

## TOWN OF ADAMS SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, September 16, 2015 – 7:00 PM  
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM, 1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

On the above date the **Board of Selectmen** and held a regular meeting at the Adams Town Hall. **Chairman Blanchard** presided the meeting. Present were, **Vice Chairman Snoonian**, **Members Joseph Nowak, John Duval**, and **Arthur Harrington**. Also in attendance were **Town Administrator Tony Mazzucco**, **Town Counsel, Ed St. John III** and **Community Development Director Donna Cesan**.

*The Select Board Meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Snoonian at 7:00 p.m.*

*The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

### READING OF THE MINUTES

- September 2, 2015
- September 9, 2015

*Motion made by Member Harrington to waive the reading and approve the minutes for September 2, 2015 as presented*

*Second by Member Duval*

*Abstention by Chairman Blanchard*

*Voted in favor were Vice Chairman Snoonian and Members Duval, Harrington and Novak*

*Motion Passed*

*Motion made by Member Harrington to waive the reading and approve the minutes for September 9, 2015 as presented*

*Second by Member Nowak*

*Voted in favor were Chairman Blanchard and Members Harrington and Nowak*

*Abstention by Member Duval and Vice Chairman Snoonian*

*Motion Passed*

### PUBLIC HEARING

*Motion made by Member Harrington to enter Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m.*

*Second by Member Duval*

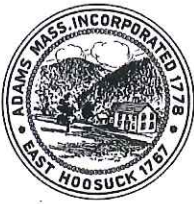
*Unanimous vote*

*Motion passed*

### FY2013 Disaster Recovery Grant

**Lynette Bond of Community Development** explained this is the second hearing of the FY2013 Disaster Recovery Block Grant. She reviewed the program dedicated to the Charles Street Bridge replacement. The Town applied for the funds after Tropical Storm Irene and was selected to receive them. The Project was bid on April 30<sup>th</sup> of 2015 and Keller & Sons was awarded the job. The project utilized a precast structure, which was created mostly off-site and then dropped in with a crane. The project is essentially complete, and the Town is paying out bills to close it out shortly. Currently expended is \$181,000 of the total budget of \$250,000. The final bills are expected to sum to the amount of the total budget.

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There was a gas line across the brook, and Berkshire Gas moved it once the construction began. It is not a new line on the west side, and water is on the other side.

There were no further questions by the Board or the Public.

***Motion made by Member Harrington to close the Public Hearing***

***Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

#### ***Fall Run***

**Mike** from the **Fall Run Staff** from *Custom City Cycle* gave an overview of the *Fall Run*, which is scheduled to run on Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup> for 3.5 hours. He requested Town approval for placement of a sign on private property on Route 8 for the event.

Fall Run has been happening since 1989 raising money for *Shriner's Hospital* in Springfield, and to date they have raised \$528,000. This year's Fall Run is in memory of David Gancarz and begins at Bowe Field with registration from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. leaving at 11:00 a.m. There will be a bike show, a 50/50 raffle and food available. He thanked the Events Committee, Chief Tarsa, the Police Department, and the people of Adams for their help and cooperation.

***Motion made by Member Harrington to approve the placement of the sign as requested by Custom City Cycle for the Fall Run on September 27, 2015***

***Second by Member Duval***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

#### ***Maple Grove Civic Club***

**Jeff Lefebvre** announced that Tony Mazzucco will be the speaker at the Polish National Alliance for the Maple Grove Civic Club meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. The topic is to update the public on the potential regionalization of Lanesborough and Adams-Cheshire Regional School District.

#### ***Tax Rate***

**Jeff Lefebvre** inquired when the tax rate would be set.

The tax rate is set at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Board Meeting in October. It was originally expected to be \$.75 but it will likely be lower than projected.

#### ***Projects***

**Jeff Lefebvre** asked the Select Board to have the owners of projects like old Woolworth building, Albert's Hardware, Topia Arts Building, the Jones Block and Mausert Building come in and give the Town an update on where their projects stand. He said the Town gave them \$1.5 Million and the projects were to be completed in 18 months, but it has been 5 years.

Each project has met the requirements of the grant.





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### ***Roundabout Project***

Jeff Lefebvre inquired about the status of the Roundabout Project.

There was a culvert issue that caused a brief delay in the project.

### ***Great Chair Auction***

Francie Anne Riley announced that the Great Chair Auction will be held on October 18<sup>th</sup> at the Bounti-Fare Restaurant. Today was the ribbon cutting ceremony. Chairs and other objects for sale at the auction have been decorated and are displayed in store fronts on Park. Items are available online at [www.32auctions.com/greatchairauction](http://www.32auctions.com/greatchairauction) and the proceeds raise money for the Youth Center.

### ***ProAdams and Adams Events***

David Basillion and Andrea Stump of ProAdams congratulated the *Chair Auction* and also 34 years of the *Fall Run* and *Bike Night*. Thanks were given to the Select Board, Town Administrator's office, Police Department, and Department of Public Works and the town for support for the *Thunderfest* and *Ramblefest* events. The events appear on the Berkshire County "Things to Do Each Year" calendar. There will be bands, food, local craft beers, activities for kids, and a recreational theme.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***Facility Use Request: Bike Night***

A Facility Request Form was received for the *Bike Night* to use the Visitors Center, on September 26<sup>th</sup>

***Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to approve the Facility Request for the use of the Visitors Center for the Bike Night on September 26<sup>th</sup> as requested***

***Second by Member Duval***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

### ***Facility Use Request: Berkshire County Boards of Health***

A Facility Use Request was submitted by the Berkshire County Boards of Health to utilize the Visitors Center on September 29, 2015 from 5:00 to 8:30 p.m.

***Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to approve the Facility Use Request for Berkshire County Boards of Health to use the Visitors Center on September 29, 2015 as requested***

***Second by Member Duval***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

### ***Facility Use Request: Ramblefest***

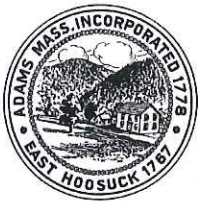
A Facility Use Request was received for use of the Visitors Center for Ramblefest on October 11<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

***Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the use of the Visitors Center for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Ramblefest on Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.***

***Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***



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### ***One Day Liquor License: Balderdash Cellars***

A One Day Liquor License Application was received by *Balderdash Cellars* for October 11, 2015 from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. for Ramblefest.

***Motion made by Member Nowak to approve a One Day Liquor License for Balderdash Cellars on October 11<sup>th</sup> from 12pm to 5pm***

***Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

### ***One Day Liquor License***

A One Day Liquor License Application was received from *Bounti-Fare* for October 11, 2015 from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. for Ramblefest.

***Motion made by Member Nowak to approve a One Day Liquor License for Bounti-Fare on October 11<sup>th</sup> from 12pm to 5pm***

***Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

### ***Common Victualer License***

A Common Victualer License Application was received from *JB's Broasted Chicken* for 2015.

***Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to approve the Common Victualer License for JB's Broasted Chicken for 2015***

***Second by Member Duval***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

### ***Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy***

**Town Administrator Mazzucco** advised he is finalizing Attachment B, the fleet list, which will change annually, and requested its approval for the Green Communities application. An anti-idling policy is already part of the Town bylaws, and an overview of the current policy was given. Police and DPW vehicles are exempt, and fleet vehicles for town staff would be required but Adams doesn't have them so there will be low to no impact on how the Town currently operates.

***Motion made by Member Harrington to approve the Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy***

***Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

### ***Gebirgs Verein, Inc. dba Mountain Club***

**Town Administrator Mazzucco** advised that due to incidents at Mountain Club in past months that the Chief has made the Board aware of, a Show Cause Hearing is recommended to be scheduled to invite the Club to come before the Board to discuss what action they would like to take and if they feel action would be warranted.





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*Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to schedule a Show Cause hearing with Gebirgs Verein, Inc. dba Mt. Club*

*Second by Member Duval*

*Unanimous vote*

*Motion passed*

### ***Reserve Fund Transfer Request***

**Town Administrator Mazzucco** requested approval for several reserve fund transfers. The Town is processing transfer requests on a quarterly basis. Total dollar amount is \$22,350 in this request.

**\$7,000 for Building Inspector/Community Development Salaries.** When the budget went to print, it was anticipated that one employee would be in a position as the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Health/Conservation Commission/Building Commissioner. The employee in the Clerk's office left the Town, and a staff member that was going to go to that position is now staying in the position that now serves the Board of Health/Conservation Commission/Building Commissioner areas. The Town had factored in someone being at Step 1 in that position, and the person that is now staying there is higher up on their Step scale, and the salary is approximately \$7,000 higher. The Town needs to make sure it has that amount of money appropriated in that account to cover through the end of the year. The vacancy in the Town Clerk's Office will likely cause a wash at the end of the year, but the Town can't have a salary line without enough money to cover it. This is not an increase in pay, and there has been no raise. Because there are no overlays built into the budget for this type of event, but the process is the same. Either the Town transfers money or a reserve fund transfer covers it.

**\$750 Overtime Funds for Building Commissioner/Board of Health Office** for implementing the online software to make sure there is a little money to cover in case staff has to stay late or in case it takes extra work to get the software up and running. Once it goes live, the Town will still be taking paper applications and staff will be entering them into the system. This amount of money will buy the Town time to get it running. The software has been purchased and ordered, tablets have been purchased, and the final step is loading assessing data.

**\$4,000 for Property and Casualty.** \$800 is for the Tax Title Properties that the Town has taken, like Hoosac Valley Coal and Grain, and two other properties. The Town has to make sure it is covered with liability insurance until these properties are up for auction to be sold. There also was an increase in insurance for Memorial School insurance of \$3,200, so there is not enough to cover that additional amount in the Property and Casualty line of the budget.

**\$10,600 for Safety and Blight Cleanup.** \$8600 represents the cost to tear down 2 of 4 buildings for *Hoosac Valley Coal and Grain*; one of them is essentially down and needs removal for health and safety reasons, as well as blight cleanup. The other building is the coal shed, and the top portion of the building will be taken down but the main building would remain. The storage building is in salvageable shape. The other \$2,000 is for dumpster rental and trash removal costs for another couple properties that were taken in tax sales with bags of trash piled up in them. The DPW with the Sheriff's volunteers will be able to clean up bags of trash which need to be taken care of from a health and safety perspective, and then the buildings can be sealed.

There is \$175,000 in the Reserve Fund currently.



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Discussion ensued regarding the reasons for the Memorial School insurance costs increasing. The insurance company came and assessed the building at a higher risk than originally estimated before visiting. Decommissioning the building would result in an enormous insurance cost, to have it listed as an unoccupied building.

**Town Administrator Mazzucco** will get quotes from insurance companies on what the cost would be to cover the building if it was unoccupied.

The process to acquire property is initiated by the Town Treasurer by charter and state statute is authorized to take any property that has gone through the land court process in tax sale that has not paid their property taxes. In the past there were properties that were not taken and the amounts accrue. If the money is not on the tax role it comes out of free cash or the assessor's overlay. If the property needs to be reused or remediated, the Town has the responsibility to get it back to some kind of use. If a building is abandoned and continues to get worse, it gets harder and harder to get back on the tax roles. If a building is contaminated, the Town is not required to remediate it but a private business is. The Town can apply for Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) money to do remediation. The Town may want to build in a small fund to take care of tax acquired properties next year to address slum and blight.

### ***M.G. Day Property***

**Town Counsel St. John III** advised that the Tax Collector has been instructed to start the tax process, which will take about a year. There are no extra costs expected, but remediation is another issue.

The Town would secure the building and there would be a cost for insurance. It should be built into next year's budget. They owe the Town over \$400,000 which holds up money in free cash. The Treasurer, not the Select Board has the authority to take businesses or houses as a result of blight. The eminent domain process the Selectmen have authority to act and must pay fair market value of the property.

Additional discussion continued regarding the specifics on the tax taking of property and remediation of hazardous materials on a property site.

***Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to approve the Reserve Fund transfer in the amount of \$22,350 for Community Development and Building Inspector Salaries, Slum and Blight Removal  
Second by Member Harrington***

***Unanimous vote***

***Motion passed***

### **SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS**

#### ***Cemetery Commission***

**Member Nowak** attended the Cemetery Commission meeting. The concern addressed was that two trees need to be taken down and due to concern about damaging a stone wall it was put out to bid. Praise was given to Mike Durant for taking care of Maple St cemetery singlehandedly.

#### ***Topia Inn***

**Member Nowak** attended a meeting at Topia Inn regarding getting the Topia/Adams Theater up and running. Shirley Jenks will sign a contract to find funding to get it redone and running. The Topia Theater couldn't be accessed because it was closed. The theater would be a lynchpin to get people to congregate downtown and would keep people in the area.





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### ***Parks Commission***

**Member Nowak** attended with Lynette Bond of Community Development. Russell Street Field will be revamped with grant money and they are looking for a consensus to move parking forward. The big issue was handicapped accessibility. It is long overdue to have Russell Field brought up to code.

### ***Adams Cheshire Regional School***

**Member Nowak** attended the Adams Cheshire Regional School Meeting. The DESE report came in and found some things they were impressed with, and also some shortfalls. Superintendent Gordon will answer questions about what the school needs to improve on. They received good feedback on the quality of the dedicated teachers. The new Technology Director also gave a report and said the kids need to do more work online. The new Curriculum Director gave input regarding bring the students forward and trying to improve MCAS scores. The turnover of students has balanced out. School committee member Josh DeMarsico-Birkland resigned and will be replaced.

### ***Historical Commission***

**Member Nowak** attended the Historical Commission meeting. There has been slow visitation at Quaker Meeting House this season. There is also plaster coming down and after Columbus Day money in the budget will be used to fix it before it gets worse. There is an open position on the commission and hopefully an interested person with a strong background in historical preservation to be appointed on October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### ***Buildings and Projects***

**Member Nowak** noted that the Mausert Block currently has a *Stop Work Order* issued by the Building Commissioner. The Jones Block has people showing interest. The Scenic Train has new tracks in place from North Adams to Renfrew and hopes to start passenger rides in October. The Mill Children Gallery is looking for a space for their display. The Holocaust Display is up and running in the south meeting room of the library. The Old Stone Mill has been purchased by a couple who makes titanium bicycles and sculpts, and the Auto Mart Building has been purchased by a sculptor and a graphic designer.

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

### ***Joint Select Board and Finance Committee Meeting***

There will be a joint meeting next Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. with the Finance Committee and the Select Board Workshop at the Visitors Center on Labor and Benefit costs.

### ***Strategic Planning***

The Strategic Planning process has started and over 60 people attended the first session. The next scheduled sessions will be held on October 17<sup>th</sup>, October 24<sup>th</sup> and November 14<sup>th</sup> at Hoosac Valley High School at 10:00 a.m. The state may be able to provide some grant money to add on a couple more sessions.

### ***Economic Development Commission***

The launch of the Economic Development Commission will be October 8<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Town of Adams Facebook Page***

The Town has launched its Facebook page and already has 412 likes.



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### ***Handicapped Parking Signs***

The Handicapped Parking Signs on Park Street are scheduled to be put up next week.

### ***Crosswalk Signs***

Arrow signs for the crosswalks have been ordered and will be put up shortly.

### ***Assessor's Report***

The Assessor's monthly report has been given to the Select Board and the Assessors will provide a listing of property transactions in town. Many are above their assessed value, but some came in lower. A Question and Answer was prepared with the Assessor regarding the Revaluation process, and it will be given to the Board to review.

There was a social media concern about assessments going on in town so information and rules should be put on the website. The Town is in a 10 year revaluation process, which is done in the Commonwealth every 10 years in every community and required by state law. *Bishop and Associates* is going to every house and business in town to see what is changed and looking for added value or a small deck or shed and assessing the condition of home to be fair, good, or excellent. They look at the wood, roof, and siding for the building to be fairly and equitably assessed. They will identify themselves, and when speaking with minors a judgment call will be made to determine if they can answer questions. It is not necessary to tour the whole house but from the foyer they can confirm the number of beds and baths. They will walk around the exterior and look for additions but will not peer in windows.

Real estate and assessors are two different jobs and the revaluation was put out to bid through state procurement laws. One local company in North Adams chose not to be on our project list. Revaluation companies must be certified, on the list, and have enough manpower to do the job. A mailing was not done last year because the cost would have been over \$1800. The Code Red Alert System was not used because it is currently used for emergencies.

If people give verbal information, they are likely to underreport and would need to go through a lengthy appeals process to have their house assessed at its real value later. If a resident chooses not to let in the *Bishop and Associates* staff an assessment on the house will be made utilizing other houses in the neighborhood, which could over-assess the house. It is in the best interest of all to be forthcoming.

### **TOWN COUNSEL REPORT**

**Town Counsel St. John III** advised he reviewed a memorandum of understanding proposed by the Chief for the use of school radios, discussed a zoning matter with the zoning enforcement officer, and reviewed correspondence from the property owner for compliance with a housing court order.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER**

#### ***Memorial School Building***

**Member Harrington** requested reopening the discussion on the Memorial School Building at a future meeting since the Town did not get the grant for the heating system. There is concern about the insurance issue and the Board needs to re-evaluate where they stand on it.

This topic will be on the next Workshop Agenda.





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### *Thanks to ProAdams*

Member Nowak thanked *ProAdams* for all the work they do.

### *Strategic Planning Sessions*

Town Administrator Mazzucco reminded everyone that the next *Strategic Planning Sessions* will be held at Hoosac Valley High School on October 17th, October 24th and November 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

*#3 - To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares;*

*Motion made by Member Harrington to enter into Executive Session at 8:18 p.m.*

*Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian*

*Roll Call Vote: Chairman Blanchard, Vice Chairman Snoonian, Members Duval, Nowak and Harrington*

*Motion passed*

The Board will reconvene in the Town Administrator's Office, exiting only to adjourn.

### ADJOURNMENT

*Meeting Adjournment by Select Board*

*Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn*

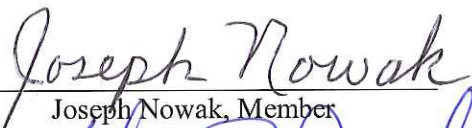
*Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian*

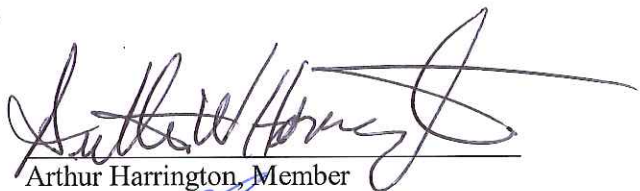
*Unanimous vote*

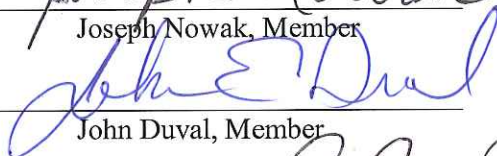
*Motion passed*

*Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary.

  
Joseph Nowak, Member

  
Arthur Harrington, Member

  
John Duval, Member

  
Jeffrey Snoonian, Vice Chairman

  
Richard Blanchard, Chairman