



Board of Selectmen

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, November 16, 2016
Location: Town Hall, 221 Main Street
Time: 8:00 AM – 8:10 AM
Members Present: Chairman James Wood; Michael May; James Underwood; Marty McNamara, Town Administrator; April C. Steward, Administrative Assistant to the Board

The meeting commenced at 8:01 AM.

Joint Real Estate Tax Classification Hearing with Board of Assessors

- Requested single Tax Rate of \$16.12/\$1 K
- Discussion ensued on single rate vs. split rate
 - Impact on commercial significant versus very small savings for residential
 - BOS Chairman Wood is trying to encourage commercial growth in town. A split rate would discourage commercial growth. Mike May agreed with the Chairman. Dave Butler from Finance Committee noted there would be a small shift off of residents and a huge increase on business. Business in general require much less of the towns' resources than a residential dwelling.
 - New growth was 207

At 8:10 AM James Wood motioned to close the hearing. Mike May seconded; all in favor

Mike May made a motion to keep the fiscal year 2017 tax rate at a single rate; Jaimie Underwood seconded; voted all in favor

- Board of Assessors ran an ad in the Telegram advertising the vacancy on the BOA
- Discussion ensued on current issues with Assessors office. BOA would like to see improvements with IT. Paul O'Connor stated he would like to see a full audit performed on Assessor's office.
- Discussion ensued on Vision/Vadar software databases. Should we upgrade/change systems? Should we increase data bridge frequency?
- Tax papers were signed by the BOS

School Superintendent Nadine Ekstrom came in to speak on financial concerns regarding the school department budget. Wanted to speak to BOS to get ahead of issues she foresees and to see if the town can help them. A student has come into the district that needed to be placed out of district and that was not included in the budget. There was some money that was freed up do to a teaching position that was not filled at the beginning of the year so that money was diverted to assist with the out of district placement cost.

Presentation was distributed

- Two special education students that require outside services
- Each placement averages between \$65K and \$100K, not including transportation which can range between \$175 - \$250 per student, per day.
- School choice funds were used last year – there was more being used that was currently coming in.
- Discussion ensued on enrollment outlook and new housing developments coming online in town soon. After speaking with developers, the Superintendent feels that the new homes will help maintain the current enrollment numbers but does not anticipate larger class sizes.
- BES budget is shifting between school choice funds revenue and free kindergarten now being offered.
- School choice revenue is not supposed to be carried, you are supposed to use what revenue comes in for the next year's budget. Several years ago there was a large pocket of school choice funds being

carried over and the school department has been working to bring that number down to where it should be.

- In a statewide comparison BES pays out less per student than school districts comparable in size.
- Per pupil spending costs can be driven up by out of district placements for special needs students
- Where are we with other schools under 400 pupils? BES ranks fourth.
- New science supplies are needed to bring BES up to just released state standards
- English Literacy needs supplementary materials to enrich the program
- Discussion ensued on presentation of needs of the school system to the budget committee and the community.
- Finance Committee does have a reserve fund that may be able to assist for unexpected expenses that arise during the year. Dave Butler suggested that that may be a source of revenue to help alleviate some of the costs of the new special needs students becoming part of the BES community.
- TRMHS has some grant funds that they were able to leverage to close budget gaps.
- In District special needs students are transitioning from elementary to TRMHS.
- Staff salary step increases and lane changes. (step is years of service and lane is education level achieved)
- Enrollment – Boylston has an increase on their side which will result in a shift in portion the town pays into TRMHS.
- School Choice reserve is continued to be spent down and will level off soon.
- Additional staff is needed up at TRMHS with more BES students transitioning up.
- Superintendent does not see any additional funding coming in from the state. The state has also cut grants that we were previously receiving.
- School's Budget Presentation in December 2016, they will be requesting additional funding. 8% at BES and 5% at TRMHS.
- Discussion ensued on other potential items that could come up financially that could impact budget going forward. Possibly cost of replacing furnace at present location, cost of moving to BES facility
- Discussion on litigation on façade at TRMHS. The district lost the arbitration. HMFH, our architect, was found at fault with the façade design. They had to pay \$573,000.00. They ran into difficulties with their insurer and it was costing the district a 13% interest charge every day that it was not paid so the district made an agreement with HFMH that we would pay with the understanding that they would reimburse us when their insurance money came through. Now they are disputing that they own it because of the language included in the indemnity clause. The district has tried to enter into negotiations with HMFH but that has not gone well so the last option is the district taking action against them. Mike May suggested that the school district keep the BOS in the loop so that they can come along side and help share resources with the legal issues if necessary.

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes: The minutes of September 12th, October 11th, and October 28th were presented for approval. *Jamie Underwood motioned to accept the meeting minutes; Michael May seconded; voted all in favor*

Appointments to Historical District Commission: David Bottom and Judith Bottom

Mike May motioned to approve the appointments. Jamie Underwood seconded the motion; voted all in favor

At 9:18 AM, on a motion made by Selectman Michael May and seconded by Jamie Underwood, the following roll call vote was recorded to go into Executive Session under MGL c. 30A §21(a) ¶3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the newly certified Highway Department bargaining unit that was certified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations on or about September 29, 2016 at DLR Case No. WMAM-16-5418; James Wood: Yes; Michael May: Yes; James Underwood: Yes. The Board agreed they would reconvene to open session only to close.

At 9:51 AM James Wood motioned to adjourn; Mike May seconded; voted all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
April C. Steward, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen