

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2012
7 P.M. — TOWN HALL**

PRESENT STEPHEN BANNON
 ANDREW BLECHMAN
 ALANA CHERNILA
 DEB PHILLIPS
 SEAN STANTON, CHAIRMAN
 KEVIN O'DONNELL, TOWN MANAGER

1. CALL TO ORDER

The chairman called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 4, 2012, Strategic Planning Priorities Meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, and voted by all five members.

April 23, 2012, regular meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, and voted by all five members.

April 25, 2012, mini-town meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, and voted by four members, Ms. Chernila abstaining.

May 15, 2012, regular meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, and voted by all five members.

3. SELECTMEN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS

Mr. Blechman said he read a newspaper report that Great Barrington's revenues from recycling were less than \$6,000, much lower than several neighboring towns and he asked why.

Mr. O'Donnell said he is about to sign a contract with a credit card agency so that payments can be made onsite at the recycling center and other town operatins.

4. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Board members signed contracts for renewal of new bond anticipation notes. Mr. O'Donnell said the town will borrow short-term \$2.162 million for capital improvements such as a fire truck, police cruiser, bridge, street and sewer work. The interest rate is .5 percent, he said, and the bonds are due in February 2013.

Mr. O'Donnell said the Master Plan draft of goals and strategies will be presented at a public forum June 21 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the new fire station. A copy will be available on the town website.

5. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME

Frances O'Neil, 18 Elm Court, asked if the town could prune a tree near her house that is either on town or AME Zion Church property. It blocks the street light.

David Magadini, Great Barrington, said the town's "charter commission" is improper and needs to be instigated by a petition signed by 15 percent of the town's registered voters. Mr. Stanton said it is a charter review committee and that he is aware of the legal citations given by Mr. Magadini.

James Stark, 1099 Main St., Housatonic, inquired whether town fire engines carry collision insurance. Mr. O'Donnell said he would check, but coverage on some older vehicles was dropped several years ago. Mr. Stark also inquired about the liability of homeowners whose shade trees protrude into public ways, and whether the town would remove such trees upon request.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Sewer Fees. The Selectmen at 7:20 p.m., acting as the Sewer Commission, convened a public hearing on a motion by Ms. Philips, seconded by Mr. Bannon and voted favorably by all. The purpose of the hearing was to set sewer rates for FY2013.

The options, Mr. O'Donnell said, are to raise the present rate by \$90 to \$460 per year per EDU or to raise it by \$240 more, to \$700, and generate a modest reserve. The increased rates are in anticipation of major capital improvements to the wastewater treatment plant.

Patricia Ryan, 14 Oak St., spoke against flat rates as discriminating against small households such as hers. She and others suggested rates should be based on metered water usage. She said she found a published report from 2010 that only 11 percent of Massachusetts communities set flat sewer rates.

Michelle Loubert, Housatonic, also spoke against the flat rate, and urged adoption of the lesser amount, as a rise seems inevitable, given the capital improvements project.

Mr. Stark asked what the rates might be down the road in 2023.

Town Financial Coordinator Lauren Sartori said she cannot project total costs that far; she is only able to speculate on borrowing costs. She has no idea of operating costs.

Mr. Stanton said he would prefer a rate based on water usage, but because some of the wastewater treatment plant users are customers of Housatonic Water Works, and others are customers of the Great Barrington Fire District and some with private wells, it is unusually complex to try to institute a different system.

Town DPW Joe Sokol said an EDU is a state formula that postulates use of 330 gallons a day from a typical three-bedroom dwelling.

There was further discussion of a rate based on metered use doing more to reduce water consumption. On the other hand, there remain fixed costs for operation of the treatment plant, no matter how they are apportioned. Creation of a

Sewer Users' District was mentioned. Ms. Phillips read into the record an email from Brandy Nelson of Great Barrington.

Andy Moro, North Plain Road, said Great Barrington's sewer rate may be lower than in neighboring communities, but its tax rate is the second highest in the county and it's because of school costs.

On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the hearing was closed at 7:45 p.m. Ms. Phillips moved to adopt a rate of \$460 a year, Mr. Bannon seconded. It was the board's consensus to keep the rate increase as low as possible, despite the temptation to create a larger reserve (free cash is approximately \$1.8million) . The vote was all five members in favor.

Ms. Phillips moved, Mr. Bannon seconded, to adopt the findings on this rate vote as outlined by the town manager. The vote was all five in favor.

Mr. Blechman said the board still needs to address the matter of rate equity. Ms. Ryan agreed to do initial research and bring it to the board to possibly instigate creation of a study committee.

The Board of Selectmen reconvened in that posture at 8 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon and voted by all.

B. Town Fees. The board on a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, opened a public hearing on municipal fees. It was 8:05 p.m. Mr. O'Donnell presented a proposed schedule of fee changes. There was no public comment. Mr. Stanton wondered why someone building a new home had to pay \$400 to hook into the town's septic system. Mr. Sokol said the amount covered inspections. Some board members wondered if certain lower fees would generate increased use.

The hearing was closed at 8:06 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon and approved by all.

On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the board unanimously approved the proposed fee schedule.

On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the board unanimously approved the findings for the proposed fee schedule as drafted by Mr. O'Donnell.

7. LICENSES OR PERMITS

A. David Isby, WSBS Radio, nine temporary weekday entertainment licenses for live evening music at VFW grounds, 800 Main St., July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and Aug. 7, 14, 21. On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the board unanimously approved the permits.

B. Great Barrington Libraries, one-day beer and wine license, Ramsdell Library, Housatonic, June 22, 5 to 7 p.m., for library anniversary celebration, according to Ron Blumenthal, Friends of the Great Barrington Libraries. On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the board unanimously approved the permit.

C. Sasa Armor, circus at Bogie's Restaurant, June 23, 3 to 5 p.m. On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the board unanimously approved the permit.

D. Sasa Armor, circus at Bogie's Restaurant, June 24, 2 to 4:30 p.m. On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the board unanimously approved the permit.

E. Great Barrington Fish & Game, one-day beer and wine license, June 17, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., 338 Long Pond Road, Father's Day event. On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the board unanimously approved the permit.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Main Street Reconstruction. To continue planning for the Main Street reconstruction in 2013, the board needs to give the design team direction on several items, Mr. O'Donnell said. Engineering consultants at the meeting included Rob Hoogs, also Mark Moore of MassDOT.

At least a majority of the board agreed on the following:

- Period lighting fixtures at bumpouts: Option 1.
- Color/type of brick edging: Blend of reds to accept variety of building masonry
- Color/type concrete sidewalks: Tinted darker, unless it appears to increase the budget beyond what the commonwealth will cover
- Crosswalk treatment/pattern: Probably herringbone, but the board to look at samples, and unless it appears to carry budget beyond what the commonwealth will cover
- Pedestrian flasher at post office: remove
- Location/number flower beds: Number not specified, but four at each crosswalk, if not maintained by volunteers, then maintained by town
- Paving in evening: Likely more costly, and noisier for downtown residents, but little or no traffic. Maybe, if it can be done in one night

On non-participating cost items, there is still no indication from federal/state authorities, Mr. O'Donnell said. The cost is projected at \$4.8 million, and \$5.15 million apparently is budgeted, so some approved extras could likely be covered.

The board discussed the designation of a bicycle lane. Travel lanes, engineers said, need to be 12 feet. If center lane exception is to 11 feet, then right lane of 15 feet next to parking still does not allow necessary bike lane 5 feet, so a bike lane can't be delineated. An exception is very unlikely, engineers said, because of heavy truck traffic downtown.

The board briefly discussed written comments that came from a DOT hearing: James N. Parrish, 510 Egremont Road (visitors will park in parts of bumpouts); Laura Katz, 34 Kalliste Hill, don't eliminate right-turn lane onto Taconic Avenue from Main Street; Jennifer Clark, 11 Oak St., and Sharon Gregory, 32 Hollenbeck Ave., eight issues including ones dealing with sidewalks (engineer drawings distorted, engineers said), bright signage for crosswalks, vagueness of timing of project, minimal-maintenance plantings; Wendy Linscott, 22 Elm St., disruption to downtown businesses; and Chip Elitzer, Great Barrington, limit scope of project; Alan Kalish, 322 Main St., complained of misleading information about town decisions on the project.

B. Lake Mansfield. To acquire a 2,500-square-foot untaxed parcel at south tip of Lake Mansfield, in order to implement stormwater improvement project on Knob Hill Road with grant funds, Ms. Phillips moved and Mr. Blechman seconded that the Town Manager with Town Counsel investigate steps that need to be taken to identify the owner (possibly Rosamund Flower Vitale estate) and pursue taking by adverse possession, through town meeting vote. All were in favor.

C. Town Charter Review Committee. On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the board unanimously voted to appoint Patrice Mullin and Marcia Stamell.

D. Town Building use Facility Policy. Tabled to June 19 meeting, on motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, and voted favorably by all.

E. Extend P&S Agreement for Castle Street Fire Station. The board unanimously approved a 90-day extension, on a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon. Board members are to receive copies of the environmental report.

9. SELECTMEN'S TIME

Mr. Blechman asked if appointment letters for Town Charter review Committee appointees could be expedited. Mr. O'Donnell said they would be.

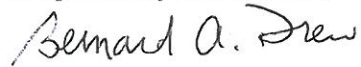
Ms. Chernila thanked Jenn Bailly for her work in the Town Managers office.

10. MEDIA TIME

11. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Phillips moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m., Mr. Bannon seconded, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Bernard A. Drew
Recording Secretary