



Town of West Boylston
140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

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MAR 15 2021

Select Board/Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
WEST BOYLSTON, MA

Date / Time / Location of Meeting
December 2, 2020; 6:00 p.m.

Members Present

John W. Hadley, Chairman
Christopher A. Rucho, Vice Chair
Patrick J. Crowley, Clerk
Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Selectman
Michael J. Kittredge III,
Selectman

Members NOT Present

Invited Guests:

Jack McCormick
Elaine Novia
Lynn Harding-Smith
David Manzello, RRG

Mr. Hadley convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. roll call taken.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

▪ November 18, 2020 Regular Session

Mr. Rucho requested to pass over until next meeting.

**REVIEW AND VOTE TO APPROVE WARRANTS FOR THE PERIOD COVERING
NOVEMBER 19, 2020 to DECEMBER 2, 2020 : Town Payable Warrants FY2021-22 and 23;
Town Payroll Warrant FY2021-11; Sewer FY2021-SE143; School FY2021-S9:**

*Motion Mr. Crowley moved to approve; Mr. Rajeshkumar second.
All in favor*

John McCormick, Chair Cemetery Trustees:

Mr. McCormick announced the Board of Cemetery Trustees met and decided on a name for the proposed cemetery on Tivnan Drive, Hillside Cemetery. He stated they held much discussion on the names that were submitted also considered Pine Hill but they were afraid people would think they would plant lots of pine trees. Mr. Crowley asked if there was one resident that submitted the name Hillside, Mr. McCormick will go back and find name. Mr. McCormick stated the names not selected will be used for the streets within the cemetery. Mr. Rucho asked for other names submitted; Mr. McCormick read them off. Mr. McCormick explained he is still waiting for the pins to be placed so they can layout the streets and everyone will have a road edge for their lots. Mr. Rucho asked if this will be more costly, Mr. Hadley asked if the survey of the property has been completed, MS. Lucier stated it has been completed but they are waiting for the surveyor to place a stake in middle. Mr. McCormick stated bids will go out this winter for the clearing of the land. Mr. Crowley stated

he only hears complements about how well maintained the cemetery is, Mr. McCormick stated they guys do a good job.

6:15 p.m. PUBLIC HEARING: Re: CLASSIFICATION HEARING IN CONFORMITY WITH M.G.L. CH. 40 § 56 TO ESTABLISH LOCAL PROPERTY TAX RATE OR RATES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021:

Mr. Crowley read the Public Hearing notice.

Mr. Manzello, Assigned Assessor with Regional Resource Group presented the Board with an annual levy, evaluations, taxation presentation to inform the Board. He explained the Board will need to decide and vote on a single tax rate or split tax rate. He stated the tax levy is amount of property taxes to be raised and levy amount is determined by the budget. He explained of the approved budget less other revenue sources such as motor vehicle excise, municipal fees and state aid is the amount raised from property taxation. He stated this year proposed levy to be raised is \$19,599,527.43 and is an increase of \$776,276.75 from last year's levy of \$18,823,250.68. He stated the levy ceiling is the total taxable town base of \$1,013,092,071.00 and 2 ½ of that is \$26,543,239.00 and said there is plenty of cushion between that and the proposed levy for the budget. He stated new growth for this year which has been approved by the Department of Revenue is \$308,002. He stated they levy limit is \$18,723,755. He stated the excess levy capacity is \$7,972.57 and explained where this figure comes from. He explained the breakdown of valuations; residential class accounts for 82.445 percent, and Commercial 6.4915 percent, Industrial 4.9170 percent, and Personal Property 6.1470 percent combined 17.555 percent which is down from last year and believes it will be down again next year. Mr. Rucho asked about the combined Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property being down, Mr. Manzello stated the overall value is down due to vacancies in commercial properties. He explained the value decrease if the property is vacant. He stated there is some building coming up and is hopeful it balances out. Mr. Hadley asked how the vacancies are handled, Mr. Manzello explained they annually send out a mailer for income and expense. Mr. Rucho asked for clarification that if a building is vacant it is assessed lower, Mr. Manzello stated yes it does affect the overall value. Mr. Crowley asked if the vacancies of commercial properties affects the overall rate. Mr. Manzello stated they assess for many communities and they get a bigger picture of commercial. Mr. Manzello explained apartments are viewed the same but apartments are not showing as much vacancies. He stated the Assessors recommend a single tax rate; he explained the town would need to raise 5% shift from commercial properties from residential to see a 1% deduction in residential. Mr. Manzello stated a single rate for the town will see a reduction in FY2020 the tax rate was \$18.58 and FY2021 will be \$18.46. He gave an overview of what the rates will be using average single-family home which takes the total value of single-family homes and dividing by number of single-family homes; FY2020 was \$322,200 and FY2021 will be \$338,800 which is a 5.15% increase and FY2020 Tax Bill was \$5,986.48 and FY2021 will be \$6,254.25. Mr. Crowley asked for clarification on the proposition 2 ½ raise but average residents will see 5% increase, Mr. Manzello responded that there were budget increases that increased the overall levy. Mr. Crowley stated he is trying to reconcile the proposition 2 ½ increase that raised the property taxes up 5%. Mr. Crowley would like the town accountant to provide a reconciliation of how the town has 2 ½ overall levy yet single family tax bill is going up double. Mr. Rucho asked how the town budget is factored in to the levy, Mr. Manzello responded the levy is based on balancing the budget and he sets the value which is the divided by the town

budget and that is how you get your tax rate. Mr. Rucho stated why the town always goes up to the 2 ½% if they do not have to, Mr. Crowley stated they would have to cut the budget.

Mr. Kittredge asked about in the years that values goes down how long does it take to come back up, Mr. Manzello stated it is will take about 18 months to come back up. Mr. Rajeshkumar if the town has to increase up to the 2 ½%, Mr. Crowley stated majority of the budget is salaries and most get 2% COLA.

***Motion** Mr. Rucho moved to close the public hearing; Mr. Crowley second.*

All in favor

***Motion** Mr. Rucho moved to accept a single tax rate; Mr. Crowley second.*

All in favor

Mr. Manzello stated the Board no longer has to sign the LA5, the DOR only requires a Clerk's Certification now. He explained the Town Clerk has to review the meeting minutes and certify.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Consider approving the following alcoholic beverage licenses for 2021 renewal:**

- **Harold N. Keith Post** **Club**
- **Wachusett, INC d/b/a Wachusett Country Club** **All Alcoholic Pouring**
- **Funny Guys d/b/a Recess** **All Alcoholic Pouring (tentative)**

Ms. Lucier asked for the Board to remove Funny Guys d.b.a. as they will not be renewing.

- **M&T Hospitality Group d/b/a The Mill** **All Alcoholic Pouring**
- **Steve Paskalis d/b/a Steve's Pizzeria** **Wine & Malt Pouring**
- **West Boylston Pkg. Store** **All Alcohol Non-Pouring**
- **Cheoy Lee's Galley II** **All Alcoholic Pouring**
- **Kitsta Corporation d/b/a The Manor Banquet Facilities d/b/a The Draught House Bar & Grill** **All Alcoholic Pouring**
- **Webo Seafood, INC** **Wine & Malt Pouring**
- **Oli's Seafood Eatery, LLC** **All Alcoholic Pouring**
- **Wachusett Wine & Spirits, INC** **Full Package**
- **JAG Business LLC** **All Alcoholic Pouring**
- **Nola Cajun Kitchen** **Beer & Wine Pouring**
- **Ari's Tavern LLC** **All Alcoholic Pouring**
- **KC Brothers, LLC d/b/a Wachusett Farms** **Wine and Malt Non-Pouring**

Ms. Lucier asked for the Board to hold as they have issue to attend and requests the Board take up at their next meeting.

***Motion** Mr. Crowley moved to approve the licenses as read with exception and waiving fee for Harold N. Keith Post; Mr. Kittredge second.*

Mr. Rucho asked about Funny Guys, Ms. Lucier stated they did submit for renewal after being contacted multiple times.

***Motion** Mr. Crowley moved to amend his prior motion to include a change on agenda to have Wachusett Boylston Pkg Store to Full Package not ; Mr. Kittredge second*

All in favor

- **Consider approving the Business Licenses for 2021 appended and posted with the agenda:**

Ms. Lucier requested the Board not renew is Recess and Free Form Dance center which has been sold.

Motion Mr. Crowley moved to approve the licenses with the exception of the two Ms. Lucier stated and to waive fees for Harold N. Keith Post Common Vic and Entertainment License; Mr. Rajeshkumar second.

All in favor

- **Consider voting to acknowledge and accept the following donations received between May 2, 2020 and October 20, 2020 for the Library including payments for lost or damaged books and materials, general donations and \$500 in support of Children's Materials:**

- **\$85.00 in donations were deposited into the Library Revolving Account**
- **\$814.21 in donations were deposited into the Donations Account for the Library.**

Motion Mr. Crowley moved to approve; Mr. Kittredge second.

All in favor

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

1. Employee Performance Reviews

In accordance with the Personnel Bylaw, all non-union employees serve a 6-month probationary status and are reviewed prior to the end of that period at which time the employee shall be advised of his/her status (regular or terminated). All regular full-time, part-time and fractional employees shall be evaluated once a year. Some department heads evaluate employees during the month of their anniversary date or they evaluate all their employees during one month. Per the bylaw, it shall be the responsibility of each department head to maintain a list of employee anniversary dates and to evaluate his/her employees within the time frame given. My office tracks performance reviews and sends reminders out on an annual basis through the Town Administrator or his/her designee.

All union employees are reviewed per their union agreements. Fire employees are on probation for one year and they are evaluated at 6 months, again at one year and then annually. New hires at the Police Department serve a one-year probationary period, they are reviewed prior to being considered for reappointment, and annual reviews are done after that. DPW and Cemetery Department employees serve a 3-month probation period, are reviewed prior to being considered a permanent employee, and following that annual performance evaluations will be conducted 30 days prior to the employee's anniversary date by the Director.

We are on track with our reviews with all departments with the exception of one. The majority of the employees at the DPW were last reviewed in February of 2011. I have spoken with Director and we reviewed the performance review form we typically use. He will be working on those reviews over the next couple of months so we can get that department back on track.

Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if the reviews are turned back to the Town Administrator, Ms. Lucier stated some are turned in or she received a memo stating which employees reviews have been

completed and that goes into the file. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if the town received a memo since 2011 from the DPW, MS. Lucier stated they have not completed reviews since 2001. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated the Town Administrators did not follow procedure from 2001, Ms. Lucier stated it is on the municipal calendar to complete and annual reminders were sent out. Ms. Lucier stated has a plan to get back on track with the reviews. Mr. Rucho asked if the Town Administrators were being told the or are, they not getting the memo and not following up. Ms. Lucier can only speak to what was in the files. Mr. Rucho asked if all contracted employees are up to date, Ms. Lucier stated they are. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if she thinks they are sitting at the DPW, Ms. Lucier stated she does not believe so. Mr. Kittredge stated he had only been reviewed once in 27 years and was complete by John. Mr. Rucho asked when they do the review of the town administrators why is the question "have you followed up on all the performance reviews" and cannot believe the town administrators office let this go for 19 years. Ms. Lucier reiterated that she is getting this back on track and explained it is very important to get them done, it gives you time to sit with employees and see where they are at, if they need training and if they are looking to move up.

2. Brush Dump

We continue to get requests to expand the days our town's brush dump on Laurel Street is open to the public. This Saturday will be the last day the facility will be open for the year and the hours are 7:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

Next year we will be tracking usage of the facility so that going forward we will have the data needed to best set the schedule we will be following. Currently we open in May for three days, two Fridays and one Saturday, one Saturday in June, one Friday in July, one Saturday in August and one Friday in September. In October and November, we are open one Friday and one Saturday. Under this current schedule, our 'average' annual cost for labor is \$3,651.00. Typically, we always add an additional Saturday, as we are doing this year, and that brings our total 'average' labor cost to \$4,089.12.

Ms. Lucier would like to see what the usage is in the summer time and possibly eliminate Fridays and add Saturdays. She thinks with some data and counting cars it will allow for planning for the future. Mr. Rucho stated the only cost would be Saturdays, Mr. Kittredge state there is a cost as the guys are not doing other things if they are working the brush dump. Mr. Hadley stated it makes sense if there are only three cars coming in. Mr. Rucho asked how many employees work there, Ms. Lucier stated there are two guys for safety reasons. Mr. Kittredge stated you never know how the days will go and if the brush gets put aside it will take twice as long to do it later. Mr. Rucho asked if we are waiting a year before we make changes, Ms. Lucier stated they need some data. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated he received a suggestion from someone on social media to increase in the spring and fall and less in summer.

3. Dispensing Drill

On Saturday, November 21st our town was invited to observe the Town of Sterling's Emergency Dispensing Site Drive-Thru exercise for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. I attended the drill along with Bob Barrell, Chair of the Board of Health, Board of Health member Tom Dillon, Fire Chief Tom Welsh and members of our CERT Team. It was a very educational session as we are in the process of updating our Emergency Dispensing Plan. The Board of Health, Fire Chief, Police Chief and myself will be meeting tomorrow night to coordinate and prepare for West Boylston's dispensing site for possible COVID-19 vaccine

distribution. Forrest Price, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Consultant for the City of Worcester will be joining us. He has expertise in preparing Dispensing Plans.

Mr. Rucho asked if every town will be dispensing vaccine, Ms. Lucier stated she is unsure but need to have a plan but is hopeful that CVS or Walgreens will be issuing the vaccine. Mr. Crowley believes this is a good plan but does not think the town will have to issue.

4. Update on Grants

The Town has been notified that our project was not selected for funding under the Community Compact Information Technology Grant Program - 55 grants totaling \$3.7 million were awarded. We applied for \$177,000 in funding and we were informed that the competition for the \$3.7 million of available funding was intense, with 158 applications totaling more than \$15 million. I am also being told that they are planning to offer this again and we are eligible to reapply again in FY22.

We were also notified by Mass Works that our \$906,000 grant application for the Newton/Goodale Street Sidewalk Improvements Project was not recommended for funding. The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development received 100 applications requesting \$208 million in funding requests. They funded \$68 million worth of projects. The next round of grants are due in May of 2021 and I have reached out to the program and requested feedback on what we can do to strengthen our proposed project when we reapply in May.

The Police Department was awarded a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Grant in the amount of \$7,687 to be used for added patrols.

The Town was awarded a MIIA Loss Control Grant in the amount of \$7,961.90. The DPW will be installing a heating unit in their metal garage and these funds will be used to insulate the walls, garage doors and pipes. This will allow us to work on our large plows with the stainless-steel bodies as they do not fit in our current building garage. By doing this the town will also receive a .5% MIIA rewards credit in the property coverage line item. Mr. Crowley asked what they .5% rewards credit is in dollars, Ms. Lucier will contact MIIA for that information.

I previously reported that the town was eligible for \$724,298 in CARES Act Grant Funds and that the school had their own CARES Act Grant fund allotment. Thus far the town has expended \$118,000 of those funds and we are estimating by the end of December, when our final reconciliation is due, we may be at \$175,000. All CARES Act grant funds are no longer available to towns and cities after December 31, 2020.

Our school district received \$258,889 in CARES Act Funds, spent \$166,088 for eligible expenses and have a deficit \$92,801 which would need to be charged off to School Choice funds unless they received more CARES Act funding in the future. We also were able to identify \$3,040.34 in salary costs which could be charge off to the CARES Act funds as employee leave related to COVID, or as a precaution related to COVID, is an eligible use of the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund. As the town has sufficient surplus in its CARES Act grant fund, I have informed the School Superintendent and Business Manager that their deficit will be covered under the town's share of those funds. They expressed their thanks for our spirit of cooperation during these crazy times.

Mr. Rucho asked if the \$92,801 will come from the Town's CARES funds, Ms. Lucier stated it will. She explained we have \$724,298 given to the town and we have plenty left.

5. Sick Leave Bank Committee

The Board previously voted a Sick Leave Bank Policy for non-union town employees. One of the requirements of that Policy was the establishment of a Sick Leave Bank Committee. I am delighted to report that Administrative Assistant to the Town Accountant Michelle Noberini-White, Building Department Assistant Sheryl Keddy, and Municipal Assistant Faye Zukowski have expressed an interest in serving on the Committee. I recommend the Board concur with this recommendation for an effective date of December 7, 2020 for a term to expire on April 30, 2022. I would like to express my appreciation to these individuals, I know that they will do a great job on this new Committee.

Mr. Rucho asked why is this not under the agenda item Appointments, Ms. Lucier stated it is under her report. Mr. Rucho stated it usually give the starting date and appointment term, Ms. Lucier restated the terms. He stated they do not get the Town Administrator report until prior to the meeting. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if they can table and take up at the next meeting as an agenda item. Ms. Lucier stated she has looked back in former town Administrators reports and they have taken action on appointments before. Mr. Rucho stated prior to Anita these items were always listed on the agenda, Ms. Lucier stated it is listed on the agenda under town administrator report. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated the Selectboard members can only see the Town Administrator report, Ms. Lucier stated the whole agenda packet is only sent to the board members and not to the public. Ms. Lucier stated former town administrator had appointments listed under her report. Mr. Rucho asked why do not all appointments get listed under town administrator reports. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated Mr. Rucho has been requesting for these appointments to be under the agenda rather than town administrator report. Mr. Rucho requested to get the Town Administrator reports on Friday with the agenda.

APPOINTMENT AND RESIGNATIONS:

- **Concurrence on the appointment of Siobhan Bohanson to the Council on Aging effective December 7, 2020 for a term to expire on April 30, 2023.**
Motion Mr. Rucho moved to approve; Mr. Crowley second
All in favor
- **Concurrence on the following Records Access Officer reappointments effective January 1, 2021 for a term to expire on December 31, 2022"**
 - **Colby Fiske, Fire Department**
 - **Anthony Papandrea, Police Department**
 - **Richard Meagher, School Department***Motion Mr. Rucho moved to approve; Mr. Crowley second*
All in favor
- **Acknowledge receipt of letter of resignation from Beverly Scott after working as an election worker for 40+ years and consider voting to send a letter thanking her for her lob-time service to the Town.**
Motion Mr. Rucho moved to approve; Mr. Rajeshkumar second
All in favor

MEETINGS, INVITATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Sunday, December 6th from 1-4 p.m. the Agricultural Commission will be hosting a food drive in the parking lot of the Congregational Church, 26 Central Street to benefit the West Boylston Food Pantry. The Food Pantry would appreciate jams, jellies, cocoa mix, jello pudding 4 or 6 packs, peanut butter, shelf table milk, microwavable items since some of their guests do not have stoves, baked beans, pancake mix, syrup, and paper products. Questions may be directed to commission member Amy Marold 508-353-9696.
- DCR's Water Supply Protection FY2021 Forest Management Proposals is posted on the town's website as proposed projects are located on DCR land within West Boylston. The public may comment on the Plan until December 11, 2020.
- The Historical Society will not be hosting their Annual Open House and Tree Lighting Ceremony this year, and the Municipal Lighting Plant will light the tree.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SELECTMANS REPORTS:

- Mr. Crowley stated on the announcement for the Food Bank if residents would like to donate cash instead of food items the Food Bank uses the funds to purchase gift cards to go out with the food to recipients so they may buy things that are not available at the bank.
- Mr. Crowley stated beginning the end of November the parking ban is not in effect and you cannot park on the spring and if you live near a fire hydrant to shovel it to keep you and your neighbors safe in the event of a fire.

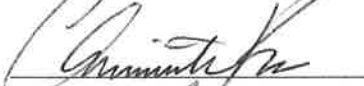
Motion Mr. Rucho to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. Mr. Crowley, second all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Faye D. Zukowski, Municipal Assistant

Approved: December 16, 2020


John W. Hadley, Chairman


Christopher A. Rucho, Vice Chairman


Patrick J. Crowley, Clerk


Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Selectman


Michael J. Kittredge III, Selectman