

Selectmen's Minutes 01/11/2017

Minutes of Meeting – January 11, 2017; meeting called to order at 7:00pm. Present: Warren Archey; Channing Gibson; Dave Roche. Absent: Ed Lane; Ken Fowler.

MOTION by DR, seconded by CG to accept the Minutes of December 28. 3/0 vote.

Citizen's Open Forum: Frank Newton expressed his opinion about granting tax breaks to businesses. He stated that he did the Gables project, losing over \$2M, with no subsidy. It is not fair to start giving them out now. Beverly Hathaway stated that she doesn't feel that it is appropriate to subsidize businesses; why should they receive town services for free when the taxpayers have to pay.

Consent Agenda: MOTION by DR, seconded by CG to approve the consent agenda as follows:

One-Day W&M license to Ventfort Hall for Monday, 1/23 from 6-10pm; acceptance of monetary donation to the Police Department; acceptance of monetary donation to the Fire Department; authorization for TM to vote on behalf of Selectmen for MIIA Board of Directors. 3/0 vote. MOTION by CG, seconded by DR to deny the solicitation request from nrg Community Solar. 3/0 vote. CG does feel that solar is an important initiative, and asked if there was another way to get the word out. DR suggested offering them the use of a town building to hold a public forum. It was decided to have the TM contact them to discuss further.

Land Use Director Gwen Miller informed the Board that there are currently three applicants waiting to hear about the Town's STA/TIF policy. She briefly went through the revised draft policy with them. Debra Boronski, the Western MA Director of the MA Office of Business Development, then continued the discussion about the Board's Tax Increment Financing/Special Tax Assessment Policy. She explained that this policy helps to encourage businesses to grow or relocate to MA. CG asked about how this policy would affect housing projects. She stated that housing is a separate situation and dealt with differently. She suggested that the Town contact other communities that have dealt with STA/TIF's and housing projects to get their input.

The TM gave a very brief overview of his proposed FY18 draft Town budget, highlighting some of the major changes over the current year, as well as projections and forecasts for the next several years. This preliminary total budget figure is \$28M +/-, and projects an overall growth in the tax levy of 2.5% in FY18. He still needs to finalize health insurance numbers, receive state aid figures, etc. which he hopes to do prior to handing out his proposed budget next month. DR questioned what the Town could do to alleviate struggles at the Library. CG asked the TM whether funding for a human resources person should be included in the budget since we know that it is a need for us whether we share the individual with the Town of Lee or not. He suggested that the TM meet with the School Superintendent since they employ the bulk of town employees (180/40 split).

The Board briefly mentioned that the presentation for the Shared Services Public Forum scheduled for Tuesday, January 17 at 7pm in the Duffin Theatre at the LMMHS now needs to be rescheduled due to conflicts. They agreed on Monday, January 23. [NOTE: It was later determined that the School Committee was meeting on 1/23 so the forum was moved to Tuesday, January 24 at 7:00pm in the Town Hall auditorium. {Duffin Theatre was already booked.}]

BOS Liaison Reports: DR reminded everyone that burning season begins on January 15, and that permits can be obtained on-line or by calling the fire department. CG stated that the CPC met on Monday evening, and voted on the four projects in front of them, approving three: Ventfort Hall, \$30,000; Berkshire Natural Resources Council, \$235,000; The Mount, \$75,000. A request for \$250,000 from the Stockbridge Bowl Association was not approved.

By roll call, CG, DR and WA voted to go into Executive Session at 8:25pm to discuss strategy with respect to potential litigation, as well as for collective bargaining with union and non-union personnel.

Minutes Taken By: _____
Mary Ellen Deming
Director of Administrative Services

Minutes Accepted By: _____
Clerk
Board of Selectmen