

Selectmen's minutes of meeting September 29, 2014

Members present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Lisa Blackmer, Dolores Harasyko

Members absent: Rosario Messina

Called to order at 7:03

The Tax Classification Hearing was opened by Assessor Chair Bethany Perry. The notice for the hearing was posted in the Berkshire Eagle for the required 3 consecutive days of Sept. 24, 35, & 26, 2014. Bethany first addressed concerns regarding placing the Assessors database on the town's website. She needs guidance on privacy laws concerning law enforcement personnel that live in town. The Sandisfield Times will post a statement that if you are in law enforcement to contact the Assessors office so that they can block the information on their property.

Bethany reviewed the Classification Tax Allocation. Patrick agreed to keep the tax allocation as is which will keep it fair for all and hopefully new business will open and contribute to the tax base. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to keep the tax allocation as is with a residential factor of 1. Discussed the tax rate. The new tax rate will be 12.99. Discussed rounding it off to 13.00 to simplify computing the tax bills. The levy cushion is very close as approx. \$600.00. There has been no new growth in town. There is approx. \$500,000 in Free Cash and approx. \$900,000 in Stabilization.

John Burrows asked about New Hartford Rd. He is concerned that there won't be enough funds to complete the job. He is disappointed that the job won't be completed this fall. Patrick reviewed the progress of the project. We hired Berkshire Regional Planning to bid the job out for the town. They were unable to complete the bid packet in time. The cost of blacktop has increased as plants close. We received an additional \$46,000 of Chapter 90 that has specific uses and deadlines. We cannot carry it over as we do with the regular Chapter 90. It is for winter repairs and must be used by Sept 30, 2014. We have had a highway dept. employee leave. So with all this to consider Mass Dot recommended that we do all the prep work on New Hartford Rd., including ditch work and culvert replacements and have the job bid put out first thing in the spring.

Bethany reviewed the 30 cent increase in the tax rate. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to accept the tax rate of \$13.00 based on the recommendation and work done by the Board of Assessors. The DOR also recommended rounding up the tax rate by a penny. We thank them for their hard work.

Tom Jacobs present from the Planning Board. They are working on the driveway bylaw and are seeking information regarding access roads. Jeff responded that he would like to see 10 feet off any boundary line.

Roberta Myers in for the STOP, Sandisfield Tax Payers Opposing the Pipeline. She presented a letter requesting the selectmen act immediately using all avenues including legal council to support the Mass. Constitutional Article 97 which permanently protects conservation land. She would like them to provide guidance and a policy about who is responsible for security of this pipeline. Provide adequate resources and proper training

for emergency personal including emergency drills. Roberta would like the selectmen to work with the Attorney General. Patrick reviewed correspondence he has had that states there would be no fast track through the FERC process. There is a meeting on October 29, 2014 at 7p.m. at the SARC building with Tenneco. Patrick will be sending letters inviting gubernatorial candidates to this meeting. Patrick has received info from Smitty Pignatelli that he will forward to Roberta regarding the federal level of involvement. Roberta feels this project will have a negative impact on her property. She feels her property value will go down. Patrick responded that the selectmen have been very aggressive and will continue to work on this issue. Ron Bernard reflected that after 9/11 Tenneco was regularly surveying the pipeline. That only lasted about a year. Ron feels strongly that pipelines are extremely vulnerable for terrorist attacks. He wants to know what plans are in place to protect the area from attacks. Patrick assured him he is in contact with state officials and will convey his concerns.

Ron Bernard made a presentation that he and his wife Jean Atwater Williams made to Ombersley England, Sandisfield's sister city. There is one descendent of the Sands family there. They were equally as interested in our town. Lord Sands is buried in Ombersley and Ron suggested the town create a plaque to be placed there. The selectmen all agreed with the idea.

Discussed the annual dump sticker fee. We will keep it the same at \$25.00.

Discussed the annual business license fees. Lisa reviewed research she has done on surrounding communities. We are far below what other town's charge. She suggested raising the general licenses by \$5.00. She explained that we are missing the second hand license which is for antiques, second hand items. There has to be record keeping of where items come from. We also do not have a separate license for Bed and Breakfast. She is suggesting \$50.00. She reviewed an ongoing flea market which is not licensed and will follow up on this. Patrick feels we should keep the fees where they are at. It is a difficult time to place even a \$5.00 burden on our business. Jeff completely agreed.

John Burrows asked about the pipeline and how it affects surrounding towns. Patrick explained that it concerns Sandisfield, Agawam and Tyringham.

Motion by Jeff, second by Patrick to appoint Eric Pachulski to the Historical Commission.

Motion by Jeff, second by Patrick to appoint Ron Pachulski, Barbara Cormier, Kathy Burrows and John Kuzmech to the Cemetery Committee.
They will work with Lisa and Ben Campetti.

Reviewed and signed minutes of meetings of 9/8 and 9/15, 2014

Lisa reviewed the Legislative Breakfast she is hosting in Sandisfield on October 10, 2014 at 10 a.m. at the SARC center.

Ron Pachulski asked if the town has any parcels of land that we acquired from unpaid taxes that we could possibly sell. Lisa will check with the Treasurer and Tax Collector.

Mail reviewed

Warrants reviewed and signed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Patrick Barrett

Jeffrey Gray