

Town of Ashfield
Select Board Minutes

December 15, 2014

The Ashfield Select Board meeting was held on Monday December 15, 2014 at the Ashfield Town Hall at 7:00 P.M. There were approximately 11 audience members in attendance. There were five audio recorders in use.

Previous Select Board meeting was December 8, 2014.

Select Board: Tom Carter-Chair, Ron Coler-Vice Chair, Todd Olanyk

Executive Administrator: Mary Fitz-Gibbon

Assistant Municipal Clerk/Scribe: Jean Cherdack for Lynn Taylor

The Tax Classification hearing for the Town of Ashfield was called to order at 7:00 by Chair at 7:00 p.m.

Board of Assessors presented the tax report for 2015. The new tax rate will be \$16.04(down .07 to \$15.97 as of 12/29/2014) down from last year's rate of \$16.16. Evaluations went up 2%. Discussed split tax rate between residential and business. If Ashfield had a split tax rate, business would pay at a higher rate. We have never done that in Ashfield. It could be a financial burden on the businesses. There are so few commercial properties, that it does not make sense to tax them separately, according to the tax assessor.

When asked how many acres are in Chapter Land, it was stated that is not known at this time, but will make that number available at a later date. State will have to verify all our numbers. In answer to a question from a resident, it was stated that older homes that are not cared for get devaluated and new construction gets adjusted upward. Most rates are based on comparable sales. The town has hired Mayflower Assessors who do a partial assessment every year. Every home has to be assessed in a nine-year period. Mayflower is permitted to do outside measurements, but do not go inside a home unless they are invited. The assessment is based on outside square footage if they cannot get inside a home.

The Board of Assessors asked the select board to approve one tax rate for the town of Ashfield so tax bills can be processed.

MOTION: Carter made a motion that the Board accepts one tax rate for this fiscal year, seconded by Coler. **VOTE: 3-0-0 (document 1)**

Select Board meeting was called to order by Chair at 7:15.

Agenda for 12/15/14 (document 2)

Payroll Warrant WP15-13 dated December 15, 2014 (document 3)

Vendor Warrant W15-13 dated December 15, 2014 (document 4)

Minutes:

SB minutes of 12/01/14 (**document 5**): **MOTION:** Carter made a motion to accept the minutes of 12/01/14 as written, seconded by Coler. **VOTE: 3-0-0.**

SB minutes of 12/12/14 (**document 6**): **MOTION:** Coler made a motion to accept the minutes of 12/12/14, as amended, seconded by Olanyk. **VOTE 3-0-0.**

Appointments:

Smith Road project. MJ Adams, Director of Community Development, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority stated they are seeking an extension and that Mike Petrin of Tighe & Bond and David Loring would address updates to the project.

It was stated that there was a kickoff meeting to discuss stabilization of the embankment and to develop permanent plans. Water needs to flow freely. It was further noted that the DEP audited the project, which is something they don't usually do. The DEP asked for alternative analysis and requested a site meeting. Since this is a limited project it cannot meet performance standards. DEP sees this as a river front redevelopment project with improvements. They believe this is better alternative. The concern is the cost of the project, which is designed not to exceed \$7,000. DPW can perform some of the work. The DEP wants additional changes to the plans, which could increase the costs considerably. David stated that he is not convinced that the DEP read through all the plans as there appears to be a disconnect. Discussed additional DEP concerns. David stated that this is outside of their scope and that is why they needed to meet with the SB and get some input.

The next step is a discussion with the DEP in order to get some direction. It was noted that it would be good to have a town rep present at those meetings. Tom Poissant stated that there is FEMA/MEMA money left over from Storm Irene that could be used toward this project as this is additional Irene related work. Smith road is passable but it is not open to the public. If nothing is done we will lose it the road. Discussed different types of construction and greenery that could be used to stabilize embankment. Tom Carter will attend the meeting with DEP after the first of the year along with Tom Poissant. Construction has to happen during low flow conditions. MJ Adams is applying for additional grant money. Project has to go out to bid, which would take 60 days. Coming down to the wire. No extension past September 2015. There will be additional fees because of the change in scope.

Coler made a motion to extend the contract of T&B through September 30, 2015, seconded by Olanyk. **VOTE: 3-0-0.**

Carter made a motion to extent the FCRHRA contract through September 30, 2015, seconded by Coler. **VOTE: 3-0-0.**

MJ Adams stated that she is looking for additional grants to help fund the project.

Extension with FCRH will be reviewed and signed before January 2, 2015.

In answer to a question about Barnes Brooke, Tom Poissant stated he is looking into this and does not have an answer tonight.

Doug Field EMD, Emergency Action Dam Plan Update. Signatures are needed. Corrections were made i.e., updated with names and phone numbers. Need one with original signatures and copies made from that. Discussed power outages during the last snow storm. Doug stated that power companies deal with towns with 100% outages first. Doug also stated that he checked on the elderly in town.

Sarah Cormier, Double Edge Theatre: National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program grant request. Sarah explained they want to apply for a grant so Double edge can do more programs about town. Needs support of Select Board. Gave out two draft letters for the Board to review and sign with two different scopes. Application needs support of highest elected town officials. All can sign or just the chair. There is a January 15, 2015 deadline.

MOTION: Coler made a motion that we endorse both letters which are to be put on the Town of Ashfield letterhead, and ask that the Chair sign on behalf of the Board, seconded by Olanyk. **VOTE: 3-0-0. (document 7 & 8)**

Old Business:

Wired West/Mass Broadband Institute proposal discussion. David Kulp and Ted Murray represented the committee. Discussed regional meeting that was attended by several local people. It was noted that to get a true sense of the cost we need to know how many towns are willing to commit to the project. We need 25 or 30 towns not 5 or 6. A good downtown analysis is needed: broadband vis. dial up etc, as well as a grip on financial issues (how much is this going to cost). Discussed the difference between Matrix vs. Wired West. It was noted that we should check with other groups to see what their experience is with these companies. We also need to see a contract explaining agreement. Also need publicity so the town knows what we are talking about. Carter stated that he agrees with the assessment but hasn't Wired West been looking at these things already – all this data has already been generated. Need a minimum of 370 homes to sign on. For the betterment of the town we should supply the service and people pay for hookup.

Discussed a letter, which the committee would like signed, by the Select Board before end of the year (**document 9**). Asked to vote on letter tonight to keep options open. 14 towns have already said yes. Coler stated that it is non-binding letter but shows the other towns Ashfield's intentions. David said it shows we are willing to do a bond in the spring. Select Board has copy of letter that needs to be signed and it can make corrections. David made suggestions "ultimately responsible for its full share of the bond" rather than.....The town of Ashfield may ultimately be responsible for its full share of the bond. Build a fiber optic network.... "network adds design and construction".

Discussed bylaws of the cooperative.

MOTION: Olanyk made a motion to sign the resolution for support of Ashfield to continue their support of Wired West to construct a regional broadband network, as edited, seconded by Coler. **VOTE 2-1-0 (TC) (document 10)**

Ted Murray stated he had a call from the auditor who would like to begin audit April 1st.

Budget schedule conflict February 16th being President's day will meet on Tuesday February 17th instead.

Open Meeting Law complaint determination.

Case was made that Select Board did not go into executive session appropriately. Chair paraphrased and did not read the Open Meeting Law word-by-word. Need to read it from a script in the future. Complaint dated July 25th, alleged that the town of Ashfield at their May 19th meeting did not go into executive session properly. AG requires the Executive Session minutes be released.

Final Winter Sidewalks Plan

There will be two contactors – Michael Skalski will snow blow on the east end of Main Street and Jon Williams will be responsible for the west end. The cost will be \$60/hour and there is \$5000 in the budget.

New Business:

Town Hall Use Application, Historical Commission. (document 11)

The Historical Commission would like to use the Town hall for a brunch on January 1, 2015 from 10 am to 4 pm as a kick-off event for the Town's 250th year long Celebrations. Event will begin at 11, but need to get in earlier to setup.

Motion: Coler made a motion to accept the application of the Historical Commission to use the town hall on January 1, 2015 from 10-4, seconded by Olanyk. **VOTE: 3-0-0**

Appoint of Jean Cherdack Planning Board Scribe.

Motion: Coler made a motion to appoint Jean Cherdack as Planning Board Scribe, seconded by Olanyk. **VOTE: 3:0:0**

Green Communities Annual Report and amended contract for Green Communities Grant. Brian Clark explained discussion followed. How much are we saving. Hundreds of dollars worth of credits. Paperwork needed to be signed.

Motion: Coler made a motion that we authorize the chair to sign the Green Communities Annual Report and amended contract for Green Communities grant for 2014 as attached, seconded by Olanyk. **VOTE: 3-0-0 (document 12)**

Liaison Reports:

Olanyk stated that the highway department did a good job during the recent snow storm.

Coler stated that we are scheduled to get into Ashfield Lake when the ice thaws to clean out the invasive species. Coler has initiated contact with Gloria Pacosa regarding the stone wall she had constructed which part of lies on the Town Common property.

Mail:

Discussed Letter from Attorney regarding mediation project. Town Counsel was cc'd on the letter. The Attorney is representing five people in town and requested that all correspondence kindly be directed to him. **(document 13)**

Discussed e-mail regarding a Par Electrical Contractors Inc. truck with a hydraulic leak that tipped over. **(Document 18)**

Motion: Carter made a motion to accept resignation of Mollie Babize from the Historical Commission, seconded by Coler. **VOTE: 3-0-0 (document 14)**

Letter from Attorney General dated December 4, 2014 regarding complaint about Open Meetings Law. **(document 15)**

Northeast Utilities letter regarding vegetation control around poles. **(document 16)**

Meeting notice ZBA **(document 17)**

Confirmation from the Personnel Board that the 5th and the 7th of January will work.

MOTION: Olanyk made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Coler. **VOTE: 3-0-0**

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Document List

1. Documentation regarding the set tax rate for new fiscal year.
2. Agenda for 12/15/14 (document 2)
3. Payroll Warrant WP15-13 dated December 15, 2014
4. Vendor Warrant W15-13 dated December 15, 2014
5. SB minutes of 12/01/14
6. SB minutes of 12/12/14
- 7 & 8. Sarah Cormier, Double Edge Theatre: National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program grant request 2 letters to sign.
9. Letter regarding Wired West
10. Resolution for support of Ashfield to continue their support to construct and operate a regional broadband network
11. Town Hall Use Application, Historical Commission.
12. Green Communities Annual Report and amended contract for Green Communities grant for 2014
13. Letter from Attorney regarding mediation project.
14. Resignation of Mollie Babize
15. Letter from Attorney General dated December 4, 2014
16. Northeast Utilities letter regarding vegetation control around poles
17. Meeting notice ZBA
18. e-mail regarding a Par Electrical Contractors Inc. truck with a hydraulic leak that tipped over.

Note: These minutes were discussed, amended, and approved at the Select Board meeting dated 12/29/2014 and filed in the folder of the actual date of the said minutes

Approved as amended 3-0-0