

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES – November 23, 2015**

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

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

\*Pledge of Allegiance

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 9, 2015 REGULAR MEETING**

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to approve the meeting minutes of the November 9, 2015 regular meeting as submitted; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**7:00 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 16<sup>th</sup>. Captain Theve encouraged those in need to contact him.

**7:05 p.m. - MARK LEAHY, POLICE CHIEF**  
Appointment of Police Officer.

Chief Leahy introduced Christopher Buzzell as the recommended candidate for appointment to the position of full-time Police Officer.

Chief Leahy indicated that Mr. Buzzell is a lifelong resident of Northborough. He graduated from Algonquin Regional High School in 2010 and received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Westfield State University in 2014, where he majored in Criminal Justice. He was a self-sponsored student in the Western Massachusetts Regional Police Academy and graduated in July of 2015, having successfully completed their 52<sup>nd</sup> Basic Police Officer Recruit Class.

Chief Leahy added that Mr. Buzzell has satisfactorily completed all phases of the Town's selection process.

Members of the Board congratulated Christopher and welcomed him as the newest member of the Police Department.

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to appoint Christopher Scott Buzzell as a full-time police officer effective November 24, 2015, Selectman Pantazis seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**7:10 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, Town Accountant Jason Little and Assistant Town Administrator Kimberly Foster 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 FY2016.

In summary, after extensive review of the market activity during the FY2016 Triennial Revaluation, the average single family home value increased from \$387,617 to \$398,960 or 2.9%. This analysis was based on valid sales activity during calendar year 2014 for single family homes and condominiums. Market adjustments resulted in an overall increase in the residential category of property values of approximately 3.4%. Commercial values increased 1.8% and industrial property values decreased 3.2%. The result is a slight market shift in the tax base from the commercial and industrial properties to the residential.

Mr. Coderre added that it is important to note that the total valuation of Northborough has increased to \$2.62 billion dollars or 2.2% led by strong single family and condominium sales activity. This combination of an improving housing market and the decline in new growth is reflected in the tax impact of the average single family home for fiscal year 2016. Through a conservative approach, the Town has managed to provide level services while the tax impact on an average single family home over the past 10 years was approximately \$149 per year. The top taxpayers continue to remain strong, helping to reduce reliance on our residential taxpayers.

Mr. Brogie presented the various tax rate scenarios. Should the Board of Selectmen decide to continue with a single tax rate, the FY2016 rate would increase from \$16.73 to \$17.17. The average single family tax bill would increase by \$365 from \$6,485 in FY2015 to \$6,850 for FY2016.

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.

Karen Chapman, President of the Corridor Nine Area Chamber of Commerce was present to inform the Board that they strongly support the continuation of a single tax classification. A letter was also submitted to the Board from the Northborough Industrial Development Commission supporting the continuation of a single tax classification.

**PUBLIC HEARING CONT. . .**

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

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

**REPORTS**Jason Perreault

- Attended the second day of the Fire Chief Assessment Center. Looking forward to interviewing the final candidates.
- Congratulated the Algonquin Girls Soccer Team for a successful season finishing at 21-2 and earning the title of Central Mass Champions.

Dawn Rand

- Noted that the annual Tree Lighting ceremony and Holiday Trolley event will take place on Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>.

William Pantazis, Clerk

- Noted that the Interview Committee met with an applicant for the Cultural Council prior to tonight's meeting. See below for appointment.

Leslie Rutan, Vice Chairman

- Congratulated the Algonquin Girls Soccer Team, the Cheerleading Squad and the Football Team for their successful seasons.
- Announced that the Regional School Committee Naming Subcommittee recently voted to accept the nomination of Brian Arsenault. As part of the 3-month public comment period, residents are encouraged to submit comments and suggestions to the Naming Subcommittee. In the meantime, various locations throughout the high school will be looked at when considering the most appropriate way in which to honor Army Specialist Brian Arsenault.

Jeff Amberson, Chairman

- No report.

John Coderre, Town Administrator

- No report.

**APPOINTMENT TO THE CULTURAL COUNCIL**

Selectman Pantazis moved the Board vote to appoint Scott Nolan to the Cultural Council for a three-year term; Selectman Rand seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**7:50 p.m. - EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3 (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 Pantazis seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Rutan	“aye”
Rand	“aye”	Amberson	“aye”
Pantazis	“aye”		

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell  
Executive Assistant to the  
Board of Selectmen

**Documents used during meeting:**

1. November 23, 2015 Meeting Agenda.
2. November 9, 2015 Meeting Minutes.
3. Toys for Tots Flyer.
4. Information packet – Tax Classification Hearing.
5. Memo – Appointment of Police Officer.