

Mark Pruhenski
Town Manager

E-mail: mpruhenski@townofgb.org
www.townofgb.org



Town Hall, 334 Main Street
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Telephone: (413) 528-1619 x2900
Fax: (413) 528-2290

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Selectboard Regular Meeting via Zoom Order of Agenda for Monday, November 22, 2021, at 6:00 PM

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82620453204?pwd=WcTFR2JMZWWhuRIN0aUN5U2k5dGcvQT09>

Webinar ID: 826 2045 3204

Passcode: 619619

Dial-in, audio-only: (929) 205 6099

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's June 16, 2021 Revised Order extending remote participation by all members in any meeting of a public body, this meeting of the Great Barrington Selectboard will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on town's website, at www.townofgb.org. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: See instructions at the top of the agenda. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means.

*****ALL VOTES ARE ROLL CALL*****

1. CALL TO ORDER SELECTBOARD REGULAR MEETING
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
 - a. February 24, 2021
 - b. March 2, 2021
 - c. March 30, 2021
 - d. April 29, 2021
 - e. August 23, 2021
 - f. August 27, 2021
 - g. September 13, 2021
 - h. September 27, 2021
 - i. October 4, 2021
 - j. November 4, 2021
 - k. November 15, 2021
3. SELECTBOARD'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS
4. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT
 - a. HWW

5. LICENSES AND PERMITS

- a. Steve Birnhak/Heather Campell for a driveway at 258 Monument Valley Road, Great Barrington MA

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Tax Classification Hearing

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Request to subordinate a Real Property lien from the FY14 CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Program

- b. Partnership Agreement with Be Well Berkshires for the Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness & Leadership Initiative

8. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME

Citizen Speak Time is an opportunity for the Selectboard to listen to residents. Topics of particular concern or importance may be placed on a future agenda for discussion. This time is reserved for town residents only unless otherwise permitted by the chair, and speakers are limited to 3 minutes each.

9. SELECTBOARD'S TIME

10. MEDIA TIME

11. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT SELECTBOARD MEETING

December 13, 2021

December 20, 2021

January 10, 2021



Mark Pruhenski, Town Manager

Pursuant to MGL. 7c. 30A sec. 20 (f), after notifying the chair of the public body, any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting of a public body, or may transmit the meeting through any medium. At the beginning of the meeting, the chair shall inform other attendees of any such recordings. Any member of the public wishing to speak at the meeting must receive permission of the chair. The listings of agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Selectboard

Fee \$50.00

Application for Access to a Public Way / Driveway Permit

Number by check
Paid \$4857

INSTRUCTIONS

RETURN FIVE (5) COPIES OF THIS FORM AND ALL ACCOMPANYING PLANS, ALONG WITH THE \$50.00 FEE to the Department of Public Works office in Town Hall, 2nd Floor, 334 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230. Plans must show the location of the driveway on the property and must also indicate all details needed in order to determine that driveway regulations are met, including paving material, width, grade, drainage, culverts, angle to street, etc. See Chapter 153 of the Town Code for driveway regulations.

Application Date 9/24/2021
Name of Applicant / Property Owner Steve Bin AK/Heather Campbell
Edward J. Madden Open Heart Camp.
Mailing address PO Box 742 Stockbridge, MASS. 01262
Phone number 646-279-1688
Location of proposed driveway / highway entrance 258 Monument Valley Road
Contractor who will perform the work Joe Wilkinson Excavation
Address & phone number of contractor 1511 Boardman Street Sheffield 01257
Proposed construction date October 2021
Type of driveway (gravel, asphalt, etc.) GRAVEL

Print Form

mike@kellygrangerparsons.com

Submit five (5) copies of completed form and plans.

Applicant hereby agrees to notify the Great Barrington DPW Superintendent of the date and time of driveway construction at least 24 hours before construction is begun. Applicant further agrees to conform to all requirements of the Town of Great Barrington regulations governing access to public ways and to all conditions that may be placed on this permit. See Chapter 153 of the Town Code for regulations and design requirements.

Applicant's Signature: Steve Bin AK Heather Campbell
Agent

FOR STAFF USE ONLY

RECOMMENDATION OF DPW / HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

After consultation with review staff, and after full consideration of the application and the applicable requirements, I recommend that this application be: () approved as submitted
() approved with conditions attached
() disapproved for reasons attached
() resubmitted with changes suggested per attached

Staff Reviews Received:

	Received	Conditions Recommended	Other Permits Required
Conservation:	()	()	()
Fire Chief:	()	()	()
Planning:	()	()	()

PERMIT FOR ACCESS TO A PUBLIC WAY / DRIVEWAY

Pursuant to its vote of _____ in favor and _____ opposed, at its meeting on _____, the Great Barrington Selectboard granted permission to construct or alter this access to a public way at the address and in the location indicated in this application, in accordance with the plans accompanying this application, and subject to any conditions attached.

For the Selectboard: _____, its _____
(signature) (title) (date)

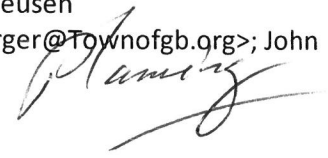
Conservation Agent & Planning

Chris Rembold

From: Great Barrington Conservation Commission
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 4:06 PM
To: Chris Rembold
Subject: RE: 258 Monument Valley Road driveway

Much better.
-Shep

From: Chris Rembold <crembold@Townofgb.org>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 4:00 PM
To: Great Barrington Conservation Commission <conservation@townofgb.org>; Sean Van Deusen <svandeusen@townofgb.org>; Shep Evans <shepevans@yahoo.com>; Charles Burger <cburger@Townofgb.org>; John Malumphy <JMalumphy@Townofgb.org>
Cc: Jackie Dawson <jdawson@Townofgb.org>; Amy Pulver <apulver@Townofgb.org>
Subject: 258 Monument Valley Road driveway



Hi folks, please see attached and provide comments as soon as possible, so we can get comments by the end of this week. Sean and I visited the site and agree this is a good location. Paul agrees.

Amy could you please this driveway permit the Board's agenda for this coming Monday November 22?

Chris



Christopher Rembold, AICP

Assistant Town Manager
Director of Planning and
Community Development
413-528-1619, x. 2401
crembold@townofgb.org

Town of Great Barrington
334 Main Street
Great Barrington MA 01230



The Secretary of State's office has determined that most e-mails to and from municipal offices and officials are public records. Consequently, confidentiality should not be expected.

From: mike kellygrangerparsons.com <mike@kellygrangerparsons.com>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 11:39 AM
To: Chris Rembold <crembold@Townofgb.org>
Cc: Sean Van Deusen <svandeusen@townofgb.org>; Paul Storti <PStorti@Townofgb.org>; John Malumphy <JMalumphy@Townofgb.org>; 'Zach Gultz' <zach.gultz@gmail.com>; 'Steve Birnhak' <birnhak@gmail.com>; mark kellygrangerparsons.com <mark@kellygrangerparsons.com>
Subject: Re: Mon. Valley Road driveway

Chris Rembold

Police Chief

From: mike kellygrangerparsons.com <mike@kellygrangerparsons.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 7:04 AM
To: Paul Storti; Chris Rembold; Sean Van Deusen
Cc: John Malumphy; Zach Gultz; Steve Birnhak; mark kellygrangerparsons.com
Subject: Re: Mon. Valley Road driveway

****CAUTION:****

****This is an external email, be vigilant****

*****Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender (and their email address) and know the content is safe*****

thank you chief. that's good to know. i will meet chris and shaun tuesday at 3:30. thanks again to all. best-mike

From: Paul Storti <PStorti@Townofgb.org>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:44 PM
To: Chris Rembold <crembold@Townofgb.org>; mike kellygrangerparsons.com <mike@kellygrangerparsons.com>; Sean Van Deusen <svandeusen@townofgb.org>
Cc: John Malumphy <JMalumphy@Townofgb.org>; Zach Gultz <zach.gultz@gmail.com>; Steve Birnhak <birnhak@gmail.com>; mark kellygrangerparsons.com <mark@kellygrangerparsons.com>
Subject: RE: Mon. Valley Road driveway

I was up in the area today for another matter and checked the site out. I drove by in both directions and observed traffic from the driveway point of view. The new location is much better and I do not have any concerns from my prospective. I hope this helps, Paul

From: Chris Rembold
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 3:21 PM
To: mike kellygrangerparsons.com <mike@kellygrangerparsons.com>; Sean Van Deusen <svandeusen@townofgb.org>
Cc: Paul Storti <PStorti@Townofgb.org>; John Malumphy <JMalumphy@Townofgb.org>; Zach Gultz <zach.gultz@gmail.com>; Steve Birnhak <birnhak@gmail.com>; mark kellygrangerparsons.com <mark@kellygrangerparsons.com>
Subject: RE: Mon. Valley Road driveway

Sean and I will come out there tomorrow Tuesday at 3:30.

Chris

Fire Chief

Chris Rembold

From: Charles Burger
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 4:05 PM
To: Chris Rembold
Cc: Great Barrington Conservation Commission; Sean Van Deusen; Shep Evans; John Malumphy; Jackie Dawson; Amy Pulver
Subject: Re: 258 Monument Valley Road driveway

If you and Sean are OK with the location so am I. The house is less than 100' to the road so we do not need access to the driveway itself so I have no other concerns.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 16, 2021, at 3:59 PM, Chris Rembold <crembold@townofgb.org> wrote:

Hi folks, please see attached and provide comments as soon as possible, so we can get comments by the end of this week. Sean and I visited the site and agree this is a good location. Paul agrees.

Amy could you please this driveway permit the Board's agenda for this coming Monday November 22?

Chris

<image001.jpg>

Christopher Rembold, AICP

Assistant Town Manager
Director of Planning and
Community Development
413-528-1619, x. 2401
crembold@townofgb.org

Town of Great Barrington
334 Main Street
Great Barrington MA 01230

<image002.jpg>

The Secretary of State's office has determined that most e-mails to and from municipal offices and officials are public records. Consequently, confidentiality should not be expected.

From: mike kellygrangerparsons.com <mike@kellygrangerparsons.com>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 11:39 AM
To: Chris Rembold <crembold@Townofgb.org>
Cc: Sean Van Deusen <svandeusen@townofgb.org>; Paul Storti <PStorti@Townofgb.org>; John Malumphy <JMalumphy@Townofgb.org>; 'Zach Gultz' <zach.gultz@gmail.com>; 'Steve Birnhak'

<birnhak@gmail.com>; mark kellygrangerparsons.com <mark@kellygrangerparsons.com>

Subject: Re: Mon. Valley Road driveway

****CAUTION:****

****This is an external email, be vigilant****

*****Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender (and their email address) and know the content is safe*****

all: attached is a revised driveway plan for steve birnhak's property on monument valley road. we have moved the driveway quite a ways to the south, and i have measured the reaction/stopping distances in both directions to meet or exceed what's required as stated on the plan.

i hope we could all get together at the same time, at the site, to exchange our thoughts with regard to this location?

from our end, we will be available at any time that anyone wants to meet up there.

thoughts? best- mike

From: Chris Rembold <crembold@Townofgb.org>

Sent: Tuesday, November 2, 2021 9:55 AM

To: mike kellygrangerparsons.com <mike@kellygrangerparsons.com>

Cc: Sean Van Deusen <svandeußen@townofgb.org>; Paul Storti <PStorti@Townofgb.org>; John Malumphy <JMalumphy@Townofgb.org>

Subject: Mon. Valley Road driveway

Mike, thanks for chatting with our team today. Please feel free to reach out Sean, John Malumphy and Chief Storti directly in order to meet them on site to look at a possible new driveway location.

Chris

<image005.jpg>

Christopher Rembold, AICP

Assistant Town Manager

Director of Planning and
Community Development

413-528-1619, x. 2401
crembold@townofgb.org

Town of Great Barrington
334 Main Street
Great Barrington MA 01230

<image006.jpg>

The Secretary of State's office has determined that most e-mails to and from municipal offices and officials are public records. Consequently, confidentiality should not be expected.

PROPERTY ADDRESS: (FORMERLY A PORTION OF) 250 MONUMENT VALLEY ROAD

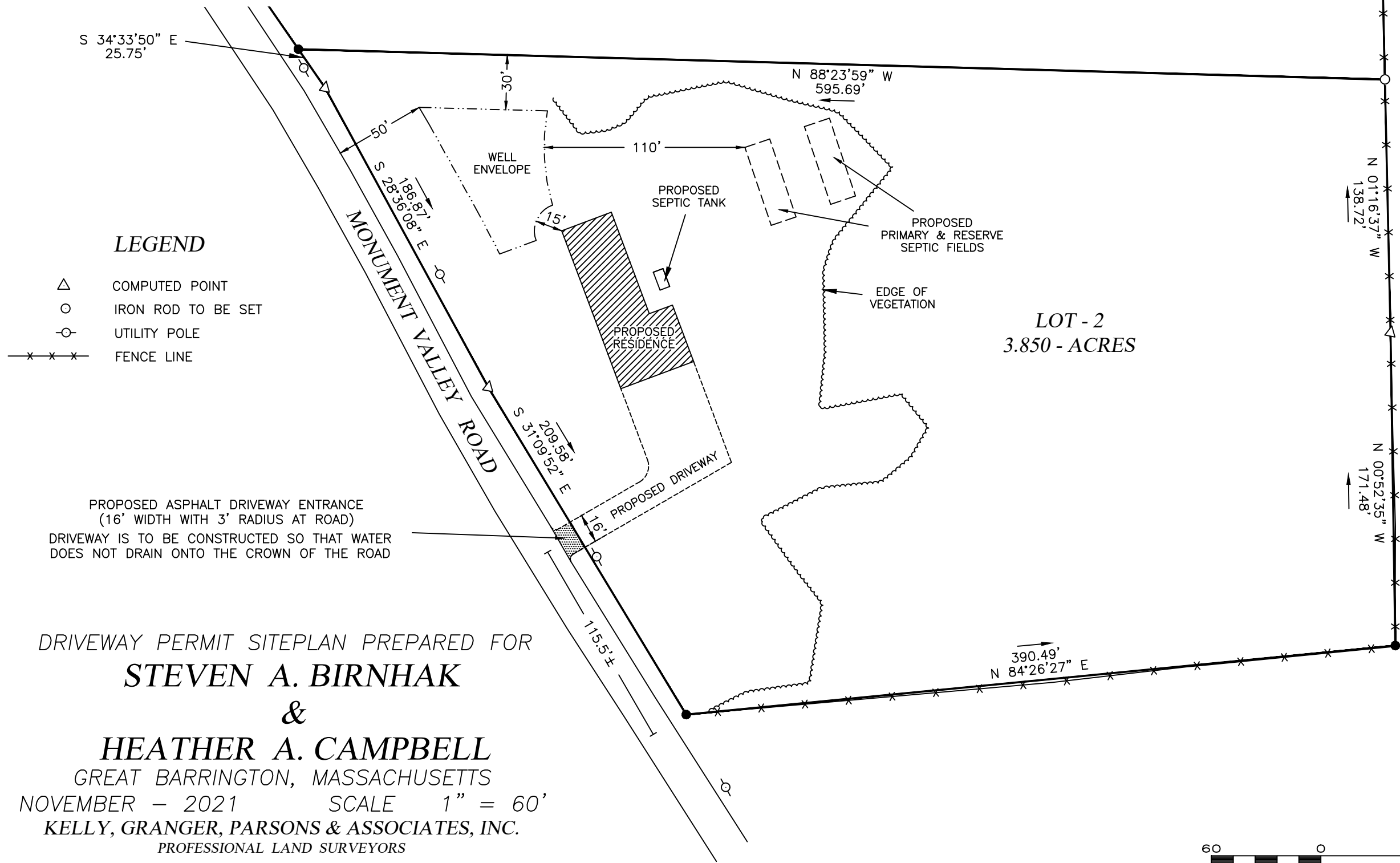
RECORD OWNERS: STEVEN A. BIRNHAK & HEATHER A. CAMPBELL

LOCUS DEED: BK - 2730 PG - 78

(SEE PLAN IN PLAT FILE D-C9 "LOT-2")

THIS PARCEL IS SUBJECT TO AND WITH THE BENEFIT OF ALL RIGHTS, RESTRICTIONS, CONDITIONS, EASEMENTS, LEASES, ENCUMBRANCES AND APPURTENANCES OF RECORD.

2006 MASS HIGHWAY DESIGN GUIDE SUGGESTS 330 FEET ARE REQUIRED FOR DECISION/STOPPING SITE DISTANCE IN A 40 MPH SPEED ZONE. DISTANCE PROVIDED IS 410' TO THE NORTH AND 550' TO THE SOUTH.



LEGEND

- △ COMPUTED POINT
- IRON ROD TO BE SET
- UTILITY POLE
- x x x — FENCE LINE

PROPOSED ASPHALT DRIVEWAY ENTRANCE (16' WIDTH WITH 3' RADIUS AT ROAD) DRIVEWAY IS TO BE CONSTRUCTED SO THAT WATER DOES NOT DRAIN ONTO THE CROWN OF THE ROAD

DRIVEWAY PERMIT SITEPLAN PREPARED FOR
STEVEN A. BIRNHAK
 &
HEATHER A. CAMPBELL
 GREAT BARRINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS
 NOVEMBER - 2021 SCALE 1" = 60'
KELLY, GRANGER, PARSONS & ASSOCIATES, INC.

PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS

312 MAIN STREET P.O. BOX 88
 GREAT BARRINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01230
 FAX (413) 528-1912 PHONE (413) 528-3291

C:\Carlson Projects\Great Barrington\Monument Valley Road\birnhak1021.dwg (MAR)



Scale 1" = 60'



TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FY2022 Tax Classification Hearing held on November 22, 2021

BACKGROUND: At the Tax Classification Hearing the Selectboard is required to vote to implement one or a combination of four classification options for distributing the tax levy among property owners. The options are: **1) Open Space Discount, 2) Residential Exemption, 3) Small Commercial Exemption or 4) Single or Split Tax Rate.**

The Town currently has a single tax rate with no exemptions or discounts given to specific classes of property. A vote to grant discounts or exemptions to specific property classes will result in a higher tax rate for non-qualifying property owners as the tax burden is shifted away from the exempted recipients. A vote in favor of more than one option will result in different tax rates for different property classes. **Regardless of the classification option(s) chosen the amount of the overall tax levy will not change.**

Historically and as part of their annual budget policy, the Selectboard and Finance Committee has endorsed the single tax rate option providing no exemption or discount to a particular property class or group. Voting a residential factor of 1.00 affirms a single tax rate and the proportionate sharing of the tax levy between all classes of property. Voting a residential factor of less than 1.00 would split the tax rate, thereby shifting the tax burden away from the residential class and onto commercial, industrial and personal property owners. Two separate tax rates would be created, a lower tax rate for residential and open space and another, higher tax rate, for commercial, industrial and personal property owners. Land enrolled in Ch. 61, 61A or 61B would be subject to the higher tax rate as it will be classified as commercial for taxation purposes.

Exemption & Discount Options

Open Space Discount

Open Space is defined as land maintained in an open or natural condition and must contribute significantly to the benefit and enjoyment of the public. It does not include lands taxable under the provisions of MGL Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B, lands with a permanent conservation restriction or lands held for the production of income. The Open Space discount is up to 25% of the selected residential factor. By discounting a certain percentage of value attributable to Open Space the tax levy burden is shifted onto residential rate payers thereby increasing their tax rate. Presently, no lands are classified as Open Space because those that might benefit receive a greater discount by enrollment in Chapter Land options.

Recommendation: The Board of Assessors does not recommend adoption of the Open Space Discount

Residential Exemption??

The *Residential Exemption* grants an exemption to property that is the principal residence or domicile of a taxpayer. Under M.G.L c.59, § 5C the exemption amount may not exceed 35% of the average assessed value of all residential class properties. Granting the exemption increases the residential tax rate as it shifts the tax burden, within the entire residential class, away from lower valued owner occupied dwellings to dwellings valued at greater than the breakeven, multi-family properties, apartment buildings, vacant land and non-domiciled property owners. Properties of domiciled taxpayers valued below the breakeven will pay fewer taxes while those valued higher will pay more. Currently, only fourteen of 351 Massachusetts communities grant Residential Exemptions. These communities are typically large cities or towns with many nonowner-occupied properties like apartment buildings, or resort communities with many seasonal residents (Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Somerville & Chelsea) or a disproportionately large number of second homes (Cape Cod & the Island communities).

Recommendation: The Board of Assessors does not recommend adoption of the Residential Exemption

Small Commercial Exemption??

The *Small Commercial Exemption* may be applied to certain commercial properties whose assessment is less than \$1,000,000 and occupied by businesses certified by the Department of Employment & Training as having no more than an average of ten employees in the previous year. If adopted, up to 10% of the assessed value of an eligible property would be exempt. The property owner is the direct beneficiary of the tax savings and is not required to pass any savings onto the tenants. The total gross value of the Small Commercial Exemption is redistributed to the non-qualifying commercial property owners in the form of a higher tax rate.

Recommendation: The Board of Assessors does not recommend adoption of the Small Commercial Exemption

Single or Split Tax Rate

Adopting a *Single Tax Rate* requires the Selectboard to vote to maintain a residential factor of 1.00. A Single Tax Rate allows for all classes of property to pay only their share of the tax levy without shifting the tax burden to any particular property class. Voting to split the tax rate shifts the tax burden from the residential class to the commercial, industrial and personal property (CIP) classes and requires the Selectboard to vote for a residential factor of less than 1.00. The minimum residential factor for the Town as set by the Department of Revenue is .873112 which allows for a “CIP” shift of 1.50.

Recommendation: The Board of Assessors recommends adopting and maintaining a Single Tax Rate

Notables for Fiscal Year 2022

Levy for FY 22 is \$25,134,939; an increase of \$498,559

Fiscal Year	Levy	% Change From Prior Yr
2022	\$25,134,939	2.02%
2021	\$24,636,380	2.68%
2020	\$23,993,431	2.10%
2019	\$23,500,999	8.93%
2018	\$21,574,492	3.56%

Total Taxable Value \$1,691,449,482

Property Class	FY 2022	FY 2021	Difference	% Change
Residential	\$1,349,084,781	\$1,200,780,171	\$148,304,610	1.12%
Commercial	\$266,743,811	\$269,810,614	\$3,159,304	-1.10%
Industrial	\$14,365,300	\$14,016,600	\$348,700	2.50%
Personal Property	\$61,255,590	\$56,129,310	\$653,465	9.10%
Total	\$1,691,449,482	\$1,540,736,695	\$17,344,236	9.80%

Tax Rate

The tax rate is calculated by dividing the tax levy (\$25,134,939) by the total value of all taxable property 1,691,449,482 x 1,000. This yields a tax rate of \$14.86 per \$1,000 of valuation, a decrease of \$1.13 from last year’s rate.

FY	Tax Rate	Change From Prior Year
2022	\$14.86	\$1.13
2021	\$15.99	\$0.24
2020	\$15.75	\$0.03
2019	\$15.72	\$0.74
2018	\$14.98	\$0.38

Excess Levy Capacity \$1,993,375

Excess levy capacity is the difference between the maximum allowable levy and the amount levied. It is also the amount of additional monies the Town is allowed to raise through taxation but chooses not to.

Fiscal Year	Max Allowable Levy	Levy	Excess Levy Capacity
2022	\$27,128,315	\$25,134,939	\$1,993,375
2021	\$25,932,998	\$24,636,380	\$1,296,618
2020	\$24,973,637	\$23,993,431	\$980,206
2019	\$24,230,886	\$23,500,999	\$729,887
2018	\$23,097,867	\$21,574,492	\$1,523,375

New Growth \$36,541,397 / \$584,296

New growth is value created through the construction of new homes, additions, substantial remodels or the creation of condos. Lot splits, subdivisions, new personal property assets and an increase in non-domiciled property ownership also contributes to new growth. The impact new growth has on expanding the levy limit is calculated by multiplying new growth value (\$36,541,397) by the prior year tax rate (\$15.99). For FY22 this yields \$584,296 in tax levy growth or new tax dollars to the Town.

FY	New Growth	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	New \$\$
2022	\$36,541,397	\$28,479,567	\$1,511,100	\$0	\$6,550,730	\$584,296
2021	\$24,758,096	\$14,191,500	\$6,301,766	\$0	\$4,264,830	\$389,940
2020	\$12,358,418	\$5,642,793	\$2,050,200	\$96,400	\$4,569,025	\$194,274
2019	\$36,207,737	\$18,293,500	\$7,991,300	\$352,300	\$9,570,637	\$542,392
2018	\$21,784,685	\$13,180,200	\$2,398,240	\$5,700	\$6,200,545	\$318,056

Median & Average Single Family Home \$348,400 / \$446,493

Single family home value increases are the result of the ongoing cyclical inspection program. Analysis of 2021 single family arms-length sales indicated support for an upward adjustment to residential values when compared to assessments.

Fiscal Year	Median Value	Median Tax	Change From Prior Yr	Average Value	Average Tax	Change From Prior Yr
2022	\$348,400	\$5,177	\$157	\$446,493	\$6,634	\$230
2021	\$313,950	\$5,020	\$80	\$400,508	\$6,404	\$124
2020	\$313,650	\$4,940	\$135	\$398,754	\$6,280	\$133
2019	\$305,650	\$4,805	\$296	\$391,055	\$6,147	\$409
2018	\$301,000	\$4,509	\$151	\$383,072	\$5,738	\$180

Median & Average Commercial \$478,750 / \$831,500

The median assessed value Increased from \$472,000 to \$478,750
 The average assessed value Increased from \$803,825 to \$831,500
 The average commercial property valued at \$831,500 will pay \$497.00 less.

Fiscal Year	Median Value	Median Tax	Change From Prior Yr	Average Value	Average Tax	Change From Prior Yr
2022	\$478,900	\$7,116	(\$431)	\$831,500	\$12,356	-\$497
2021	\$472,000	\$7,547	(\$155)	\$803,825	\$12,853	\$187
2020	\$489,000	\$7,702	\$839	\$804,169	\$12,666	\$589
2019	\$436,550	\$6,863	\$700	\$768,239	\$12,077	\$1,432
2018	\$411,400	\$6,163	(\$76)	\$710,615	\$10,645	\$264

FISCAL IMPACT: Not applicable beyond the FY 22 property tax levy that be maintained at \$25,134,939.

NEXT STEPS/TIMEFRAME: Vote the tax classification at the Classification Hearing held Monday, November 22, 2021 which will allow the second half FY 22 tax bills to be mailed on or before December 31, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption of a single tax rate of \$14.86 per \$1,000 of valuation for all classes of property for FY22.

PREPARED & PRESENTED BY: 
 Ross A. Vivori
 Principal Assessor

Date: 11-19-21

REVIEWED AND APPROVED: 
 Mark Pruhenski
 Town Manager

Date: 11-19-21



TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Great Barrington Fire District FY '22 Tax Classification Hearing November 22, 2021

BACKGROUND: At the Tax Classification Hearing the Fire District Prudential Committee shall vote to implement one or a combination of four classification options for distributing the tax levy among district property owners. The options are: 1.) Open Space Discount, 2.) Residential Exemption, 3.) Small Commercial Exemption and 4.) Single or Split Tax Rate. A vote to grant discounts or exemptions to specific property classes will result in a higher tax rate for non-qualifying property owners as the tax burden is shifted away from the exempted recipients. A vote in favor of more than one option will result in different tax rates for different property classes. **Regardless of the classification option(s) chosen the amount of the overall tax levy will not change.**

Historically, the Prudential Committee has endorsed the single tax rate option providing no exemption or discount to any one particular class of property. Voting a residential factor of 1.00 affirms a single tax rate and the proportionate sharing of the tax levy between all classes of property. Voting a residential factor of less than 1.00 would split the tax rate thereby shifting the tax burden away from the residential class and onto commercial, industrial and personal property owners. Two separate tax rates would be created; one, a lower tax rate for residential and open space ("RO") and another, higher tax rate, for commercial, industrial and personal property owners ("CIP"). Land enrolled in Ch. 61, 61A or 61B would be subject to the higher tax rate as it would be then classified as commercial.

- **Open Space Discount**

Open Space is defined as land maintained in an open or natural condition and must contribute significantly to the benefit and enjoyment of the public. This classification may not include land taxable under the provisions of Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B, land under a permanent conservation restriction or land held for the production of income. The Open Space Discount is up to 25% of the selected residential factor. By discounting a certain percentage of value attributable to Open Space the tax levy burden is shifted onto residential rate payers thereby increasing their tax rate. Presently, there are no lands classified as Open Space because those who might benefit receive a greater discount by enrolling in Chapter Lands.

- **Residential Exemption**

The *Residential Exemption* grants an exemption to property that is the principal residence or domicile of a taxpayer. The exemption amount cannot exceed 35% (\$156,272) of the average assessed value (\$446,493) of all residential class properties. Granting the exemption increases the residential tax rate as it shifts the tax burden, within the entire residential class, away from lower valued owner occupied dwellings to multi-family properties, apartment buildings, vacant land and non-domiciled property owners. Properties that are valued less than the breakeven will pay fewer taxes while those assessed higher will pay more. Currently, only fourteen of 351 Massachusetts communities grant Residential Exemptions. These communities tend to have a large number of apartment buildings (Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea) or a disproportionately large number of second homes (Cape Cod & the Islands communities).

- **Small Commercial Exemptions**

The *Small Commercial Exemption* may be applied to certain commercial properties whose assessment is less than \$1,000,000 and occupied by a business or businesses certified by the Department of Employment & Training as having no more than an average of ten employees in the previous year. If there is more than one business located within the property all must meet the requirements to qualify. If adopted, up to 10% of the assessed value of the eligible property would be exempt. The owner of the property is the direct beneficiary of the tax savings and is not required to pass any savings onto the tenants. The total gross value of the Small Commercial Exemption is redistributed to the non-qualifying commercial property owners in the form of a higher tax rate.

- **Single or Split Tax Rate**

Adopting a *Single Tax Rate* requires the Prudential Committee vote to maintain a residential factor of 1.00. A Single Tax Rate allows for all classes of property to pay their fair share of the tax levy with no advantage or additional burden meted out to any one particular property class. A split tax rate requires the Prudential Committee vote a residential factor of less than 1.00. The minimum residential factor for the Fire District as set by the Department of Revenue is .785988 and allows for a “CIP” shift of 1.50.

Notables for Fiscal Year 2022 Revaluation:

Total Taxable Value \$887,932,279

Class	FY 2022	FY 2021	Difference	% Change
Residential	\$ 621,791,427	\$ 547,816,766	\$ 73,974,661	+ 13.5%
Commercial	\$ 237,932,960	\$ 242,960,635	\$ - 5,027,675	-2.07%
Industrial	\$ 4,794,200	\$ 4,588,500	\$ 205,700	+ 4.48%
Personal Property	\$ 23,413,692	\$ 20,051,285	\$ 3,362,407	+ 16.77%
Total	\$ 887,932,279	\$ 815,417,186	\$ 72,515,093	+ 8.89%

Fire District total taxable real and personal property value for FY '22 is \$887,932,279, an increase of \$72,515,093 or 8.89% over the prior fiscal year.

Residential values increased \$73,974,661, or 13.5% from \$547,816,766 to 621,791,427.

Commercial values decreased \$5,027,675, or -2.07% from \$242,960,635, to 237,932,960.

Industrial values in increased \$205,700 or 4.48 % from \$4,588,500, to \$4,794,200. Personal property values increased \$3,362,407 or 16.77% from \$20,051,285 to \$23,413,692. Value increases are a result of new growth and the upward adjustments to cost tables so that assessed values more closely reflect sale prices.

Levy \$ 923,449.57 The total amount of money to be raised through taxation for FY'20 is \$923,449.57. The FY'22 tax levy increased \$342,832.46 or 59.05% from the prior year levy of \$580,617.11.

Tax Rate \$1.04 The tax rate is calculated by dividing the Fire District's **proposed FY'22 tax levy by the total value of all District taxable property or, \$923,449 ÷ \$887,932,279 = 0.00104 x 1000 = \$1.04. The District tax rate will increase by \$.31, from \$.73 to \$1.04 over last year's rate.**

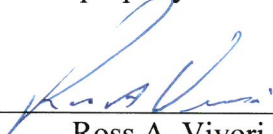
Average Single Family Home Value \$416,136 The District's average single family home value increased \$42,587 or 11.4% from \$373,549 in FY '19 to \$416,136. The same District home will see an increase \$160.00 from their prior year bill, going from \$272 to \$432

Average Commercial Property Value \$889,655 The District's average FY'22 commercial property value increased \$43,059 from \$846,596 to \$889,655. The average commercial bill will increase \$307. from \$618.00 to \$925.

FISCAL IMPACT: Not applicable beyond the FY'22 property tax levy that be maintained at \$923,449

NEXT STEPS/TIME FRAME: Vote the tax classification at the Classification Hearing held Monday November 22, 2021 which will allow the second half FY'22 tax bills to be mailed on or before December 31, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: The Fire District maintain a single tax rate of \$1.04 per \$1,000 of valuation for all classes of property for FY 2022.

PREPARED BY: 
Ross A. Vivori
Principal Assessor

DATE: 11/19/21

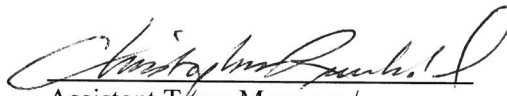
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

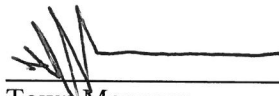
TITLE: Subordination of a lien imposed by FY14 Housing Rehabilitation Program
57 East Street

BACKGROUND: Through a FY14 CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Program, Great Barrington granted funds to income-qualifying homeowners who needed to make repairs to their homes to address structural, safety, and code issues. This was a regional program led by Great Barrington, with funds granted to homeowners in both Great Barrington and Sheffield. The Town of Great Barrington is the holder of all liens required under the program. Grants to homeowners are structured as deferred payment loans, under which the homeowners' obligation to repay the grant would decrease over a period of 15 years, at which time it would be forgiven.

One property with such a lien is 57 East Street, which received CDBG assistance in the amount of \$32,893 in 2015. The property owner is requesting that Great Barrington subordinate this lien to a new, refinanced mortgage. A refinanced mortgage will allow the owner to take advantage of low interest rates and have a lower monthly payment.

RECOMMENDATION: The Selectboard vote to subordinate the lien and authorize the Town Manager to sign the subordination document.

WRITTEN BY:  **DATE:** 11/15/21
Assistant Town Manager /
Director of Planning and Community Development

APPROVED BY:  **DATE:** 11/18/21
Town Manager

76

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Mass in Motion Partnership Agreement

BACKGROUND: The Northern Berkshire Community Coalition is seeking our Town's support in the next round of Mass in Motion funding (the main funding stream for Be Well Berkshires). The program implements municipal and regional practices for opportunities for active living and access to healthy and affordable food. If awarded, the funding will cover Be Well Berkshire activities in the following municipalities: North Adams, Adams, Williamstown, Pittsfield, Lee, Lenox, Stockbridge, Great Barrington and Sheffield.

Mass in Motion goals include: to address issues such as housing, employment, safety/violence reduction, economic development, etc. – influences known as the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) – that restrict or enable opportunities for active living and access to healthy and affordable food; to sustain the practices of municipal governments, organizations, and collaborative partners to address structural and systemic racism and other root cause barriers to good health; and to ensure everyone has access to healthy foods, opportunities for safe, physical activity, and the things that keep us healthy.

If funded, program coordinators from Be Well Berkshires will be available to support the Town of Great Barrington's equitable food access planning and related activities that are now ongoing through our Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant and our Strategic Sustainability and Livability Committee and, soon, through our Agricultural Planning grant and our Agricultural Commission.

RECOMMENDATION: The Selectboard vote to support this work and authorize the Chair of the Selectboard to sign the attached partnership agreement.

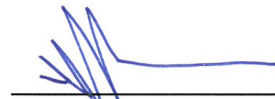
WRITTEN BY:


Assistant Town Manager /

DATE: 11/18/21

Director of Planning and Community Development

APPROVED BY:


Town Manager

DATE: 11-18-21

STEPHEN C. BANNON
CHAIR

LEIGH DAVIS
ED ABRAHAMAS
ERIC GABRIEL
GARFIELD REED



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TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

SELECTBOARD

November 22, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

The Town of Great Barrington agrees that our Town will participate in the proposal for the Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness & Leadership Initiative RFR submitted by Northern Berkshire Community Coalition. This agreement is evidence of our commitment to support the implementation of the requirements in this RFR if the application is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). We understand the program requirements and agree to:

- Support the lead applicant, as needed, to meet all administrative requirements detailed in the RFR and in-line with guidelines and annual calendar provided by MDPH upon award
- Work with the lead applicant, resident, and organizational partners to implement MDPH Mass in Motion if awarded
- Provide capacity to operationalize the approach, practices, and effort detailed in the RFR
- Advance and abide by the Principles for Promoting Racial Equity included as part of this RFR.

Thank you.

Chief Elected Official or Organization Chief Executive Officer/President:

Name: Stephen C. Bannon

Title: Chair, Selectboard

Signature and Date: _____, 11/22/2021