

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 7, 2009**

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7:00 p.m. - Selectmen's Meeting Room, 63 Main Street, Northborough, MA

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Fran Bakstran, Chairman  
Dawn Rand, Vice Chairman  
Leslie Rutan, Clerk  
Jeff Amberson  
William Pantazis

\*Pledge of Allegiance

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 23, 2009 REGULAR MEETING**

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to approve the Minutes of the November 23, 2009 Regular Meeting as presented; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**7:00 p.m. - PUBLIC HEARING**

To consider a pole petition from Verizon New England and Massachusetts Electric Companies to place one new pole on Talbot Road.

Paul Schneider from Verizon New England was present to request the placement of one new jointly owned pole to be numbered T29/E29 on the southerly side of Talbot Road at a point approximately 553 feet easterly from the centerline of Lyman Street at its intersection with Talbot Road. Existing pole number T29/E29 will then be removed.

Chairman Bakstran invited comments from the public. There were none.

Selectman Pantazis moved the Board vote to approve Petition #4AAZTA (Talbot Road) as submitted by Verizon New England and Massachusetts Electric Companies with the condition that Pole T26 in front of #71 Lyman Street be either replaced or have some additional support provided while the work is taking place; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**7:03 p.m. - PUBLIC HEARING**

To consider a pole petition from Massachusetts Electric Company to place one new pole on Whitney Street.

Michael Roberts from Massachusetts Electric was present to request permission to install one solely owned pole to be numbered P.73 for the purpose of installing a new load break switch to be used to isolate their electrical circuit.

Chairman Bakstran invited comments from the public. There were none.

Selectman Pantazis moved the Board vote to approve Plan #770195 (Whitney Street) as submitted by Massachusetts Electric Company with the condition that extra care be used to deal with the busy traffic while the work is taking place; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**7:05 p.m. - CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION**

Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation to Bob Brunstetter.

At the invitation of the Board, Bob Brunstetter was present along with his family in honor of his recent receipt of the Bronze Star in recognition of his heroic achievements as a combat medic during the Vietnam War.

Selectman Amberson presented Mr. Brunstetter with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Board. He was also presented with a Resolution from State Representative Harold Naughton on behalf of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

**7:10 p.m. - RENEWAL OF SELECTMEN'S LICENSES**

Chairman Bakstran noted that all premises have been reviewed by the Police, Fire and Building Departments. All of the licensees are in compliance with both Municipal and State codes and regulations and all taxes are up to date.

Town Administrator John Coderre informed the Board that the Motel Six (formerly Comfort Inn) has decided to not renew their All Alcoholic Restaurant/Innholders License for the Calendar Year 2010. Once the license expires on December 31, 2009, the available license will be advertised and a notice of its availability will be sent to all licensees who currently hold Common Victualler and Beer & Wine Licenses.

He also informed the Board that Tom's Eatin' & Drinkin' Place is not included on the Final Renewal List due to the business being closed. The licensee has been invited to attend the Board's December 21<sup>st</sup> meeting in order to present a written business plan prior to the Board's consideration of the renewal of his All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant License for the Calendar Year 2010.

Selectman Amberson moved the Board vote to approve the renewal of the annual licenses by the Board of Selectmen for the calendar year 2010 as indicated on the "2010 License Renewals List", subject to the following condition: For Beezers and Tougas Family Farm Kitchen: Due to the businesses being seasonally closed, subject to the condition of a satisfactory inspection prior to their re-opening in the Spring; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**REPORTS**William Pantazis

- Noted that today is the anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day.
- Attended the Tree Lighting ceremony on December 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Encouraged residents to vote in the upcoming elections.
- Questioned if the Town is looking into replacing the missing stones on the bridge that crosses Church Street? Mr. Coderre responded that although the bridge is structurally sound, it is deteriorating and will need to be rebuilt and widened. Town staff is working on trying to get this included in the downtown traffic improvement project.

Jeff Amberson

- Reminded residents that the tree that is officially lighted each year for the Holiday Season was planted several years back in honor of Neil Ellsworth, a Northborough resident who was killed in Vietnam. Thanked the Ellsworth family for their annual attendance at the Tree Lighting ceremony. Also, thanked the local merchants and the Community Affairs Committee for their planning and participation of the Holiday Trolley event.
- Reminded residents to shovel their sidewalks and keep nearby fire hydrants clear of snow and debris.
- Reminded the public that the winter parking ban is now in effect.
- Announced that the annual Winter Ball will be held on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

Leslie Rutan, Clerk

- Reminded residents that Toys for Tots donations can be dropped off through December 15<sup>th</sup> at either the Fire Station or Town Hall.
- Announced that the Regional School Committee has voted to reconvene the Naming Subcommittee. The Board of Selectmen is being asked to appoint three community members.
- Noted that the students at the Melican Middle School collected many items that were shipped to the Worcester County Shelter through their Veterans' Donation Drive. The students also adopted six local families to help with Holiday gift-giving for the children.
- Noted that the Melican Middle School faculty participates in a Giving Tree for 12 local families.
- Announced that the Holiday concert will take place at the High School on December 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>. Both concerts are open to the public.

Dawn Rand, Vice Chairman

- Noted that Charles Bradley is an Alternate Member to the Open Space Committee and has recently requested to fill the current vacancy as a regular voting member. See below for appointment.
- Attended the Holiday Trolley event and the Tree Lighting ceremony. Thanked the Community Affairs Committee, Patty Murphy, Michelle Gillespie and Kim from the Purple Rose for their hard work in planning the event.
- Questioned why there seems to be double telephone poles along Church Street. Mr. Coderre responded that he will look into this.
- Noted her concern with the number of sandwich and post signs that are being seen all over Town. Requested that the Building Inspector provide information on how these signs can be eliminated. Mr. Coderre stated that he will ask the Building Inspector to address this.

Fran Bakstran, Chairman

- Noted that the Board of Selectmen is looking for interested residents to serve on the Regional High School's Naming Subcommittee.

John Coderre, Town Administrator

- Announced that a legislative priorities letter is currently being drafted. Town staff and the School Department have been asked to prioritize and submit their legislative concerns to the Administrative Office by December 17<sup>th</sup>. He asked that if Board members have anything that they would like included in the letter, to let him know by that date as well. Once the letter is finalized, the legislative delegation will be invited to a Selectmen's Meeting to discuss the Town's legislative priorities.
- Requested that the Board consider continuing their tradition of closing Town Hall and other non-essential offices at 12 Noon on Christmas Eve to allow employees to spend Christmas Eve with their families.

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to close Town Hall and other non-essential offices at 12 Noon on Christmas Eve; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**APPOINTMENT TO OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE**

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to appoint Charles Bradley to the Open Space Committee for a partial one-year term; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**UPDATE ON SCHEDULE FOR TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING**

Town Administrator John Coderre discussed the possibility that the Town may not receive the final certification from the Department of Revenue in time to get actual third quarter tax bills out, resulting in the need to send out third quarter preliminary tax bills. Unfortunately, this is also pushing back the date for the tax classification hearing until either December 21<sup>st</sup> or January 11<sup>th</sup>.

At the Board's last meeting, Principal Assessor Diane O'Connor spoke briefly about several critical changes under the DOR requirements that have negatively impacted the amount of time and work required by the Board of Assesors to complete this year's revaluation. Also, reductions in State agency funding and mid-year cuts have impacted the amount of time required for DOR to perform their review of information submitted by municipalities.

Mr. Coderre informed the Board that the Department of Revenue is advising those communities who have not been certified, to submit a letter for approval to authorize third quarter preliminary tax bills. He assured the Board that everything is being done on the Town's end to avoid the issue of third quarter preliminary tax bills; however, it may become necessary. Mr. Coderre reminded the Board that we are not alone in this predicament, adding that only 136 out of 351 communities have been certified.

**UPDATE ON SCHEDULE FOR TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING CONT. . .**

Board members expressed their concern that if they take action to request authorization to send out third quarter preliminary tax bills, that the Department of Revenue may no longer consider Northborough a priority. Mr. Coderre assured the Board that third quarter preliminary tax bills will only be sent out as an absolute last resort.

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to sign, WHEN AND IF NECESSARY, the request letter for authorization to issue third quarter preliminary tax bills for FY10 in the event that the Department of Revenue is unable to provide certification of final values in time for issuance of third quarter actual bills. It is the Town's strong preference to issue third quarter actual tax bills and the Board acknowledges that the issuance of preliminary third quarter bills are a last resort. The motion was not seconded; and therefore, withdrawn.

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to sign the request letter for authorization to issue third quarter preliminary tax bills for FY10 in the event that the Department of Revenue is unable to provide certification of final values in time for issuance of third quarter actual bills. It is the Town's strong preference to issue third quarter actual tax bills and the Board acknowledges that the issuance of preliminary third quarter bills are a last resort; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion. Vote: 4-1-0 (Selectman Rand opposed).

**FY11 PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS**

Mr. Coderre discussed the FY11 preliminary financial projections. He informed the Board that he anticipates that the expenditure budgets for the General Government, Northborough K-8 Schools and the ARHS Assessment can increase just 1% in FY11. He added that this is subject to change once we receive the final certification from the Department of Revenue for FY10.

This projection is based on the following assumptions:

- State Aid decreases 10%
- Departmental receipts remain constant
- \$600,000 in Free Cash is used to support the FY11 budgets (down from \$700,000 in FY10)
- Other available funds decrease \$100,000 due to no available overlay surplus
- Tax revenues increase 3.42%, including Prop 2½ increase plus new growth

Mr. Coderre stated that a 1% increase translates into approximately \$153,931 for the General Government budget and \$178,355 for the Northborough K-8 Schools budget. He advised that these preliminary estimates should be treated as a starting point for discussion and planning purposes only, adding that any significant changes in State Aid or adoption of new revenue sources, such as the optional meals and hotel taxes, will have an impact.

He warned the Board that similar to last year, they should expect things to unfold late in the process and that this year's budget process will need to remain flexible as new information comes in.

**FY11 PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS CONT. . .**

In response to a question from Selectman Rand, Mr. Coderre stated that communication between himself and the School Superintendent is ongoing. Mr. Coderre will provide ongoing updates as more detailed information becomes available.

**APPROVAL/EXECUTION OF PLOWING, SANDING & SALTING AGREEMENT FOR BEECHWOOD CIRCLE**

Selectman Amberson moved the Board vote to approve and execute the Plowing, Sanding & Salting Agreement for Beechwood Circle for the 2009/2010 Winter Season; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**MEETING SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH & APRIL**

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to set the Board of Selectmen regular meeting schedule for January through April as follows:

- January 11<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>
- February 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>
- March 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>
- April 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> – Town Meeting

Selectman Rand seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**8:05 p.m. – EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 39, Section 23B, Subsection 3, Personnel Matter; Selectman Rand seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Pantazis	“aye”	Rand	“aye”
Amberson	“aye”	Bakstran	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

Chairman Bakstran announced that the Board would return from Executive Session only to adjourn.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Selectman Amberson moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell  
 Executive Assistant to the  
 Board of Selectmen