



TOWN OF ADAMS SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, October 21, 2015 – 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM, 1st 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** and **Town Counsel, Ed St. John III**.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

READING OF THE MINUTES

- September 22, 2015

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to add the approval of minutes for September 22, 2015

Second by Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Motion made by Member Snoonian to waive the reading and approve the minutes for September 22, 2015 as presented

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion Passed

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tree Lighting

Haley Meczywor of the Events Committee thanked all those who helped with Ramblefest. She announced that the last scheduled event of the year is the Annual Tree Lighting on November 29th from 2pm to 5pm. Details were given about the event and sponsors were thanked for their support.

Arts Advisory Board

Francie Riley of the Arts Advisory Board gave the first monthly report to the Selectmen and explained it is an open board. Those interested in participating or supporting the arts can contact the Board at artsinadams@gmail.com, or on the Arts Advisory Board Facebook Page. She discussed recent activities by the Arts Advisory Board and some ideas they are considering. A proposal for a building on Victory Street has been sent for consideration to the Town and an online newsletter is being developed. She advised that artists in the community are ready to create sculptures and artwork.

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TOWN OF ADAMS SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

PUBLIC HEARING

Classification Hearing, Board of Assessors, 7:10 p.m.

Motion made by Member Duval to go into the Public Hearing

Second by Member Harrington

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Donna MacDonald, Town Assessor explained that the purpose of the public hearing was to determine how to set the tax rate. She said the total valuation went up slightly, and explained how the single tax rate was calculated. She went over other shift options and where the tax rates would land. The majority of new growth in town was due to the utilities.

Discussion took place regarding which shift would be most advantageous to the citizens, and it was noted that the residential tax needed a break. Commercial property was explained, as well as personal property tax. The Department of Revenue has to set the rate and it may shift a few cents. The Select Board Members expressed commitment to finding ways to lower the taxes for residents. It was pointed out that new growth and jobs are needed in this community and increasing the commercial rate would give the perception that Adams is not business friendly. Increased commercial rates will be passed on to the consumer in increased product costs. Those on fixed incomes are facing increases in health insurance and other bills and it is difficult to lessen the increase on the whole community so a good deal of thought is put into it. The residential rate has carried the weight of the tax increases over the past few years and needs to increase as little as possible. Live/work situations were discussed and would be mixed-use taxes. If it is an even split the commercial rate would go down approximately three dollars and residential would go up about \$.81. The majority of the taxable property is single family homes.

Peter Coussoule, a local tax payer and property owner explained the struggles of getting rental properties filled and expressed concern about taxes going up and about the tax rate in Adams.

George Haddad, a local businessman, homeowner, and part-time assessor assistant explained that there had been some intense budget cutting and the reason the Town was able to do such a low increase is because the utility companies did a lot of work. He pointed out that the low new growth amount in Adams is a red flag. He explained the delicate balance between the commercial rate and the residential rates. He noted that a former selectman suggested considering a single tax rate. He expressed concern that businesses are not thriving and are struggling to manage costs.

Motion was made by Member Duval to change shift from 15% to 17%, resulting in \$.02 residential, and \$.61 Commercial.

Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian

Voted in Favor were Vice Chairman Snoonian, Members Duval and Harrington

Voted in Opposition were Chairman Blanchard and Member Nowak

Motion passed

Motion made by Member Duval to exit the Public Hearing

Second by Member Harrington

Unanimous vote

Motion passed



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NEW BUSINESS\

Library Trustee Vacancy

A Library Trustee passed away, and a joint meeting must be held to fill that position and to discuss the transition of the Library Director as well. The Town Administrator will get dates from the Library Trustees to schedule the meeting.

Ad Hoc Solid Waste Committee Appointment

Bruce Shepley indicated an interest in being on the *Ad Hoc Solid Waste Committee*. There would be no conflict and it would be beneficial to have him on both the Board of Health and this committee.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to appoint Bruce Shepley to the Ad Hoc Solid Waste Committee

Second by Member Harrington

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Ratification of Administrative Assistant II Position

Subject to ratification of the Board, *Paula Wheeler* has been appointed to the position of Administrative Assistant II to the Office of the Town Clerk. There were approximately 80 applicants, and she will begin in a couple of weeks at a Grade 6, Step 1 rate of \$16.43 per hour.

Motion made by Member Nowak to ratify Paula Wheeler to the Administrative Assistant II position for the Office of the Town Clerk

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Facility Use Request – Events Committee, Town Common

Haley Meczywor of the Events Committee Facility requested use of the Town Common for the Tree Lighting Ceremony on November 29th from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. The Town is looking for a donation of a tree for the Town Common and a second tree for Summer Street. If anyone wishes to donate a tree contact the DPW to go look at it. Santa will be available and there will be carriage rides.

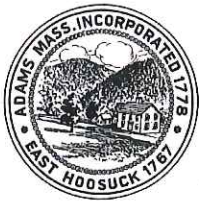
Discussion will take place at a separate meeting regarding the annual suspension of parking meters from the date of the tree lighting ceremony until New Year's Day.

Motion made by Member Harrington to approve the use of the Town Common for the annual Lighting of the Christmas Tree Ceremony on November 29, 2015.

Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian

Unanimous vote

Motion passed



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Facility Use Request – BART Charter School, Memorial School

BART Charter School requested use of Memorial School from November 1st to Feb 28th for basketball practice.

Julia Bowen of BART School explained it would be exactly the same arrangement as last year, and this year they have contracted a cleaning company once a week to come in.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to add the Facility Use Request by BART School to the agenda

Second by Member Harrington

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to approve the Facility Use Request for BART School to use Memorial School as requested

Second by Member Harrington

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Facility Use Request - Cultural Council of Northern Berkshires, Visitors Center

The Cultural Council of Northern Berkshires submitted a request to use the Visitors Center on October 27, 2015, December 1, 2015 and December 8, 2015 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. for meetings.

Motion made by Member Harrington to add the facility request for the Cultural Council to the agenda

Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to approve the facility use of the Visitors Center by the Cultural Council of Northern Berkshires as requested

Second by Member Harrington

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Set Halloween Hours

The Lions Club Halloween Parade will be held Sunday, October 25th at 4:00 p.m. at the former South Adams Savings Bank parking lot, and ending at the Visitors Center parking lot. Halloween hours still need to be set.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to add Halloween Hours to the Agenda

Second by Member Harrington



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Unanimous vote
Motion passed

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to approve Halloween Hours for 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on October 31st

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

One Day Liquor License – Bounti-Fare

The Berkshire Carousel Fundraiser Event to benefit Kumar in the K9 Program is scheduled as a Paint and Sip at the Firehouse Café on Saturday, October 24th at 7:00 p.m. A One-day liquor license has been requested by Bounti-Fare Restaurant to support this event. The portrait is expected to be Kumar with the Mount Greylock Monument in the background.

Motion made by Member Harrington to approve the One Day Liquor License for Bounti-Fare for the Berkshire Carousel Fundraiser on October 24th

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Division of Local Services Financial Management Review

The Division of Local Services does a best practices review on financial management which requires the Board's approval. It requires a six month schedule, which would begin after the next audit. There is no cost and there are no requirements. The Town did them about 10 years ago. The review would be requested to begin in April. Auditors are exempt from bid, and the Town is in its second year of a three year contract.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to request the Financial Management Review from the Division of Local Services

Second by Member Harrington

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

MIIA workshops

MIIA is the insurance agent for risk management and offers free training for municipalities. This would also connect with an in-service with all town staff to cover opiate challenges in community. The Board was requested to authorize closing Town Hall for a day to do a number of workshops for efficiency. A long term suggestion was to have up to three days a year spread out over a few months to eliminate a large service impact.

A request was made by Member Duval to waive the vote until specific workshops are identified.



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Motion made by Member Harrington to hold voting on closing Town Hall for a day until the workshops are identified

Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Green Communities Energy Reduction Plan

A request was made to add to the agenda the proposal to apply for the Green Communities Grant.

Motion made by Member Harrington to add the Green Communities Energy Reduction Plan to the agenda

Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

The categories of Green Communities were reviewed. The goals are to reduce energy usage by 20%, which the Town will show with energy savings plans upon submission. The Town would be guaranteed an amount of money the first year and every year thereafter could get up to \$250K. Great Barrington, Lenox and Williamstown are among 180 communities in the Commonwealth in the Green Communities. The Stretch Code held up the Town in the past. Adams taxpayers and businesses are paying for this through their utility bills already. If something changes with the program the Town can choose to leave program and will not need to pay anything back. This program gives communities money for energy efficiency.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to approve the Energy Reduction Plan for the Town of Adams

Second by Member Harrington

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

Parks Commission

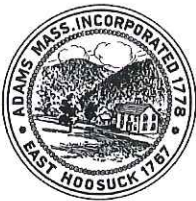
Member Nowak attended the Parks Commission, School Committee, and Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership meetings and updated the Board on the highlights.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Member Duval noted that last week at the BRPC Dinner, Community Development Donna Cesan received a very prestigious award for an individual that goes above and beyond.

Community Compact

Board Members attended the Community Compact Signing Ceremony in Clarksburg with the Lt. Governor.



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Berkshire Health Alliance

Member Harrington attended the Berkshire Health Alliance meeting and will bring the information to the Board and the Board of Health at a future meeting.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised the next Strategic Planning Session is Saturday 10:00 a.m. on the Downtown Feel and Culture at Hoosac Valley High School. The Roundabout work is ongoing and there are no planned stoppages. Most of the delay was engineering. The online building permit software has been launched and contractors finding it to be a great advantage to quickly get permit requests submitted. By this time next year the Town will require online applications. The Agricultural Fair expressed concern about a piece of property for sale that may lose valuable parking for the Fairgrounds.

TOWN COUNSEL REPORT

Town Counsel St. John III advised since last report he drafted decision re suspension of Gebirgs Verein, Inc., provided advice on a conflict of interest question and reviewed and advised on an RFP for 20 East Street property.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER

The Lions Club Parade was announced for 4:00 p.m. October 25th.

Community Development Director Donna Cesan was congratulated for her award.

Citizens were reminded to be careful of trick-or-treaters and kids are advised to dress with reflective costumes for higher visibility.

Citizens were invited to attend the Strategic Planning Session, Saturday at 10:00 a.m. at Hoosac Valley High School.

Citizens were reminded not to put falling leaves in the street when removing them from their property.

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;

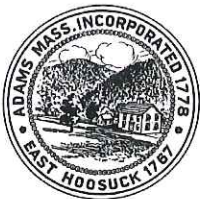
Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to enter Executive Session

Second by Member Harrington

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

Motion passed

A five minute recess took place at 8:49 p.m.



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ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjournment by Select Board

Motion made by Vice Chairman Snoonian to adjourn

Second by Member Harrington

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

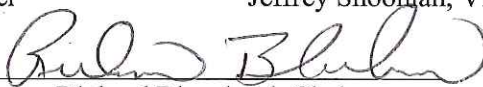
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary.


Joseph Nowak, Member


Arthur Harrington, Member

John Duval, Member

Jeffrey Snoonian, Vice Chairman


Richard Blanchard, Chairman