

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
SELECTBOARD AND FINANCE COMMITTEE  
JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
FIRE STATION, 37 STATE ROAD  
MARCH 25, 2015

PRESENT:

SELECTBOARD

DEBORAH PHILLIPS  
SEAN STANTON - absent  
STEPHEN C. BANNON  
DANIEL BAILLY  
ED ABRAHAMS

TOWN MANAGER JENNIFER TABAKIN

FINANCE COMMITTEE

SHARON GREGORY  
MICHAEL WISE  
LEIGH DAVIS  
WALTER F. ATWOOD III  
THOMAS BLAUVET

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

APPROVAL OF JOINT MINUTES OF THE SELECTBOARD AND FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Minutes of February 11, 2015

MOTION: Stephen Bannon to approve.  
SECOND: Dan Bailly  
VOTE: 4-0

Minutes of February 24, 2015

MOTION: Stephen Bannon to approve.  
SECOND: Dan Bailly  
VOTE: 4-0

Minutes of February 25, 2015

MOTION: Stephen Bannon to approve.  
SECOND: Dan Bailly  
VOTE: 4-0

Minutes of March 3, 2015

MOTION: Stephen Bannon to approve.  
SECOND: Dan Bailly  
VOTE: 4-0

**Minutes of March 11, 2015**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to approve.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

Deb Phillips noted there was a lot of dissension around the school vote and conversation about community meetings to find common ground and pull together in the same direction. She said she is proposing that we do a community meeting in April to begin to talk about what the issues are. We need a guided discussion to find out what people want to see. Deb said she spoke to a woman who mediates meetings like this. Her name is Rosa Zubizaretta. She has volunteered to do the first meeting for us free of charge. If we are planning on doing more, we can talk about paying her. It was decided to try and schedule her for April the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Dan asked if there has been any response in the discussion regarding the Regional Agreement. Stephen Bannon said they are waiting for West Stockbridge. It was also decided to have a Selectboard meeting on Monday March 30, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

Jennifer explained that the Warrant, dated May 4, 2015 begins with the index of warrant articles and also has a ballot question. The Ballot Question is exempting the repairs to the Dewey School Building and property from Proposition 2 1/2.

**WARRANT ARTICLES:**

**ARTICLE 1:**

Revolving funds together not to exceed the sum of One hundred Thousand Dollars:

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Tom Blauvelt to recommend.

**SECOND:** Michael Wise

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 2:**

To see if the Town will accept MGL Chapter 60 § 15B to establish a tax title collection revolving fund and to appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to start the revolving fund:

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Tom Blauvelt to recommend.

**SECOND:** Michael Wise

**VOTE:** 4-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 3:**

To see if the Town will vote to fix the salaries of all elected officials for the period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 – Selectboard: \$7,500 (\$1,500 per Selectboard memeber)

**MOTION:** Tom Blauvelt to recommend.

**SECOND:** Buddy Atwood

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 4:**

To see if the Town will accept any and all funds being provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts – under the provisions of Chapter 90 to pay such costs connected to the maintenance, repair and construction of Town ways and bridges,

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Tom Blauvelt to recommend.

**SECOND:** Michael Wise

**VOTE:** 4-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 5:**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$639,000 for the following purposes:

Highway Storage Facility \$210,000.00

Police Cruisers (2) \$80,000.00

Fire Chief Vehicle \$40,000.00

Pickup Trucks (2) \$117,000.00

Dump Truck (1) \$192,000.00

Jennifer Tabakin noted that there are existing funds, so the Town will be borrowing less than the \$639,000. The existing funds we have are \$52,536.00. This warrant gives us permission to spend that amount. Deb Phillips said that Sean was concerned about the money for the Highway Storage Facility in that he thought it should not be borrowed until 20 Castle Street Fire Station is not available to the DPW for the storage of equipment. Lauren said her recommendation would be to approve the item to borrow and then before we move to borrow we would come back to the boards with permission to move forward. If the money is not borrowed, we would go back to Town meeting to rescind the authorization to borrow the \$210,000.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Leigh Davis

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 6:**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$80,500 or any other sum, for General Fund Capital Items:

Town Manager/Selectmen - Copier	\$10,500
Public Works - Pedestrian Tunnel Rehab design	\$10,000
Senior Center Building Repairs	\$15,000
Parks – Improvements	<u>\$45,000</u>
Total Capital General Fund	<b>\$80,500</b>

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Buddy

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 7 - FISCAL YEAR 2016 PROPOSED BUDGET – OPERATING BUDGET**

LINE ITEMS 1-77 TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT FOR \$1,355,195

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 4-1

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

LINE ITEMS 78 TO 130 – TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY - \$2,106,933

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

LINE ITEMS 131-177 – TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS - \$2,057,240

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

LINE ITEMS 178 TO 185 TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH FOR \$71,959.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

TOTAL COMMUNITY SERVICE LINE ITEMS 186 TO 200- \$380,056

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

TOTAL CULTURAL/RECREATION LINE ITEMS 201-218 - \$581,255

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**INSURANCE – LINE ITEMS 219-223 FOR \$1,825,369**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**DEBT – LINE ITEM 224 FOR \$1,693,785**

There is a decrease of \$73,595

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**RETIREMENT – LINE ITEMS 225 TO 226 FOR \$767,697**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

MISCELLANEOUS – LINE ITEMS 227 AND 228 FOR \$10,433

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

FUND TRANSFERS – LINE ITEMS 229 TO 230 - \$50,000

Line Item 230 – Unfunded Liability -

Lauren explained that this is the Select Board the opportunity to create an OPEB trust or not and how much to fund it with. We have pension liabilities and health insurance liabilities for retirees. The retirement includes both the retirees as well as the active employees. We have a Pension Trust Fund and it has about \$700,000 in it and is only to be used for Pension. Every year we take \$100,000 out of it and there is nothing going into it other than the interest. The other item that is an unfunded employee benefit is when employees leave employment – they have a payout based on whatever union contract they are in or unused sick, vacation time benefits. We have about \$450,000 in that trust fund which is restricted only for that use. We were adding \$30,000 to it regularly but last year we proposed to put it in for OPEB instead of \$30,000 into the trust. There are the other post-employment benefits which is health insurance for retirees. There is health insurance for retirees which are OPEB; there is pension for both active and retirees, which is pension and the unfunded employee trust which is for people to retire and the ability for us to pay the benefits out that are in their contract. The one we don't know how much the funding is for because we don't have an actuarial calculation is the pension. That is the one that Standard and Poor's is saying that we fund the pension liability before we fund the insurance for the retirees. A stabilization fund can be set up for OPEB purposes only. If you set up the trust, you don't have that flexibility.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise that the Finance Committee recommend putting \$30,000 in Line 230 for the unfunded employee benefits fund.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend putting \$30,000 in Line 230 for unfunded employee benefits fund.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 9: -**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the receipts of the Wastewater Treatment Plant money necessary for the operation of the Sewer Division detailed in the FY 16 Annual Budget.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend the total Operating Budget of \$1,888.023 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend the total Operating Budget of \$1,888.023 for the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ATTICLE 10**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$500,000 or any other sum of money to pay the costs of remodeling, reconstructing and making extraordinary repairs to the Dewey School building. This is also exempting the borrowing from proposition 2.5.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise that the Finance Committee recommends the adoption of Article 10.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon that the Select Board recommends Article 10 and that the article is included on the ballot.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 11 – BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

\$13,019,769 is for the operating budget and \$504,735 is for the capital assessment.

Total Budget: \$13,524,504.00.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Leigh Davis that the Finance Committee recommends.

**SECOND:** Michael Wise

**VOTE:** 3-2

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon that the Selectboard recommends.

**SECOND:** Edward Abrahams

**VOTE:** 3-1

Mr. Richard Ruth said he encourages a no vote on the school budget.



**ARTICLE 12**

To see if the town will vote to authorize the use of \$100,000 of the Pension Reserve Fund to reduce the FY16 appropriation required under Chapter 32 of the General Laws for the Berkshire Regional Retirement System.

**MOTION:** Michael Wise that the Finance Committee recommends.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon that the Selectboard recommends.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 13**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the use of Free Cash to reduce the tax levy for Fiscal Year 2016.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise that the Finance Committee recommends using \$2,350,000 of Free Cash to reduce the tax levy.

**SECOND:** Tom Blauvelt

**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon that the Select Board recommends using \$2,350,000 of Free Cash to reduce the tax levy.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 14**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate or reserve for future appropriation from the Community Preservation Fund, the following amounts recommended by the CPC for FY 2016.

**RESERVES:**

FY 16 Revenues for historic resources reserve	\$43,050
FY 16 revenues for community housing reserve	\$43,050
FY 16 revenues for open space reserve	\$43,050

**APPROPRIATIONS:**

FY 16 revenues for administrative expenses	\$21,525
FY 16 revenues for 2016 budgeted reserve	\$49,825
Undesignated fund balance for 2016 budgeted Reserve	\$250,000

The first portion is the Reserves is to meet the CPA statute which requires that there be 10% spending of the of the reservation funds in each of the three categories. We could spend the funds if we approved all the projects first. The first article is to reserve 10% in each category. The first part of the appropriations is for administrative expenses, that is where CDC can pay things like legal costs, administrative secretarial work, appraisals and CPA signage for

construction sites, etc. The second part is for appropriations, the next part is to take the balance of 2016 funds and put into a budgeted reserve so it could be available to town meeting and spent if worthy projects came up between the May 2015 Town Meeting and the May 2016 Town Meeting. We would still need a special town meeting to use those funds. The last item is to move some funds around from a current reserve which is untouchable right now into a budgeted reserve so if we need it we will come back to town meeting and request authorizations.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Tom Blauvelt to recommend.

**SECOND:** Michael Wise

**VOTE:** 4-1

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 15**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund for Fiscal 2016 the amounts recommended by the Community Preservation Committee with each item to be considered a separate appropriation. Chris Rembold noted that there are a total of 9 projects recommended by the Community Preservation Committee. There were initially a total of 21. There is \$200,000 for Affordable Housing at 100 Bridge Street for 45 affordable housing units. There are 6 projects under the Historic Preservation Category for a total of \$346,640. There are three town projects included, the Newsboy Statue, the Town Hall and Mason Library. There are two open space projects which includes 1.3 acres of open space along the river at 100 Bridge Street as well as \$20,000 to the Trustees of Reservations to rehab and create trails at Flag Rock and Monument Mountain. The Trustees recently purchased Flag Rock and it will be turned into conservation. The total recommended by the CPC is \$866,640. The source of the appropriations is basically we are using the budget reserves for the 3 designated categories first and the balance of the funding comes out of reserves. Town meeting can authorize the full appropriation or partial appropriation but cannot increase the appropriation or entertain new projects.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING:**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Tom Blauvelt to recommend \$200,000 for Affordable Housing.

**SECOND:** Michael Wise

**VOTE:** 4-1

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend \$200,000 for Affordable Housing.

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE:** 4-0

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION:**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Michael Wise to recommend \$346,640 for Historic Preservation  
**SECOND:** Buddy Atwood  
**VOTE:** 3-0-2

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend \$346,640 for Historic Preservation.  
**SECOND:** Dan Bailly  
**VOTE:** 4-0

**OPEN SPACE:**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION:** Tom Blauvelt to recommend \$320,000 for Open Space.  
**SECOND:** Michael Wise  
**VOTE:** 5-0

**SELECTBOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon to recommend \$320,000 for Open  
**SECOND:** Dan Bailly  
**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 16:**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Finance committee Bylaw chapter 7, Article II of the Code of Great Barrington by addition a new section § 7-6-1, Financial Reports and information.....

Michael Wise noted that it was supported by the Finance Committee by a previous vote. Sharon said the reason is to have direct access to key financial reports on a timely basis. Jennifer said if they are going to be amending the Town Code, the language that you put in the code has to be approved by Town Counsel. Stephen Bannon said he talked to Town Counsel as to whether this was advisory and it was determined that it would change the Town Code. Sharon said their intent is that they will not have to go through various channels to get the reports they need. Debbie asked if we can mandate what the regional school district does. Michael said we can't tell them what to do because they are a separate entity. It was noted that it doesn't specify the documents that the Finance Committee wants.

**SELECT BOARD:**

**MOTION:** Stephen Bannon not to recommend to Town Meeting.  
**SECOND:** Ed Abrahams  
**VOTE:** 4-0

**ARTICLE 17:**

To see if the Town will vote to accept MGL c 143 sec 3Z which states that any part time inspector of buildings, building commissioner, local inspector or alternate inspector may practice for hire or engage in the business for which he is certified, licensed or registered under the building code while serving as such inspector; provided, however, that within the area over which he has jurisdiction as inspector or alternate inspector, he shall not exercise any of his powers and duties as such inspector, including enforcement officer of enforcement officer of the state building code for the construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, demolition or removal

work done by himself, his employer, employee or one employed with him. After discussion, it was decided to adjourn and continue the rest of the warrant articles on Monday, March 30, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the Selectboard meeting.

A motion was made by Dan Bailly and seconded by Stephen Bannon to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Wichmann". The signature is fluid and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Carolyn Wichmann  
Secretary