



Town of Paxton
Board of Selectmen
697 Pleasant Street, Paxton, MA 01612
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Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 24, 2011

Meeting Location: John Bauer Senior Center 17 West Street, Paxton, MA 01612

Members Present: William A. Trotta, Chairman
Peter Bogren, Jr., Vice Chairman
John F. Malone, Clerk

Carol L. Riches, Town Administrator

Attendees: Attendee List

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:58pm.

Classification Hearing

- At the Classification Hearing, Administrative Assessor, Kathleen Stanley presented the Board of Selectmen with four items that need to be voted on. In order to set a tax rate the Board of Selectmen have to vote on whether to calculate the tax rate by using Factor 1, which would provide for a single tax rate for all classes, or to use Chapter 797, which would reduce the Real Estate tax rate but significantly increase the remaining three classes.
- **Motion (JM) seconded (PB) to set the FY12 tax rate by using the Factor One calculation and provide a single tax rate for all classes. Unanimous, all in favor.**
- The second question posed was whether or not to offer a discount for Open Space.
- **Motion (JM) seconded (PB) to offer no discount for Open Space. Unanimous, all in favor.**
- The Third question posed was whether or not to offer a Residential Exemption.
- **Motion (JM) seconded (PB) to offer no Residential Exemption. Unanimous, all in favor.**
- The final question posed was whether or not to offer a Small Commercial Exemption.
- **Motion (JM) seconded (PB) to offer no Small Commercial Exemption. Unanimous, all in favor.**
- Kathleen Stanley presented the Board with the LA-5 for signatures.
- (JM) spoke to the audience stating that what you vote for in May is what you pay for in October. If the budget had been reduced by \$100,000 the tax rate would have been \$0.22 less. If the budget had been reduced by \$200,000 the tax rate would have been reduced \$0.43. So please remember that we spent a lot in May and that will adjust what you pay in October.

Greater Worcester Land Trust

- Colin Novick from the Greater Worcester Land Trust came to update the Board on the progress that has occurred in attempt to purchase the Muir Meadow property on Pleasant Street. At the last meeting the Board was looking for assurance from the City of Worcester that they were a willing participant. The City of Worcester will be submitting a grant on November 1st in order to obtain funds of \$500,000 towards the purchase of this land. The City of Worcester will then put in \$300,000; with the GWLT putting up \$100,000 and looking to have the Town of Paxton provide the final \$100,000. We are interested in this land for conservation preservation. It seems that the expense for the property being developed would far exceed the income earned. Would the Board of Selectmen consider a town meeting vote to this item? The Paxton Conservation Commission may be able to assist in the expense of this project. Paxton is critical. We need you to complete this effort. We understand that the town is very tight with funds. Many Committees for the Town of Paxton have singled out this property as an important piece for the town.
- **Motion (WT) seconded (PB) that we open this for discussion as to whether we want to bring this forward at a Town Meeting. Unanimous, all in favor.**
- **(WT)** The town needs to hear the whole proposal.
- **(JM)** Who will own the land?
- Colin Novick state the City of Worcester will own the land, because they are the only ones that meet the criteria to apply for the \$500,000 grant, because without the grant we would not be able to purchase the property. However there would be a conservation provision that the land stays the way that it is. By virtue of the high cost we only have the drinking water grant which the City of Worcester holds.
- **(WT)** How did they arrive at the \$1,000,000 price tag?
- Colin Novick state that there were two private appraisals done.
- **(PB)** Could we have a copy of those?
- Colin Novick will send a digital copy to Carol.
- **(JM)** Will we have split rights?
- Colin Novick replied the Paxton Conservation Commission and the City of Worcester will both have the right to preserve the property in the way that they wish.
- **(WT)** Who will handle the maintenance? Will this become another Moore State Park, where we have to go and fight for assistance to keep up the property?
- Colin Novick stated this will not be at all like Moore State Park. There would be a few mowed trails, but mainly will be kept as is.
- **(JM)** Could a green project be handled on this property?
- Colin Novick stated that it would be difficult due to the drinking water provisions. Conservation Commission sill usually not allow building structures to be located neat a drinking water supply, due to such things as utilization of herbicides to keep the weeds down, and clearing the area if you are looking for a solar project to allow for as much sunlight as possible. We have located other sites in town that would not affect the drinking water. You may also encounter some difficulty with the DEP in putting in a solar project.
- **(JM)** There would be no disturbing of the trees. No crush stone would be needed. Only 6 acres would be impacted and it is nowhere near the water shed.

- Colin Novick stated that altering the state of the property will alter some of the development of the water drinking project, and would affect the appraisal, and that may impact what we are eligible for.
- **(PB)** This needs to stand on its own without any issues of green development.
- Colin Novick would relook at green project, because there seems to be some conflicting information. The solar company may be interested in purchasing two other properties. Solar companies are getting away from leasing land and are more interested in purchasing it out right.
- **(JM)** We can table the green project or now.
- Colin Novick stated that a deposit has already been put down on the property and that by the end of December we would need to put down additional funds that would not be refundable in order to move forward.
- **(WT)** Asked Carol what is the timeline for a Special Town Meeting?
- **(CR)** We need 14 days to post the meeting, and have time for the registrars.
- Richard Fenton spoke that he felt this was an important issue and should be brought to a Special Town Meeting.
- **(PB)** Introduced Representative John Mahoney who was present at the meeting.
- Representative Mahoney stated that the City of Worcester has been a good steward, and no matter how well intentioned the property owner may be they could easily sell to another private owner.
- Cutler Rd resident Lisa Reece spoke on behalf of support this project in order to preserve the land as it is currently. A 40B project would prompt a number of residents in the abutting area to move out of Paxton, and will just add to the overall burden on the town.
- **(JM)** Let me assure you we have talked about what the impact of a 40B development would have on the town.
- **(WT)** I don't feel that due to the restrictions that the land can be developed.
- Lisa Reece expressed her concern over the impact a 40B project would have on Paxton similar to other towns that saw an increase in crime and school expenses.
- **(PB)** We need to look at any type of development that could go in.
- Anita Fenton asked if the Board of Selectmen agree upon supporting this project.
- **(JM)** First we should vote on having a Special town Meeting for this project.
- **Motion (WT) seconded (PB) agree to hold a Special Town Meeting. Unanimous, all in favor.**
- **Motion (JM) seconded (PB) agree to support the proposal presented by the GWLD to purchase the Muir Meadow property. William Trotta opposed this motion until more information comes forward.**
- **(PB)** I just want to state that I am not voting under pressure on this. I have looked at this long and hard.
- Gerald Ryan town resident asked if this information would be put out to the public prior to the Special Town Meeting.
- Daniel Genhrich town resident spoke as part of the Conservation Commission that they would like to use some of their funds towards this and also would look for further donations towards this project.
- **(WT)** We need to raise as much as possible to lessen the burden on the tax rate.

Reaffirmation of vote on Inter Municipal Agreement

- This letter is to reaffirm that the vote taken by the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on October 13, 2011 to unanimously approve the signing of the Intermunicipal Agreement between the Town of Paxton and Wachusett Regional School District to receive funding under the Green Repair Program administered by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The Board of Selectmen unanimously reaffirmed the vote at their regularly posted meeting on October 24, 2011.
- **Motion (JM) seconded (PB) to approve the reaffirmation of the Inter Municipal Agreement. Unanimous, all in favor.**

Recreation and Little League – bathrooms

- Paul Riches (Recreation Chairman) spoke in regards to the progress of the plans to put a bathroom facility at the Tivnan Fields. Since we spoke about six weeks ago we have raised the money needed and are ready to break ground.
- David Roy of the Little League Committee said the project will cost about \$45,000.
- **(PB)** Who will handle the maintenance and the cost to upkeep the facility?
- Paul Riches stated that the Recreation Commission will be responsible for it in the same way that they take care of the facility at the soccer fields. We have a number of volunteers that assist, but Recreation will be responsible over all.
- **(JM)** Will we have a written agreement to that fact?
- Paul Riches stated that they will put that on for their next meeting.
- **(JM)** I only ask because we had a problem with the rubbish cans on the playground that became an issue.
- Paul Riches stated that as part of the project they are looking to place a 20 x 20 bandstand by centerfield. Somewhat near the old snack shack. We are looking to have this completed by next spring, and I would like to thank Dave and the rest of Little League in their efforts, and we would like to have a ground breaking ceremony next week.
- Dave Roy stated that the president of Country Bank would like to be at the ground breaking and have some pictures done.
- Rich McGhee from Little League spoke in support of these efforts and explained that Little League has been working on this for some time. Each year we set a little bit aside so that we are able to do projects like this,
- **(JM)** This group has done a fabulous job in making the town proud of how the fields look. The Recreation Commission has really pulled together. Congratulations to all of you. Do they need any permits for this project?
- Dave Roy replied that the septic permit is already set. I would like to involve Country Bank in the development as we go along as well.
- Mike Putnam, DPW Superintendent, stated that we are using a lot of volunteers and time to get this moving.
- Paul Riches also commented that we are laying out a new plan for the old pool area. We put an article in the local paper to start drawing attention to it.

- (WT) It would be nice to be able to move functions from the center of town to the old pool area and ball fields.
- Dave Roy states that they will make sure they have sufficient power to that area.
- (CR) Make sure you talk to Rick Trifero before you start to make sure that everyone is on board with the work being done.

Resignation of Sandy Benoit

- **Motion (JM) seconded (WT) to accept the resignation of Sandy Benoit from the Southern Worcester County Vocational School Committee. Unanimous, all in favor.**

Meeting Minutes

- **Motion (JM) seconded (PB) to approve the Meeting Minutes from October 13 & 17, 2011. Unanimous, all in favor.**

Town Administrators Update

- The recently accepted 2012 Health Reform Bill was put in place to help communities control soaring costs of health insurance in order to protect services and preserve municipal jobs.

The first step in the process is to review the current cost of health insurance plans that the Town has and compare them with the plans in the GIC.

From this analysis if the maximum savings by transferring into the GIC would result in a least five percent savings, the Board should consider adopting the Mass General Law Sections 21-23. In which instance a new Public Employee Committee would need to be formed consisting of a representative from our Collecting Bargaining Units (1) and a representative from the seniors. Attached are the procedures as provided by MMA?

We have conducted an initial review of our policies and premiums with the assistance of our insurance Advisor, Lively Insurance, which shows a possible savings of 1.57% for the calendar year 2012. The Town's health insurance renewal date is January 1st 2012 and the renewal date for the GIC is July 1, 2012. The GIC figure is an estimate based on previous year's trends.

If the Board has no objection then we will follow our existing procedures for providing health insurance options for our members at this time.

A further comparison will be made in July once the new premium amounts are determined by the GIC for FY2013 and will be reviewed each year in the same manner.

The Insurance Advisory Committee has always done a thorough job in reviewing all options available to the Town and has made policy adjustments that have been beneficial to the employees and Town.

If you go into the GIC you have to stay in for three years. Our current IAC has one member from all departmetns and we have managed to keep our premiums low.

- **(JM)** We have been on the better end than many others towns in the past ten years or so.
- **(WT)** Has the committee given their opinion as well.
- **(CR)** It is reviewed each year, and some point we may go into the GIC.
- **(PB)** With the GIC you are relinquishing all control.
- **(CR)** The Tufts Navigator is what the insurance companies are looking at as a model for the GIC.

Appoint Steven Mucci

- **Motion (JM) seconded (PB) to appoint Steven Mucci from a part time dispatcher to a full time dispatcher. Unanimous, all in favor.**

One-day Liquor License

- **Motion (JM) seconded (PB) to approve a One-day Liquor License for beer and wine only at the Congregational Church to hold their annual twilight auction. Unanimous, all in favor.**

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, November 7, 2011 at 7:00pm

Adjourned Meeting at 8:38pm, Unanimous all in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Graf-Parsons, Administrative Assistant

Documents filed with Meeting Minutes:

Agenda

Attendance list

Documents from the Meeting filed in BOS office:

Tax Classification Document

Reaffirmation letter

Town Administrators Update

Appointment letter Steven Mucci

One-day Liquor License

William A. Trotta
Chairman

Peter Bogren, Jr.
Vice Chairman

John F. Malone
Clerk