

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 24, 2017
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**



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

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 #1804 was signed for \$1,000,391.85.
- b) Routine documents
- c) Approval of Minutes: Mr. Aponte moved the Board accept the minutes of June 26, 2017 as presented. Motion seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0.

3) Additions to the Agenda:

4) Appearances Before the Board:

- 7:35 p.m. Barton Avenue Residents – Discuss Granby Bow and Gun Club: Gary Brougham, Town Administrator presented the details to the Board. Several years ago the Granby Bow and Gun Club engaged in a significant forest cutting operation which opened up a large parcel of land that was heavily forested. They left massive piles of debris which during the first year was a concern for wildfires because of how dry the area was due to a lack of rain.

More recently the firing range has been reconfigured which allowed larger caliber shooting events that are uncontrolled. Our Belchertown residents that abut the range and the Granby residents that abut the range feel like they are stuck in their homes, not being able to go outside due to all of the shooting which runs from early in the morning until five or six in the evening. He provided an assessor's map to the Board that delineates where the Belchertown residents live abutting the gun range. It's unknown if the Town of Granby had an involvement with the clear cut and the reconfiguration of the range. Nothing is getting better with the shooting. There was a recent meeting with the Granby Board of Selectmen and some of the Granby residents who have concerns about the range.

The residents who have concern what it known that it is not the use that they are not anti-gun, anti-hunters. They want their lives back, they want to be able to sit out in the back yard and have a quiet evening or a quiet Saturday afternoon. Mr. Brougham has concerns about whether any permits were pulled either environmental or a forest cutting plan, if there was an environmental impact study, if there was any zoning oversight, if the town of Granby approved this use. The property is in a recreational chapter which has very specific allowances or

prohibitions and it appears that the property is not be used with the total intent of the recreational chapter. All these things should be looked at. He feels the Belchertown Board of Selectmen should write a letter to the Granby Board of Selectmen encouraging them to step up and do the right thing and put the site under control.

Mr. O'Connor questioned if anyone knew the outcome of the meeting with the Granby Board of Selectmen. Mr. Brougham believes that there was some indication that Granby officials were going to try and work with the owners of the club. He also questioned what was meant by the shooting was unmanaged. Mr. Brougham stated it would be safe to say that the people using the range are doing so safely but there are no set hours of operation or controls.

Darrell Weldon of 168 Barton Ave stated that all there is only a cable across the road to the range and anytime anyone wants to use it they just drive up the road. He is directly behind the range and can verify that it has been extremely loud. His concern is that kids and adults riding their dirt bikes and atv's on the road for the power lines and the road is in bad shape so if there is a fire because of all the brush that was left when they did the clear cut it will be almost impossible for emergency vehicles to get up the road. The last time there was a brush fire a helicopter had to drop buckets of water on it. The noise from the shooting is unbelievable. His daughter's wear headphones to shut out the noise when they are trying to sleep. Some of the guns actually rattle the windows in his home. He has nothing against the club and up until this point they have been very good neighbors.

Mr. Aponte questioned if anyone has reached out to the gun club owner(s) and if so were any responses received. Jean Whipple of 146 Barton Ave responded that she was at the Granby Selectmen's meeting and the gun club owner(s) did not attend that meeting.

A Granby resident stated that they have been trying to get some things resolved through the environmental department which is where their police chief sent them. He feels the environmental department has been useless. He attended three of the meetings with the environmental department and the Bow and Gun Club did attend those meetings. Ms. Aldrich questioned if anyone has been out to check the decibels of the shooting. This resident indicated that the Granby Chief of Police told him that Granby does not have a noise ordinance.

Paul Lebeau of 186 Barton Ave mentioned that since the meeting with the Granby Board of Selectmen it has quieted down. It's been a lot quieter in the last week. He did state that when they cleared the property that even the buffer zone is gone. He did agree that they had always been good neighbors.

Mr. Aponte questioned when it got to the "unbearable" point. He was told that it was earlier in the spring that it was noticed. The abutters feel that it's a combination of the clearing of the trees and that now large caliber guns are being

shot there. Also the range was only open on weekends in the past now it's all week.

There is also a concern about all of the spent casings. Is there a collection process as it's very wet up in that area?

Mr. O'Connor feels there are three areas of concern; the clearing and safety of the site itself; the level of management with people coming and going all the time with no set hours; and the larger caliber guns.

Ms. Aldrich suggested that the Board or several members of the Board let the Granby Board of Selectmen know they will be in attendance at their next meeting. Mr. Aponte suggested even town administrator to town administrator. Mr. Brougham encouraged that the Board put their concerns in writing so that there is a paper trail.

A resident questioned what happens if our Board gets no response from the Town of Granby. Ms. Aldrich stated that if we don't have a response by our August 14th meeting she will address their chairman of the board as the chairman of our board. The Granby town resident indicated that their town manager is interested in doing something to help the residents. The Granby board of selectmen will meet on Monday, August 7th and this is one of their agenda items.

Mr. Barnett feels that we should first try to work out an agreement and understanding with the Granby board of selectmen and if that doesn't work out then our board should find out if there is State legislation that deals with these types of problems.

Ms. Aldrich is available to attend the Granby Board of Selectmen meeting on Monday, August 7th. Mr. O'Connor moved that Ms. Aldrich attend the meeting and also send a letter sent to Granby asking what is being done to address this problem. Motion seconded by Mr. Aponte. Motion passes 4 – 0.

5) Discussion/Action Items:

- a. Right of First Refusal – Est. of Joseph L. D'Aguiar, 231 Michael Sears Rd. (Map 269-99): Gary Brougham, Town Administrator presented the details to the Board. There is a valid purchase and sale agreement. Both the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board have recommended the Selectmen not exercise their right of first refusal.

Mr. Aponte moved the town not exercise its right of first refusal for the property located at 231 Michael Sears Road. Motion seconded by Mr. Barnett. Motion passes 4 – 0.

- b. Appointment of Historical Association Representatives as Trustees to Willard Stebbins Trust Fund (for the care of Lake Vale Cemetery): Mr. O'Connor presented the details to the Board. Per the recommendation of a letter submitted by

Tom Stockton for the Historical Association, Mr. O'Connor moved to appoint Tom Stockton and Peg Louraine as Historical Association Representatives as Trustees to the Willard Stebbins Trust Fund. Motion seconded by Mr. Barnett. Motion passes 4 – 0.

- c. Executive Session – MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3: Mr. Aponte moved the Board enter into executive session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30, Section 21, subsection 3 to discuss and / or consider filing an appeal of the common drive special permit granted to RAMA Development, LLC at 45 Pine Street. Belchertown by the Belchertown Planning Board on Tuesday, July 11, 2017 and not to return to open session. Motion seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Roll call vote: Aldrich – yes, O'Connor – yes, Aponte – yes, Barnett – yes.
- d. Miscellaneous Matters:

- 6) **Town Administrator's Report:** Spoke about the MassWorks grant that the Board authorized him to sign at a previous meeting. Mass Development now feels that they should be the applicant and Claire O'Neill questioned if the Board would take issue with that. He confirmed that they would not. The application will be submitted on time and will still be for the same amount of money.

He also told the board that Steve Williams did a pre-bid walk through for the extension of Front Street and hopes that they will receive some good bids.

Ms. Aldrich questioned Mr. Williams if Front Street coming out onto Jackson Street is going to be safe. Mr. Williams explained design and how it was done to make it safe. He also updated the board on an upgrade on lighting throughout the town. Mr. Williams also presented updated the Board regarding stormwater.

Mr. Brougham updated the board with the details on the release of the Brownfield checks that the town will receive toward remediation of the former state school buildings.

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

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

Mr. Aponte: He attended the farewell party for Linda Barron. She has been a treasure for the town of Belchertown. She had well over 30 years of service to the town.

Mr. O'Connor: The Cultural Council is having a food festival on the town common on Friday, July 28th.

Ms. Aldrich: Attended the opening of the animal control facility with Mr. Brougham and Mr. O'Connor. Mr. O'Connor did thank Jenny Franz who has resigned from BARC following the opening of the facility. Her and her team did a lot of work in raising money for the facility.

9) **Questions from the Press:** Jim Russell from *The Republican* questioned the towns concerns regarding the representation we received from town counsel during the town meeting. An explanation was given to Mr. Russell.

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

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed: Aug. 28, 2017

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:

Brenda Q. Aldrich
Brenda Q. Aldrich, Chairman

(absent)
George D. Archible

Ronald E. Aponte
Ronald E. Aponte

William R. Barnett
William R. Barnett

Nicholas O'Connor
Nicholas O'Connor