

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
MINUTES  
MONDAY, AUGUST 25, 2014  
7:00 P.M. - REGULAR SESSION  
TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** ED ABRAHAMS  
DANIEL BAILLY  
STEPHEN BANNON  
DEB PHILLIPS  
SEAN STANTON

JENNIFER TABAKIN, TOWN MANAGER

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Deb Phillips called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

July 28, 2014 Regular Meeting

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to approve the July 28, 2014 minutes

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE:** 5-0

**3. SELECTBOARD'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS:**

**A. GENERAL COMMENTS BY THE BOARD.**

Ed Abrahams said that the police department had a busy week and thanked them for the incredible job that they do.

Deb Phillips read the names of the raffle prize winners from the summer fest.

**B. DISCUSSION OF UPCOMING MEETING CALENDAR**

The Selectboard was given the meeting calendar. There was discussion about scheduling a joint meeting with the Planning Board, a date was not determined.

**4. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:**

**A. FOLLOW UP ITEMS**

**- RECOGNITION OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

Jennifer Tabakin recognized Sharon Nourse for her many years of service as a parking enforcement officer. She was presented a certificate.

Police Chief Walsh thanked Sharon Nourse for her 26 years. He said that Sharon did many other tasks in addition to parking enforcement officer. Sharon was a big part of the accreditation process.

**- VACANCIES ON TOWN BOARDS/COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS**

Jennifer Tabakin said that she will announce vacancies at the next meeting.

Jennifer announced that sewer bills have been mailed.

The Town Code has been uploaded to the Town's website. Jennifer thanked Marie Ryan for this.

Jennifer announced that Rita Schumacher is the new Asst. Director of the Senior Center.

There is a new grant that the town is applying for through Mass. Works, seeking \$3 million for the Bridge Street bridge rehabilitation.

CPA applications will be accepted 9/1 – 10/1.

The BRTA transportation survey is online.

## **5. PUBLIC HEARING**

### **A. TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING TO DETERMINE THE TAX ALLOCATION FOR FY 2015 FOR THE TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)**

#### **a. Open Public Hearing**

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to open the public hearing

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE: 5-0**

#### **b. Explanation of Project**

Town Assessor, Chris Lamarre said that the overall tax levy will not change at this point.

He explained the exemption possibilities; Open space discount, residential exemption, small commercial exemption, single and split tax rate.

He stated that the town has always chosen a single tax rate.

The Board of Assessors recommends the single tax rate.

Chris reported that the excess levy capacity is \$1,689,311. This indicates the amount that could have been added to the levy but was not.

Jennifer Tabakin spoke about the significant growth and the increase value of housing.

Sean Stanton read a letter from Rich Dohoney in support of a split tax rate.

#### **c. Speak in Favor/Opposition**

Sharon Gregory said that she would like the Assessor to meet with the Finance Committee before the budget season to discuss this option.

Michael Wise said that he would like to see this topic on the table well before budget season.

Michelle Loubert highly recommended comparing apples to apples when comparing towns. Michelle said that Sudbury did a residential exemption study and recommends that Great Barrington consider doing the same.

Paul Kleinwald cautioned that the business climate has deteriorated over the years. He said if taxes increase too much, marginal businesses will be lost.

#### **d. Motion to Close Public Hearing**

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to close the public hearing

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE: 5-0**

#### **e. Motion re: Findings: none**

#### **f. Motion re: Approval/Denial/Table**

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to adopt a single tax rate of \$13.72 per \$1000 of valuation for all classes of property for fiscal year 2015.

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE: 5-0**

## **Fire District**

Chris Lamarre explained the fire district options and financials.

**MOTION:** Bud Atwood to accept a single tax rate as proposed.

**SECOND:** Ken Schumacher

**VOTE: 3-0** Bud Atwood, Ken Schumacher and Bob Hammer

## **6. LICENSES OR PERMITS:**

### **A. DALE ABRAMS/GB LAND CONSERVANCY FOR PERMISSION TO HOLD THE 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL RUN FOR THE HILLS EVENT ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2014 FROM 8:00 AM TO 11:00 AM BASED OUT OF THE KILPATRICK ATHLETIC CENTER AT BARD COLLEGE AT SIMON'S ROCK. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)**

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to grant permission

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE: 5-0**

B. NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY/LIZ STRAWN FOR AN ANNUAL BIKE MS RIDE ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2014. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to approve

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE: 5-0**

C. LAUREN SMITH/FAIRVIEW HOSPITAL FOR PERMISSION TO USE PARKING SPACES SURROUNDING TOWN HALL ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2014 FROM 12:00 NOON TO 9:30 PM FOR THE FAIRVIEW HOSPITAL 2014 GALA. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to grant permission

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE: 4-0-1 Steve Bannon recused**

D. LAUREN SMITH/FAIRVIEW HOSPITAL FOR TEMPORARY ONE DAY WEEKDAY ENTERTAINMENT LICENSE FOR SEPTEMBER 20, 2014 FROM 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM AT THE GAZEBO, TOWN HALL, 334 MAIN STREET. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to approve license

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE: 4-0-1 Steve Bannon recused**

E. LAUREN SMITH/FAIRVIEW HOSPITAL FOR ONE DAY BEER AND WINE LICENSE FOR SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2014 FROM 5:00 PM – 7:30 PM AT THETOWN HALL GREEN, 334 MAIN STREET. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to approve license

**SECOND:** Dan Bailly

**VOTE: 4-0-1 Steve Bannon recused**

F. GREAT BARRINGTON FISH AND GAME FOR ONE DAY BEER AND WINE LICENSE FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2014 FROM 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM AT 338 LONG POND ROAD. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to approve license

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE: 5-0**

G. GREAT BARRINGTON FISH AND GAME FOR ONE DAY BEER AND WINE LICENSE FOR NOVEMBER 30, 2014 FROM 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM AT 338 LONG POND ROAD. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to approve license

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE: 5-0**

H. GREAT BARRINGTON FISH AND GAME FOR TEN (10) ONE DAY BEER AND WINE LICENSES, EVERY SUNDAY, FROM SEPTEMBER 21, 2014 – NOVEMBER 23, 2014 FROM 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM AT 338 LONG POND ROAD. (DISCUSSION/VOTE)

**MOTION:** Sean Stanton to approve license

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE: 5-0**

#### **7. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME:**

Paul Kleinwald gave out and read documents detailing charges that he feels that he is owed by the Town. The total owed is \$3570.50

Richard Needleman said that Karen Smith made a recommendation at the last Housing Authority meeting. She suggested that Great Barrington hire a grant writer. Richard agrees and asked the Selectboard to consider this suggestion.

**8. SELECTBOARD'S TIME: None**

**9. MEDIA TIME: None**

**10. ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion by Sean Stanton, seconded by Steve Bannon, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cara Becker". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Cara Becker  
Recording Secretary

Subject: Tax Classification

Date: Mon, 25 Aug 2014 17:17:03 -0400

From: [RDohoney@derosadohoney.com](mailto:RDohoney@derosadohoney.com)

To: [deb@debphillips.biz](mailto:deb@debphillips.biz); [seanstanton@hotmail.com](mailto:seanstanton@hotmail.com); [scbannon@gmail.com](mailto:scbannon@gmail.com); [danielbbailly@gmail.com](mailto:danielbbailly@gmail.com); [EDforGB@gmail.com](mailto:EDforGB@gmail.com)

Dear Honorable Selectboard,

I note that the public hearing on the tax classification is this evening. Unfortunately, I do not think I will be able to attend so I am writing to share my thoughts on the matter. Specifically, I would like the Selectboard to consider a split tax rate shifting a larger portion of the tax burden to our commercial and industrial tax payers. Great Barrington is the only community in Berkshire County with a large business center that does not employ a split tax rate. Of the Berkshire County communities that maintain a flat tax rate, I believe that we have the largest Police budget, largest Fire Department budget and largest DPW budget. It is unfair for residential tax payers to bear the burden created by the municipal services required to serve our commercial properties. We are lucky to have such a thriving business community but, with no local sales or income tax, the only way to capture revenue from business income is through a higher commercial tax rate. Given the consternation that has gripped our Town during the last few budget cycles, I think a split tax rate deserves some consideration. On a personal note, I can tell you that, as a member of the School Committee, I regularly hear concerns and complaints from residential tax payers about the affect of the School budget on their tax rate. I have never once heard such a complaint from a commercial tax payer.

Rich

Richard M. Dohoney  
74 Blue Hill Road