

**Town of West Newbury  
Board of Selectmen**

Monday, November 14, 2016 7:00 p.m.  
First Floor Hearing Room 381 Main Street, Town Office Building

**Meeting Minutes**

**Open Session:** Chairman Anderson opened the public meeting at 7pm.

Selectmen present: Joseph Anderson, Chairman; Glenn Kemper; David Archibald

I. Tax Classification Hearing

Present were the Board of Assessors: Thomas Atwood, Jennifer Poliseno, Richard Baker; Chief Assessor Meredith Stone and Finance Director Michael Bertino.

Chairman Anderson read the public notice for holding this FY 2017 Tax Classification Hearing, in accordance with MGL Chapter 40, Section 56. The purpose of the hearing is to determine the minimum residential factor and rates for all classes or properties: Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Open Space and Personal Properties.

Chairman of Board of Assessors Tom Atwood spoke on a meeting held on November 9<sup>th</sup> when the Board of Assessors discussed setting the tax rate and voted unanimously to approve a single tax rate in the amount of \$14.57 per thousand. This puts the average tax bill with an increase of approximately \$76.68 with an average property assessment increase of 1%. This will put the overall tax rate which is a decrease from \$14.63 per thousand to \$14.57 per thousand with the average tax bill estimated at \$7,719 based upon an average assessment of \$529,877.

Chief Assessor Meredith Stone added that the town has seen new growth of 200% over the last year.

Finance Director Michael Bertino stated that the tax rate is an estimate with the final rate to be certified by the State Department of Revenue.

Selectman Kemper talked about how the town has historically not had a commercial exemption and who makes that determination. Chief Assessor Stone responded that it is recommended by the Board of Assessors and then voted upon by the Board of Selectmen.

Chairman Anderson opened the floor for any public comment with no comments from the public.

Chairman Anderson moved to close the public hearing, second by Selectman Archibald with a unanimous vote.

**Chairman Anderson motioned to adopt a single tax rate to not allow a residential exemption, to not allow a commercial exemption and to not allow a discount for property classified as open space applied for the FY 2017. Second by Selectman Archibald with a unanimous vote.**

Selectman Archibald noted that this is the lowest tax rate per thousand since 2012.

Chairman Anderson brought up two unexpected items that came up after the agenda was posted. The first one is the yellow paint on Bachelor Street in which a response was received today from RoadSafe, therefore unanticipated and is something that needs to be moved on in a timely manner. DPT Gary Bill and Town Counsel Michael McCarron asked to join the discussion. Chairman Anderson stated that RoadSafe Traffic Systems offer of remediation is to remove approximately two feet wide of spilled yellow paint on approximately 7/10 of a mile on Bachelor Street and to repaint double yellow line with reflective, waterborne, yellow paint along the same stretch of 7/10 of a mile on Bachelor Street.

The Board discussed their options with DPW and Town Counsel in that the yellow paint is wider than two feet and spans the length of the road. The Board decided to send a response letter to RoadSafe authorizing the remediation of the paint spill on Bachelor Street from the commencement of the spill by Meeting House Hill Road to Middle Street to the satisfaction of the town and the repainting of the double yellow line. The Town will hold RoadSafe responsible for all costs associated with this work and any damage which may result from the remediation process. The Board expects this work to occur by the first of December, as the winter season is fast approaching.

The second unexpected item is from the Planning Board which also came in today. The Planning Board is requesting, via the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, to join the community compact for a grant they are applying for and needs the support of the town for it lessens their ability to obtain the grant. Chairman Anderson questioned the commitment of the town by signing this grant. Finance Director Michael Bertino responded that he is not aware of any commitment from the town. Town Clerk Michael McCarron added that the community compact outlines programs that the town is already doing and planning. The Board felt that they are being asked to decide without all the details and they are not sure of any requirements of the town.

## II. Interim Finance Director Interviews

The Board met with two applicants for the position of Interim Finance Director: Andrew Gould and Jeffrey Towne. Each candidate gave a brief synopsis of their relevant work experience and answered questions from the Board of Selectmen.

## III. Capital Improvements Committee Update

Selectman Archibald explained that the committee held a meeting approximately one week ago, and reviewed responses from all departments and are now working on a spreadsheet outlining the 10-year plan.

IV. Annex Roof Damage

Mr. Gary Bill, DPW addressed questions from Selectman Kemper on any water damage to the Annex due to the roof leaking. Mr. Bill informed the Board that he spoke with the Director of the Housing Authority today and told him that the workers on the roof did not cover up completely and some water got in during the last rain storm and the company is responding with the necessary repairs.

The Board addressed the fact that the workers on the roof are there well after dark and the Board was concerned with the safety of the workers.

V. Appointments

**Chairman Anderson moved to appoint Steve Boyd as an Associate Member of the Harbor Commission. Second by Kemper with a unanimous vote.**

VI. Cont. review of Quotes from MIIA: Back Wage Limit

Executive Administrator Mary Winglass informed the Board that the back wages insurance coverage is to cover the town in case an employee termination is deemed negligent by the court. Currently the town has \$50,000 coverage and the insurance company is recommending \$150,000 with an annual premium of \$984. The Board asked Winglass to contact the insurance company to get a quote on a \$100,000 policy and to increase the deductible from \$7,500 to \$10,000 to help offset the cost.

VII. Cont. review of Chubb Police and Fire Accident Program

Executive Administrator Mary Winglass informed the Board that we are still waiting on a response from the insurance company for the town recently increased some of the limits under this program.

VIII. Verizon and Comcast

Town Counsel Michael McCarron is still working on the renewal contracts.

IX. Historical Commission: Historical Inventory Grant

**Chairman Anderson moved to approve the Historical Commission grant for the West Newbury Inventory of Antique Structures on Main Street. Second by Selectman Kemper with a unanimous vote.**

X. Minutes of October 17, 2016

**Chairman Anderson moved to accept the Board of Selectmen minutes dated October 17, 2016. Second by Kemper with a unanimous vote.**

XI. Payroll and Invoice Warrants

Selectman Archibald questioned that some Boards are signing off for the approval of bills or payment warrants but others are being signed by only one committee member. Town Counsel Michael McCarron explained that with the new provision of Municipal Modernization Act: Approval of Bills/Warrants, members can vote to authorize a member to sign vouchers as the sole signature.

Selectman Archibald questioned the electrical bills and how best to understand how the credits are being applied from the solar fields. Finance Director Michael Bertino explained the rates are set every year; the town will see the benefit over time.

**Chairman Anderson moved to approve the payroll warrant. Second by Archibald, motion passed with Kemper abstaining.**

**Chairman Anderson moved to approve the Invoice Warrant. Second by Kemper with a unanimous vote.**

XII. Placing items for future agendas

Solar Field and hiring of an Interim Finance Director.

**Chairman Anderson moved to go into *Executive Session*:**

- 1) **MGL Chapter 30A §21(a) 2: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or conduct collect bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.**
- 2) **Discussion of potential litigation, MGL Section 21(a), 3: To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.**

**Second by Selectman Archibald with a unanimous roll call vote: Anderson – aye, Kemper – aye, Archibald – aye.**

At 9:46pm, the Selectmen came back into Open Session and adjourned for the evening.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Winglass  
Executive Administrator

