

**MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
NOVEMBER 24, 2014 at 6:30PM**

CALL TO ORDER/OPENING

Chairman Buckley called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Chair Thomas E. Buckley, III, Vice-Chair Dianna Provencher, 2nd Vice-Chair Matthew Dennison, Selectwoman Sandra Wilson and Town Administrator Kevin Mizikar were in attendance. Selectmen Doug Belanger had a previously scheduled travel commitment.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No members of the public provided comments.

1. SCHEDULED

A. 6:30pm – Tax Classification Hearing

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Dennison to open the public hearing at 6:31pm.

Vote by Roll Call:

Buckley – Aye
Provencher - Aye
Dennison – Aye
Wilson – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Buckley read the public hearing notice which appeared in the Telegram and Gazette on November 20, 2014. John Prescott, Assessor, stated that property values have not changed and the percentage of the levy divided between residential, commercial, industrial and personal has not changed. There are several options for setting the tax rate:

- Single tax rate – The Town has historically had a single tax rate and Mr. Prescott recommends the Town continue to have a single tax rate as commercial and industrial properties comprise a very small percentage of the tax levy.
- Split tax rate – Up to 150% of the total commercial and industrial valuation can be paid by these classes. The split tax rate would result in a 1 cent savings for residents per \$1,000 and a 90 cent increase for businesses per \$1000 which would significantly hurt businesses.
- Small business exemption – Could provide a 10% exemption for small businesses under the split tax rate only.
- Owner-occupied residential exemption – Up to a 20% exemption for class I residential properties which serve as the primary residence for its owners. This option is not recommended by the Board of Assessors due to the minimal amount of rental homes and apartments in the Town. Only 13 communities in the State have this exemption as it is designed for resort communities.

The proposed FY'15 rate is \$14.54 per \$1000 which is 1 cent higher than last fiscal year's tax rate of \$14.53. The increase would normally be larger; however, the high school construction loan has been paid off and removed from the debt exclusion, thereby lowering the levy limit.

Ms. Wilson stated that the tax rate is normally provided in advance to the Board and recommends keeping the single tax rate as a split tax rate would send a negative message to businesses.

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Dennison to close the public hearing.

Vote by Roll Call:

Buckley – Aye

Provencher - Aye

Dennison – Aye

Wilson – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Dennison to accept the single tax rate of \$14.54 per \$1000 for FY'15. The motion carried unanimously.

B. 6:45pm – Change of Manager – Shannon Davis American Legion Post 205

John Cusson, Commander for the Shannon Davis American Legion Post 205, presented a request for a change of manager at the Legion as Raymond Hazzard, current manager, has resigned. The Legion's Board took a vote to appoint Charlette Ryan as the new manager. Ms. Ryan has been with the Legion for 19 years and Mr. Cusson said he could not trust the building to anyone but her.

Mr. Dennison asked if servers go through the TIPS program. Mr. Cusson responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Wilson asked about a cell phone number for Ms. Ryan as the application stated n/a. Ms. Wilson stated the Police Department needs a number to call should an incident occur. Ms. Ryan agreed to provide a contact number.

A motion was made by Mr. Dennison and seconded by Ms. Provencher to approve the change of manager at the Shannon Davis American Legion Post 205. The motion carried unanimously.

2. CORRESPONDENCE

None

3. NEW BUSINESS

None

4. DISCUSSION/OLD BUSINESS

A. FY'15 Operating Budget

Mr. Mizikar noted that the State has a \$325M budget deficit for the second half of FY'15. The Governor is proposing to reduce local aid by \$25.3M, or approximately 2.7% per municipality, resulting in a \$42K approximate cut from the Town's FY'15 budget. Mr. Mizikar stated he is working to find areas in the budget which can be reduced. These reductions could include articles recently approved at Town meeting. Mr. Mizikar has instituted a spending freeze on all discretionary spending and will keep the Board updated.

Mr. Dennison stated that the Governor gave significant raises to state workers recently and asked that a letter be sent to the Governor requesting he rescind those raises rather than take critical funds from municipalities. A motion was made by Mr. Dennison and seconded by Ms. Provencher to send a letter to the Governor and all

State officials as appropriate. Ms. Wilson recommending using the recent MMA statement and adding an extra paragraph on the State employee raises. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Annual License Renewals

Mr. Mizikar stated that most annual licenses, with the exception of liquor licenses, have been renewed in the past as an administrative function. However, moving forward, Mr. Mizikar stated that the renewal notifications could go out to all licensees in early October and a list could be compiled for the Board's review and consideration thereby creating consistency in review of all Town licenses.

Ms. Wilson thanked Mr. Mizikar and asked that he formally write a process for annual license renewals to be incorporated in the Town's policies. Ms. Wilson asked if the liquor license renewals would be coming before the Board at its next meeting. Mr. Mizikar stated these renewals would come before the Board at its December 15, 2014 to attempt to complete all fire and code inspections prior to the Board's consideration.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Mizikar noted that the Town will be receiving a \$12K credit due to benefit charge errors. The Town pays UTMC \$2K per year to review benefit charges and seek reimbursements for overpayment, which more than pays for itself.

6. BOARD OF SELECTMEN REPORTS

Ms. Wilson wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and wished the LHS football team good luck. Ms. Wilson also reminded residents that the winter parking ban goes into effect on December 1st.

Mr. Dennison noted that the first snowstorm of the year is upon us and asked residents to check on their elderly neighbors and be careful while driving.

Ms. Provencher reminded all residents to check the batteries in their smoke alarms and CO detectors.

Mr. Buckley wished the LHS football team good luck and mentioned the Thanksgiving dinner at the Senior Center to be held Tuesday at noon.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Ms. Wilson at 7:02pm to enter into Executive Session under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21a, Exception 2, negotiations with nonunion personnel, and to resume in open session only for the purpose of adjournment.

Vote by Roll Call:

Buckley – Aye
Provencher - Aye
Dennison – Aye
Wilson – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Wilson and seconded by Ms. Provencher at 7:20pm. The motion carried unanimously.