

**MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
NOVEMBER 16, 2015 at 6:30PM**

CALL TO ORDER/OPENING

Chairwoman Provencher called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Chair Dianna Provencher, Vice Chair Douglas Belanger, 2nd Vice Chair Sandra Wilson, Selectman Harry Brooks, Selectman Thomas E. Buckley, III and Town Administrator Kevin Mizikar were in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No members of the public provided comment

1. SCHEDULED

a. 6:30pm - Tax Classification Hearing

Ms. Provencher read the public notice as published in the T&G. A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Buckley to open the public hearing

Vote by Roll Call:

Provencher – Aye

Belanger – Aye

Wilson – Aye

Brooks – Aye

Buckley – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

John Prescott, Principal Assessor, presented the Board of Assessor's recommendation for the FY'16 tax rate which is to remain with a single tax rate as 88% of the town is residential. Based on a single tax rate and the average assessment, the average single family home value has increased by \$800, representing a 36 cent increase to the tax rate, bringing it from 14.54 to 14.90. The average single family home will see its tax bill increase by an average of \$89 which is a 2.9% increase.

Mr. Belanger asked Mr. Prescott if he would explain why Worcester is facing so many issues with their split tax rate. Mr. Prescott responded that because cities and towns have a cap on how much they can raise as tax levy, the Worcester commercial rate is in the 30's and the large differential is detrimental when trying to attract business but residents are fighting the shift to bearing more of the burden of the tax rate.

A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Buckley to exit the public hearing.

Vote by Roll Call:

Provencher – Aye

Belanger – Aye

Wilson – Aye

Brooks – Aye

Buckley – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Ms. Wilson to support the Board of Assessor's recommendation of a single tax rate and to set the tax rate at \$14.90 per \$1,000 for FY'16. The motion carried unanimously.

b. 6:30pm – Class II License Hearing – 10 Old Stafford Turnpike

Ms. Provencher read the public notice as published in the T&G. A motion was made by Mr. Buckley and seconded by Mr. Brooks to open the public hearing.

Vote by Roll Call:

Provencher – Aye

Belanger – Aye

Wilson – Aye

Brooks – Aye

Buckley – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

Tom Southard presented a request for a Class II license for 3 cars at 10 Old Stafford Turnpike. Mr. Southard stated he has years of experience repairing cars and would like to sell repaired vehicles. Mr. Belanger asked how many licenses remain. Mr. Mizikar stated this license, if granted, would be license 21 out of 22 allowed.

Sarah Paulson, resident, came to learn about traffic implications because it's a dead end road and she is a neighbor. Mr. Southard responded that viewings would be by appointment only and most of the time he would be bringing the car somewhere to be viewed. Mr. Southard added that there would be no advertising.

A motion was made by Mr. Buckley and seconded by Mr. Brooks to exit the public hearing.

Vote by Roll Call:

Provencher – Aye

Belanger – Aye

Wilson – Aye

Brooks – Aye

Buckley – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Belanger asked if the number of cars allowed would be listed on the license. Ms. Forsberg responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Brooks asked about personal vehicles. Mr. Mizikar responded that the license would say 3 for sale.

A motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Brooks to approve the Class II license for Tom Southard at 10 Old Stafford Turnpike. The motion carried with 4 in favor and 1 abstention (Ms. Wilson).

2. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Senior Center Donations

A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Buckley to accept the senior center donations for the veterans' breakfast. The motion carried unanimously.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Resignations

i. Truck Driver – Patrick Navaroli

A motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Buckley to accept the resignation of Patrick Navaroli from his position as truck driver for the Highway Department. Ms. Provencher asked that an exit interview be conducted. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Appointments

i. Special Police Officer – Don Lennerton

Mr. Mizikar recommended the appointment of retired police officer Don Lennerton as a Special Police officer subject to the pre-employment process including a physical.

A motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Buckley.

Under discussion, Ms. Wilson asked about the State law requiring officers to retire at 65. Mr. Mizikar responded that state law allows officers to work as special police officers until they are 70 and that they are covered under the Town's 111F insurance policy. Ms. Wilson asked if the Chief intended this appointment to be for mostly traffic duty. Mr. Mizikar responded in the affirmative and noted Mr. Lennerton would have to stay on traffic duty unless specifically called to an incident.

The motion carried unanimously.

ii. Special Police Officer – Frank Cummings

A motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Brooks to appoint Frank Cummings to the position of Special Police Officer.

Under discussion, Ms. Wilson asked if this appointment would only be good until this officer turned 65 as he is a Becker officer and not a former employee. Mr. Mizikar responded in the affirmative.

The motion carried unanimously.

c. Appropriate Dog Fund Revenues - Animal Control Van

Mr. Mizikar noted the Animal Control van is in serious disrepair and must be replaced despite not having made it into the FY'16 capital plan. Mr. Mizikar requested the Board appropriate up to \$27,000 from the Dog Fund to purchase a vehicle.

A motion was made by Mr. Brooks and seconded by Mr. Buckley to authorize the Town Administrator to expend up to \$27,000 from the Dog Fund for the needed replacement of Animal Control vehicle.

Under discussion, Mr. Belanger asked about the Dog Fund balance and bids. Mr. Mizikar responded that the current balance is \$66,000 and that at least 3 quotes for vehicles would be obtained. Mr. Brooks asked if the new seal would be on the van and Mr. Mizikar responded in the affirmative.

The motion carried unanimously.

d. Rate of Compensation for Four-Wheel Drive Plow Drivers

Mr. Mizikar presented a requested from Highway Superintendent Tom Wood to increase the rate of compensation for four wheel drive plow drivers from \$55 to \$60 per hour as few responses were received this year. Most towns pay between \$60 - \$70 per hour.

A motion was made by Mr. Buckley and seconded by Mr. Brooks to increase the rate of compensation for four wheel drive plow drivers to \$60 per hour.

Under discussion, Mr. Mizikar noted these are contracted positions who bring their own vehicles, are responsible for insuring the Town against liability and are responsible for all wear and tear to their vehicles. Mr. Brooks asked if gas is paid for. Mr. Mizikar responded that the drivers are responsible for paying for their own gas. Ms. Wilson asked if the sample rates from other Towns is this year or last year's rates. Mr. Mizikar responded it is likely a mix but were as current as the Town could get mid-year. Ms. Wilson stated she still felt \$60 was low and recommended increasing the rate of compensation to \$62 or \$64 per hour to better compete with other Towns for more experienced drivers. Mr. Buckley felt the Town should go with Mr. Wood's recommendation of \$60 per hour and see what happens.

The motion carried unanimously.

e. 2016 License Renewals

A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Buckley to approve the license renewals and presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Belanger asked to confirm that all businesses have paid all Town taxes.

4. DISCUSSION/OLD BUSINESS

a. Regional Emergency Communications Center Update

Mr. Mizikar provided an update on the regional emergency communications center which will not open until June of 2016 and will therefore require an amendment to the Intermunicipal Agreement between the City of Worcester and the Town. The City has verbally agreed to cover the cost of dispatch after January 1, 2016. Mr. Buckley asked if the Town is required to pay back this money if the Town decides to back out of the agreement. Mr. Mizikar responded that this could be a provision written into the amendment. Ms. Wilson responded that if we did not do an amendment we would have to pay a penalty for backing out, however. Mr. Mizikar stated he still feels this agreement is a good consolidation of resources which saves the Town money so they can carry out department goals and support more officers. Mr. Belanger stated he is very frustrated with the City and they are proving those municipalities who didn't want to enter into an agreement with the City right.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Mizikar presented highlights from his Town Administrator report.

6. BOARD OF SELECTMEN REPORTS

Mr. Buckley noted the Veterans Breakfast was great. At the breakfast Betty Benoit asked about starting an ROTC program at the high school and Mr. Buckley said he would speak with the Superintendent.

Mr. Brooks noted the Primary School food drive brought in 950 articles of food for the Leicester Food Pantry.

Ms. Wilson noted the layout of the floor plan for the fire station has been approved by the Committee and will go to the Planning Board next then out to bid in January or February. Ms. Wilson noted Senator Moore will host a Thanksgiving lunch at the Senior Center and people are needed to help serve the meal. Ms. Wilson congratulated the library trustees and the building committee on a successful town election vote for the library expansion and renovation project.

Mr. Belanger encouraged the neighbors to stay involved with the fire station project and to keep the dialogue going so the Town can attempt to mitigate any concerns the residents have. Mr. Belanger mentioned the Veterans Ceremony on Veterans Day in the Center of Town and asked that it be more publicized next year.

Ms. Provencher mentioned the LHS craft fair coming up on December 5th.

7. MINUTES

None

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION – MGL CHAPTER 30A, SECTION 21A

No executive session was held

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Brooks and seconded by Mr. Buckley at 7:45pm. The motion carried unanimously.