

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2015

The regular meeting for the Board of Selectmen convened at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room in the Town Office Building at 110 Main Street. In attendance were Dr. Richard M. Smith, John R. Morrell, and Edward S. Harrison. Also present were Town Administrator Evan Brassard and the media.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Harrison made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of November 10, 2015 – open session. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Hall of Fame Project Update / 250th Anniversary Book Discussion:

James Duggan and Dan Moriarty approached the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Duggan explained for the Town's 250th Anniversary back in 2009, the Board of Selectmen donated \$5,000 from the Gifts to the Town account to kick off the 250th celebration. The funds were used throughout the community on the celebration, as well as on the printing of the "Then and Now" anniversary books, which are still on sale either through Mr. Duggan or at the "This and That" store down the street. Mr. Duggan said they are handing back a check in the amount of \$2,300 for the Gifts to the Town Account that wasn't spent.

Mr. Duggan showed the Board of Selectmen pictures of the cases located in the High School that were recently built to showcase the Western Mass. and State trophies, as well as the picture plaques. Mr. Duggan noted Steve Slozak mounted all of the picture plaques and donated everything for that project. The display cases were built and donated by H & L Builders. The funding approved by the Board of Selectmen will go towards the glass to cover them.

Mr. Harrison said it's very impressive.

Dr. Smith noted they did a beautiful job.

Mr. Harrison asked if the pictures could be put on Facebook. Mr. Brassard responded if Mr. Duggan emails him the jpeg, he would post the pictures.

Mr. Moriarty wondered, on behalf of the Monson Booster Club, if the Town would like to donate funds toward a banquet for the athletes. Right now the Boosters are doing fund raising for this and going to area businesses seeking donations. Mr. Moriarty was unsure on how much of a donation they are seeking.

Mr. Brassard said he would contact Sara Szado to get a dollar amount for the next meeting.

Mr. Duggan said prior to the tornado, the Monson Hall of Fame had a display case mounted on the wall outside the Town Clerk's office and he is requesting permission to reinstall it. Mr. Duggan said he would like to keep it in the Town Office Building for the public to see. It will contain picture plaques of the teams that have been inducted, along with a perpetual plaque for that year of the people who were inducted. Since this was started in 2007, a total of 55 athletes, 13 others which includes coaches, administrators, supporters and businesses, and 16 teams have been inducted.

Mr. Brassard noted everything in the new Town Office Building is designed to match, and added we still have to put up the scholarship recipients, which he vetoed at the time as he felt it didn't go with the aesthetics of the new building, so a new background will be purchased for it.

Mr. Moriarty said another reason for keeping the display here is this is where the former original High School stood for many years, as well as the tight security at the schools not allowing people to roam around looking at it as they wish.

Mr. Duggan said they have 16 team picture plaques as well as 8 perpetual plaques which list the name of each class, for now, to display on the board.

Mr. Duggan said they will work with Mr. Brassard to find a location for this.

Dr. Smith suggest placing it downstairs near the Parks and Rec. office as he felt that might be the appropriate place for it, as that's where people come in to register their children for sports.

Mr. Harrison said he would like to know the footprint of the display.

Mr. Brassard noted there is space in the lower lobby near the door and elevator downstairs, outside the Park and Rec. office.

Mr. Duggan will email Mr. Brassard the dimensions.

Dr. Smith noted he is in favor of placing it downstairs by the Parks and Rec. office, or wherever it works out.

Mr. Morrell said you have to be careful where it is put as it's going to be a permanent fixture in that place.

The Board of Selectmen were in agreement this is something they would all like to see brought back to the Office Building.

Mr. Harrison thanked Mr. Duggan and Mr. Moriarty for all their work with the Hall of Fame.

Tax Classification Hearing:

Principal Assessor Alyce Johns approached the Board of Selectmen and presented a slide show presentation on the tax classification hearing, as attached. Ms. Johns explained each slide and said the recommendation is for an increase of 45¢, going from \$16.67 to \$17.12, an increase of \$114.00 on the average tax bill. There are 2,630 homes in Monson, 75 commercial properties and 51 industrial parcels.

Mr. Harrison made a motion to adopt a single tax rate. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Mr. Harrison made a motion to vote not to adopt the open space discount. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Mr. Harrison made a motion to vote not to adopt the residential exemption. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Mr. Harrison made a motion to vote not to adopt the small commercial exemption. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Memorial Hall Update:

Mr. Brassard said the front doors were recently re-installed at Memorial Hall. The final paint color is not on them yet and that depends on the temperature. Mr. Brassard said he is reasonably satisfied with the quality of work. Either this week or the beginning of next week, they will be taking off the north door for refinishing as well.

Mr. Brassard stated we are all set for the craft fair to be held in Memorial Hall. The sheetrock bid went out this Wednesday, and hopefully we will get that moving as early in January as possible.

Mr. Brassard thanked the Monson Garden Club for the Holiday decorations at Memorial Hall, as well as at the Town Office Building and noted they did really nice work once again.

Mr. Morrell thanked Mr. Brassard for all of his hard work on Memorial Hall project.

Mr. Brassard noted he has a draft indemnity agreement from Town Counsel for the next Selectmen's meeting, for the use of Memorial Hall that people using the space will sign agreeing that it will be returned in the same condition otherwise they will be held liable for any damages to the space. Mr. Brassard said he and Paul DeMaio are working on a document to redefine the process for the requested use and the keys.

Right of First Refusal – Bogan Road:

This was tabled.

Principal Assessor Alyce Johns approached the Board of Selectmen and noted a protocol was put together and she and Mr. Brassard will review it prior to handing it out to the departments to assist in navigating this process in the future.

Correspondence was read and completed.

In Other Business to Come Before the Board:

- Mr. Harrison made a motion to appoint Dylan Sullivan as an auxiliary police officer effective immediately through December 31, 2015. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.
- Mr. Morrell wondered how we were making on the investigation of a dog complaint. Mr. Brassard responded, it's going just fine and should be done soon.
- Resident Charles Cournoyer approached the Board of Selectmen and questioned correspondence #4 from Comcast regarding programming changes. Dr. Smith read the letter into the record noting the changes. Mr. Harrison replied Monson has a ten year contract with Comcast and the town has no control over the rates or the programing. Comcast is primarily just a delivery system of programming and the people who own the programming essentially negotiates with each individual provider of programming as to what they are going to charge. Therefore if the program owner wants to raise the rates, Comcast either says aye, or nay, and if it's nay they don't provide that content.

At 7:55 p.m., Mr. Harrison made a motion to adjourn from open session to go into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to non-union personnel pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Sec. 21 (2) and collective bargaining or litigation pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Sec. 21 (3), not to return to open session. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Edward S. Harrison, Clerk

Fiscal Year 2016 Classification Hearing

Presented by:
Alyce Johns
Principal Assessor



PURPOSE OF THE CLASSIFICATION HEARING

- ⑤ MGL Ch. 40 § 56 – Allows a shift in the tax burden between property classes.
- ⑤ This does not change the total tax levy for the community; it simply determines the share to be borne by each class.

What Happens At The Classification Hearing

The Board of Selectmen vote on four different issues

- ⑤ Selection of a CIP Factor
- ⑤ Open Space Discount
- ⑤ Residential Exemption
- ⑤ Small Commercial Exemption

SHIFTING THE BURDEN

- ⑤ The share of the levy for the Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property classes (CIP) may be increased by up to 50% as long as the residential and open space classes raise at least 65% of what they would have raised without the shift.
- ⑤ If the Minimum Residential Factor would be less than 65%, the community cannot make the maximum shift and must use a CIP factor less than 1.50.
- ⑤ Approximately 105 out of the 351 cities & towns have split rates.

RESIDENTIAL SUMMARY SINGLE RATE

(THIS RATE IS AN ESTIMATE ONLY!!!)**

<u>FY 2015</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>	<u>Difference</u>
<u>\$16.67</u>	\$17.12	.45



\$213,255

\$3,555 Taxes



\$214,320

\$3,669 Taxes

Increase \$114.00

HISTORIC TAX RATES

Fiscal Year	Tax Rate
1994	\$ 13.86
1995	\$ 14.30
1996	\$ 15.07
1997	\$ 15.29
1998	\$ 15.63
1999	\$ 15.98
2000	\$ 18.24
2001	\$ 18.69
2002	\$ 17.78
2003	\$ 17.99
2004	\$ 15.97
2005	\$ 13.01
2006	\$ 12.18
2007	\$ 11.66
2008	\$ 11.92
2009	\$ 12.61
2010	\$ 13.45
2011	\$ 14.43
2012	\$ 14.96
2013	\$ 15.12
2014	\$ 16.20
2015	\$ 16.67

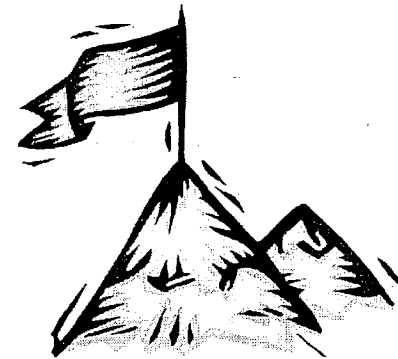
COMPARISON REPORT

Property Type	Fiscal Year 2015 Values	Fiscal Year 2016 Values	Difference Increase	Difference Decrease
Residential Parcel count 2630	\$560,700,935	\$563,662,03	\$2,961,100	
Commercial Parcel count 75	\$16,909,000	\$17,021,800		112,800
Industrial Parcel count 51	\$12,120,740	\$12,365,540	\$244,800	

*Rounded to nearest \$1

VOTE ON THE OPEN SPACE DISCOUNT

Open Space Discount – A shift of up to 25% can be adopted by vote of the Board of Selectmen for all property that is classified as Open Space. This exemption is borne by the residential classes of properties, and will increase the residential tax rate without affecting the Commercial/Industrial/Personal Property classes.



OPEN SPACE TAXATION IN MONSON

- ⑤ All classified open space is currently in Chapter 61, Chapter 61A or Chapter 61B. Chapter parcel count 490.
- ⑤ Chapter lands are assessed at 25% of their fair market value or lower.
- ⑤ An additional discount would not benefit Monson or the taxpayer.

OPEN SPACE TAXATION EXAMPLE

- ⑤ Land in Chapter is valued based on values from the Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission.
- ⑤ Appraised values in Chapter at full and fair cash value \$22,264,855
- ⑤ Assessed chapter value \$1,922,070

VOTE ON THE RESIDENTIAL DISCOUNT

Grants up to a 20% Discount to Owner Occupied Residential Properties:

Exclusions to this exemption are:

- ⑤ Vacant Land
- ⑤ Seasonal Homes
- ⑤ Residential Properties not occupied as a primary residence by the owner

The impact is to the overall residential class, and shifts the burden from the “less expensive” properties onto the higher priced and non-resident homes. **Benefits would be to communities with a high number of vacation homes, or non-owner occupied properties.**

VOTE ON THE SMALL COMMERCIAL EXEMPTION

The other option for the Board of Selectmen is the granting of a commercial exemption of up to 10% to certain small commercial properties.

SMALL COMMERCIAL EXEMPTION

- ⑤ Shifts the tax rate between properties occupied by qualifying small businesses onto the other commercial and industrial properties.
- ⑤ Does not have any effect on the residential and personal property tax rates.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THIS EXEMPTION

A Property:

- ⑤ Must Be Assessed at less than \$1,000,000 and employ 10 or less employees.
- ⑤ Does Not have to be owner occupied.
- ⑤ For Multi-business parcels all businesses must qualify.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THIS EXEMPTION

(Cont.)

- ⑤ Must be classified as commercial or mixed use commercial.

****Industrial properties do not qualify, but do share the tax burden if the exemption is adopted.***

BASICS OF THE COMMERCIAL EXEMPTION

- ⑤ Approximately 71 business are on the list sent to Monson by the Department of Workforce Development.
- ⑤ Businesses not on the list can be qualified by applying directly to the Board of Assessors.

BASICS OF THE COMMERCIAL EXEMPTION

(Cont.)

- ⑤ An exemption of up to 10% can be voted on at the classification hearing by the Board of Selectmen.
- ⑤ Percentage must be voted annually.

APPLYING THE EXEMPTION TO

- ④ Research done indicates that approximately 20 properties out of 71 may qualify for this exemption.
- ④ The total valuation is approximately \$ 7,800,000.
- ④ A 5% shift would change the commercial/industrial tax rate by approximately \$0.05
- ④ A 10% shift would change the tax rate by approximately \$0.09

DRAWBACKS TO COMMERCIAL EXEMPTION

- ⑤ Only the commercial properties can qualify, but the industrial class must share the burden.
- ⑤ The owner of the property, rather than the business occupying the site, receives the tax benefit.
- ⑤ The qualification process for the Board of Assessors is time consuming and cumbersome.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS WILL MAKE A RECOMMENDATION

The Board of Assessors recommend that the
Select Board:

- 1) Vote to adopt a Single Tax Rate
- 2) Vote not to adopt the Open Space Discount
- 3) Vote not to adopt the Residential Exemption
- 4) Vote not to adopt the Small Commercial
Exemption