

Holbrook Board of Selectmen

Minutes of the Regular Session of

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Present: Timothy J. Gordon, Chairman  
Brinsley A. Fuller, Clerk  
Richard B. McGaughey, Associate  
Kevin J. Sheehan, Associate

Absent: Matthew V. Moore, Vice-Chairman

In attendance: William J. Phelan, Town Administrator  
Marjorie E. Godfrey, Selectmen's Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Gordon, in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, 50 North Franklin Street, Holbrook, MA 02343, and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chairman expressed condolences to the family of Firefighter Jon Davies and the City of Worcester following the loss of Firefighter Davies earlier today.

**TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING:**

Present: Members of the Board of Assessors: Mr. William Marble and Mr. Vincent Digiacommo  
Gary Brennan, Principal Assessor  
Pamela Holt, Administrative Assistant/Assistant Assessor

MOTION: At 7:05, by Mr. Fuller, second by Mr. Sheehan, to open the Fiscal Year 2012 Tax Classification Hearing

VOTE: 4:0

MOTION: By Mr. McGaughey, second by Mr. Fuller, to recess the hearing until 7:20 pm

VOTE: 4:0

**CITIZEN CONCERNS:**

With the room full of residents and members of the School Committee, the Chairman explained that those with a concern will be recognized one at a time, and that there are to be no personal attacks on anyone.

Discussion took place between members of the Board of Selectmen, School Committee members Ann Poppenga, John Flanagan and Lou Pransky, the Town Administrator, and residents, relative to a school building project. Ms. Poppenga said the Mass. School Building Authority (MSBA) indicated that the Town Administrator has been exploring options other than building a Pre K – 12 complex, as voted recently in response to a non-binding petition article on the November 29, 2011 special town meeting warrant. It was explained that the Board of Selectmen is working to satisfy the requirements of the MSBA, including reaching out to Abington, and exploring the educational aspects of Holbrook's options, not just the financial aspect, because it could impact the scope of work necessary for any building project. Mr. Phelan explained that there is a grant available to fund a proper study, including the building of a Pre K – 12 project, but the deadline is fast approaching, and deliberate steps need to be taken quickly. It was explained that a study would offer valuable information. It was discussed that

both the Town and the School Department should be included at each meeting because a school building issue is a town-wide issue. Mr. Flanagan said the issue is the action of the Town Administrator, and Mr. Gordon explained that Mr. Phelan was following up from a prior meeting with Abington, and Mr. Phelan indicated that the MSBA had called and contacted him. Portions of the May, 2011 letter from the MSBA and the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) detailing the steps to be taken by Holbrook were read. Mr. Phelan said the MSBA is seeking information that should be gathered before a decision is made. The Town of Abington may have received the same letter, and the Town Manager has indicated that Abington is ready, and the Abington Superintendent is willing to have a meeting with everyone. Mr. Phelan will reach out to Mr. Joseph Baeta, Holbrook's Superintendent, and contact the MSBA for clarification. The MSBA would entertain another meeting with Abington and the DESE, but all parties should be present. Mr. Gordon said he has complete confidence in Mr. Phelan, and he looks forward to his continued assistance with the project.

8:00 pm: RECOGNIZE FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDIC BRANDON SMITH

Fire Chief Edward J. O'Brien read a letter he received from the Fire Chief in Abington relative to the actions of Firefighter/Paramedic Brandon Smith on October 24, 2011. While off duty and traveling through the Town of Abington, FF/P Smith noticed a man lying on the ground next to a lawnmower. FF/P Smith and another off duty firefighter stopped, assessed the situation, called 9-1-1, started cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and defibrillated the man when an Abington Police cruiser arrived. The man was awake and responsive when the ambulance arrived. Chief O'Brien presented a plaque from the Chief and the Selectmen. Those present congratulated FF/P Smith.

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING:

MOTION: At 8:10 pm, by Mr. Fuller, second by Mr. Sheehan, to reopen the Tax Classification Hearing

VOTE: 4:0

The hearing notice, which was published in the newspaper, was read. Mr. Brennan thanked those who have helped in the process of preparing for this meeting and setting the tax rate in a timely manner. Mr. Brennan explained that the fair market value of all properties as of January 1, 2011 has been certified, based on the sales in 2010. The values have decreased 2.6%, with the average home, valued at \$241,750 decreasing in value to \$235,400. The town is roughly 85% residential, and the tax shift has been moved slightly away from business recently. Currently, the shift is 1.69.

MOTION: By Mr. McGaughey, second by Mr. Fuller, that the Board of Selectmen vote to classify the Town of Holbrook under the Classification Act at a factor of 1.69 for Fiscal Year 2012

VOTE: 4:0

Mr. Brennan discussed the Residential and the Small Commercial Exemptions, and advised that the Board of Assessors voted to recommend that the Board of Selectmen vote not to adopt them. In response to a question from Mr. Sheehan, it was explained that only 10 of 353 towns have adopted the small business exemption, which could only be used by businesses occupied by January 1<sup>st</sup>, with an average employment of less than 10 employees. In Holbrook, 28 properties would be eligible, and it would increase the tax rate by 29 cents/thousand.

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MOTION: By Mr. Gordon, second by Mr. McGaughey, that the Board of Selectmen vote not to adopt the Residential Exemption or the Small Commercial Exemption for Fiscal Year 2012

VOTE: 4:0

MOTION: At 8:45 pm, by Mr. Gordon, second by Mr. Fuller, to close the Tax Classification Hearing

VOTE: 4:0

ADJOURN:

MOTION: At 8:46 pm, to adjourn the meeting

VOTE: 4:0

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Brinsley A. Fuller, Clerk

Documents:

Tax Classification packet from Assessors

Email from Fire Chief re: FF/P Smith