

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2017
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**



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

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

2) Sign Documents:

- a) Warrant #1822 was signed for \$1,875,226.65.
- b) Routine documents
- c) Approval of Minutes: None.

3) Additions to the Agenda:

- Accept Conservation Commission Member's Resignation: Mr. Aponte presented the details to the Board; Nicholas Burns submitted his letter of resignation from the Conservation Commission effective November 21, 2017. A letter will be sent to Mr. Burns thanking him for his service to the Town.

4) Appearances Before the Board:

- 7:45 p.m. Classification Hearing with Board of Assessors: Board of Assessor members (Raymond Goff, Donald Minney and Thomas Barry) as well as Jay Whelihan, Director of Assessments were present for the hearing. Mr. Barry informed the Board that at a Board of Assessor's meeting in a vote of 3 – 0 the recommendation was to keep a single tax rate.

Mr. Whelihan took over the presentation and indicated this is the last step in setting the tax rate. Evaluations have been approved, the appropriations have all been set and the last part is to set the tax rate. The Board of Selectmen needs to vote on a residential factor. The Board of Assessor's has voted that the Board of Selectmen not shift the rate and adopt a factor of one which is one rate for the whole town. Changing the tax rate will not change the tax levy for evaluations. It is just the allocation of the levy. The State allows the residential levy is reduced and the difference picked up by commercial classes.

He presented statistical information with comparison community data. The proposed FY rate is \$18.19 with a maximum FY rate of \$18.29.

Mr. Archible moved to close the hearing. Motion seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 3 – 0.

Mr. Archible moved to endorse a factor of one as the FY18 tax rate. Motion seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 3 – 0.

- 8:10 p.m. Colleen Toothill-Berte, Town Clerk: Ms. Toothill-Berte came before the Board and is requesting the Board of Selectmen's support to designate the town website as the official posting site for public meetings and / or notices.

Mr. Aponte moved that for the Town of Belchertown the Board of Selectmen designate the town website as the official posting mechanism for all town meetings and agendas. Motion seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 3 – 0.

- 8:15 p.m. LeeAnne Connolly, Conservation Administrator – Endorse Acceptance of Deed, Catherine Drive Open Space Land Gift: Ms. Connolly came before the Board requesting the acceptance of the deed to Catherine Drive open space land gift. The Board of Selectmen has already voted to accept the land gift. She now has the deed, drawn up by town counsel, for the Board to endorse. She reiterated all legal costs are being covered by the Kestrel Trust.

Mr. Aponte moved the Board endorse the deed for Catherine Drive open space land gift. Motion seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 5 – 0.

5) Discussion/Action Items:

- a. Accept Historical Commission Member's Resignation: Mr. Aponte presented the details to the Board. After many years of service to the Town, Les Squires is resigning from the Historical Commission and the Community Preservation Committees, effective immediately. He served on the historical commission for 21-years and the community preservation committee since its inception. A letter will be sent to Mr. Squires thanking him for his many years of service to the Town.
- b. Appointment of Part-Time Firefighter/Paramedic: Mr. Aponte presented the details to the Board. Fire Chief Bock is recommending the appointment of part-time firefighter/paramedic. Mr. Aponte moved the Board appoint Aaron Mackenzie to the position of part-time firefighter/paramedic, effective immediately. Mr. Mackenzie has previously worked for the department and has all the proper certifications. Motion seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 3 – 0.
- c. Henry Martin – Request for Easement of Capen Street: Mr. Brougham, town administrator, presented the details to the Board. Mr. Martin's owns a piece of property with very limited frontage off of Federal Street which would require the crossing of wetlands to access. It is a wood lot and Mr. Martin is an active participant in the American Chestnut Tree Restoration Foundation. He manages this property as a tree farm. He is seeking an easement across a discontinued road known as Capen Road which is off Allen Road. He wants to be able to access his property for cutting firewood and logging. Mr. Martin has no interest in building the property he only wants to be able to enter his property and to maintain it. Mr. Martin is willing to have his attorney draw up the legal documents for the easement for the Board's signature if the Board is in agreement in granting it.

Mr. Aponte is in favor as long as there is a stipulation in the easement agreement that it is for the management of the particular forest. He doesn't want someone to be able to utilize it 20 years from now and develop this property.

Mr. Archible moved the Board grant the easement of Capen Street with the stipulation that it be used for the management of this particular forest. Motion seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 3 – 0.

- d. Waive Hearing for Class III License Renewal: Mr. Archible presented the details to the Board. The Board has waived the Class III (auto-salvage) hearing for many years as there have not been any complaints regarding this business. Mr. Archible moved the Board waive the Class III Hearing. Motion seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 3 – 0.
- e. Accept Retirement of Council on Aging Director: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to the Board. The Board has received notification from Bill Korzenowski, the Director of the Senior Center that he will be retiring. His last day in the office will be January 19, 2018. He has been the director for the past 17 years and has seen a lot of growth and has done a lot for the seniors. It is with sadness that the Board accepts his letter or retirement.

The town administrator confirmed that the town will be advertising soon for his replacement in a number of media outlets.

- f. Miscellaneous Matters: Mr. Aponte stated the Board's last meeting of the month is Christmas week and the Board doesn't usually meet that week. Licensing hits pretty hard at this time of the year and that the Board tries to address any issues or concerns at their meeting of December 11th. If there are things that are still outstanding after that the Board could always schedule for December 18th or the week of the 18th. The board members were in agreement.

6) Town Administrator's Report:

- Updated the Board on the progress of the assisted living. The building is pretty well closed up and the inside work is progressing. The target date for opening is April 19, 2018. The Grantham Group also looked for an office space close by that they could use temporarily for interviewing, screening potential residents and such. The town made arrangements with them to use a vacant room in the recreation department. They posted a certificate of insurance and are making a donation to the recreation department.
- There have been a lot of unexpected challenges with the extension of Front Street. The area next to the former garden center is quite wet and with the amount of rain that we've had there's been a difficult time getting compaction on the utility trenches. There was concern the binder coat wouldn't be down before the ground freezes. There has been some success lately. He and Steve Williams made the decision that even if there is some anticipation of settling as opposed to facing damages from the developer for failure to have a road by his opening in the spring that the road will be paved with at least binder coat this year and if necessary do what is needed in the spring. He provided further updates regarding the utility work.
- There was a little bit of a delay with the Patrick Center. The asbestos removal contractors have been on site. He expects to see Associated Building Wreckers on site by next week.

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

8) Individual Board Members' Reports:

Mr. Archible: Will attend the MPO meeting on Tuesday. It is a very important seat and has made it possible for him to help get projects in town.

Ms. Aldrich: Attended the recreation meeting last week. There was a hitch in getting the site plan done for the disk golf but they are working on it.

- 9) **Questions from the Press:** Steve Hill from *The Sentinel* and Jim Russell from *The Republican* asked questions regarding the tax rates. Mr. Whelihan answered their questions.

Lew Louraine from *Belchertown TV* has more of a statement than a question. They have been out taping so for anyone who wants to know about Christopher Heights and what the rooms may or may not look like, they did an hour tour in Northampton and today they were invited to do a hard hat tour at the Belchertown facility. They will be running those on bctv starting next Friday.

Mr. Russell also questioned the Pride Station that is to be built on the corner of Routes 21 and 202. He was told that because the Planning Board delayed the project the property owner missed the construction season.

- 10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.


Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed: December 11, 2017

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:


Brenda Q. Aldrich, Chairman


George D. Archible


Ronald E. Aponte

William R. Barnett

Nicholas O'Connor