



**Town of Bernardston**  
**Board of Selectmen**

MEETING MINUTES: for the meeting of November 25, 2015

Select Board Members Present:  
Robert R. Raymond, Chairman  
Andrew Girard  
Stanley Garland

Others Present:  
Bill Young, Board of Assessors  
Russ Deane, Board of Assessors  
also see attached list.

Chairman Bob Raymond called the meeting to order at 6.01pm.

Bob announced the meeting was being broadcast by BNCTV.

**Warrants** (*week ending 11/20/2015*)

Bob asked for a motion to approve the Payroll Warrant in the amount of \$39,012.49. Motion by Stan, second by Andrew. Motion carried.

Bob requested a motion to approve the Vendor Warrant in the amount of \$119,571.07. Motion by Stan, second by Andrew. Motion carried. Bob stated that \$85,000 was paid toward the BES roof project and the purchase of a highway dump truck in 2012.

**Minutes**

Regular Meeting of November 10, 2015. Motion by Stan to approve as written, second by Andrew. Motion carried.

**Calendar & Announcements**

Bob read aloud including pre-applications are being sought by the Franklin County Housing Authority for the FY16 CDBG application for housing rehabilitation deferred loans.

**Building Permits**

None reported by the FCCIP.

**Citizen's Concerns**

None.

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### **Appointments**

#### 6.05pm Board of Assessors

Board of Assessors members Bill Young and Russell Deane met with the Board of Selectmen pursuant to a tax classification public hearing in accordance with MGL Chapter 58 section 1A. The advertisement notice is attached and part of the minutes herein. Chairman Bob Raymond opened the hearing at 6.06pm. The Board of Assessors voted at their meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup> to recommend to the Selectmen to adopt a single tax rate in the Town of Bernardston for FY16. The FY16 tax rate is expected to be \$19.46 per \$1,000 of valuation. This is an increase of 0.88c over the FY15 rate. Bill & Russ explained the Town underwent a revaluation resulting in approx. \$5million in less value and an increase in the Town expenditures, and a decrease in state revenues. Motion by Andrew to accept a single tax rate for the Town of Bernardston for FY16, second by Stan. Considerable discussion took place about how the reduce spending and increase revenue. Many Town expenses were discussed including the PVRSD assessment and capital expense plans for the next fiscal year, numerous 3<sup>rd</sup> party services, a comparison to surrounding municipality tax rates and the ability of local residents on fixed incomes to keep up with increasing tax burdens. Jane Dutcher, Finance Committee, noted that Town department budgets have been kept in check over the years but outside services and assessments have increased beyond the Town's control. Motion carried. Motion to close the hearing at 6.22pm by Stan, second by Andrew. Motion carried.

### **New Business**

#### 2016 Auto Sales Class II License Renewals

The following 2016 Class II auto sales licenses were considered for renewal:

- Beckwith's, 146 South St
- Deneault's Auto Sales, 888 Brattleboro Rd
- Bernardston Auto Wrecking, 164 Turners Falls Rd

Motion by Stan to approve all 3 Class II license renewals for 2016, second by Andrew. Motion carried.

The following 2016 Class III Junk Dealer license was considered for renewal:

- Bernardston Auto Wrecking, 164 Turners Falls Rd

Motion by Stan to approve the Class III license renewal for 2016, second by Andrew. Motion carried

#### Time-Off Request

Motion to approve by Stan, second by Andrew. Motion carried.

#### Entertainment License Renewal

The following 2016 Entertainment Licenses were considered for renewal:

- Kringle Candle Company, 220 South St
- The Farm Table Restaurant, 219 South St

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Motion by Stan to approve the Entertainment License renewals for 2016, second by Andrew. Motion carried

#### Solid Waste District

The FCSWMD is seeking a representative from Bernardston to attend quarterly meetings which have often coincided with Selectmen's meetings on Wednesday nights. The district has had difficulty obtaining a quorum for meetings. Bob asked of the FCSWMD could move their meeting dates to an alternate weeknight. Many district municipalities host their Selectmen's meetings on Mondays and Tuesdays so it may be hard for the district to accommodate the change. Bob announced the Town is seeking a representative and interested persons can contact the Selectmen's office.

#### PVRSD Offices

Bob reported on his attendance at a school committee meeting regarding mold and mildew being discovered in the PVRSD modular office buildings prompting a need to relocate personnel to an alternate location inclusive of records, supplies, furniture and equipment. A building in Northfield has been located at a monthly lease of \$3,000 with a right of first refusal to purchase the 4,500 sq. ft. property at a present asking price of \$450,000. The PVRSD offices have been subject of renovation or new construction in the recent past with a cost range of \$580,000 to over \$1million. The administration needs approx. 2,800sq ft. to meet an immediate need. SPED offices at BES will be moved to Northfield and the elementary education department will move to BES. Andrew asked if deferred maintenance of the modular building may have led to the manifestation of the mold problem speaking to the issue of who is responsible for maintenance versus capital expenditures. Stan mentioned this may be ideal time study Bernardston's withdrawal from PVRSD as a measure to control local education costs.

#### **Old Business**

##### 2016 Liquor License Renewals

The final 2 licenses were returned for local licensing authority approval as follows:

- Fall Town Sprints, 77 Church St
- Four leaf Clover Restaurant, 19 South St

Motion to approve the above listed liquor license renewal applications by Stan, second by Andrew. Motion carried.

#### **Colonial Power Group**

Town Counsel had reviewed the consulting contract between the Selectmen and Colonial Power Group for aggregated electricity rates and stated the contract was acceptable. The Aggregation Plan will require a 15-day public comment period before formal adoption by the Selectmen. A vote to

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adopt the plan is scheduled for December 15<sup>th</sup>. The plan will be posted on the Town's website in addition to a hard copy kept at Town Hall for inspection. Leo Sullivan from Colonial and Bernie Kubiak from the HCOG were on hand to field questions and explain the role of the HCOG in terms of public education. There is no cost to the Town for this program. Of approved by the state DPU, lower electric rates could be offered to the private sector in Bernardston by May 2016. Motion to sign the consulting contract with Colonial Power Group by Andrew, second by Stan. Motion carried.

### **Town Coordinator Report**

Hugh Campbell reported on the following:

Turners Falls Rd bridge – Stantec responded with clarification for the 9-ton weight restriction posted at the Turners Falls Rd bridge by stating their recommendation holds with a possible exception to a school bus if it met certain narrow criteria in terms of seating arrangements for an even distribution of weight. Andrew said the response was disappointing and does not answer their concerns fully. A full evaluation of the condition of the bridge and replacement cost options will be provided by Stantec by December 11<sup>th</sup>. Representatives from Stantec will be invited to the Selectmen's meeting on December 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the detail of the load bearing posting in more detail.

### Power Options – Landfill Solar Array

Copies of FY15 electric bills for the following locations were forwarded to PowerOptions relevant to the Board's inquiry to develop a solar array at the closed Bernardston landfill.

- Pioneer Valley High School
- PVRs pump house
- Northfield Elementary School
- Leyden Elementary School (Pearl Rhodes)
- Warwick Elementary School

### King Information Systems (KIS)

KIS will schedule an audit of town records in the spring of 2016. Several boxes have been added to the upstairs filing area to be filed and catalogued. KIS will perform this task for a \$500 fee. There is \$1,548 available in the line item to handle the cost.

### FY16 CDBG Application

The Franklin County Housing Authority reported the Powers Institute guttering project will require Mass Historic Commission approval before any work can take place on the building. In addition, an architect is likely needed to develop plans for the project. Both items would need to be in the CDBG application; a deadline that can't be met to include P.I. in the application.

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150 Fox Hill Rd

Contact was made the FRCOG about grants for studies to evaluate the water flow off of Fox Hill and into the village, specifically Cushman Park. Any studies would require the services of a civil engineer with a hydrology specialty to evaluate water tables, water flow patterns, saturation points, and storm water runoff impacts to the area.

Adjourn With no further business to be discussed, Andrew made a motion to declare the meeting adjourned at 7.08pm, Stan seconded. Motion carried.

Attest: Hugh Campbell, Town Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman  
Robert R. Raymond

\_\_\_\_\_, Member  
Andrew I. Girard

\_\_\_\_\_, Member  
Stanley D. Garland