

Board of Selectmen's Meeting
November 22, 2010, 7:00 PM
Sanford Hall, Town Hall
155 Village Street

Present: Chairman Dennis Crowley, Selectmen John Foresto, Andrew Espinosa, Richard Dunne, and Town Administrator Suzanne Kennedy. (Selectman Trindade absent)

At 7:04 PM Chairman Crowley called the meeting to order, and the Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: None

Public Hearing -- Tax Classification Hearing:

At 7:06 PM Selectman Dunne moved that the Board hold a public hearing on the adoption of a Residential Factor (Tax Classification); Selectman Espinosa seconded. No discussion; all ayes, 4-0.

The Board was in receipt of the following information: Letter, dated November 22, 2010, to the Board of Selectmen and the Citizens of Medway, from the Medway Board of Assessors, updating the Board and residents on the work the Board of Assessors has completed prior to this hearing, presenting data on past and present tax levies, assessed values, comparisons to other communities, explaining available options, and other related statistics, 16 pages.

For the benefit of the Board and residents, Will Naser, Principal Assessor, read aloud the letter to the Selectmen and residents from the Board of Assessors (without statistics). He summarized the work the Assessors office has completed in the past year, in order to prepare for this hearing. He noted that there are actually four questions communities consider when setting the tax rate, clarifying that the fourth one, the Open Space Exemption, does not apply to Medway.

Mr. Naser briefly explained how the tax levy works and its relationship to revenues necessary to support the municipal budget. Selectman Dunne asked what items cause a budget to grow beyond the revenues coming in. Town Administrator Suzanne Kennedy stated factors such as increases in health insurance premiums, enterprise funding, overhead expenses, and salaries are some of the things that contribute to this.

Mr. Naser clarified that the first two bills residents receive for real estate taxes are preliminary bills, meaning they are estimated, based on last year's rate. Once the rate is determined, the remaining two bills for the year will reflect the new rate and even out any discrepancies so that those tax revenues are up to date.

There was a general discussion about tax rates, setting a levy, the operating budget, inflation, and the relationship among all these components. Selectman Espinosa asked that the packet prepared by the

Assessors Office be put on the website so that residents can read about it and understand how it works. He stated the chart showing information on surrounding communities would be helpful for comparison.

Selectman Espinosa expressed concern that government is growing faster than it should be allowed to. Discussion followed. Responding to a question from the Board, Ms. Kennedy clarified that, if a tax classification rate is not set timely, it is detrimental to the Town.

Mr. Naser clarified that the Assessors Office does not raise or lower taxes, noting that their work is value-based, using generally-accepted assessing standards set by the Commonwealth. There was brief discussion on impact of residential property taxes on residents in an already-difficult economical climate.

Jay Newton, Chairman, Medway Board of Assessors, clarified that the Assessors Office works on valuing property as fairly as possible, noting that the value is used to determine overall value and subsequent tax rate when determining revenues required to operate the town effectively. Chairman Crowley opined that taxes may have to increase or services may be reduced.

Drawing the discussion back to the purpose of the hearing, Mr. Naser began reviewing the Questions Requiring a Vote by the Selectmen of Medway.

Question 1 – Do you choose to have a residential exemption? Mr. Naser stated the Town of Medway has not had this in the past as it is typically adopted in rental areas and summer home areas, presently 14 out of 351 communities.

Selectman Foresto moved that the Board not adopt a residential exemption; Selectman Dunne seconded. No discussion. Split vote, 3-1 – aye, Foresto, Dunne, Crowley; oppose, Espinosa.

Question 2 – Do you choose to have a small commercial business exemption? Medway has not adopted this previously; currently adopted by 6 out of 351 communities.

Selectman Foresto moved that the Board not adopt a small commercial business exemption; Selectman Dunne seconded. No discussion. Split vote, 3-1 – aye, Foresto, Dunne, Crowley; oppose, Espinosa.

Question 3 – Do you choose to have a single tax rate or a split tax rate? If split, what tax burden percentage is desired?

Selectman Foresto moved that the Board adopt a Single Tax Rate (factor of 1) of 17.02; Selectman Dunne seconded. No discussion. Split vote, 3-1 – aye, Foresto, Dunne, Crowley; oppose, Espinosa.

Selectman Espinosa thanked the Assessors Office for their hard work in getting this information together. The Board encouraged residents to write to their state representatives if they have concerns regarding high taxes based on valuations.

Ms. Kennedy clarified that the new growth piece of the revenue equation is nearly impossible to predict with such variables as building permits, personal property, industrial and commercial land parcels. Mr. Naser stated the utility companies usually let them know what their individual new growth amount is, usually things that do not require a permit. He stated the largest utilities serving Medway are Algonquin Gas, Verizon and NStar. He stated that they may have a better idea of how to predict growth in these areas by considering historical information. Responding to a question from Selectman Foresto, Mr. Naser stated that they do not have information on Comcast, most likely because it is not one of the higher valued utilities. He stated further he would prepare a history of the higher valued utilities and get it to Ms. Kennedy. Discussion followed.

Resident Martin Dietrich noted that the present rate is 16.29, and going to 17.02 is more than a 2.5% increase. Mr. Naser explained how the levy works, noting that other data is also factored in. Chairman Crowley reiterated that putting the information packet on the Town website would be helpful to residents.

Mr. Naser stated the Assessors Office will prepare the required form, Classification Tax Allocation, Form LA5, based on tonight's vote, for the Board's signatures.

At 7:54 PM, Selectman Dunne voted to close the public hearing; Selectman Foresto seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Authorization to Expend Grant Funds – MIIA Loss Control Grant:

The Board reviewed the following information: Notice of Grant Award, dated September 14, 2010, from the MIIA Insurance Company, specifying an award of \$5,000.

Allen Tingley, Chief of Police stated the department has been awarded the MIIA Loss Control Grant in the amount of \$5,000. This grant will be used to help purchase an emergency response equipment trailer which will be shared by the Police, Fire and Public Services Departments. The trailer will contain traffic cones, barrels, caution tape, safety vests and other equipment. Chief Tingley stated the trailer costs \$5,800, and the remaining \$800 will come out of the Police Department's budget.

Selectman Foresto moved that the Board authorize the expenditure of the MIIA Loss Control Grant award of \$5,000 to be used by the Police Department for the purchase of an emergency response equipment trailer; Selectman Dunne seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Town Administrator Suzanne Kennedy commended the department heads for their quick action. Due to popularity, applications to this program have been suspended, and Medway's quick action garnered an award.

Authorization to Expend Grant Funds – COPS Grant:

The Board reviewed the following information: Notice of Grant Award from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, dated September 29, 2010, in the amount of \$23,041 to be used for continuation and enhancement of school safety equipment and efforts.

Allen Tingley, Chief of Police, introduced Officer Grimes, School Security Officer for the Town of Medway.

Office Grimes briefly reviewed how these funds would be expended, which included the leasing of the OneCall System at a cost of \$11,000 over a three-year period; a visitor management system that processes that personal ID information through CORI and other databases for flags on that individual; and be fire protection upgrades. Discussion followed on coordinating alarm systems at the Middle School as the buildings were built at different times. Ms. Kennedy suggested a conference call with Tim Bonfatti of Compass Management (Middle School Repair Project) about coordinating these systems.

Selectman Foresto moved that the Board authorize the expenditure of the U.S. Department of Justice “Secure Our Schools” Grant in the amount of \$23,041 to be used by the Police Department for the purchase of school security equipment; Selectman Espinosa seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Ms. Kennedy asked Chairman Crowley to sign the acceptance letter on behalf of the Board.

Approval – Waiver of Building Permit Fees for 50 Winthrop Street House Repairs:

The Board reviewed the following information: Letter, dated November 18, 2010, from the Medway Building Department, requesting the building permit fees be waived for the repair project associated with the house on property located at 50 Winthrop Street (Town-owned).

Selectman Dunne moved that the Board approve a waiver of building permit fees associated with house repairs to the property located at 50 Winthrop Street; Selectman Espinosa seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Authorization of Chairman to Execute Contract for Vinyl Siding of Police Station:

The Board was in receipt of the following information: Agreement, dated November 9, 2010, between the Town of Medway and Brocorr LLC, for work to be done at the Police Station, 32 pages; agreement includes contractor bid, specifications, RFP, descriptions/drawings, copies of bonds, certificates of insurances and licenses and other related items.

Robert “Bobby” Magee, Department of Public Services, stated this project came in well within the budgeted amount. Responding to a question from the Board, he stated that a performance bond was not required as the project amount was beneath the dollar amount required for such a bond. He noted that a payment bond is required. Discussion followed.

Selectman Espinosa moved that the Board authorize the Chairman to execute the contract as submitted with Brocorr LLC in an amount not to exceed \$30,650 for the installation of vinyl siding at the Police Station. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Authorization of Chairman to Execute Contract for Catch Basin Cleaning:

The Board was in receipt of the following information: Agreement, dated April 21, 2010, between the Town of Medway and Truax Corporation for catch basin cleaning, 26 pages; agreement includes

contractor bid, specifications, RFP, descriptions/drawings, copies of bonds, certificates of insurances and licenses and other related items.

Selectman Espinosa moved that the Board authorize the Chairman to execute the contract as submitted with Truax Corporation in an amount not to exceed \$80,000 for the Department of Public Services catch basin cleaning program; Selectman Dunne seconded. Selectman Dunne asked about the source of the funds. Mr. Magee responded the funds will be expended from the general fund and road maintenance accounts. All ayes, 4-0.

Approval of Minutes:

Selectman Espinosa moved that the Board accept the minutes of October 18, 2010, as drafted; Selectman Dunne seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Regarding minutes of October 25, 2010, Chairman Crowley suggested the following addition: Page 2, Line 18, the word "middle" should be added so that it reads "Middle School Building Committee."

Selectman Espinosa moved that the Board accept the minutes of October 25, 2010, as amended; Selectman Dunne seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Regarding the minutes of November 1, 2010, Chairman Crowley suggested the following correction: Page 3, Line 24: the vote should be 3-1.

Selectman Espinosa moved that the Board accept the minutes of November 1, 2010, as amended; Selectman Dunne seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

School Committee Report from School Committee Liaison:

Deb Trindade, Chairman, School Committee, updated the Board on budget realignment, school choice monies/expenditures, an additional bus run due to overcrowded buses, and monies voted to cover expenditures. She noted that the committee is prudent in its fiscal responsibility and, if necessary, will examine each school's budget by line item to see if adjustments can be made. Ms. Trindade stated it is important for the public to understand how the school makes its budget cuts, and what criteria were used to make those decisions. Discussion followed.

Selectman Espinosa asked about special education mandates. Ms. Trindade responded by noting that out-of-district tuition increases often come after the budget is set and the fiscal year has begun. When this happens, they work to cut expenses.

Selectman Foresto noted that sometimes an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) changes which causes a shift in funding, i.e., additional staff or resources required to deliver the services specified by the IEP. He stated he recently attended a meeting where teachers and students were enthused about having computers in the classroom, and emphasized resources like that are well worth the effort.

Chairman Crowley expressed caution on spending a lot of time working on a needs-based budget before the Town's budget policy is set. Ms. Trindade responded that the needs must be determined before they can assess the value of those needs.

Action Items:

No updates on the following items: Outsourcing activities (5/18/10), Medway Cleanup Day (6/7/10), and DPS Facility Feasibility Study (9/7/10).

Matrix of street acceptances for Annual Town Meeting (7/6/10): A meeting on this is scheduled for December 9. Selectman Espinosa will be there representing the Board of Selectmen.

Route 109 Project (9/20/10): Ms. Kennedy stated Mr. Guy Rezendes of Mass. Highway has asked for additional information, predominantly schedules of budget numbers from subcontractors and asked when the committee will be meeting. Selectman Espinosa stated he would contact the committee chair about scheduling a meeting; the committee had been waiting until after November elections were over to see what individuals would be in office.

Setting of 1/18/10 Special Election and Approval of Ballot Question for Middle School Repair Project:

Selectman Dunne read aloud the proposed ballot question for an election proposed for Tuesday, January 18, 2011.

Selectman Dunne moved that the Board set January 18, 2011 as the date of a Special Election to be held relative to a vote on proposed Middle School repairs; Selectman Foresto seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Selectman Dunne moved that the Board approve the ballot question as submitted relative to the January 18, 2011 Special Election to be held relative to the vote on the proposed Middle School Repairs; Selectman Espinosa seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Preliminary FY2012 Budget Policy Discussion:

The Board reviewed the following information: comparison of cherry sheet figures for FY11 and expected aid in FY12, a draft FY2012 Budget Policy Statement, and FY11 Budget Policy Statement for reference.

Chairman Crowley asked the Board to again review the previous year's information and policy before the December 6 public session when Selectman Trindade will be present. Ms. Kennedy stated it is imperative the budget discussion occur that evening as staff needs to begin working on budgets to avoid delay in the budget development process. Discussion followed. The Board asked for updated revenue figures as well as expenses to date for that meeting.

It was agreed to meet on Wednesday, December 1, at 7:00AM to prepare for the December 6 meeting.

Approval of Warrants:

Warrant 11-21, dated 11/24/10

11-21	Town Bills	2,541.62
11-21S	School Bills	372,794.41
11-21P	Gross payroll – Town	195,376.31
11-21S	Gross Payroll – School	797,141.36
Total		1,369,853.70

Selectman Espinosa moved that the Board approve the Warrant 11-21, dated 11/24/10, as read for a total of \$1,369,853.70; Selectman Dunne seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Town Administrator’s Report:

Suzanne – flesh out – I didn’t catch the other 3 items you mentioned

Ms. Kennedy commended the Energy Committee regarding its efforts to adopt the Stretch Code. There are [redacted] communities that have adopted it. Projects will now be reviewed to reduce energy consumption. She noted that grant applications are due in January. It is hoped that Medway can become designated as a “green” community, and noted there are already 63 designated communities in the state.

Ms. Kennedy stated she has implemented a performance evaluation system for department heads. This entails defining goals and objectives and meeting periodically with staff regarding accomplishment of those goals. She emphasized that this is a year-long process.

Selectmen’s Reports:

Selectman Foresto – (1)The Thayer Committee now has seven members but may need an additional one to replace a member who is unable to regularly attend, preferably someone with an architecture or construction background. The committee will move forward to develop the RFP for a consultant with the goal to have a recommendation for the Annual Town Meeting. He noted this weekend is Christmas parade with fireworks and asked Ms. Kennedy to check with the police chief to make sure the Thayer property is protected. He suggested putting up parking barriers to protect the lawn and septic system. (2) He stated he heard many positive comments on the Board’s presentation at Town Meeting.

Selectman Foresto stated he had heard positive comments about rejuvenation of Town Hall, the staff and overall environment. Ms. Kennedy responded that it has been a collaborative effort, and remarked how nice it is to have a group of people who can get along to work cohesively.

Selectman Espinosa – Nothing to report.

Selectman Dunne -- Thanked the School Committee for the Legislative Breakfast. He suggested having it every six months instead of only once a year.

Chairman Crowley -- Asked Ms. Kennedy to make sure the State of the Town address in on the Town website.

It was agreed to meet early on December 6: Executive session at 5:45 PM with the regular meeting beginning at 6:00 PM.

Cancellation of December 20 Selectmen's Meeting:

After brief discussion, Selectman Foresto moved that the Board cancel the Selectmen's meeting scheduled for Monday, December 20; Selectman Dunne seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Town of Medway 300th Anniversary:

The Medway 300 Committee has met to begin preparations for this historical event. The Gala Ball has been scheduled for December 31, 2012.

At 9:04 PM, Selectman Dunne moved to adjourn; Selectman Foresto seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Galliardt
Board Secretary