It is a purchase only option. This program is to educate residents about the use of solar. They are not limited to buying from this program. They can go outside the program and choose an installer of their own.

If there were multiple technologies being offered there would be additional money being offered above the \$5,000. Large communities receive extra money; a designated low income community will also receive more money to get affordable access. Belchertown will get the \$5,000 standard and if we choose additional technology such as air source heat pumps and/or solar photovoltaic there would be an additional \$1,000 per additional technology.

Rental properties can be included if the landlord is the applicant.

There is the Mass Save loan program that some banks participate in. You may be able to get a reduced rate on a loan and the State pays off some of the loan especially for people who are below the Massachusetts standard income level. The federal tax credit for residential solar is still there for 2019 as is the state tax credit.

Ms. Gramarossa moved the Board proceed with forming a group to officially apply for the Mass Solarize program. The motion was seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.

- 7:25 p.m. Members of the Historical Commission and Historic District By-Law Commission – Certified Local Government Status: Jill Bierly from the Historical Commission came before the Board to talk about a program through the Mass Historic Commission called a Certified Local Government. To reach this designation we would have to apply to Mass Historic Commission, have a Historic Commission and Historic District By-Law Commission which we have and file an annual report. It does not cost the Town any money to become a Certified Local Government but can bring in funding for historic preservation projects.

Mr. Archible questioned what authority it gives them. The Certified Local Government gives the opportunity to apply for grants through Mass Historic Commission. Their staff will help us to apply for those grants and advise us on projects that we might want to consider. Their funding partially comes from the federal government and 10% of that funding every year is earmarked for Certified Local Government which makes us more competitive.

Mr. Boscher questioned if this just applied to the Historic Commission. He was told it would apply to every other commission in town as long as it relates to historic preservation. Ms. Bierly indicated there are only 25 communities in Massachusetts with this designation.

Mr. Boscher moved the Board take the steps to become a Certified Local Government. Motion seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0.

Mr. Brougham questioned the application process. He was told it is a rolling process and takes effect as soon as it is approved by the State.

- 7:35 p.m. Town Common Lighting Committee: Gloria Fortunato and Cindy Brown came before the Board to review the accomplishments of the committee. They accomplished everything they wanted to do with the holiday lighting.

Going forward they want to amend the charge that was given to the committee. They would like to install vintage lighting on the common along Main Street as seen in the 1800's. They also want to update the infrastructure around the town common, the lighting, and the wiring.

They want the charge to be amended to update and expand the current electrical systems on the common to support the increasing number of events using this

important town space. In time they would like to add historically appropriate ambient lighting similar to those once placed on the common mid-18th century.

Mr. O'Connor commented that the terms for the Town Lighting Committee go through the end of June like all other committees. At that time they would go through the annual re-appointment process. There was no talk of disbanding the committee. Ms. Fortunato questioned the term "lights" for the committee – does that mean holiday lights only or going forward any lights such as the ambient lighting that was suggested. She was told it meant all lighting. She requested it in writing from the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Brown is aware that this is a multi-step, multi-year undertaking. The existing wiring on the common is 30 years old and while functioning is barely meeting the needs of the Fair Committee never mind the needs of what might happen in the future. They would like the wiring to go all around the common instead of being limited as it is now. Ms. Brown estimates the cost to improve the electrical around the common to be around \$200,000.

Mr. O'Connor wrapped the conversation up by again indicating that the committee members have annual appointments and they would go through the annual re-appointment process and allow them to work on everything with the updated charge.

5) Discussion/Action Items:

- a. Accept Resignation from Cultural Council: Ms. Gramarossa presented the details to the Board. Matt Grillo submitted his letter of resignation from the Cultural Council due to other commitments. A letter will be sent to Mr. Grillo thanking him for his service to the Town.
- b. Letter from Jared Newell, 10 Keyes Street: Mr. Archible presented the details of Mr. Newell's letter to the Board.

Mr. Brougham, Town Administrator was asked if he had any other details regarding the request. It is unclear whether Mr. Newell is looking for abatement back to the date the property was purchased or if he is looking to pay what he has accrued in sewer charges from the date of his purchase and be placed as inactive going forward. There have been no permits pulled for this property either for renovations or demolition. Mr. Brougham explained how the sewer user fees work. The only time sewer user fees can be suspended is if a demolition permit has been pulled; other users have been denied abatement or forgiveness of fees when there is none. There is nothing to support abating this request or putting this bill in an inactive status. If the owner is interested in a demolition he should come in and pull the demolition permit.

Mr. Archible moved the Board deny the request to place the bill in an inactive status and advise Mr. Newell he will need to pull a demolition permit going forward. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 4 – 0.

- c. Miscellaneous:

6) Town Administrator's Report: No report given.

7) **Review of Weekly Mail:** See Mr. Archible's report.

8) **Individual Board Members' Reports:**

Mr. Archible: Mr. Jay Buckley submitted a letter regarding his concerns about traffic on Michael Sears Road. He would like to see some things done to curb the speed on the road as well as some other suggestions. He will go out to Michael Sears Road with Steve Williams, Director of Public Works and the Chief of Police to see what can be done regarding Mr. Buckley concerns.

Mr. Brougham indicated that Mr. Buckley's concerns have been ongoing for the last three years. He had the police department pull a crash report from that area and there was only one accident on record at the intersection of Michael Sears Road and Rte. 181 since 2015. There have been no calls to the police department by Mr. Buckley complaining about excessive speed. Chief Pronovost has agreed to put the electronic billboard in the neighborhood and that device has a method of printing out a report to establish the maximum and minimum speed in the area.

Mr. Archible questioned the Town Administrator asking if all businesses had picked up their liquor licenses for 2019. Mr. Brougham believes that there is still one business that has not picked up their license which is for the restaurant at the Cold Spring Golf Course. He confirmed that even if the license holder picks it up late he will be responsible for paying for the license in full. It does not get prorated.

Ms. Gramarossa:

- The Jabish Brook Chili Cook-off is happening later this week and encouraged people to attend.
- Congratulations to our school superintendent on her upcoming retirement.
- Preparations are underway for the upcoming budget cycle.
- Thanked the DPW and the Town Administrator for all the work they did during the really intense rain storm that we just had.

Mr. Boscher:

- The Chili Cook-off is phenomenal.
- It was great speaking with the Family Center. They are very happy with all the help that the DPW has given them. They are talking about bringing some of the big machines over for the kids to see when it gets warmer
- He has a meeting with the senior center to talk about their budget process.

Mr. O'Connor:

- Budget season is firing up. We had our first finance committee meeting. The Board will have some material to go over as they had some recommendations on some policy suggestions.
- The first Patrick Center Re-Use committee meeting was held. Things will be moving forward. The Recreation Department is looking at applying for a PARCC grant to help with demolishing the old tennis courts.

9) **Questions from the Press:** Aimee Henderson from *The Sentinel* had a question about the Solar Mass program and the timeframe for the program. The Board was not sure about the timeline. Mr. O'Connor told her to reach out to Doug Albertson, the Town Planner as he will be a part of the program.


10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed: February 11, 2019

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:




Nicholas O'Connor, Chairman



Gail Gramarossa



Ed Boscher



George D. Archible

(Absent)
Brenda Q. Aldrich