



Select Board

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Select Board Meeting Minutes December 13, 2021

Open Meeting

Quorum present: Eric Shimelonis, Select Board Chair and Member Roger Kavanagh, Kathleen Keresey was absent and Marie Ryan, Town Administrator.

Others Present: Mary Stodden, Assessing Clerk, Harald Scheid, Assessing Consultant and Director of Public Works, Curt Wilton.

Eric called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM and listed Select Board members present.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from November 15 and December 6, 2021 will be approved at the next meeting.

Town Administrator Update:

Marie informed the Board that the committee to hire a shared Human Resource Director position has two potential applicants and is expecting to extend an offer to one of them. The committee is deliberating between these two candidates. Once the position is filled, Marie will have the new shared Human Resource Director attend a Board meeting to introduce them to everyone.

Marie updated the Board in regards to the Community Preservation Committee adopted bylaw. She received information on the bylaw which governs how to form the committee in regards to the Housing Authority position. Since the Town of West Stockbridge does not have a Housing Authority, the Town will need to change the bylaw by changing the wording for that position at a Town Meeting. Marie was also informed that some small towns also only appoint 2 citizens at large and not 4, this would be up to the Board.

Presentation by the Assessors on Tax Rate – Harald Scheid, Principal Assessor

Harald explained to the Board that he is meeting with the them to request that they vote on a single tax rate for West Stockbridge. He stated that there is a very low amount of commercial property tax in the Town and that 93% of the tax revenue is made up of residential property tax. The Assessors are recommending the Board vote to keep the single tax rate. If the Board voted to adopt the single tax rate, the tax rate will decrease from \$13.91 to \$12.56. The Town is required to complete a re-evaluation of all properties and that many needed to be increased this year to reflect market values. On average the homeowners will have an estimated increase of 11% in their assessed evaluation, which will decrease the tax rate. The commercial properties will have little to no impact due to a lack of evidence to support an increase in value as seen in the residential properties. Harald then asked the Board to vote.

Eric made the following motion, seconded by Roger;

The West Stockbridge Select Board votes in accordance with M.G.L., Ch. 40, Sec. 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2022 tax rates and set the Residential Factor at 1.0, with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.0, pending approval of the town's annual tax recap by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

Roll call vote:

Roger Yes

Eric Yes

Motion passed.

Great Barrington Road Traffic Concerns – Curt Wilton, Director of Public Works

A petition was presented to the Board in regards to the traffic on Great Barrington Road, specifically between #127-143 Great Barrington Road. The residents are concerned about the speeding and passing lane on this section of the road. They are requesting that there be a double no passing line painted in that section of the road. Curt explained that the Town owns that road and in the past at the southern end of this road, in the Williamsville section, when it was repaved years ago, the Board allowed the Department of Public Works to paint a double line there. Curt has received a quote for an engineering firm, BSC Group, to perform a complete traffic study of Great Barrington Road. He feels this could assist the Town in making this road safer. He said the study could give the Town advice on such things as determining which types of vehicles are safe to travel on this road, a safe speed limit, and where to paint double no passing lines. He then asked the Board what their feelings were and if they would approve having this study completed.

Roger and Eric both felt this study would be a good idea. Their concern was the funding to pay for the study. Curt said the quote for the traffic study was \$7,590 which includes a study of the entire Great Barrington Road, from Housatonic to the Massachusetts Turnpike entrance. He feels this is a fair cost and asked the Board to place a warrant article to cover the cost for this study on a future Special Town Meeting or the Annual Town Meeting.

The Board agreed to the Department of Public Works painting the double lines in the near future. Curt explained that he can do that but it can not happen until the spring. Curt asked the Board to let him know when they will have a Town Meeting vote for the money to pay for the study so he can get back to the engineer, the Board agreed.

Select Board Speak:

None.

Citizen Speak:

Frank Landsberger asked the Board what the status was of the previously discussed lengthening of Harris Street. Eric requested Curt speak to this. Curt stated that he has received two feasibility study proposals. He said that he will submit the two proposals to the Board for them to decide on which firm to hire and get the study completed.

Frank also inquired about the status of Merritt Way. Eric responded that the Town is working on an offer by Amy Brentano for an easement on Merritt Way and will begin to layout the way shortly.

Eric made a motion to adjourn at 6:50 PM, seconded by Roger.

Roll call vote;

Roger Yes

Eric Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Marie U. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

- Documentation from Assessors for Tax Classification Hearing
- Petition written by residents of 127-143 Great Barrington Road
- Quote from BSC Group to perform a complete traffic study of Great Barrington Road