

Great Barrington Selectboard
Town Hall, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Minutes of January 28, 2019, meeting

1. Call to Order

The meeting opened at 6 p.m. Attending were Steve Bannon, Ed Abrahams, Dan Bailly and Bill Cooke in person and Kate Burke on the telephone. The town manager was absent.

2. Minutes

Mr. Abrahams has changes to suggest, so action on minutes of Nov. 26, 2018, was continued.

3. Old Business

Town Manager Screening Committee: The board heard brief presentations by candidates Peter Taylor, Michael Wise, Locke Larkin, John Katz, Sean Stanton, Ron Majdalany, Richard Needlemen, Shep Evans, Peter J. Most, James P. Bailly, Fred Clark, Krista Haley and Natalie Narotzky. Holly Hamer withdrew. Mr. Bannon read emails from Ben Downing and Mark Lefenfeld, who did not appear. Jonathan Hankin, Sam Nickerson, Chris Tucci and Patrick Fennell did not appear. Annie O'Dwyer appeared later in the meeting.

Selectboard members each announced seven choices. The recording secretary kept a tabulation. Three individuals received four votes, which the board had previously determined would be a criteria for appointment. They were Mr. Katz, Ms. O'Dwyer and Ms. Haley. The board decided it was not necessary to vote a second time, as four individuals received three votes. They were Mr. Taylor, Mr. Wise, Mr. Stanton and Mr. Downing. Thus a seven-member committee.

Mr. Bannon praised all applicants and urged those not appointed to apply for other open committee positions. He said the committee's work should be completed by early March.

4. Board Comments

Mr. Abrahams said the Planning Board plans some significant changes to the zoning bylaw and the public should be aware and learn more.

5. Public Hearing

Transfer of existing Common Victualler Restaurant All-Alcoholic Liquor license held by Mezze South Inc. dba Allium, Nancy Thomas, manager, to ESPDM Inc. dba Baba Louie's Organic Sour Doug Pizza Co., Paul Masiero, manager, located at 42-44 Railroad St., Great Barrington. On a motion by Mr. Abrahams, seconded by Mr. Bailly the board on a unanimous roll call vote opened the hearing at 6:50 p.m. Mr. Masiero and counsel appeared before the board. Baba Louie's will move from its 50-seat location on Main Street to the 100-seat restaurant space on Railroad Street. The difference in business is the new space will have a bar.

On a motion by Mr. Abrahams, seconded by Mr. Bailly, the board on a unanimous roll call vote closed the hearing at 6:52 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Abrahams, seconded by Mr. Bailly, the board on a unanimous roll call voted to approve printed findings of fact.

On a motion by Mr. Abrahams, seconded by Mr. Bailly, the board on a unanimous roll call voted to approve the transfer.

6. Licenses/Permits

Robin Vickery/Great Barrington Fish and Game, applied for a one-day Beer and Wine Liquor License for Feb. 9, 2019 (rain date Feb. 16, 2019) from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 338 Long Pond Road. On a motion by Mr. Abrahams, seconded by Mr. Bailly, the board on a unanimously voted to approve the permit.

Robin Vickery/Great Barrington Fish and Game, applied for nine one-day Beer and Wine Liquor Licenses for every Sunday from Feb. 17 to April 14, 2019, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 338 Long Pond Road. On a motion by Mr. Abrahams, seconded by Mr. Bailly, the board unanimously voted to approve the permit. Ms. Burke was no longer a participant.

7. More Old Business

Tate Coleman, Taconic Avenue, a local public transportation activist and student at Simon's Rock, having worked with Selectboard member Cooke, gave a brief presentation on a public transportation plan and draft of a Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Use Survey. He used PowerPoint and provided some handouts of the material, which the Selectboard received. He gave some ridership data and suggested the system could become more efficient, and popular with riders, by eliminating some long runs (such as 2 hours from Great Barrington to Pittsfield) and establishing express runs and feeder lines. He said that after some initial costs, there would be no increase in costs to operate the system.

Mr. Cooke moved that the board ask the Town Manager to create a Public Transportation Advisory Committee consisting of a representative from the Selectboard and either the Town Planner or a member of the Planning Board, and up to three Great Barrington residents. Representatives from the Selectboards of other South County towns should also be invited to attend and participate.

This Committee should be charged with regularly evaluating the needs and desires of South County residents regarding public transportation services through surveys and public input meetings, and provide recommendations on how to maximize service frequency in areas with the most ridership potential in addition to providing widespread coverage. The Committee should report to the Town Manager at least once a year. Seconded by Mr. Abrahams, requested the town manager to establish a Transportation Advisory Committee. All voted in favor.

Mr. Cooke moved that the board ask the Town Manager to have the South County Public Bus Service Survey translated into Spanish and distributed throughout Great Barrington, Sheffield and Egremont. The Survey should be posted on the town websites of all 3 towns and a press release, including a link to the online Survey, should be sent out. The Public Transportation Advisory Committee, under the direction of the Town Manager, can develop other publicity and distribution strategies to maximize the number of respondents to the Survey. Seconded by Mr. Abrahams, requested the town manager to have said Transportation Advisory Committee circulate a BRTA Use Survey in Great Barrington, Housatonic, Sheffield and Egremont. All voted in favor.

From the audience, Natalie Narotzky urged the board to ask the committee to coordinate its efforts with the new town Sustainability Committee.

8. Last Old Business

Based on an email from the town's executive secretary, conveying information from Police Chief William Walsh, the board decided to seek no further Beverage Alcohol Training for package store employees, as they are adequately policing themselves.

9. New Business

On the matter of authorizing the town manager to sign a cost settlement and lien release agreement with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection regarding the Ried Realty Corp. property at 218 Main St., Great Barrington, Town Planner Chris Rembold explained that the town several years ago had initiated tax foreclosure proceedings on the property. Mass. DEP is the last party with interest in the site, he said (it did groundwater testing), in the amount of \$100,000. DEP wants assurance it will be paid if sufficient proceeds come from future sale. If the board doesn't accept the agreement, efforts to deal with pollution there will go nowhere. Mr. Abrahams moved authorize the signature, Mr. Bailly seconded, and the four members voted yes.

Mr. Abrahams moved to appoint Liz Hersh to an opening on the town's Parks Committee. Mr. Bailly seconded and all were in favor.

Mr. Bailly moved to endorse Mr. Abrahams' appointment to the Ramsdell Library Design Selection Committee. Mr. Cooke seconded, all said aye. The committee is to determine an engineer/architect as part of a process to make improvements to the building.

Citizen Speak

In answer to a question, Mr. Bannon said town offices have been moved from the Castle Street firehouse, but some items are still stored there.

In answer to a question, Mr. Abrahams said the Planning Board is looking at zoning changes for Stockbridge Road and may revise the marijuana bylaw. It is looking to relax some requirements to encourage auxiliary housing units.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernard A. Drew
Recording Secretary