



# BOARD OF SELECTMEN

CHARLES E. SHEPARD MUNICIPAL BUILDING

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES OF MARCH 17, 2021

**PRESENT:** Mr. John Nason: Chairman and Mr. David Dufresne, Clerk.

**ABSENT:** Mr. Marc Richard: Vice-Chairman,

**ATTENDEES:** see attached list.

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### Opened the Meeting at 7:15 PM

Mr. Nason called the meeting to order and led with the Pledge of Allegiance. He advised all that this meeting is NOT being video/audio taped, and he advised that if anyone is taping the meeting to please notify the Board.

### MINUTES:

Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of March 11, 2021 as written, made by Mr. Dufresne; second: Mr. Nason – AIF.

### CORRESPONDENCE, read by Mr. Dufresne:

1. On March 16<sup>th</sup>, the Town received the letter of resignation from Rachael Carney Assistant Assessor. Ms. Carney's last day of employment will be March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Nason thanks Ms. Carney for her time here and wishes her well in her new job.

### Budgets & Articles: Assessors, Planning, Building, Veterans, cemetery, Board of Selectmen, Accountant:

**Assessors-** Mr. Bill Ramsey presented the FY22 Budget proposal. The overall increase from FY21 is \$6,779.96, whereas \$4,000 is for the Appraisal Service/Roy Bishop. Commercial Solar Arrays without Pilots would require appraisals, and Mr. Bishop's professional services would be needed; he is certified and qualified. Mr. Bishop does the evaluations for the Town. There is a \$5,000 increase in the revaluation expense; utility value adjustment per new DOR requirements. Assistant Assessor salary line down \$1,261.95, with Ms. Carney resigning March 18<sup>th</sup>. Assessor's Clerk salary increase for FY22 of \$241.91.

Mr. Ramsey proposed two Articles: 1. To see if the Town will vote to accept the local marijuana sales tax at a rate of 3% of the total retail sales to take effect Jan.1, 2022. 2. To see if the Town will vote to accept the .75% Meals Excise Tax to take effect Jan. 1, 2022. Mrs. Ramsey stated that Town residents are already paying the Meal Tax in: Ware, West Brookfield, Palmer, Monson, Sturbridge, Brimfield, Belchertown. Out of 351 towns in Massachusetts, approximately 242 have adopted the Local Meal Tax. – the Town would receive the sums collected, at least quarterly. Mr. Nason stated that we will be hosting a bigger meeting in the Gym with a lot more discussion on Budgets and Articles, with all department. – Before the Budgets and Articles get on the Town Meeting.

**Planning & Building:** Ms. Kathy Czub submitted a letter stating that she will be retiring this year. The Building Inspector and Planning Board are requesting that her replacement be hired prior to her retirement, based on the time sensitive deadlines and heavy workload of the two departments. \$2,000 extra salary hours are requested for training purposes.

The Planning Board will have on the Agenda at their next meeting, to discuss advertising the position, etc. Mr. Nason and Mr. Dufresne thank Ms. Czub for her service.

**Veterans:** Ms. Acerra could not attend, yet stated that would like to discuss Veterans Memorial parade and events budget line in the BOS.

**Cemetery Commission:** The Budget for FY22 shows an increase of \$1,513. Supplies, Roads & Fences increased \$1,200 and salaries increased by \$313. Note: The average return to Free Cash from Burials and Stone Foundations = \$4,000 reducing their Budget.

**Board of Selectmen:** Insurance amounts have increased In various lines, Law Dpt. Expense increase in fees and more cases projected for solar, etc., Generator contract expense with new contractor for generators at Fire, Police and Sewer. Also, the five sports programs at \$500 each are reinstated. Finance Committee level-funded, even though was not utilized this past year. ACO regional will be renamed to ACO expense, with Mr. Nason still researching our options on possibly a contracted ACO position. Mr. Nason to reach out to Earl/Sturbridge for possibility of ACO services.

**Accountant:** Ms. Tammy Martin/Accountant Budget FY22 has increases for 2% salary, Procurement stipend, and Accountant Expense up slightly. Other line items are level-funded: Actuarial Services, Municipal Audit, Procurement Expense. Also, \$5,000 added for Accountant Assistant for backup if needed for vacations, etc.

**COMMENTS & CONCERNS:**

Mr. Stan Soltys inquired if the Board read the Hampden, Ma Town Administrator description he sent over. The description of duties is very similar to the needs of our Town. Mr. Nason stated that the article was read, and Mr. Dufresne stated that he is working on putting together the description to approve as a Board. Mr. Dufresne believes that an Article for Town Administrator to be funded for ½ year to see how things go, and then carry over for following years if works well. Mr. Dufresne stated that the Town Clerk has requested that all Budgets and Articles be approved by March 31<sup>st</sup>. We are running out of time, with the Annual Town Meeting coming up May 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Next Meeting date is scheduled for tomorrow night March 18<sup>th</sup> at 6pm to go over the remainder of departmental Budgets.**

**Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:44 pm by Mr. Dufresne; second by Mr. Nason— AIF.**

Respectfully submitted,



Priscilla J. Clowes  
Administrative Secretary



David P. Dufresne, Sr., Clerk