



BOARD OF SELECTMEN / BOARD OF ASSESSOR
Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2015
6:30pm

Call to Order

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

Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Members Present: Chair Thomas Wright, Vice Chair Robert Crichton, Selectmen Edward Ganiere and Selectmen Joshua Plante

Absent: Selectman Mark Pendergast

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Stephen Eldridge, Interim Town Clerk Lynn Shearer and Recreation Director Kim Taylor

Guest: Greg Chabot, Auditor of RHR Smith & Company

Approval of Minutes from November 17, 2015

Vice Chair Crichton moved to accept the minutes as written and Chair Wright seconded with a correction to read as follows: Vice Chair Crichton moved to accept the minutes as written and Selectmen Ganiere seconded on the November 10th, 2015 meeting.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

First Public Comment – None.

Public Hearing – None Planned.

Reports of Committees

BCTV – No committee member was present.

Envision Berwick Committee (EBC) – Town Manager reported that Scott Benson is working on a draft “What is a TIF?” and should be ready by the end of December 2015 or January 2016.

Town slogans are still being worked on, EBC is continuing to work on coming up with a short list, hopefully EBC will be voting on a slogan at their next meeting on Thursday, December 10, 2015. Town voters may be asked to vote on what slogan they prefer.

The Christmas Tree lighting is scheduled for Saturday, Dec 5th at 4:15pm following the Berwick Parade that will start at 3pm. A craft fair will be held at the Town Hall from 9am – 2:30pm.

Public Hearing on Brownfields Application for 2016 is scheduled for next BOS meeting, December 15, 2015.

Riverfront Update – Co-Chair Dennis Dupuis reported that the Riverfront Committee put an application in with the Department of Environmental to start on Phase 2 and has been approved to move forward. Phase 2 will involve grading and adding a bench to be ADA compliant. The Riverfront Committee will be meeting with the City of Somersworth, New Hampshire in January 2016 and will be speaking with the owner of Tara Estates located on Salmon Falls Road, Rochester, New Hampshire to see how all might be able to work together – Tara Estates has a path down to the river and EBC might be able to locate another launch there.

Chair Wright stated that he has received positive feedback from other towns and wanted to encourage more people to get involved.

Selectmen Plante asked how much more funding might be needed to complete Phase 2. Mr Dupuis reported that a total of \$16,500 would be needed; but once \$8,000 is reached, grading and a bench can be completed and anyone in a wheelchair will be able to utilize the river. With the remaining funds a building for storage would be completed for canoes and kayaks.

Appointment / Presentation / Other Guests

Mr Greg Chabot, Auditor of RHR Smith & Company updated the BOS and the Town Manager on the audit as of June 30, 2015. No issues were found and Mr Chabot reported that Ms Maureen Finger, Finance Director had prepared the finances statements – she is one of twelve in the State of Maine who are able to do that. Reported that on Internal Controls no deficiencies were found. General Fund increased over last year, due to an increase in property taxes and excise taxes being paid. The unassigned fund balance is very healthy, leaving the Town to spend on future or one-time capital improvements. Only new item in the audit was the pension disclosure, where the Town of Berwick is picking-up the unfunded liability.

Recreation Committee Appointments – Chair Wright stated there were two re-appointments and one re-appointment for Amy Locke that were approved back in October 6, 2015; the appointment was not signed by the BOS.

Motion: Chair Wright made a motion to accept Natalie Gould as Regular Member of the Recreation Commission with her term expiring December 31, 2018 and Tracy DeMoura as Regular Member of the Recreation Commission with her term expiring December 31, 2017. Selectmen Ganiere second the motion.

The motion carried unanimously: 4-0.

Planning Board Appointments – Chair Wright stated there were two re-appointments and one re-appointment of John England that needs to be signed only by the BOS. Mr England was approved back on October 20, 2015; but the appointment was not signed.

Motion: Selectmen Plante made a motion to accept Nichole Fecteau as Regular Member of the Planning Board with her term expiring December 31, 2018 and Niles Schore as Regular Member of the Planning Board with his term expiring December 31, 2018. Selectmen Ganiere second the motion.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

Unfinished Business

Opening Foreclosure Property Bids – Chair Wright reported that only one bid was received by the Town of Berwick and that was on property R006 / 001; located on Little River Road, submitted by Mr Harold Shaw. The bid totaled \$3,050.

Motion: Vice Chair made a motion to accept the bid on R006 / 001 in the amount of \$3,050. Selectmen Plante second the motion. This bid covers all of the external costs.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

Motion: Vice Chair made a motion to accept the bid on R006 / 001 in the amount of \$3,050. Selectmen Plante second the motion. This bid covers all of the external costs.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

Community Center Funding Transfer – Town Manager reported that the funds were held in the Police Benevolence account totaling approximately \$1,100.

Motion: Selectmen Ganiere made a motion to have the Finance Director set-up a new account to accept funds for the Town of Berwick Community Center. Chair Wright second the motion.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

Environmental Assessment on the Estabrook / Doran School – Town Manager reported that the Town has a donation of \$1,000 to help cover the cost of the updated Environmental Assessment report with it coming in under \$2,500.

Motion: Chair Wright made a motion to move forward on the Environmental Assessment on the Estabrook / Doran School Cafeteria area not to exceed \$2, 500 with \$1,000 coming from a donation and the remaining to be paid out of the contingency fund or out of the Envision Berwick fund. Selectmen Ganiere second the motion. There was much discussion and consideration in regards to this motion.

Communications

Town Manager asked if the BOS would okay the Town Hall to be closed on Wednesday, December 16, 2015 from 3 – 5pm for a Town Employee Christmas Party and to have the Town Hall be closed all day on December 24, 2015. The Town Hall was schedule to be closed at 1pm; with an all-day closure being closed all day, Town Employees will need to use their comp or vacation time to make up the difference.

Motion: Vice Chair Crichton made a motion to have the Town Hall be closed on Wednesday, December 16, 2015 from 3 – 5pm for a Town Employee Christmas Party and to have the Town Hall be closed all day on December 24, 2015 with employees using their comp or vacation time to make up the difference. Chair Wright seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

Approval of Warrants

11/19/2015	A/P Warrant #1622	\$66,596.74
11/19/2015	Water Warrant #0621	3,583.58
11/25/2015	Payroll Warrant #1622	45,575.55
11/25/2015	A/P Warrant #1622	334,128.14
11/25/2015	Water Warrant #0622	1,689.00
12/03/2015	Payroll Warrant #1623	70,619.71

Motion: Chair Wright made a motion to accept the Accounts Payable Warrants as presented, Selectmen Plante seconded.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

New Business

Erin Thomas from the Berwick Arts presented a proposal to the BOS to have an artist from Bangor, Maine that goes by “Pigeon” come and paint local Maine residents on the Prime Tanning Wall. Pigeon knows that the wall may come down as early as January 2016. He paints local Maine people and then converts that to wall art. All funds will be covered by the Berwick Arts. He would like to start painting December 12, 2015 as long as the weather is good.

Motion: Selectman Plante made a motion that the Berwick Arts will have artist “Pigeon” repaste his art work on the Prime Tanning Wall. Selectmen Ganiere seconded.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

Pre – Foreclosure Listing – Town Manager explained that Ms Finger prepaid a list of potential properties that have outstanding balances on their 2014 tax lien. She will be mailing the 45-30 day foreclosure notices on January 8, 2016 via certified mail.

Motion: Chair Wright made a motion to have the Finance Director, Maureen Finger mail out the 45-30 day foreclosure notices on January 8, 2016. Selectmen Ganiere seconded.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

Quit Claim Deeds and / or Installment Contracts – None

Abatements / Supplemental - None

Second Public Comment

Ms Murphy had a question about the audit report. Is there a hard copy available? Ms Murphy was given a hard copy. Chair Wright informed the public that the audit is also available on the Town of Berwick website, under Finance.

Executive Session

Motion: Chair Wright made a motion to enter into Executive Session under MSRA Title 36 §841 (2) for Poverty Abatement. Selectmen Plante seconded.

The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

Motion: Chair Wright made a motion to deny the Poverty Abatement that was reviewed. Selectmen Ganiere seconded.

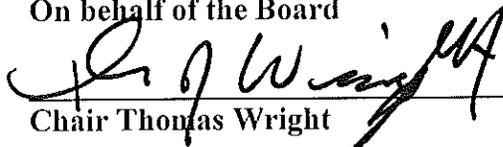
The motion carried unanimously: 4 – 0.

Other Business / Non-Agenda items - None

The Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm

The December 1, 2015 BOS Meeting Minutes – Signed as approved at the Board of Selectmen's December 15, 2015 Meeting.

On behalf of the Board



Chair Thomas Wright