

Hull Board of Selectmen

Minutes

November 17, 2015

The meeting of the Hull Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday evening, November 17, 2015, at the Hull Municipal Building, 253 Atlantic Ave., Hull, Massachusetts.

Present: John C. Brannan, Chair; Christopher Mitchell, Clerk; John D. Reilly, Jr., Member; and Kevin Richardson, Member. Also present was Philip E. Lemnios, Town Manager. Domenico Sestito, Vice-Chair, was absent. Town Counsel James Lampke was present after 10 p.m.

APPOINTMENTS

[Note: Neil Kane was on the agenda regarding appointment to the Board of Appeals, but was not able to be at the meeting.]

Stephen Becker, regarding appointment to the Conservation Commission

Becker is the owner of a retail construction firm. He is concerned about local resources, has relevant experience with planning and building, and would like to serve the town.

Donna S.E. Bergamo, regarding appointment to the Board of Appeals

Bergamo sat on the Board of Appeals in the early to mid-90s and had to resign for business reasons. She was a real estate paralegal specialist for over 30 years. She enjoyed working for the board in the past, has extensive relevant experience, and would like to serve again.

Assessor's Office Update

Katherine Rebell, Assistant Assessor, was present at the meeting to offer an overview of the office and its functions. The following points were part of the presentation, and have been edited for this document. The full presentation is available on the town's website.

- The Board of Assessors is a voluntary board. Its current members are Nazzareno Divito, Chairman; Mario Grieco, Member; Richard Morris, Member; Pamela Sinton Coffman, Member; and John B. Dromey, Member.
- The Assessor's office is governed by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59 – Assessment of Local Taxes. Its mission is to assist the taxpayers of the town in a professional manner as it pertains to the jurisdiction of the office.
- The office commits real and personal property as certified by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), and motor vehicle and boat excise as valued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- FY 2015 real estate abatements included 36 abated and 32 denied. There were 329 motor vehicle excise abatements and 68 boat excise abatements. 175 exemptions were issued.
- On a day to day basis the office assists the public; processes all motor vehicle and excise abatements; updates record owners as recorded by the deeds from Plymouth County Registry of Deeds; and updates recorded subdivision plans.
- Future goals and needs include going on line with a GIS mapping system for the follow Triennial Certification being fiscal year 2019, as requested by the Department of Revenue.

The selectmen thanked Rebell and the department for its work and service to the town.

Assessors Department FY16 property tax classification hearing

Rebell also conducted the town’s FY16 tax classification hearing. The following points were part of the presentation, and have been edited for this document. The full presentation is available on the town’s website.

The Board of Assessors annually asks the Board of Selectmen to vote to adopt the Tax Rate Policy as either:

- A single or unified tax rate
- A multiple or split tax rate
- Small commercial exemption
- Residential exemption

The overall percentage of classifications of property for FY16 is:

- Residential: 95.67%
- Commercial: 2.89%
- Personal: 1.44%

An overview of key changes assuming a unified tax rate included:

- An estimated tax rate of \$13.48 per thousand reflects a \$.46 decrease from the FY 2015 rate of 13.94 per thousand.
- The average single family tax bill of \$5,072.60 reflects an increase of \$57.57 over the FY2015 bill of \$5,015.03 based on an average single family value of \$376,306.
- The average commercial tax bill of \$6,620.62 reflects a decrease of \$171.52 over the FY2015 bill of \$6,792.14 based on an average commercial value of \$491,144.

Shifting to a split tax rate would have the following implications:

- In a 10% shift to the commercial side, the average residential taxpayer would save \$18.82 per year and the average commercial taxpayer would pay an additional \$667.96 per year.
- A 50% shift would result in the average residential taxpayer saving \$112.89 per year and the average commercial taxpayer paying an additional \$3,315.22 per year.

The Board of Assessors recommends that the tax rate not be split; that a residential exemption not be adopted; and that the small business exemption not be adopted. The selectmen are required to vote on each of those questions.

Resident Kenneth Kaplan brought up the Town of Hull Financial Management Review done in 2009. He said that it recommended that Hull should consider adopting a residential exemption that gives an exemption to those who maintain a permanent residence within the town as opposed to those with second or vacation homes. According to Kaplan the document said that 14 cities and towns had adopted that policy. DeVito said that second homes create a lesser burden because they don’t send their children to the schools and that this was considered in the board’s vote not to recommend it. Lemnios said that the Board of Selectmen discussed the matter in detail in 2009 and concluded that it was not a good fit for the town. He said that there are fewer communities with that exemption now than there were in 2009 and that a single rate is the dominant tax classification in the Commonwealth.

Kaplan also raised the issue of taxes vis a vis railroad bed use. After some discussion, Reilly noted that Kaplan has had many law suits against the town over the years concerning the railroad bed and that the matter under discussion was a public hearing about setting the tax classification.

The selectmen voted on the tax classifications and signed a document indicating the following votes:

Motion	Reilly	Move that the town set the residential factor for the fiscal year 2016 as “1”

Second	Richardson	
Vote	Unanimous	

Motion	Reilly	Move that the town of Hull will not adopt a residential exemption
Second	Richardson	
Vote	Unanimous	

Motion	Reilly	Move that the town of Hull will not adopt a small business exemption
Second	Richardson	
Vote	Unanimous	

Preliminary FY17 Budget Overview

Lemnios gave a preliminary FY 17 budget overview. The following points were contained in the presentation and have been edited for this document. The full presentation is available on the town website.

Total revenues go up by about 3.17%, to \$39,300,082, including a 2.72% in real estate revenue and an 8.04% increase in local receipts. State aid is projected to be about 1% increase. Key revenue assumptions are as follows:

- Tax levy increases as allowed under Proposition 2.5.
- State aid increases by 1%.
- Local receipts increase consistent to FY15 actual and YTD trend.
- Free cash usage is consistent with FY16's usage.
- There is no usage of the stabilization account for the fourth year in row.

Total expenditures increase by 3.18% to \$39,300,082. Key expenditure assumptions are as follows:

- Operational budget increases by 2.75%.
- Health insurance increases 5%.
- Capital projects are level funded.
- Place-holder for FY16 snow deficit is \$250,000.
- FY15 snow deficit funding is \$217,000.
- State assessments increase by 3.1%.

Lemnios noted that there is not a lot of excess or funds for new initiatives. Other points included:

- The capital projects budget does not include funds that would be forthcoming if the town votes for a debt exclusion.
- Snow deficit from this winter is factored into FY17 budget, as is allowed by the state.
- The town is part of the Mayflower Group, a consortium of cities and towns, which negotiates the health insurance coverage package most favorable to the town. This has been found to be a more beneficial and cost-effective choice than the state’s Group Insurance Commission option.

Resident Kaplan referred again to the Town of Hull Financial Management Review done in 2009, which he stated recommended that budgets have salary and expense line items for each department rather than a single department line item in order to prevent the transfer of funds between salary and non-salary line items. Lemnios noted that department heads cannot transfer funds between personnel and non-personnel line items and that he has to sign off on all transfers between line items. In addition, the annual complete budget presentation includes a detailed line item breakdown of every specific item on the budget.

Lemnios said that he will present a detailed budget in late January or early February. Following that, the Advisory Board meets weekly to review it. David Clinton, Advisory Board Chair, noted that the Advisory Board’s review is extremely thorough and examines line items in detail.

Lemnios also reviewed the FY17 Town Meeting and election schedule [see document] and asked the selectmen to vote on it.

Motion	Reilly	Motion to adopt the FY17 Town Meeting and election schedule.
Second	Mitchell	
Vote	Unanimous	

Lemnios explained that because the Town Meeting vote on the budget will happen before the town election on the debt exclusion, there may be articles on the warrant that are contingent on the debt exclusion’s passage. He said the debt exclusion’s passage or failure to pass will not affect the budget as presented because all proceeds from a debt exclusion will be earmarked for a capital stabilization fund, which is not included in the current budget. Lemnios also noted that every year Town Meeting will need to vote to put the debt exclusion generated funds into that capital stabilization account. Clinton further explained that Town Meeting has to vote money in and out of the fund by a two-thirds majority.

LICENSES AND RENEWALS

The selectmen received license renewal applications from the following:

- Kenneth L. Brown, dba Nantasket Auto Sales, 404 Nantasket Ave. – Class II Auto – Renewal
- Stephen R. Cassevoy, dba Toast, 121 Nantasket Ave. – (A) Common Victualer, (B) Wine and Malt as a Restaurant – Renewal
- William Dwyer, dba Pemberton Bait & Tackle Co., 173 Main St. – Common Victualer – Renewal
- Park Ave. Realty Tr., LLC dba Nantasket Beach Lodging, Walter Campbell, Mgr., 12 Park Ave. - Lodging House – Renewal

- Smart Save, Inc., dba Smart Save Variety Store, Patel Manishkumar, Mgr., 169 Nantasket Ave. – Wine and Malt as a Package Store – Renewal
- Thornton’s Market, Inc., dba Riddle’s Supermart, Michael Sears, Mgr., 505 Nantasket Ave. – All Alcohol as a Package Store – Renewal
- Trung V. Dang, dba Lucky Stars, 385 Nantasket Ave. – Common Victualer – Renewal

The board voted as follows:

Motion	Reilly	To approve license renewal for Kenneth L. Brown, dba Nantasket Auto Sales, 404 Nantasket Ave. – Class II Auto
Second	Richardson	
Vote	Unanimous	

Motion	Reilly	To approve license renewal for Stephen R. Cassevoy, dba Toast, 121 Nantasket Ave. – (A) Common Victualer, (B) Wine and Malt as a Restaurant – Renewal
Second	Richardson	
Vote	Unanimous	

Motion	Reilly	To approve license renewal for William Dwyer, dba Pemberton Bait & Tackle Co., 173 Main St. – Common Victualer – Renewal
Second	Richardson	
Vote	Unanimous	

Motion	Reilly	To approve license renewal for Park Ave. Realty Tr., LLC, dba Nantasket Beach Lodging, Walter Campbell, Mgr., 12 Park Ave.- Lodging House – Renewal
Second	Richardson	

Vote	Unanimous	
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Motion	Reilly	To approve license renewal for Smart Save, Inc., dba Smart Save Variety Store, Patel Manishkumar, Mgr., 169 Nantasket Ave. – Wine and Malt as a Package Store – Renewal
Second	Richardson	
Vote	Unanimous	

Motion	Reilly	To approve license renewal for Thornton’s Market, Inc., dba Riddle’s Supermart, Michael Sears, Mgr., 505 Nantasket Ave. – All Alcohol as a Package Store – Renewal
Second	Richardson	
Vote	Unanimous	

Motion	Reilly	To approve license renewal for Trung V. Dang, dba Lucky Stars, 385 Nantasket Ave. – Common Victualer – Renewal
Second	Richardson	
Vote	Unanimous	

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Mark Levenson regarding installation of fence on the railroad bed

Reilly proposed putting the matter off until a future meeting, as the board had previously voted a moratorium on railroad bed use licenses. He also noted that if selectmen decide to issue licenses for the use of the railroad bed, they should be renewed every year. Lemnios will invite Levenson in to discuss the matter at an upcoming meeting. Randy Gould asked if the 1992 Railroad Bed Study’s suggestions had ever been accepted. Reilly said that he didn’t know if they were ever officially adopted by the board.

NEW BUSINESS

Reilly reported a successful Veteran's Day Observance and commended Commander John Coggins and Veterans Agent William Leamy, as well as Nancy Allen who was instrumental in obtaining the change of venue for the event.

Mitchell acknowledged the town for the honor of being named a Coast Guard City last week. He read the proclamation from the Coast Guard and a citation of recognition from the Commonwealth.

Resident Pat Finn asked for the support of the selectmen in his communications with the French Consulate about participating in a rededication of the monument at Fort Revere.

Brannan suggested sending a note of condolence and support to the French Consulate regarding the recent Paris terrorist attacks. Brannan also suggested putting off the scheduled Fort Revere conversation that had been on the agenda this week.

Jim Lampke will be acting Town Manager following Lemnios' surgery on November 30.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m. The board will meet again on Tuesday, November 24, 2015.

Recorded by Catherine Goldhammer

Approved by:

Documents

The following documents were included in the Board of Selectmen's packets or were presented during the meeting and are available in the Board of Selectmen's office upon request:

- Board of Selectmen agenda for November 17, 2015
- Town of Hull Fiscal Year 2016 Property Tax Classification Hearing handout
- FY17 Town Meeting and election schedule
- Email from Mark Levenson regarding fence approval, with letter and photographs
- Letter from Stephen Becker regarding appointment to the Conservation Commission
- Letter from Donna S. E. Bergamo regarding appointment to the Board of Appeals
- License application from Kenneth L. Brown dba Nantasket Auto Sales, 404 Nantasket Ave. – Class II Auto – Renewal
- License application from Stephen R. Cassevoy dba Toast, 121 Nantasket Ave. – (A) Common Victualer, (B) Wine and Malt as a Restaurant – Renewal
- License application from William Dwyer dba Pemberton Bait & Tackle Co., 173 Main St. – Common Victualer – Renewal
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- License application from Trung V. Dang dba Lucky Stars, 385 Nantasket Ave. – Common Victualer – Renewal