

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
MONDAY, April 6, 2015**

Meeting was opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons, Mark Fairbrother, Chris Boutwell, Mike Nelson; Town Administrator, Frank Abbondanzio , Executive Assistant, Wendy Bogusz

Approve minutes of March 23 and 30, 2015 if available

Fairbrother makes the motion to approve the minutes of March 23, 2015. Seconded by Nelson, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye

Nelson makes the motion to approve the minutes of March 30, 2015. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye

Public Comment Period: Individuals will be limited to two (2) minutes each and the Board of Selectmen will strictly adhere to time allotted for public comment.

Mike Langknecht: You voted to renew the contract with MCTV and I was wondering if you will be contacting us and I also want to know if you have an estimated time of renewal on the Comcast contract.

Fairbrother: We will contact you shortly, and the CAC is meeting next Monday here with Comcast.

Personnel Board, Final interview of W. David Zagorski as Director of Assessing, If appointed Grade G, Step 1, \$55,194/year (Paul Emery, Board of Assessors)

Zagorski: Goes over credentials (resume attached), stated as discussed last week he is a few credits short on renewing his certification, but he plans on attending a class later this month, then he will send in the documentation and he will be certified.

Boutwell: Our first questions deal with your prior work history. After reviewing your resume and the information that you provided at our last meeting, there were some questions that we still have. One of the most obvious questions is what have you been doing since leaving your position in Beckett in May, 2014? There is nothing in your resume or in your presentation last week that addresses the last year of your work history.

Zagorski: I went from Beckett to City of Northampton, a lower position, Deputy Assessor, I had been there for 3 months then from there I did a lot of work for Roy Bishop who helps out the Towns with revals. Didn't feel the City of Northampton position was relevant to this position as it was a step down; that is why he didn't list it on his resume. They let me go due to the certification lapse. I had listed it on my resume that I was certified and they felt it was misrepresentation, so they let me go.

Boutwell: In reading some of the news clippings related to your latest position with the Town of Hatfield, the Board is concerned about some of the public discussion that took place in 2010. You indicated last week that you left because the position was restructured. The news articles suggest that there may have been performance problems in the department that impacted the town's ability to set its tax rate in a timely fashion. Would you care to comment on this statement?

Zagorski: That wasn't due to my doings. We were in a revaluation period and I was working with an outside vendor to get the values to DOR standards and one of the Assessors wasn't thrilled with the process and he was the one that threw a kink into the plans. Because of that I did go to DOR and say we had a board member who is jeopardizing the reval.

Boutwell: We know that the Assessors have addressed many, if not all, of the technical questions related to the knowledge and skills required to do this job. As Selectmen, however, we would like to know you will handle the following: Classification hearing process and your role with the Board of Selectmen.

Zagorski: The classification hearing itself is to establish single or split tax rate, the residential exemption, small commercial exemption and open space exemption if there were any.

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Boutwell: Describe your understanding of the tax rate classification process, how it relates to Board of Selectmen and your plans to ensure the timely setting and approval of the tax rate?

Zagorski: Work on it as soon as possible. I know the due dates and I like to be ahead of those due dates.

Boutwell: What would you see as the major advantages and obstacles to moving the town from a split tax rate to a single tax rate?

Zagorski: It certainly is easier to figure out taxes with a single tax rate but I understand the need for a split tax rate.

Boutwell: What is your understanding of the Districts in Montague and how do they make your position unique?

Zagorski: Similar to Beckett, I had 5 districts I had to set the tax rate for, so I know in Montague there are 5 districts as well, so the tax rate would be set on those as well.

Boutwell: Describe how you think your office relates to the Districts.

Zagorski: Basically setting the tax rate and establishing their value in order to set that tax rate.

Boutwell: What experience do you have working on a major appellate tax board cases?

Zagorski: I've gone to appellate tax board a few times, and have a pretty successful record. Basically preparing a case to present the onuses on the taxpayer to state why they feel our value is incorrect and basically I prepare a defense defending our values.

Boutwell: I know you have been acquainted over the past week with the town's current ATB cases. What do you see as the major tax impacts at stake here?

Zagorski: If the appellate tax board finds in favor of the appellee we could see a dramatic cost to the overlay which wouldn't affect the tax rate severely.

Boutwell: What strategy would you employ to increase the town's chances of prevailing in this case?

Zagorski: Hiring an outside vendor if totally necessary, getting an appraisal

Boutwell: The Assessor position is a key player in the financial management team. As such he/she is expected to work closely with other departments including the Town Accountant, Treasurer/Collector, and Town Administrator. Please describe evidence of your ability to work as a member of a team.

Zagorski: Basically, financial team meeting, setting the tax rate there is a number of things that are involved, meaning with the collector, the accountant to see what we have in the overlay, balancing to the overlay so we know what we need to request for an overlay. Working with the collector to see what is outstanding for taxes, tax title accounts, the accountant balancing.

Fairbrother: Curious who you replaced when you went to Hatfield? Zagorski responds Barbara Miller.

Nelson expresses concern regarding gap in work history and lack of transparency over the last year.

Zagorski responds it wasn't from lack of trying; unfortunately around here there are not a lot of jobs that open in this field. In the Eastern part of the State there is turnover plenty. I had applied to several positions in the Assessors field even as far as Grafton.

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Fairbrother makes the motion to appoint W. David Zagorski as Director of Assessing effective April 6, 2015, 35 hours per week, Grade G, Step 1, \$55,194/year. Seconded by Nelson. Defeated by Majority. Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother – Nay, Nelson - Nay

Miller states they only received 4 applicants that applied. Miller states she is worried what will happen with the Department.

The Board will be in touch with the Assessors to discuss plans further.

Town Administrators Report

Grant extension for use of public property at 104 Avenue A: items in front of store on the sidewalk protruding 4'8" x 22' length of the building; and use of the planter in front of Avenue A until April 14, 2015

Nelson feels it is important to have specific guidelines in place before any further action is taken.

Nelson makes the motion to grant the extension for use of public property at 104 Avenue A for items in front of store on the sidewalk protruding 4'8" x 22' length of the building; and use of the planter in front of Avenue A until April 14, 2015. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother - Aye

Madison: Confused about status of planter committee that wasn't planter committee. It is always referred as the Planter Committee. Boutwell states it is an ad-hoc. Madison doesn't feel he should have been told to remove items from the planter.

Discussion about planter committee, ad hoc committee, insurance, use of planter. These will be discussed next week

Request for appointment to Broadband Committee by Charles Kelley

Abbondanzio: The Broadband Committee was established by town meeting on May 4, 2013 with specific seats. The current vacancies are CAC liaison and legal expert. Defined seats are: Member of the CAC, residents of Taylor Hill Road, resident of Chestnut Hill Road, Technical representative and representative of the Industrial Park.

Kelley wants to be appointed as the Industrial Park liaison. He will speak to the businesses in the Industrial Park and get back to the Board.

Need to find out what position Kelley was appointed to

Rob Steinberg: Last week Mr. Kelley was disruptive at their meeting, wants to go in a different direction than where the board is headed and at least 3 members are opposed to this appointment

J. Reynolds feels it would be best if Mr. Kelley was not on the committee but showed up as a citizen

Fairbrother moves to appoint Charles Kelley to the Broadband Committee, seconded by Nelson.

Motion withdrawn

Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting requirements

Spring parade 2 weeks from now April 18, 2015

Nelson made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 PM. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell- Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother - Aye