

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – November 24, 2014**

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dawn Rand, Chairman
Jeff Amberson, Vice Chairman
Leslie Rutan, Clerk
William Pantazis
Jason Perreault

*Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 10, 2014 REGULAR MEETING

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to approve the meeting minutes of the November 10, 2014 regular meeting as submitted; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

7:00 p.m. - JOHN CODERRE, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
Presentation of the Town's Fifth Consecutive Government
Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Award
for FY2015.

Mr. Coderre announced that the Town recently received its fifth consecutive Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its Fiscal Year 2015 Budget from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA). The award represents a significant achievement by the Town. It reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting.

Following a brief presentation, Mr. Coderre thanked Finance Director June Hubbard-Ward, Town Accountant Jason Little and Assistant Town Administrator Kim Foster for their efforts. Members of the Board congratulated Mr. Coderre and his staff on this significant achievement.

7:10 p.m. - BILL FRAHER, TOWN AUDITOR
Presentation on FY2014 Audit Report.

Bill Fraher, CPA made a presentation to the Board on the completed Final Audit Report for FY2014. In summary, the Town continues to be in a strong overall financial position. Mr. Fraher credited the Town's adoption and adherence to comprehensive financial policies, especially the Free Cash and Debt Policies.

Mr. Fraher reviewed his Management Letter comments, which detailed a clean audit with no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies being found. He recommended that the Town continue to monitor the trend of tax revenues, local aid and other receipts and to ensure that annual operating budgets are kept within available revenue and other funding sources.

PRESENTATION ON FY2014 AUDIT REPORT CONT. . .

Following the presentation, Mr. Coderre stressed how pleased he is with receiving another positive Audit Report. He publicly acknowledged the efforts of the Town Accountant and thanked the Appropriations Committee and Financial Planning Committee for their continued support.

7:15 p.m. - PUBLIC HEARING WITH BOARD OF ASSESSORS

For the purpose of discussing the valuation of each class of property; the minimum residential factor and the allocation of the tax burden among the four classes of real property: residential, open space, commercial and industrial, and of personal property.

Principal Assessor Daniel Brogie, Finance Director June Hubbard-Ward and Town Accountant Jason Little were present. Mr. Coderre made the presentation, which included information and options for the Board of Selectmen to determine whether there shall be a single or split tax rate for the various classes of property for FY2015.

In summary, residential property values for FY2015 increased 3.5% resulting in an additional \$205 over last year's tax rate just for the increased value alone. Single family home values have been declining in recent years resulting in a shift in the tax burden away from the single family taxpayers. With the improving economy, that trend has begun to reverse in FY2015 as home values rebound and the commercial industrial properties increased only 1-2%. Without significant new economic development there is a natural market shift back to the residential properties.

In an effort to minimize tax impacts over the last several years, the Town has not "taxed to the max" under Proposition 2½; thereby creating levy capacity. However, accessing that levy capacity for additional revenues in future budgets will also result in increased tax bills. Absent additional economic development and increased state aid, Mr. Coderre anticipates that an upward pressure on tax bills will continue during the coming years.

Mr. Coderre added that on a positive note, home values are increasing, thereby increasing our overall tax base. The average single family home tax bill has only gone up \$98 on average for the past five years. Most importantly, our tax base remains affordable with a diversified and stable tax base.

Mr. Brogie presented the various tax rate scenarios. If the Board were to continue with a single tax rate, the FY2015 tax rate would increase from \$16.59 to \$16.73. The average single family tax bill would increase by \$260 from \$6,225 in FY2014 to \$6,485 in FY2015.

It was noted that the Board of Assessors unanimously recommended that the Board of Selectmen continue with the single tax rate, which promotes a fair and equitable system of taxation and would continue to help Northborough attract new business into the community while retaining those already located in Town.

Members of the Board expressed their support of the continuation of a single tax classification.

PUBLIC HEARING WITH BOARD OF ASSESSORS CONT. . .

Karen Chapman was present on behalf of the Corridor Nine Area Chamber of Commerce. The Corridor Nine Area Chamber of Commerce strongly supports the continuation of a single tax classification. A letter was also submitted to the Board from the Industrial Development Commission supporting the continuation of a single tax classification.

Selectman Amberson moved the Board vote to close the Public Hearing with the Board of Assessors for the purpose of discussing the valuation of each class of property; the minimum residential factor and the allocation of the tax burden among the four classes of real property: residential, open space, commercial and industrial, and of personal property; Selectman Pantazis seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Selectman Amberson moved the Board vote to maintain a uniform tax rate for all classes of property at a factor of one; to oppose the implementation of a residential exemption; and to oppose the implementation of a small commercial exemption; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

8:00 p.m. - HEARING

To consider an application from Wegmans Massachusetts, Inc. DBA Wegmans to Change the Manager of their All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store License for premises located at 9102-9104 Shops Way.

Wegmans' current manager of record David Orlovsky was present along with the proposed new manager Matthew Finewood. Mr. Finewood has been employed with Wegmans since 1992 and is TIPS certified.

Detective Sergeant Brian Griffin conducted a background check on Mr. Finewood and did not find anything of concern.

Selectman Pantazis moved the Board vote to approve the application from Wegmans Massachusetts, Inc. DBA Wegmans to change the manager of their All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store License from David Orlovsky to Matthew Finewood for premises located at 9102-9104 Shops Way; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

8:05 p.m. - KAIR TUCKER – COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Presentation on Holiday Trolley Program.
Request to Close Blake Street.

Community Affairs Committee member Kair Tucker and Kimberly Reed of the Purple Rose were present to announce that the 9th Annual Holiday Trolley program will be held on December 6th from 12pm – 5pm. The tree lighting ceremony at the Neil Ellsworth Evergreen tree on Blake Street is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. that same evening. Two trolleys will be operating this year with planned stops to those businesses who are participating in this year's event. Additional information can be found at northboroholidaytrolley.com.

PRESENTATION ON HOLIDAY TROLLEY PROGRAM CONT. . .

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to authorize the operation of the Holiday Trolley on December 6th from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and to authorize the proposed trolley stop locations; Selectman Pantazis seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to close Blake Street on December 6th from 4:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. for the Tree Lighting ceremony; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

8:15 p.m. - ROB THEVE, FIRE DEPARTMENT CAPTAIN

Presentation on Fire Department Collection for "Toys for Tots" Program.

Fire Captain Rob Theve was present to announce that the Northborough Fire Department is again an official drop-off site for the USMC Toys for Tots Collection Program. In addition to the Fire Department, additional drop-off sites are located at the Northborough Town Hall, Police Station and Library. Toys can be dropped off at either location on or before December 14th. Captain Theve encouraged those in need to contact him.

REPORTSJason Perreault

- Wished everyone a safe and happy Holiday.

William Pantazis

- Attended an evening at the White Cliff's. Thanked Norm Corbin for his history speech.

Leslie Rutan, Clerk

- Congratulated the Algonquin Sports Teams for their success during this school year.
- Noted how pleased she is with the Route 20 paving project, especially with the quality of the crosswalks.

Jeff Amberson, Vice Chairman

- Attended a recent meeting of the Regional School Committee. Noted that the DESE ranked the Northborough/Southborough School District first out of the 292 school districts based on MCAS scores using both achievement and growth in ranking.
- With the winter weather upon us, reminded residents to keep hydrants and sidewalks free of snow.

Dawn Rand, Chairman

- Attended the recent meeting of the 250th Anniversary Committee. The Committee is planning a number of events to be held throughout the week of August 20 – 28, 2016.

John Coderre, Town Administrator

- Acknowledged David DeVries as the newly elected chair of the Financial Planning Committee.
- Introduced audience member Thomas Spataro as the newest member of the Financial Planning Committee.
- Noted that he will continue to monitor the Governor's \$40M in proposed mid-year budget cuts. Although it remains to be seen whether or not the Legislature will agree to any direct cuts in the unrestricted local aid account as well. Regardless, there will be impacts to several accounts of importance to our community. The following are some potential areas of concern:
 - \$18.7 million from Regional School Transportation (a 27% cut)
 - \$7.1 million from the Regionalization and Efficiencies Reserve (a 49% cut)
 - \$3.86 million from Special Education Reimbursements (a 1.5% cut)
 - \$2.88 million from the Chapter 70 "pothole" account (an 85% cut)
 - \$2.24 million from Vocational School Transportation (a 100% cut)
 - \$1.2 million from Charter School Reimbursements (a 1.5% cut)
 - \$1.1 million from Sewer Rate Relief (a 100% cut)
 - \$1 million from Extended Learning Time Grants (a 6.8% cut)
 - \$359,000 from Kindergarten Expansion Grants (a 1.5% cut)
 - \$283 thousand from Library Aid (a 1.5% cut)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEEDS

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deeds A958 & A959; Selectman Pantazis seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

8:30 p.m. - EXECUTIVE SESSION

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3 (collective bargaining and litigation) due to the Chair's determination that a discussion regarding this matter in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the position of the Board; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	"aye"	Amberson	"aye"
Pantazis	"aye"	Rand	"aye"
Rutan	"aye"		

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. November 24, 2014 Meeting Agenda.
2. November 10, 2014 Meeting Minutes.
3. Information packet – GFOA Budget Award.
4. Information packet – FY2014 Audit Report.
5. Information packet – Tax Classification Public Hearing.
6. Information packet – Wegmans Change of Manager.
7. Information packet – Holiday Trolley Program.
8. Information packet – Toys for Tots Program.
9. Cemetery Deeds.