



BOARD OF SELECTMEN / BOARD OF ASSESSOR
Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2016
6:30pm

Call to Order

Chair Thomas Wright called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

I. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Members Present: Chair Thomas Wright, Vice Chair Robert Crichton, Selectman Edward Ganiere, Selectman Mark Pendergast and Selectman Joshua Plante.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Stephen Eldridge, Finance Director Maureen Finger, Planner John Stoll Deputy Town Clerk Lynn Shearer and Town Clerk Patricia Murray.

Guests:

II. Approval of Minutes from December 15, 2015

Motion: Selectman Crichton moved to accept the minutes as written and Selectman Plante seconded.

The motion carried unanimously: 5-0.

III. First Public Comment

Mr. Mark Carboni spoke. He distributed an "Eye Witness Report and Opinion" document authored by Diop Kamau detailing Mr. Carboni's encounters with the Berwick Police Department. Mr. Carboni feels he was mistreated and falsely charged by the Police Department. He gave a brief of the events and asked the Board of Selectmen to accept the written report as a public document.

Mr. Brian Cincotta spoke. He informed the BOS of Dr. Robert Vigue's passing.

Ms. Eleanor Murphy spoke. She noted that Dr. Vigue was a renowned eye surgeon. She also stated she was confused about the Budget Committee schedule. She said she was told she can't comment tonight and has some things she would like to settle before the budget meetings. She stated there was a meeting scheduled for the 12th that was cancelled. She was also upset regarding a member to the sewer board when there isn't an opening.

Selectman Pendergast clarified that at the last Board of Selectmen meeting it was determined to have the Town Manager's Budget Presentation tonight. Town Manager Eldridge stated the first meeting with the Budget Committee is January 26, 2016. Ms. Murphy expressed her desire to have the Budget Committee meet with the BOS prior to the Budget meetings. Selectman Pendergast suggested making a motion to schedule a meeting. Chair Wright stated the process has already begun with the budget presentation tonight.

Ms. Tammy Cole spoke. She asked about plans for replacing the sign outside Town Hall that announces meetings with a marquee/electronic sign as proposed a year ago. She stated the sign is hard to read since it is at street level. Chair Wright stated discussion is continuing and this item has not been dropped.

Andrea Ouimette spoke regarding the increase in water, sewer and Comcast rates. Chair Wright responded that the water rates increased through a process with the PUC; the sewer rates are not set by the Town; and the Town has no control over Comcast rates. Selectman Pendergast stated Comcast's contract will be renegotiated next year.

IV. Public Hearing - None

V. Reports of Committees

a. BCTV – None

b. Envision Berwick Committee (EBC) –

Mr. Dave Andreesen reported that the Committee held its first business meeting on Thursday, January 21, 2106. He stated ongoing the first meeting of every month will be a business meeting and the second meeting will be informational. He stated they will be working with the sign company to design the town welcome sign with the new slogan. Mr. Andreesen stated he will ask the BOS to approve the sign before it is finalized. He reported that the cost of the sign should come in below the \$2400.00 estimate.

VI. Appointment / Presentation / Other Guests

a. Town of Berwick Sewer Board Appointment

- Lisa Huestis

Delayed.

VII. Unfinished Business

a. Seacoast Workforce Housing Coalition - Charrette Report

Ms. Robin Comstock, Executive Director of Seacoast Workforce Housing Coalition of NH and ME, and Ms. Kristen Grant, Chairwoman, Charrette Committee, were present to speak about the results of the Charrette. Ms. Comstock gave an overview of the Coalition which holds a charrette in Maine and New Hampshire yearly. Last year, a charrette was held in Berwick in October. The vision of the charrette is to proactively reach into communities to deliver a charrette each year to bring stakeholders together to collaborate and cooperate to provide an opportunity to educate stakeholders on the concepts and value and need for workforce housing in the seacoast region. Ms. Comstock stated, in whole, the Coalition brings property owners, architects, designers, community members, government officials and housing officials together to discuss workforce housing needs in their area. She stated working with Envision Berwick and members of the community was an extraordinary experience.

Ms. Grant distributed the charrette report to the BOS and community members. She stated a charrette is a design workshop and an effort to engage all members of the community in a conversation about housing needs. It is an outreach and education process. The work the Coalition did is to help generate ideas for the possibility of workforce housing in the Town of Berwick. The Coalition is not developing a development proposal. Ms. Grant gave an overview of the charrette process; about 40 people contributed including town staff, housing specialists and community members. The site walk was on October 14, 2015. It included about 15 people; town staff, EBC members, and housing specialists. The walk enable the group to see the existing conditions on the site. Both the Prime Tanning and the Estabrook School sites were visited. A listening session was also scheduled on October 14, 2015. There were 25 community participants present who generated 80 unique ideas. Some of the themes included, homes with housing to meet the needs of diverse community members including seniors, parents and singles as well as a mix of ages, incomes, home sizes and character; restaurants that are small and locally owned that will bring the community out in the evening; retail spaces including grocery that recognizes the challenge of capturing business in a border town from tax free NH; rebuilding the past sense of

community which honors and builds on the traditional new England and rural character of Berwick; support for repurposing and reusing existing buildings as much as possible; support for indoor and outdoor gathering places; support for public transit; taking the opportunity to create the communities vision from a blank slate; and support for open space in the town's center.

On October 16, 2015 a design workshop with housing specialists was held. Attendees including housing professionals, EBC members, and town staff. Community members were also welcome to attend. The goal of the workshop was to develop concepts from the previous input and site conditions. The first concept was a unifying concept for a walkable open space network. This would include an urban to rural transect from the Prime site to the Estabrook site.

The Prime site design included urban blocks with greater density than the Estabrook site. The Prime site streets would be open to local traffic and house ten new buildings which include mixed-use, residential and commercial. The Estabrook site would be mixed use development including workforce housing, senior housing, community center, and trail extensions.

Some of the recommendations include resolving the agreement with the Funds of Jupiter regarding ownership of the property, looking into bonding and grants, amending the overlay district ordinance, and TIF consideration.

The Chair asked if members of the audience had any questions or comments.

Mr. Brian Cincotta asked for an explanation of the costs and payments. Ms. Grant replied that this is not a development proposal. These are concepts only. She stated that the town could consider tax concessions and bonds. Chair Wright reiterated that the presentation includes only concepts and discussions and that nothing concrete has been finalized. Ms. Grant stated these are approaches to use with developers for use of the sites. The Chair explained that one of the reasons for the partnership with the Coalition was the concerns brought forth by developers. This information gives a concept of what could go there which can be presented to developers.

Ms. Eleanor Murphy asked about the tax increment finance. Town Manager Eldridge explained TIF. If all the buildings on the site were torn down and new buildings were erected there would be a value associated with that which results to an increase value to the valuation. The increased value is sheltered in a TIF. Through the use of TIF, municipalities can dedicate future tax revenues of a particular business or group of businesses toward an economic development project in the community.

In conclusion, Ms. Comstock reiterated that this is a concept and a large part of its intention is to bring the community together for input and to have the volunteer experts develop concepts that are useable by the town as a jumping board in terms of development. She stated there are no obligations and the service is provided as a not-for-profit community service consistent with their mission.

b. Pay as You Throw Program – fee schedule

Mr. Eldridge stated WasteZero has been to the BOS twice to talk about the pay as you throw program. The Board has been charged with setting the price of the bags if the program is adopted. He gave a summary of the program and its success. The program would reduce the cost of tonnage and would encourage recycling. Selectman Pendergast stated that people pay taxes which supports the transfer station and now the taxpayers will have to purchase bags. He asked where the saved money would go and if mandatory recycling had been considered. Chair Wright responded that more public meetings need to be scheduled and nothing has been decided at this point. He stated a town-wide referendum would be put in place before anything is implemented. Mr. Eldridge replied that any revenue that comes into the community goes into the general fund unless it is directed by the BOS for something specific such as road maintenance. Any revenue is used to reduce the expenditure. The operating budget is offset by revenue. The town votes on the budget at town meeting.

Discussion regarding mandatory recycling ensued. Ms. Eleanor Murphy spoke about mandatory recycling in York. She stated any savings the town receives will come from the pockets of its citizens buying bags.

Mr. Eldridge stated Ms. Doyle from WasteZero will be at the February 2 BOS meeting.

Mr. Brian Cincotta asked if there was a fund where this money will go. Selectman Pendergast stated a fund could be designated.

Mr. Jeff Hodges spoke. He stated more education is needed on the subject. He also said he would rather see any increased taxes/fees go on to taxes since those are deductible and the bags are not deductible.

Chair Wright reiterated that public hearings will be held prior to implementing the Pay as You Throw program. Selectman Pendergast emphasized the importance of voting at Town Meeting.

Ms. Peggy Dennis spoke. She stated she lived in a community that had mandatory recycling with clear plastic bags. It upsets her when people don't recycle. She stated the clear bags could be another option.

VIII. Communications

a. 2016-2017 Budget Presentation

Town Manager Eldridge presented the proposed 2016-2017 budget.

IX. Approval of Warrants

01/07/2016	A/P Warrant #1628	\$693,399.12
01/07/2016	Water Warrant #0628	302.48
01/14/2016	Payroll Warrant #1629	49,809.09
01/14/2016	Water Warrant #0629	7,256.82
01/14/2016	A/P Warrant #1629	124,742.73
01/21/2016	Payroll Warrant #1630	51,096.45

Motion: Chair Wright made a motion to accept the Payable Warrants as presented, Vice Chair Crichton seconded.

The motion carried unanimously: 5 – 0.

X. New Business – None

XI. Quit Claim Deeds and/or Installment Contracts

Chair Wright reported that the BOS needs to sign previously approved quit claim deeds.

XII. Abatements / Supplemental - None

XIII. Second Public Comment

Ms. Eleanor Murphy spoke. She stated currently her sewer bill is \$490.00 per year. It is increasing to \$570.00 per year which is an eighty dollar increase. She stated her water bill also increased by \$25.04. She stated this is hard for people on fixed incomes. She also stated social security did not increase this year. She said these increases are a burden to some people and to add another fee such as the Pay as You Throw program would be unfair.

XIV. Executive Session - None

XV. Other Business/Non-Agenda item

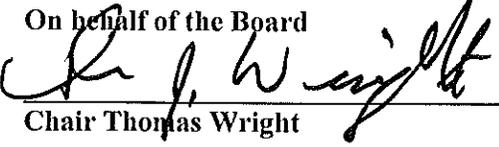
Mr. Eldridge asked Selectman Ganiere about the town becoming a sponsor for a submarine. Selectman Ganiere stated the town would basically sponsor the active duty members of the submarine. He said several communities including Berwick have done it in the past. It is a collaborative effort with the members. The Board recommended moving forward with the sponsorship.

XVI. The Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Murray
Town Clerk

The January 19, 2016 BOS Meeting Minutes – Signed as approved at the Board of Selectmen’s February 2, 2016 Meeting.

On behalf of the Board

Chair Thomas Wright