

Approved 12/8/15

TOWN OF HAMPDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES

November 9, 2015
6:00 pm

625 Main Street
Hampden, MA 01036

Board Members: Vincent J. Villamaino John D. Flynn, Norman Charest

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Guest: Tyler Witkop, Editor, Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Middle School Discussion: Joe Sabilia, resident of 11 Meadowbrook Lane in Hampden came before the board to discuss the hot topic of declining enrollment in the Middle Schools in Hampden and Wilbraham. Joe started by thanking the board for the work that they do as Selectmen. He continued then with five questions, as follows:

1. Have you initiated or been in contact with any individuals or entities in connection with the purchase and sale of Thornton W. Burgess School?
Responses were no from each board member.
2. Do you believe property values in Hampden will increase, decrease or remain the same in the event the school is closed?
Norm's response was he believes they will remain the same or go down. Vinnie responded that he thought the values would go down. John responded that he thought they would remain the same.
3. Do you believe the students will receive better, worse or the same services in the event the school is closed?
Norm said it would depend on where the students end up going. Vinnie thought the students would get better services if teamed with up Wilbraham. John related that with a school closing, there would be more services available. Vinnie added that it is all about the taxes.
4. Do you believe the citizens of Hampden are in favor, against or indifferent to the closure of the school?
Norm believes citizens are against closure, Vinnie believes older residents don't want it closed, but the younger residents were indifferent. John believes citizens are against closure.
5. Do you believe the process of determining the future of the school is in the Town's favor?

Norm and Vinnie both said no. John said the schedule put out by the School Committee is not in our favor.

Vinnie and Norm both have the same opinion that they don't want the school to close. John suggested that some of the Wilbraham Middle School students could go to TBW to distribute students so enrollment would not be such a big issue.

Tax Classification Hearing: The Board held the tax classification hearing with the Board of Assessors. Carolyn Reed discussed the current numbers and stated that the total full and fair cash values of all classes, residential, open space, commercial, industrial and personal property is \$569,448,260, up from 2015 full and fair value of \$548,903,070. Based on these numbers, the tax rate comes in at \$19.36.

After some discussion, a motion was made by Norman Charest to value all taxes at a single tax rate, as has been past practice, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

A motion was made by Norman Charest to not adopt the seasonal/vacation homes tax rate, as has been past practice, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

A motion was made by Norman Charest to not adopt the commercial exemption, as has been past practice, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Minutes: The minutes of October 13, 2015 were reviewed. The minutes of October 19, 2015 were reviewed. The minutes of November 2, 2015 were reviewed. After a full review, a motion was made by Norman Charest to approve all sets of minutes as presented, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Review of Solar Proposals: The board will review these proposals with our consultant, Beth Greenblatt.

Academy Hall Repairs: We will schedule a meeting in the near future and ask that Dave Markham work as Clerk of the project for proper oversight.

Status of Joy LeBlanc's fence repair: The board received a letter from Shelley Sears that the repairs have taken place and she is satisfied that the dogs on LeBlanc's property will be restrained from roaming due to these improvements.

Steven's Dog Issue: Shelley has another issue with a dog being used as a service dog, but has bitten people in the past. This will be discussed at the board's next meeting.

Cultural Council Members: The board reviewed the recommendations for new members made by the Cultural Council and a motion was made by John Flynn to appoint Holly Tuttle and Karen Leger to the board for three year terms, expiring in 2018, seconded by Norman Charest. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

NOTES:

- Pole Petition scheduled for November 23
- Veterans' Honor Breakfast at COA, start at 11:30, program to begin 11:45 to 12:00 pm
- DOT Meeting in Springfield November 5th

Solar Proposal Recap: The board will hold a conference call with Beth Greenblatt at next Monday's meeting for a status report on the proposals.

Norman Charest made a motion to go into Executive Session at 6:45 pm for the purpose of discussing the disciplinary action for Dispatcher Lord and the possible retirement of Highway Superintendent, Dana Pixley, without return to Open Session, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: Norm Charest yes, John Flynn yes, Vinnie Villamaino yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney
Administrative Assistant

/pbc