

TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2016
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall

Present: George D. Archible, Brenda Q. Aldrich, Nicholas O'Connor, William R. Barnett,
Ronald E. Aponte

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

2) Sign Documents:

- a) Warrant #1720 was signed for \$1,180,048.04.
- b) Routine documents
- c) Approval of Minutes: Mr. O'Connor moved the Board accept the minutes of October 24, 2016. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0. Mr. O'Connor moved the Board accept the executive session minutes of September 12, 2016. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.

3) Additions to the Agenda: None.

4) Appearances Before the Board:

- 7:35 p.m. Classification Hearing with Board of Assessors: Mr. O'Connor read the Classification Hearing Notice. Present for the hearing were Tom Barry, Chairman and Don Minney, Vice-Chair and Ray Goff, Clerk of the Board of Assessors as well as Jay Whelihan, Director of Assessments.

Mr. Barry stated that at a regular scheduled meeting the Board of Assessors had voted to keep a tax factor of one. Mr. Whelihan took over the presentation. He indicated that this is basically the last step in setting the tax rate. The State has provided their estimate as to what they will be providing the Town for revenue. This last step is for the Board of Selectmen to decide if they want to shift some of the tax burden between the classes.

He presented the values for 2017, discussed the FY17 recap, and discussed budget planning documents.

He reviewed rates in comparable communities. He feels that Belchertown should remain with a single rate as the Town doesn't have enough business to split the rate. He stated the average tax bill will increase \$134 per year.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the town has historically not split the tax bill to put more of a burden on business in order to attract new business to town. He doesn't think it's really paid off. Mr. Aponte stated that by keeping it the same it helps to keep existing business in town.

Mr. Barry reiterated that the Board of Assessors recommends a factor of one.

Mr. O'Connor moved to close the classification hearing. Motion seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 5 – 0.

Mr. Aponte proposed and moved the Board endorse a municipal tax factor of one. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich.

Mr. O'Connor stated he had a quick discussion. He indicated the Revenue Committee met last week and they came up with some estimates. In an estimated level service funded budget for school and town, not including the capital list or the needs list, there is a \$2,000,000 deficit between our tax levy and our level service. Level service and needs is a \$4,000,000 deficit and if you include capital its \$6,000,000. This does not include the cherry sheets and free cash amounts. He stated we have a structural deficit that can't be closed by taxation alone and that there will have to be deeper cuts. He brought this up so the Board members would be aware that if an override was done to close the gap in half it would cost the tax payers an additional \$325 on top of the tax levy amount of \$134. His thinking is if businesses are asked to pay an additional amount on the tax levy to save the residents the \$134 it may be easier to get an override through as asking residents to pay \$500 more a year on taxes will be difficult.

Mr. Aponte feels it is dangerous to ask businesses to pay a higher amount if we are ever going to increase our business and commercial tax base. Mr. O'Connor understands that and agrees but also feels that the Board has been telling that to the tax payers for the last 20 years and it hasn't gotten the town anywhere.

Mr. Archible stated that reality has finally come to Belchertown with the things now happening at the former State School grounds. The assisted living facility will break ground in the spring of 2017.

Mr. O'Connor wanted to bring this up to the Board now because come budget time the town will have to make deep cuts whether its 5th grade band, jv sports or positions at town hall.

Mr. Aponte still feels it isn't right to balance our budget on the backs of business in town especially when we are trying to get more business in town. Also in regards to an override that is something the residents will decide at the ballots. He also feels it is fairly late in the year to be changing to tax rate for business that run calendar year.

Mr. Minney from the Board of Assessors questioned the rate for school enrollment; he asked if it has gone up or down. He was told the enrollment was down by about 300 students. If the trend continues it could possibly mean the closing of a school. Mr. Minney thinks the town would be looking at a reduced amount of money for the schools. He also stated that the population in town is getting older and possibly raising taxes by about \$500 is going to be difficult as there are people wondering how they are going to pay for food. Maybe cuts will need to be made at town hall and in not giving raises to employees. Mr. O'Connor stated he is advocating for shifting the load and increasing some of the burden onto the businesses in town. Mr. Minney feels if that is done before the State School grounds are developed that once the business comes to town we are sending the message that once you come into town we are going to increase the taxes.

Mr. Archible called for the vote on the motion to keep the tax rate at a factor of one.
Motion passes 5 – 0.

5) Discussion/Action Items:

- a. Waive Hearing for Class III License Renewal: Mr. Aponte presented the details to the Board. The Board of Selectmen can choose to waive a hearing for a Class III license renewal. There is only one Class III license in Town for P & T Enterprise and the Board has always waived the hearing due to the fact that there have been no issues with this license holder.

Mr. Aponte moved the Board waive the Class III license renewal hearing for the P & T Enterprise Class III license. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- b. Appointment of Family Center Committee Member: Mr. O'Connor presented the details to the Board. Per the recommendation of the Family Center Committee, Mr. O'Connor moved to appoint Nicole Dunham to the Family Center Committee, term to expire June 30, 2019. Motion seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- c. Appointment of Housing Authority Member: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to the Board. The Board has received a letter from Pamela Rogers, Executive Director of the Belchertown Housing Authority recommending the Board appoints Marie Ciosek to the Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority. Ms. Ciosek's son works for the housing authority but it is felt that there is no conflict of interest.

Ms. Aldrich moved the Board appoint Marie Ciosek to the Board of Commissioners for the Belchertown Housing Authority with the term to end at the next town election in May 2017. Motion seconded by Mr. Aponte. Mr. Aponte asked Ms. Ciosek if she was aware that she would have to run for re-election at the next town election. She responded affirmatively. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- d. Appointment of Associate Member to the Zoning Board of Appeals: Mr. Barnett presented the details to the Board. Per the recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals, Mr. Barnett moved to appoint Jennifer Sharrow as an associate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, term to expire June 30, 2017. Motion seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- e. Review Appeal of Building Inspector's Cease & Desist Order – New England Small Farms Institute, 270 Jackson Street: Mr. Aponte presented the details to the Board. The New England Small Farm Institute is appealing a decision by the Zoning Enforcement Officer of a cease and desist order for a proposed slaughter house. There were concerns regarding sewer connections, water connections, disposal plans of by-products. Town Counsel has reviewed the plan and it is their opinion that it is not an allowed use. NESFI disputes this as they believe they have all the proper connections and that this is a demonstration facility. However, NESFI has indicated that there will be upwards of 20,000 poultry/fowl slaughtered in this facility.

Mr. Aponte stated that personally he backs the decision of the zoning enforcement officer and town counsel as 20,000 is not a demonstration. Ms. Aldrich was in agreement; 20,000 are a slaughter and not a demonstration. Mr. Aponte feels the Board should encourage the ZBA to support the cease and desist order for all the reasons that

are listed. It is a ZBA decision but he feels the Board should encourage them to do their due diligence. Mr. Barnett reiterated that they do not have the proper water facilities, the drainage facilities; there is no proper disposal of the carcasses that will cause an unpleasant smell for the residents who live nearby

Mr. O'Connor moved the Board back the cease and desist order sent by Mr. Paul Adzima, Zoning Enforcement Officer as well as the opinion of town counsel. Motion seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion was all in favor. The Board will have Gary Brougham, Town Administrator send a letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals indicating their support of the cease and desist order.

Mr. O'Connor stated he is concerned as this is the second or third NESFI thing that has come up during his term as a selectman and it concerns him that there appears to be a fracture between the town and NESFI. At some point it should be addressed as it is not a productive relationship and it needs to be worked out.

- f. Accept Resignation from Full-Time Police Dispatcher: Mr. Aponte presented the details to the Board. Jeffrey T. Hastings, Jr. resigned from his position as a full-time dispatcher, effective October 30, 2016. A letter will be sent to Mr. Hastings thanking him for his service to the town.
- g. Endorse Contract and Scope of Services – FY17 Local Cultural Council Funds: Mr. Barnett presented the details to the Board. The Massachusetts Cultural Council will be giving \$5,500 to the Belchertown Cultural Council with the condition that the Standard Contract Form is endorsed by the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Barnett moved the Board accept the \$5,500 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and that the Board authorizes the Chairman of the Board endorses the Standard Contract Form. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- h. Review Woodland Lane Definitive Subdivision Plan (Off Bardwell Street): Mr. Aponte presented the details to the Board. A definitive subdivision plan has been submitted for Woodland Lane off of Bardwell Street. There are approximately 20 housing lots that are being proposed for this subdivision that will be on a dead-end street.

He stated there are some concerns with the plan. The town administrator has delineated a couple of them. This will be a planning board decision but he does encourage and strongly suggest the planning board listen to the public safety officials and any concerns or suggestions they may have as well as also from the department of public works.

- i. Vote Winter Parking Ban: Mr. Archible presented the details to the Board. He read the winter parking and impediment ban. Mr. Aponte moved the Board accept the winter parking and impediment ban. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- j. Endorse Chapter 90 Reimbursements: Mr. Archible presented the details to the Board. The total requested amount is \$532,391.69. Mr. Aponte moved the Board endorse Chapter 90 reimbursement request in the amount of \$7,363.20 for engineering services on the Maple Street congestion management project. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0. Mr. Archible moved the Board endorse chapter 90 reimbursement requests in the amount of \$525,028.49 for crack sealing, bituminous concrete and chip sealing on various town roads. Seconded by Mr. Barnett. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- k. Endorse Green Communities Annual Report – FY16: Ms. Aldrich presented the details. Steve Williams, Director of Public Works has requested that the town administrator sign

endorse the Green Communities Annual Report. Ms. Aldrich moved the Board authorize the Chairman of the Board to endorse the Green Communities Annual Report as the town administrator is out of the office. Seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 5 – 0.

1. Miscellaneous Matters: None.

6) **Town Administrator's Report:** None.

7) **Review of Weekly Mail:** Mail reviewed, no discussion held.

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

Mr. Aponte: Wants to bring the residents attention to the fact that the police department has created a "safe zone". If you've purchased something on craigslist for example and are looking for a safe place to finalize the transaction you can go to the police station parking lot. The police department also has an app called My PD which gets you on the inside track with regards to text messages, notifications, and etcetera. Good things happening down at the police department so a thank you to Chief Pronovost and the Belchertown Police Department.

Mr. Barnett: Commended the Town Clerk for her magnificent job with the election. Board members were in agreement with the wonderful job that the Clerk's office did.

Ms. Aldrich: Thanked *The Sentinel* reporter for his article on the Senior Center. Also a thank you to Gary Brougham, Steve Williams and the highway department. She had received a call Friday morning that there was some vulgar and vile graffiti on the south end of town that had been spray painted on some boulders. It was sandblasted and painted away. If anyone sees that kind of stuff they should notify the selectmen's office or a selectman and it will be taken care of.

Mr. O'Connor: A job well done at the Belchertown High School Veterans' Day presentation.

Mr. Archible: A big thank you to Veterans' Agent, Ray Janke for the Veterans' Day service that he put together. He did an outstanding job. He also thanked the 3rd graders at Swift River School for their veterans' presentation, also Jeff Gold the music teacher as well as the art teacher.

Mr. O'Connor thanked Mr. Charron who is the new school committee member; he was the guest speaker at the high school service and was introduced by his son. Mr. Charron also did a very good job at the high school service.

9) **Questions from the Press:** Steve Hill from *The Sentinel* questioned if it was a \$350 tax increase would bring about a million dollars in tax revenue. Mr. O'Connor confirmed that he was correct based on the average price of a home.

He also questioned when the cease and desist order was issued on NESFI. It was issued on September 26, 2016. The ZBA hearing has been scheduled for Wednesday, December 21, 2016 at 6:35 p.m.

He questioned if any slaughtering of poultry had actually taken place before the cease and desist order. To the Board's knowledge it had not happened.

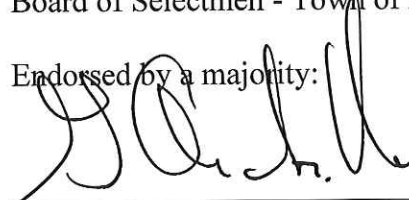
10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed: Dec. 12, 2016

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:



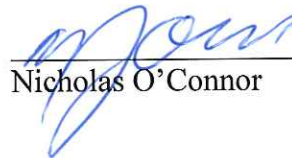
George D, Archible, Chairman



Brenda Q. Aldrich

Ronald E, Aponte

William R. Barnett



Nicholas O'Connor