

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2012
7:00 P.M. – TOWN HALL**

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

7:00 PM – PUBLIC SESSION – BOARD ROOM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Sean Stanton called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. July 23, 2012 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Deb Phillips to approve the July 23, 2012 minutes

SECOND: Steve Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

B. August 27, 2012 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Deb Phillips to approve the August 27th minutes as amended

SECOND: Steve Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

3. SELECTMEN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS:

A. DISCUSSION OF UPCOMING MEETING CALENDAR.

All members of the selectboard agree to postpone the October 1, 2012 meeting, to be re-visited after the letter goes out to the Boards regarding the content of the meeting.

B. GENERAL COMMENTS BY THE BOARD.

Andrew Blechman said that he was in New York City for an event and was speaking to African American authors. When he said that he was from Great Barrington, they recognized that this is the birthplace of W.E.B. Dubois. Andrew suggested an academic conference and more marketing around this relationship. Deb Phillips said that UMASS would be a great partner for this.

Andrew Blechman presented the brochure from the Mahaiwe that spoke about the Town Meeting being held there.

MOTION: Alana Chernila to approve the 'mock-up' for the Mahaiwe brochure for the annual Town Meeting.

SECOND: Deb Phillips

VOTE: 5-0

4. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

Kevin O'Donnell said that there is a request for a 30 day extension for the sale of the old Fire Station. He said the issues regarding the TIFF have been resolved. The perspective owners will be meeting with merchants about the alley access. Mr. McCormick requested that a provision be added to the 30 day extension agreement to enable the cancellation of the purchase and sale agreement, by either party, with 7 days notice.

Deb Phillips asked if there would be a penalty if a cancellation took place.

Kevin O'Donnell said that he did not know this information yet.

Sean Stanton suggested that Kevin O'Donnell and the board get more information and vote on the matter at that point.

A meeting to discuss this issue was set for Friday, September 28th at 4:00.

MOTION: Deb Phillips to postpone the decision until the Friday, September 28th meeting.

SECOND: Steve Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

Kevin O'Donnell listed the current vacancies and asked that anyone interested to please contact him. The vacancies include: Agricultural Commission, Conservation Commission, Tree Committee, Council on Aging, Energy Committee, Housing Authority, Charter Review Committee and the Library Board of Trustees.

5. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME:

There were many citizens who spoke in regards to the Town Manager's contract.

They include:

In support of the Town Manager

Andy Moro- North Plain Rd.

Bud Atwood – Maple Ave.

Don Hagberg – 41 Pine St

Ron Dlugosz – 14 Lakeview Rd.

Linda Miller – 256 Park St.

Tom Blauvelt – Lake Ave.

Ronnie Cunningham- 1051 Main St., Housatonic

Pat Fennell – 154 Main St

Dan Bailly – 207 North St.

Nancy Hahn – Monument Valley Rd.

Mick Garrold – 115 Taconic Ave.

Peg Neeman – Rte 183

In support of the Selectboard's decision

Ron Blumenthal

Mary Eastland – 8 Squaw Peak

Judith Kales – 32 Blue Hill Rd.

Frances Kollman – 34 Blue Hill Rd.

Dr. Alan Inglis – Castle St.

Holly Hamer – Seekonk Cross Rd.

Some of the comments in support of renewing the Town Manager's contract include:

Not renewing the Town Manager's contract is poor timing.

A citizen asked for the resignation of the total board.

The Town Manager has made great hiring choices.

The decision to not renew the contract will have a big impact for the long term.

The Town Manager gets things done.

This Town Manager is the best one, thus far.

The Town Manager is forward-thinking and thinks outside of the box.

The Town Manager stands up for what he believes in.

The Town Manager is a quick decision maker.

Some of the comments in support of NOT renewing the Town Manager's contract include:

A citizen expressed their full support of the selectboard.

A citizen said the selectboard is hard-working and dedicated. They expressed their trust in the selectboard.

A citizen said that the Town Manager is unresponsive to anyone 'outside of his circle.'

A citizen said that the Town Manager is difficult to work with.

Ron Blumenthal said that there are 35 residents and business owners who are in support of the Selectboard's decision. He said that he does not feel that the town is business friendly and is a 'toxic environment.' He encouraged the selectboard to 'stick with their decision.'

When asked who was on the list, Ron Blumenthal read the names, which were later entered into public record.

6. LICENSES OR PERMITS:

A. EDWARD G. MC CORMICK/GT. BARRINGTON FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION FOR ONE DAY BEER AND WINE LIQUOR LICENSE FOR SEPTEMBER 29, 2012 FROM 5:00PM-11:00PM AT EAGLETON SCHOOL DISCOVERY CENTER. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

MOTION: Deb Phillips to approve license

SECOND: Steve Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

B. HOLLY HAMER/TRUSTEES OF THE GREAT BARRINGTON LIBRARIES FOR ONE DAY BEER AND WINE LICENSE FOR OCTOBER 3, 2012 FROM 8:30PM – 9:30PM AT THE RAMSDELL LIBRARY THEATER, 2ND FLOOR.

(FEE WAIVER REQUESTED)

(DISCUSSION/VOTE)

Ronnie Cunningham said that she is against beer and wine at library events. The movie that will be shown is about Romanian orphans, so a party atmosphere is not appropriate.

Dan Bailly said that this is a public event and questioned how this can be held on the 2nd floor, which is not ADA compliant.

Steve Bannon said that he respects what the library does, but does not feel that there is a need for beer and wine at a movie night.

Holly Hamer responded that a group asked to show the film. They requested a reception be help so that they can ask for donations. Holly said that the library is looking to do more outreach and chose this event. She said they try to serve beer and wine only when the library is closed.

Deb Phillips said a fee should be charged if this is a fundraiser. She also suggested that the Selectboard research the ADA topic and consider what it means.

Holly Hamer said, in regards to ADA, she is willing to re-show the film at Mason Library.

Alana Chernila said that she has been to several events at the library when beer and wine has been served and she has never seen anyone who has had too much to drink. She said that these events bring in new faces.

Steve Bannon responded that too much to drink is not the issue; it is the necessity of this on more and more occasions.

Andrew Blechman said that this should only be allowed for big and important events. He would like a good foundation for this being so.

Holly Hamer said that the selectboard voted that alcohol would be allowed and asked what the standards are for when it would then be allowed.

Steve Bannon said the selectboard agreed to take it on a case-by-case basis. He suggested that they have more discussion about this to define what is meant by their vote.

Holly Hamer said that the Library Board of Trustees will create a guideline regarding in which instances they would be requesting alcohol. She will give this proposal to the selectboard.

MOTION: Deb Phillips to approve the license with fee waiver as requested

SECOND: Alana Chernila

VOTE: 4-1 Steve Bannon against

7. NEW BUSINESS:

A. BOS – PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING OCTOBER 24, 2012 AS UNITED NATIONS DAY. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

Sean Stanton read the proclamation

MOTION: Deb Phillips to accept the proclamation

SECOND: Steve Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

Alana Chernila asked what this means for the selectboard and what should be done.

Deb Phillips suggested that they contact Railroad Street Youth Project to see how they are participating and how the town can work with them. She also suggested that this information be passed along to the school district, so they can participate on Oct. 24th.

B. BOS – SET HALLOWEEN TRICK OR TREAT DATE AND TIME. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

MOTION: Deb Phillips to set 'trick or treating' for October 31st from 5:30 P.M. until 7:30 P.M.

SECOND: Steve Bannon

VOTE: 5-0

C. TOWN MANAGER'S CONTRACT. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

MOTION: Deb Phillips not to renew the Town Manager's contract

SECOND: Alana Chernila

VOTE: 4-1 Steve Bannon against

Steve Bannon said that the town finances are in good shape. He feels that the problems between the Selectboard and the Town Manager are improving, as well as communication. Steve said that he would like to extend the contract for 1 or 2 years. He feels that the timing of this decision is very poor. He feels the decision is not in the best interest of the town.

Deb Phillips said that, although the timing is not the best, this is when the contract is up and a one year contract does not make sense. She said that she has spoken to many professionals about this and they all say that this is not uncommon and that the town will adapt. Deb said that the selectboard and the Town Manager differ on how we can and will move the town forward.

Alana Chernila said that the citizen comments make it seem like they are making this decision based on their feelings and are taking the decision lightly. She said, "I assure you that I am not taking this decision lightly."

Alana thanked the public for their trust.

Andrew Blechman said that this was not an easy decision. He is comfortable with the decision that he has made. Andrew said that the Selectboard is trying to make a change; to be more business-friendly, more efficient, etc. He said that Kevin has taken the town partly there, but the selectboard wants to go further. Andrew said that a Town Manager, who has an additional skill set to do so, is needed. He said this decision will be for the betterment of the community in the long term. Andrew thanked Kevin for his service.

Sean Stanton said that there is qualified staff in Town Hall. He appreciates Kevin's work to date and it is time to move on.

MOTION: Deb Phillips to invite someone from the Collin Center to come out and give a presentation regarding what they offer in regards to a Town Manager search.

SECOND: Andrew Blechman

VOTE: 5-0

Deb Phillips will contact them and schedule for 10/9 or 10/22

8. OLD BUSINESS:

A. REVIEW OF RFP FOR THE SALE OF HOUSATONIC SCHOOL.

(DISCUSSION/VOTE)

Kevin O'Donnell asked the board to break the lease concept into 2 RFP's or forgo the lease option, altogether. He does not see anything positive about leasing.

MOTION: Steve Bannon to immediately go with the sale of the Housatonic School

SECOND: Alana Chernila

VOTE: 5-0

Sean Stanton said that the Housatonic Task Force recommendations should be put in the packet.

Steve Bannon said that this may lead people to believe that the recommendations are the basis of the RFP.

Dan Bailly, member of the Housatonic Task Force, said that it should be left out of the RFP as to not create bias. However, he said that the recommendations should be considered when the RFP responses come in.

DISCUSSION OF SIDEWALKS THROUGHOUT TOWN.

Joe Sokul showed a slide presentation of the map of sidewalks in Great Barrington and Housatonic. He rated them as good, poor, and needs repair. He reviewed each. Joe said that this is important in the assessment for capital planning. He said that a certain percent of money should be committed to work on sidewalks.

Joe said that this map does not show the possibility of expansion of sidewalks. This can be discussed after the Master Plan.

Joe will use this information in the discussion during the Budget for CIP.

Andrew Blechman said that connectivity is the next step.

C. DISCUSSION ON POSSIBLE BUILDING MAINTENANCE CODE.

Ed May gave a presentation about possible building maintenance codes with examples from other states. He suggested that the code include the possibility of being able to walk around a building, to look at the exterior etc.

Andrew Blechman suggested that we use a code from a municipality nearby that can be "tweaked" so as to not re-invent the wheel.

Steve Bannon said that the selectboard needs to decide what is really needed, so as to look over the distressed buildings but not make people feel like we are watching.

Sean Stanton said that the goal is to take houses that are health and safety issues. We can then fix it or pass it on. Sean said, if a property affects the area, there should be a tool to fix it.

Kevin O'Donnell said that various steps can be put in place for enforcement to give leniency or not.

Alana Chernila asked if there is anyway to target buildings that are falling down.

Kevin O'Donnell responded that it takes a few years to acquire property.

Ed May said that he will come back with an edited version of what he presented.

MOTION: Deb Phillips to ask Mr. May to take the information that the selectboard gave him and incorporate it into what he has given the board and come back in 4 weeks with an amended maintenance code.

SECOND: Alana Chernila

VOTE: 5-0

D. DISCUSSION RE: SIGN REGULATIONS.

Currently temporary signs are allowed one day before and one day after the event. A revision or stricter enforcement is needed.

MOTION: Steve Bannon to have a public hearing about a temporary sign by-law to be advertised well.

SECOND: Deb Phillips

VOTE: 5-0


9. SELECTMEN'S TIME: None

10. MEDIA TIME: None

11. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Steven Bannon, seconded by Deb Phillips, the Board adjourned its meeting at 9:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Cara Becker
Recording Secretary