

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2016  
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**

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

- 1) **Call to Order:** Chairman Aponte called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.
  
- 2) **Sign Documents:**
  - a) Warrant #1641 was signed for \$421,218.67.
  - b) Routine documents
  - c) Approval of Minutes: Ms. Aldrich moved the Board accept the minutes of March 14, 2016. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 3 – yes, 1 – abstain (Archible).  
Ms. Aldrich moved the Board accept the minutes of March 21, 2016. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0.
  
- 3) **Additions to the Agenda:**
  - Request to Transfer from the Reserve Fund – Animal Control and Inspection Services: Mr. Aponte moved the Board approve and endorse the transfer of \$4,500 to the dog officer wage budget to cover pay for remaining dog calls/animal calls for this fiscal year. Seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – 0.  
  
Mr. Aponte moved the Board approve and endorse the transfer of \$3,500.00 to cover Inspections – Part-Time Wage budget to cover wages for inspections for the remainder of this fiscal year. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.
  
- 4) **Appearances Before the Board:** None.
  
- 5) **Discussion/Action Items:**
  - a. Endorse State House Note for Renewal of Borrowing – Jackson Farm: Mr. Aponte presented the details. There is a Note in the amount of \$39,000 at 0.73% for one year.  
  
Mr. Aponte that the Board endorse the Borrowing Certificate in the amount of \$39,000.00 for one year at a rate of 0.73% from Greenfield Cooperative Bank. Seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – 0.  
  
Mr. Aponte moved the Board endorse the Town Treasurer's Record for the Certificate. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0.  
  
Mr. Aponte moved the Board endorse the Material Events Disclosure for this Note. Seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – 0.  
  
Mr. Aponte moved the Board endorse the Certificate and Designation as a qualified tax exemption obligation. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0.

- b. Review Articles Submitted for Annual Town Meeting: Mr. Aponte presented the details of each of the articles. This is a preliminary list of articles for the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Brougham mentioned that there would be one additional article for Town Meeting, the Solar Tax Pilot Agreement between Nexamp and the Town of Belchertown for the May Farm Solar.

The Special Town Meeting Warrant needs to be posted on Monday, April 25, 2016. The Annual Town Meeting warrant will need to be posted on Monday, May 2, 2016.

- c. Appointments of Animal Control Department: Mr. Aponte presented the details. This is an annual appointment. Mr. Aponte moved to appoint Anna Fenton, Animal Control Officer; Janet Lipscomb, and Lawrence Belbin as Assistant Animal Control Officers, all terms effective May 1, 2016 with a term to expire April 30, 2017. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0.
- d. Appointment of Veterans' Service Agent: Mr. Archible presented the details. This is also an annual appointment. Mr. Archible moved to appoint Ray Janke as the Veterans' Agent, term effective May 1, 2016 with an expiration date of April 30, 2017. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0.
- e. Designate Representative to PVPC Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): Ms. Aldrich presented the details. The Metropolitan Planning Organization is seeking the appointment of a selectman to serve on the MPO to be considered to represent up to 14 Western Massachusetts cities and towns. Currently, Selectman Archible serves in this capacity. Mr. Aldrich moved the Board designate Selectman Archible as the representative to the MPO. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0.
- f. National Telecommunicators Week, April 10 – 16: Ms. Aldrich presented the details. David Squires, Administrative Assistant to the Chief/Communications Supervisor has asked the Board to formally recognize National Telecommunicators Week. He wants to acknowledge the work that the dispatchers do on a daily basis. Ms. Aldrich moved the Board formally recognize National Telecommunicators Week, April 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.
- g. Senator Eric Lesser's Letter to EOEEA Regarding Timber Rattlesnakes: Mr. O'Connor presented the details, reading the letter prepared by Senator Eric Lesser regarding the timber rattlesnake proposal for Quabbin Reservoir.

Mr. Aponte feels the public has not been heard. The Board is still requesting an on site meeting to address the concerns. He feels the meeting should include the Town of Ware. The Board is requesting this meeting after our Annual Town Meeting.

Gary Brougham, will send a letter from the Board supporting the legislators regarding the timber rattlesnake. He will also put together a meeting regarding the timber rattlesnakes at the Belchertown High School and include the Town of Ware.

- h. Discuss or Appoint Members to Recreation Director Search Committee: Mr. Aponte presented the details. He questioned if a letter has been received from Mr. Opalenik with a retirement date. Mr. O'Connor indicated that the letter had just been received. Mr. O'Connor moved the Board accept the letter of retirement from Mr. Opalenik, effective June 30, 2016. Seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – 0.

The Board agreed that the Gary Brougham, Town Administrator; Steve Williams, Director of Public Works; Dawn French, School Committee Member and Bill Vosburgh, Recreation Committee member would be on the Search Committee. The Board then voted for the three at-large members. Following a vote the Board agreed

to Donna Spraggon and Christopher Shea as two of the at-large members by a unanimous vote. The Board did not come to an agreement regarding the third at-large member.

Mr. Aponte moved the Board appoint Gary Brougham, Steve Williams, Dawn French, Bill Vosburgh, Donna Spraggon and Christopher Shea to the Recreation Director Search Committee. Seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – 0.

Mr. Aponte will notify Selectman Barnett that he will need to vote for either Mr. Anziano or Mr. Otto at the next Board meeting, (either at the Finance Committee meeting this Thursday, or the appointment of a new Police Chief meeting this Friday),

- i. Executive Session – MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 2 and 3: Ms. Aldrich moved the Board enter executive session at the conclusion of their regular session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsections 2 and 3 and not to reconvene in open meeting. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Roll call vote: Aponte – yes, Archible – yes, Aldrich – yes, O'Connor – yes.
- j. Miscellaneous Matters: None.

- 6) **Town Administrator's Report:** Having received Mr. Opalenik's letter of retirement in the office today, the staff has advertised for the position. The deadline to apply for this position is May 11, 2016.

He has been working on the warrant for the Special Town Meeting. The John Patrick Center will appear on both the Special and Annual Town Meeting warrants. The Special Town meeting warrant needs to be posted on April 25, 2016. Annual Town meeting warrant will be posted on May 2, 2016.

Budgets are being worked on. He is hopeful that there will be an update from the State House regarding budgets this week. He has asked the Director of Assessments, Jay Whelihan, to come up with a fact sheet on proposition 2 ½ overrides.

- 7) **Review of Weekly Mail:**

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

Mr. O'Connor: In speaking with the Director of Assessments he found out that in order to do an override for every million dollars it would raise taxes about .75¢ per thousand. It would raise taxes to approximately \$18.72 making it about a \$200 - \$230 increase on property taxes.

Ms. Aldrich: The director of the Amherst Survival Center is scheduled to come and speak to the Board at the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. There is a School Committee meeting tomorrow night. She thanked Belchertown Police Officer Robbie Mann. She was working at Rannsaka on Saturday and saw the unmarked cruiser go up and down the street. She watched Officer Mann perform a stop in front of the store. He was very professional throughout the stop. She spoke with him and was told that the State Police had put out an initiative to stop all people who were texting and driving. She thanked him as his professionalism showed in the stops that she saw him make.

Mr. Aponte: On Friday there is a Board of Selectmen's meeting at which time public input will be allowed at the beginning of the meeting for the appointment of the new

police chief. Once the public has had their opportunity to speak, the Board will deliberate and make an appointment.

9) **Questions from the Press:** Jim Russell from *The Republican* questioned the Board on several issues:

- The start time of Friday's meeting. He was told it begins at 7:00 p.m. and will be held in the auditorium.
- He also questioned if the Board has heard if the State has made any decisions regarding Mary Lane Hospital. The Board has not heard anything.
- He questioned the CPA's warrant article for \$20,000 and the money from last year's annual town meeting towards the Assisted Living at the former Belchertown State School property. Last year's money was never expended.
- He mentioned the timber rattlesnake issue at Quabbin. He confirmed that the Board in conjunction with Ware will be requesting a meeting where the community can express their concern. Several members of the audience spoke in favor of the timber rattlesnakes.
- He asked if there was a salary range for the Recreation Director's position. The information was not readily available.
- He wanted clarification on the Patrick Center – he understood that it would either be on the Special Town meeting warrant or the Annual Town meeting warrant but questioned if a special town meeting might have to be scheduled prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>. It was confirmed that at this point everything should be taken care of in the annual town meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup>.
- He questioned if the Belchertown Chief of Police had outside income, teaching at the police academy or at a college, if it is required to get the Board's permission every year. He was told that past contract's have allowed it with the consent of the Board of Selectmen.

10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator


Board approved/endorsed: May 23, 2014

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

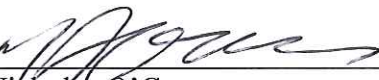
Endorsed by a majority:

  
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Ronald E. Aponte, Chairman

  
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Brenda Q. Aldrich

  
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George D. Archible

(Absent)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
William R. Barnett

  
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Nicholas O'Connor