

\*Minutes from Selectboard and Finance Committee Joint Meeting  
&  
Selectboard and Great Barrington Housing Authority Joint Meeting  
&  
Selectboard Regular Meeting

Wednesday, November 13, 2019  
917 Main Street, Claire Teague Center

1. Call to Order: the Meeting was called to order by S. Bannon at 6:30 pm. Present at the meeting where: Town Manager, M. Pruhenski, Assistant Town Manager, C. Rembold, Chairman, S. Bannon, E. Abrahams, K. Burke, and L. Davis.

2. Selectboard and Finance Committee Joint Meeting:

Monument Mountain Regional High School Next Steps Committee, overhead slide presentation was presented by committee member Roger Kavanagh. He began by stating the three (3) steps of the presentation; process, findings, and recommendations.

- I. Process: committee comprised of residents of the three (3) towns of Stockbridge, Great Barrington (village of Housatonic) and West Stockbridge, in addition to educators, parents, and administration.

The report was initially compiled in May of 2019, and brought first to the School Committee Meeting. This presentation is being brought to all towns, starting with the West Stockbridge Town Meeting, November 13, 2019, to Stockbridge Town Meeting, November 14, 2019.

1. The question to answer will be, if the Massachusetts School Building Authority accepts proposal, does committee accept grant?
    2. Possible political challenge is the already high tax rate, community concerns are the decline in population, and the number of possible school choice students.

- B. Findings: 3 Categories; education: flexible spaces/buildings, physical needs: plumbing, windows, heating; and lastly, community benefits.

1. Education: modernization of buildings, with flexible spaces, so can be used for several disciplines. Focus on CVTE: Career Vocational Technological Education, i.e. Automotive, Horticultural/Greenhouse, Science Labs, Library/Media Center, and Early Childhood education.

2. Physical needs (MMRHS):

- a. structural: windows, heating, plumbing, roof, etc. Outdated, not up to current safety codes, needs ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act).

3. Community Benefits:

- a. Prepare students for college
- b. Safe environment
- c. Public venues
- d. Public education classes

3. Recommendations of Committee:

A. Repair Only option:

Not preferred. Will tip over to the State Mandatory upgrades. Tax payers would potentially pay more, increase the tax burden.

B. Renovation / add to building/ build new

C. School Committee will need to engage professionals, engage community involvement in process, and more information on the consolidation of the school districts.

D. Timeline: the MBSA representative came to the MMRHS; will know in January 2020 if invited into the grant program.

3. Citizen Speak

~Steven Picheny, Seekonk Cross Roads, questioned what is the budget of the recommendations.

~ Mr. Kavanagh, replied of the obligation to educate all the children, in the school district.

Mr. Peter Dillon, Superintendent, obligation to educate the students in the district, Richmond has a tuition agreement with the district as well as the Otis/ Farmington River District. If Southern Berkshire merges that is an additional five towns, bringing it to 8 (eight) towns. A formal building committee will be formed as the process moves forward to accurately assess the new enrollment numbers, and the number of school choice children.

~Mr. Bill Fields, School Committee member, stated that on October 1, 2019, there are currently 526 students at MMRHS. Feels consolidation is several years in the future. In the meantime, we have current children to educate. Enrollment has been consistent for the last ten (10) years.

~Ms. Sharon Gregory, Great Barrington; congratulations were given to the committee on the report. Wanted to know if consolidation will affect MMRHS or the cost of renovations? Would the costs be equitable to all towns?

~Mr. P. Dillon: if MBSA accepts, will be able to answer these questions, in detail. The proper number of students will be figured out. Then, architects can design build:(s), lastly, will go back to the separate towns to vote on the proposal(s).

4. Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Selectboard Regular Session

1. Called to order at 7:05 pm by S. Bannon.

2. New Business:

A. EDC (Economic Development Committee): Mr. Steven Picheny, Chair, Ms. L. Davis, Vice Chair, gave recommendations together, on the possibility of Housatonic School re-use.

1. EDC had meetings for the last three months, talked to residents of Housatonic. Many do not want to remove the building.
2. Building has several challenges, including lack of parking, tightly positioned in between two buildings, and private investors cannot get adequate financing.
3. Recommendations to Town:
  - a. Keep building.
  - b. Research and seek grant monies.
  - c. At Special Town Meeting, to get a vote for appropriation of monies for repairs/ renovations.
  - d. Possible uses put forward where child care (park on property), community services, to rejuvenate new business and serve the community.
  - e. Hoping to put on Agenda for December 9, 2019, for more public input.
  - f. EDC committee willing to continue their work.

3. Approval of Minutes:

~October 10, 2019, Selectboard & Planning Board Joint Meeting - Approved

~October 21, 2019, Special Meeting - Approved with one change: citizen speak, " traffic stop".

~October 28, 2019, Regular Meeting -Approved

4. Selectboard Announcements / Statements:

A. General Comments by Board:

1. Ms. K. Burke, talked about making a Housing sub Committee, consisting of contractors and builders, to find ways to lower the start-up cost of construction projects.
2. Ms. L. Davis, EDC has a meeting for December 4, 2019, Step Two of Open Space, and December 5, 2019, Step Two for Affordable Housing.
3. Mr. E. Abrahams, commented on the expedient response of the Great Barrington fire Department at a structural fire in town. Spoke about the State wide art week, next week. More information can be found on [www.artweek.org](http://www.artweek.org). Additionally, the Mass Cultural Council, sponsoring Fair Saturday, on last Saturday of November, artists and cultural organizations get together to support social causes, website is [fairsaturday.org](http://fairsaturday.org). The meeting in Housatonic addressing high speed internet looked promising.

5. Board of Sewer Commissioners:

Selectboard to convene as Sewer Commissioners

~ To set Sewer Rates for 2020: discuss / vote.

1. Mr. S. Van Deusen, DPW Superintendent, spoke that the long term rates are going to be increasing, in 5 - 10 years, capital improvements will need to be done.

Mr. E. Abrahams, made a motion to keep the Sewer Rates the same for FY 2020, Mr. B. Cooke, 2nd motion, All in Favor, (5 - 0).

6. Town Manager's Report:

A. Department updates:

1. Police Department; Chief Walsh, began by updating staff needs that there were four (4) officers short though the department was able to get an exemption from the Municipal Police Training on October 18, 2019 for work full time. He will go to the Police Academy in January 2020.

A. Traffic enforcement/ pedestrian safety: Statistics from October 1st - November 1st, 516 hours logged in ½ hour blocks of radar. Number of citations have increased. There is a new Traffic Complaint Form available on website or at Police Station. The forms help as to where the officers need to concentrate on. The officers have given many verbal warnings at stop signs missed, missing red lights, and traveling through pedestrian crosswalks.

B. Ms. K. Becker, administrative assistant, has applied for a state grant to ease the costs of safety patrols, for ten thousand dollars (\$10,000); will know in December if grant is awarded.

2. Finance Department: Ms. S. Carmel, Finance Department, spoke of the revenues collected from the marijuana - second half (January - June 2019, Three percent (3%), of State Impact funds, of two hundred seventeen thousand dollars (\$217,000.). That the money has been put into General Fund at the close of fiscal year. At Annual Town Meeting, monies can be voted on to be used as " free cash".

~ M. Pruhenski, Town Manager, commented, that in the next couple of months a decision will be clear of how to use the General Fund monies.

3. Department of Public Works (DPW), Mr. S. Van Deusen, gave reports.

- a. Wastewater upgrade, nitrogen and phosphate levels are going into the Housatonic River, after being treated at plant. Will need to upgrade the equipment.
- b. Lake Mansfield paving for one-way traffic, ordered signs.
- c. West Sheffield Road, the bank has failed. Currently there are Jersey barriers up to direct traffic. The culvert will need repair.
- d. Ramsdell Library, needs to be upgraded with ADA updates.
- e. Division Street bridge, waiting for DOT recommendations.
- f. Brown bridge is to be repaired in Spring 2020 by DOT. Twenty thousand pounds of steel to reinforce bridge and repainting. Repairs to be completed approximately nine to twelve months from start time.

1. Citizen question:

- a. Mr. D. Tawczynski/owner of Taft Farms, questioned when the bridge would definitely be passable again to traffic? He is concerned his business cannot withstand the lengthy process of repairs. He offered, again, his land for temporary bridge to be erected.

Mr. Van Deusen, sympathetically apologized, stated that the grants take time and that due to the wetlands surrounding the area, can't build on them.

- b. Ms. M. Loubert wanted to acknowledge that the bridge had been posted for "No Heavy Loads" for years. The trucks carrying gravel and equipment have traveled over this particular bridge, thus summarizing that has shortened the life of the bridge.

- g. Paving on Route 23, was delayed due to the cold weather. Will finish it on the next opportunity.

## 2. Project Updates:

Mr. M. Pruhenski, Town Manager, spoke of the five foreclosed properties (5) that the Town owns currently. Wants to ask Ms. K. Fink, her recommendations on what is best for Town, at the December 9, 2019 meeting.

- Fairgrounds/Horseracing. Town staff has contacted A. Hinds, State Senator, and Mr. S. Pignatelli, State Representative, to get the current information on this topic on the State/Massachusetts level.

- Water bottle ban enforcement began November 2019, all water filling stations complete.

- Monument Mountain Regional High School recently had a car accident at the entrance, an alternative drop off pattern has been implemented. The Great Barrington Police department, Superintendent P. Dillon, Senator Hinds, and educators are aware of this concerning safety breach.

- Winter Parking Ban is in effect; no parking on the streets until March 30th, from 1 - 6 am.

- Intersection of Route 7 and Route 23, by the Police Station, the Roundabout plans need to be finalized; construction is to take place in 2021.

- C. Rembold, Assistant Town Manager, spoke on the Reid's Cleaners and Cook's Garage properties, foreclosed on due to the taxes being in arrears, both have some contamination concerns, no underground tanks. On November 25, 2019, there will be a Community Meeting, addressing how to clean up Reid's Cleaners, and apply for a Brownfields grant, to find ways to remediate the property.

## 7. Old Business:

- A. Continuation - Selectboard - Approval of Revised 2020 Town Meeting / Election Calendar.

- 1. Mr. M. Wise spoke of the two changes; April 4th and May 7th, both at 6 pm.

- 2. Mr. E. Abrahams made motion to approve the 2020 Town Meeting calendar with the additional dates; Mr. B. Cooke, 2nd motion; All in Favor, (5 - 0).

- B. Continuation - Update Selectboard Policies. ( Discuss/vote) Code of Conduct document of Selectboard Policies and Procedures. Recommendation from Selectboard, Town Manager, and Town's Attorney, to have a current document to refer to.

- Page two (2): Responsibilities of Selectboard:

- E. Public Service: the language was disagreed on. S. Bannon made a suggestion that L. Davis and E. Abrahams work out the wording, for next meeting.

- Page two, F.

- E. Abrahams made motion to accept the paragraph (F); B. Cooke, Second (2nd), 4 - 1, (L. Davis, no.).

~Page four (4), V. Preparing the Agenda: A.

- E. Abrahams made motion to accept the paragraph, B. Cooke, second, All in Favor (5 - 0).

~Page Three, III. The Officers of the Board, A. The Chair:

- E. Abrahams made motion to approve/ accept, B. Cooke, second, All in Favor (5 - 0).
- L. Davis made amendment to the above vote, to add "next available" meeting notification to SB member...., No second.
- E. Abrahams made motion to accept as, B. Cooke second, no vote.
- K. Burke made motion to add words next available meeting", L. Davis, second, vote, 3 - 2. (K. Burke profusely apologized, to L. Davis, for making motion with same wording as L. Davis had, previously.)

~Page Five (5), IX. Citizen Speak Procedures: (G):

- E. Abrahams made motion to keep, " will be scheduled", B. Cooke, second, vote 4 -1, (L. Davis, no).

~S. Bannon, suggested to revisit this agenda item the following meeting since it was taking up large amount of meeting time. The Joint Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

- I. Call to Order, S. Bannon called session/ meeting to order at 8:41 pm.
- II. Selectboard and Great Barrington Housing Authority Joint Meeting, those present: S. Bannon, E. Abrahams, B. Cooke, K. Burke, L. Davis, J. Mercer, E. Mooney, and Marie Ryan.
  - a. Appointment of member(s) to the Great Barrington Housing Authority:
    1. Discussion -
    2. Vote: K. Burke made a motion to accept Cara Becker to the Housing Authority Board, B. Cooke 2nd; 6/yes; 2/no; 1/recused. (S. Bannon, yes; E. Abrahams, yes; B. Cooke, no; K. Burke, yes; L. Davis, recused; J. Mercer, yes; E. Mooney, yes; M. Ryan, yes; J Sinico, no)
- III. Citizen Speak:
 

No discussion
- IV. SB and GB Housing Authority Joint Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

8. New Business - continuation:

B. Selectboard - Appointment of members to the Affordable Housing Trust.

~E. Abrahams made motion to accept Larissa (Lara) Yaple to the Affordable Housing Trust, B. Cooke 2nd, All in Favor (5 - 0).

C. Selectboard - Appointment of members to serve on the Commission on Disability.

~ E. Abrahams made motion to accept that R. Flach, Jane Burger, Patrick Hollenbeck and J. Bachetti be on the commission, B. Cooke, second, All in Favor, (5 - 0).

- One position for a person with disabilities to be on commission.

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D. Selectboard - Recommendation to ZBA on Special Permit Application from Berkhill 11, LLC.

- Applicant or anyone on behalf of the applicant was present; no recommendations were given.

E. Request from Fulcrum Enterprises, LLC, to consider Host Community Agreement (HCA) for Marijuana Cultivation and Manufacturing establishment in an Industrial Zone at 22 Van Deusenville Road separate from Special Permit. (Discussion/Vote) only to determine if the item is to be placed on future Selectboard Agenda

- Attorney K. McCormick spoke to the topic; November 28, 2019, is the year-end deadline for the letter of intent. If the date passes, the Applicant will be obliged to re
- start the Community outreach meetings.
- Attorney M. Greenwald, of Pittsfield, speaking on behalf of T. Forbes; not present, read a letter on this matter.
- No Motion made.

F. Selectboard set the date of the Special Town Meeting for December 11, 2019, at 6 pm., at Monument Mountain Regional High School.

- E. Abrahams made motion to accept, B. Cooke, 2nd, All in Favor (5 -0).

9. Citizen Speak:

- D. Stevenson wanted to impress on the Selectboard that the Board needs to do their jobs, not talk about losing " lawsuit", to listen to the citizens.
- Janel Munoa has a petition with 470 citizens' signatures calling for a Special Town Meeting for the December 11 regarding horse racing in Great Barrington.
- M. Loubert feels that this is too quick of a " turn around" for Citizens petition, to fill application in time. That it goes against our democracy. Would like a copy of the citizens' email that was sent to S. Bannon. It is public record and she is willing to fill out a formal request to receive copy. She has called Town office for information, but has not gotten a response. Spoke that the Host Agreement is for those with " deep pockets".
- M. Greenwald, Esq., Speaking for T. Forbes, wants the Selectboard to think about the Town Procedures.
- S. Farnia : brought in large plastic bottles filled with water. He wants the Selectboard to consider the negative impact this plastic water ban has on the economy / businesses in town.
- S. Gregory - Hollenbeck Ave. - listen to the citizens and be leaders.
- Maureen Quigley - Asked Selectboard if there was any conflict of interest relative to Fulcrum, by any of the board members?

10. Selectboard Time: none

11. Media Time: E. Mooney asked about the Town's subpoena concerning the Host Community Agreements. M. Prunhenski, Town Manager, can't comment at this time, has contacted the Attorney General and waiting for information.

12. On a motion by E. Abrahams, seconded by B. Cooke, the Selectboard meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Next Selectboard Meeting is November 18, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Minacci', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jamie Minacci  
Recording secretary