

Board of Selectmen  
December 18, 2013  
Minutes

Members present: Jeanne Pryor, Angela Hilton, William Elovirta

Others Present: Ed Gibson, Nina Weiler, Colleen O'Connor, David MacWilliams, Josh Lombard,  
Ann Spadafora, Dan Parnell

7:00 PM Jeanne called the meeting to order. She advised that the meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Meeting Law and Guidelines for Board of Selectmen Meetings.

Jeanne asked if anyone was recording the meeting. No one other than the Board of Selectmen is recording the meeting.

Josh Lombard, chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, addressed the Board regarding the MacWilliams variance. He advised that the ZBA received the letter from the Board of Selectmen regarding this variance but was not exactly sure what they were asking. He is asking for clarification on what the Board's recommendations are for this application. Jeanne advised that one of the Board's concerns was that there currently is a garage on this piece of property that is partly on another piece of property. The Board does not want to make this property anymore non-conforming then it already is. Josh advised that this property was very unusual because it does not have frontage on a road; its frontage is on a right-of-way. Ed explained that because the garage that is already on the property has a zero setback, the applicant can use this to his advantage for the new garage because the setback cannot be any less. Ed also explained that if the applicant decided to place the garage somewhere else on the property then they would not have to go through the ZBA because it would be allowed by right. Josh advised that the ZBA would need to determine if this is reasonable to do. He also advised that the ZBA has been working with the applicant to change the size and shape of the garage to increase the setbacks. The Board thanked him for coming to the meeting.

Bill motioned to approve the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee joint meeting minutes of November 20, 2013, Angela seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Bill motioned to approve the Board of Selectmen minutes of December 4, 2013, Angela seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board reviewed the Financial Reserves Policy with the Finance Committee. Jeanne advised that, in response to Becket's 2006 DLS Financial Management Review, she had drafted and submitted this policy to the Finance Committee about a year ago. Dan advised that there was a policy put together a number of years ago by the Finance Committee but it was never adopted. The Finance Committee reviewed, revised and approved this version of the policy. Dan explained some of the sections of this policy. Bill advised that he had not had a chance to read the Financial Reserves Policy so he asked if this could be tabled until the next meeting. The Board agreed to table this policy until their next meeting.

The Board reviewed the application for Dimensional Special Permit from the ZBA for the replacement of an existing structure with new structure on property located at 261 Old Pond Road. The Board would like Ed to send the ZBA a letter stating that they do not have any objections to this permit but they would like a map included with the special permit applications.

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The Board reviewed the monthly reports of the Animal Control Officer, Police Department, Citations Issued and the Highway Department. Jeanne asked when the animal control officer was supposed to complete his training. Ed will check on this.

Board of Selectmen's Comments and Announcements: Bill advised that when he was at the Transfer Station the other day he was approached by someone complaining about the house at the intersection of Wade Inn Road and Hopkins Lane. The person he spoke with advised that they do not have running water and there is someone living there. Angela also had someone complain to her about this same house. It was brought up that the person who lives in this house had left a couple of years ago and the electricity was turned off. When a house does not have electricity for a couple of years the utility company will not turn the electricity on until it has been upgraded and inspected. This may be the reason there is no running water. Ed will have the building inspector check this out.

Bill advised that the Fire Chief asked him about the dry hydrants in town. Bill said he advised the fire chief that he should be involved with the installation and maintenance of the dry hydrants and that he should talk with Ed. Ed will speak with the fire chief about this.

Town Administrator's Report: Ed advised that the Highway Department has expended their equipment maintenance budget line item. He will be working with Chris Bouchard on an estimate for a Reserve Transfer Request to present to the Finance Committee.

Ed advised that we received notification this afternoon that our FY 14 Tax Rate has been approved by the DOR. The rate set is \$10.44 per thousand dollars of valuation for residential and commercial properties. He gave the Selectmen a copy of the notification.

Ed advised that we have a rare opportunity, due to Lenox dropping out of a Performance Management opportunity with the UMASS Boston Collins Center, to join with Richmond and Lanesborough and take Lenox's place. He advised that he and Chris Bouchard are willing to undertake the time commitment to pilot a program for our highway department. The mission of this program is to expand the use of data, measures and goals in Massachusetts municipal government in short term, and to embed data use and performance management in the culture of municipal government over the long term. Municipal Performance Management currently provides analysts to work on the ground with over 25 Massachusetts cities and towns and it will be heading toward 35 municipalities over the remainder of FY14. A trial period of five months focusing on the Department of Public Works/Highway Department related topics is available at the subsidized rate of \$200. Ed gave the Selectmen a copy of the overview of this program for their reference.

Ed advised that BRPC has filed a request on behalf of the Town of Becket as a Request for Technical Assistance Grant funding to complete our Housing Needs Assessment and to serve as liaison between the town and various state agencies. The Technical Assistance Grant would also identify challenges and solutions with respect to the limitations of the Town's infrastructure in determining appropriate sites for affordable housing within the Town and to explore the merits of organizing an Affordable Housing Trust. He has given the Selectmen a copy of the grant application for their reference.

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Ed advised that he attended procurement training put on by the Massachusetts Inspector General's Office in Stockbridge yesterday. He advised that this was a worthwhile class as an overview of Massachusetts Procurement Laws and an excellent refresher course before taking the MCCPO classes this spring. He will also be attending the Becket Energy Committee's meeting tomorrow night at 6:00 p.m.

Public Input: Colleen O'Connor expressed her concerns about the Board of Health and the Conservation Commission. She advised that a house that was sold on Greenwater Pond had a failed Title V and should not have been sold. Ed advised that this is just speculation.

Any other business: Jeanne asked if anyone was planning on going to the MMA's Annual Business Meeting. Ed advised that he would be going to the MMA's Annual Meeting but was not sure if he would be attending the business meeting. Jeanne advised that if he would be attending the business meeting she would give him authorization to vote in her place.

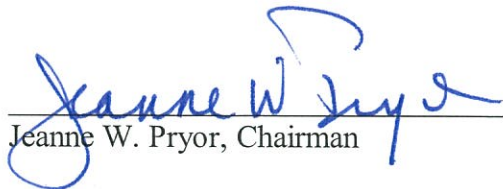
Reviewed correspondence.

Briefly discussed the letter that the Town of Dalton sent to the school committee advising that the town is not able to accept any increase from CBRSD.

7:55 PM Bill motioned to adjourn, Angela seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Reviewed payroll/expense warrants.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nina Weiler, Secretary

  
Jeanne W. Pryor, Chairman

Documents discussed at meeting:

- Application for Dimensional Special Permit from the ZBA for the replacement of existing structure with new structure on property located at 261 Old Pond Road
- Monthly reports of the Animal Control Officer, Police Department, Citations Issued and Highway Department