



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, November 6, 2012 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Chair, Lucy Wallace in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Marie Sobalvarro, Ron Ricci, Bill Johnson and Lucy Wallace were all in attendance as well as the Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet. Tim Clark entered the meeting at 7:40PM.

MINUTES

On a Ricci/Sobalvarro motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 10/2 & 10/16 including the executive session, as presented.

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

Principal Assessor Harald Scheid attended the meeting to recommend the BOS adopt a single tax rate for FY13. He explained due to the low percentage of commercial/industrial properties in town having a split tax rate does not make sense. The BOS members asked a few questions about personal property tax and tax exemptions. On a Johnson/Sobalvarro motion, the board voted unanimously to maintain a single tax rate.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW

Council on Aging

COA Director Debbie Thompson was in attendance along with COA board members Connie Larrabee, Sharon Briggs and Pam Frederick. Thompson explained the budget was developed to support the true needs of the seniors in town. She said the COA has experienced an increased demand for senior services due to the senior affordable rental units at Bowers Brook. She explained the budget prepared includes an increase of \$3800. These funds will be used to provide additional hours to the Receptionist/MART Dispatcher allowing the Outreach Coordinator more time to spend on direct social services. She emphasized the importance outreach has on identifying seniors who are in need of services but have not come forward seeking assistance. Thompson said about half of the seniors in town are utilizing COA programs and services. Ron Ricci was curious about how many seniors are included in her active case log. Bill Johnson asked if Devens residents request services and if so are we reimbursed by MassDevelopment for the services provided. Thompson said just recently she has received a request for transportation. Tim Bragan said he would be attending a meeting in Devens where he can begin this conversation.

Department of Public Works

DPW Director Rich Nota was in attendance. He explained his budget is straight forward and supports level service. He pointed out a few areas that required increases with the largest being in the fuel cost. Nota also reviewed the Water Department, Transfer Station and Snow & Ice budgets which were all level funded. He was asked about the possibility of offering single stream recycling and creation of a composting area. Nota said he is

working with the Police and Fire Chiefs to finalize a shared Administrative Assistant position.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Worth Robbins (Harvard Solar Gardens), 115 Massachusetts Avenue, admitted this was probably a conversation that should have happened a year ago. He asked the BOS to consider establishing a permit category for ground mount community solar. As a participant in the Harvard Solar Garden Project I he explained they were surprised by the hefty permit fee (\$17,040). He said it was almost four times what they expected. He referred to the fee schedule the BOS approved for residential systems (\$125 building & \$36 electrical). He said the approved fee schedule enabled the Solarize Mass project to move forward and be successful. Robbins added the reason the solar garden concept has evolved was so residents who could not put solar on their property could still benefit from the program. He offered the idea of creating a fee structure specific for solar in the overlay district. Lucy Wallace allowed the BOS members to comment. Tim Clark was open to the idea acknowledging the solar equipment is expensive and maybe should not be included in the fee calculation. Wallace asked Robbins how quickly the BOS would need to act on this. Robbins said the grant funding that was due to expire in August has been extended to February but obviously they would like to get started before the ground freezes. Ron Ricci and Bill Johnson were open to revisiting how the permitting fees are structured but not just for solar. Ricci said if we are going to revisit how we determine fees for solar in all fairness to the community we need to evaluate this across all inspectional service fees. Marie Sobalvarro seemed to be in agreement. Clark and Sobalvarro volunteered to work on this further.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Selectmen Budgets

Tim Bragan reported he is currently working on the Selectmen budgets and confirmed there will be no significant changes.

Town Center Sewer Project

Bragan reported the sand filter at the plant is being repaired which should be complete within a couple weeks. He confirmed the plant is operational and once the filter is fixed DEP will be notified. He said we are waiting to receive drainlayer applications and expect to provide a list of 7 to 10 to homeowners in the district.

Power outage due to Hurricane Sandy

Bragan said Fire Chief Rick Sicard will have a report on the response at the November 20th BOS meeting. He explained National Grid used a different protocol this time to deal with the damage from the storm. They addressed downed wires and trees first and then began the restoration process. He acknowledged this did hinder their progress.

Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch

Bragan reported they are working on hiring a Director to begin working in January. They are still on target to be up and running by July 2013.

Joint Calendar

(BOS, Finance Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Capital Planning & Investment Committee)

Bragan provided the BOS with a joint calendar including all the important dates for the upcoming budget season and Annual Town Meeting preparation. He still needs dates from the CPIC. The BOS set the date of January 31st for all warrant articles to be submitted.

WATER POLLUTION ABATEMENT TRUST INTERIM LOAN NOTE

On a Clark/Johnson motion, the board voted unanimously to endorse the interim loan note for the water pollution abatement trust interim loan.

TOWN PLANNER POSITION

Bill Johnson reported the Planning Board voted 3-1 at their recent meeting to move ahead with a proposal for the ATM to hire a full time Planner. The BOS decided to invite the Planning Board to the November 20th meeting to discuss this further with them and they plan to also discuss this at the All Boards meeting on November 28th.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12pm.

Documents referenced:

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING – tax rate options spreadsheet dated FY2013

DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW

COA - letter dated 11.5.2012 & FY14 spreadsheet

DPW – FY14 spreadsheets