

## **MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

October 26, 2020

Recorded from Town Hall, 139 Main Street, Rowley, MA

1:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Cliff Pierce; Vice Chairman Joseph Perry; Clerk Deana M.P. Ziev; David Petersen; Robert Snow (Town Administrator Deborah Eagan, Assistant Town Administrator Amy Lydon)

### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chairman Pierce called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. He read the following:

Consistent with the Governor's orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law this meeting will be conducted by remote participation to the greatest extent possible. The public may not physically attend this meeting, but every effort will be made to allow the public to view and listen to the open session portion of the meeting in real time. Persons who wish to do so are invited to watch the open session portion of the meeting on Rowley Community Media TV / listen live on the RCM page on the Town's website at [www.townofrowley.net](http://www.townofrowley.net) or join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone by using the link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/261388101> can also dial in using your phone by calling [+1 \(312\) 757-3121](tel:+13127573121) and using access code 261-388-101. In the event that live transmission proves infeasible, an audio or video recording, transcript or other comprehensive record of the open session portion of the meeting will be made available on the Town's website as soon as possible.

### **1:00 p.m. JOINT MEETING BOARD OF ASSESSORS - TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING**

Chairman Pierce called the Joint Meeting with the Board of Assessors to order by calling for a motion to open the joint meeting by a roll call vote. Bob Snow so moved, Joe Perry second, all in favor, roll call vote— Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

Chairwoman D'Angeli called the Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen to order by calling for a motion to open the joint meeting by a roll call vote. Diane D'Angeli so moved, Jami Snow second, all in favor, roll call vote— Jami Snow – aye; Diane D'Angeli – aye; Don Thurston – aye.

Joint meeting opened at 1:04 p.m.

Chairman Pierce reads the Tax Classification Hearing Notice into the record and stated that that notice of this public hearing was published in the October 15, 2020 edition of The Daily News.

Chairman Pierce called for a motion of the Board of Selectmen to open the tax classification hearing, by a roll call vote of the Board of Selectmen. Bob Snow so moved, Deana Ziev second, all in favor, roll call vote– Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

Chairwoman D’Angeli called for a motion to open the tax classification hearing by a roll call vote of the Board of Assessors. Diane D’Angeli so moved, Jami Snow second, all in favor, roll call vote– Jami Snow – aye; Diane D’Angeli – aye; Don Thurston – aye.

Tax classification hearing opened at 1:07 p.m.

Chairman Pierce called upon the Board of Assessors to make a presentation on the classification of the tax rates and a recommendation for fiscal year 2021.

Principle Assessor Sean McFadden said there is an interim adjustment each year on all valuations, and last year it was substantial. He said this year it is not as dramatic, despite the hot real estate market. He said most style homes are increasing 1-3%, with ranches and splits increasing 5%. He said overall there is a 95% assessment to full value ratio. He said 2019 and some 2020 sales data was used. He said condos changed by 2%, but differed between complexes. He said the complex on Morphew Avenue had three sales out of twelve units, and their assessments decreased by 5%. He said the complex at Pingree Farms had units that originally sold for different prices, and nine went up by 7%. He said Fox Meadow had an increase of 9% based on the sales analysis.

McFadden said in FY20, the average single family home value was \$479,796 versus \$482,379 in FY21. He said the tax rate is increasing \$.06 from \$15.58 to \$15.64, but this is a fluid number until this is certified by the State. He said the tax bill for an average single family home will increase by \$69.18, but there are outliers who will see an increase more than this average. He said the new growth was \$6,000,000, which is decent given the Coronavirus shut-downs.

McFadden said the purpose of the Tax Classification Hearing is to determine if there will be a flat tax rate of 15.64, or if the Board wishes to shift the tax rate to the commercial properties. He said the Town is allowed to shift the rate if there is 10% or more commercial properties, and he reviewed the numbers with the various levels of shifts. He said he recommends a shift once we have 25% or more of a commercial property base, but this is a decision for the Board of Selectmen.

Petersen said he recommends that the Town keep a single tax rate. He said COVID has been tough on homeowners, but it has also been tough on businesses, and we want to encourage business in Town. Pierce agreed.

Dave Petersen moved that the Town keep a single tax rate, Bob Snow second. The vote was not completed. Pierce asked if there were any questions about this from the audience. There were no questions.

Bob Snow moved that the Town keep a single tax rate. The vote was not completed.

Bob Snow moved to close the Public Hearing, Joe Perry second, all in favor, roll call vote– Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

Diane D'Angeli moved to close the Public Hearing, Jami Snow second, all in favor, roll call vote– Jami Snow – aye; Diane D'Angeli – aye; Don Thurston – aye.

Public Hearing closed at 1:16 p.m.

Bob Snow moved to have a single tax rate, Joe Perry second, all in favor, roll call vote– Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

Diane D'Angeli moved to have a single tax rate, Jami Snow second, all in favor, roll call vote– Jami Snow – aye; Diane D'Angeli – aye; Don Thurston – aye.

Joe Perry moved to close the Joint Meeting with the Board of Assessors, Bob Snow second, all in favor, roll call vote– Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

Diane D'Angeli moved to close the Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen, Jami Snow second, all in favor, roll call vote– Jami Snow – aye; Diane D'Angeli – aye; Don Thurston – aye.

**1:20 p.m. APPOINTMENT** Neal Duffy, Regional Coordinator, Green Communities, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources to discuss the Fuel Efficiency Policy and Green Communities Program

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*We are working towards satisfying the five criterion required for the Town of Rowley to be designated as a Green Community. The deadline for the Town's application to be designed as a Green Community is December 30, 2020.*

*Criterion 4 of the Green Communities Program states that communities must purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable. The purpose behind this criterion is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by municipal vehicles, which has a positive impact on the environment and saves municipalities money.*

*Attached is the draft Town of Rowley Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy, along with the Criterion 4 guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. Please note that certain vehicles, including heavy-duty vehicles (fire trucks, and some public works trucks) and police cruisers are currently exempt from this policy.*

*This policy has been reviewed by Department Heads with Town owned vehicles in their departments, (Water Superintendent, Light Department Manager, Health Director, Cemetery Supervisor, Highway Surveyor, COA Board Chairman, Police Chief and Fire Chief). These Department Heads confirmed that they do not have any issues with this draft policy.*

*Neal Duffy, from the state Massachusetts Green Communities Program, is attending this virtual meeting to discuss the requirement for the Town to adopt a Fuel Efficient Policy and to provide an update on the Town's application to become a Green Communities Program.*

Neal Duffy thanked the Board for their time today and their work on this application. He said there are five criterion to become a Green Community and he has been working with Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and the Selectmen's Office staff on this for the past several months. He said criteria one and two have been met, pertaining to zoning. He said criteria four is the adoption of this policy and criteria five is to adopt the Stretch Code, which has been done. He said that leaves criteria three, which is being worked on now, building audits are complete and the baseline is being worked on. He said the Town should be in good shape to apply for designation on time. He said the designation grant is \$125,000 and is based on population and per capita income. He said after the designation grant, we will be eligible to compete for grants of up to \$200,000 to be used for energy efficiency measures for Town facilities. He said he can answer any questions the Board has. Pierce said the policy seems reasonable and it should be considered even if the Green Communities designation process wasn't happening. Petersen thanked Duffy, who previously discussed this project with the Board, and he thanked the office staff, MVPC and Duffy for doing a great job working towards this designation.

Pierce read the following:

*If the Board is satisfied with the draft policy, please vote to adopt the policy and to authorize Chairman Pierce to sign a letter to the State documenting that the Town of Rowley has adopted a Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy.*

Bob Snow moved to adopt the Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy and to authorize Chairman Pierce to sign a letter to the State, Deana Ziev second, all in favor, roll call vote— Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

## **ELECTION BUSINESS**

1. Early Voting Schedule – Rowley Town Hall, 139 Main Street

- October 26 – 12:00 p.m.(Noon) to 8:00 p.m.
- October 27 – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- October 28 – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- October 29 – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- October 30 – 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.(Noon)

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*Early voting for the November 3 Election continues this week through Friday at Town Hall*

*The schedule is as follows:*

- *October 26 – 12:00 p.m.(Noon) to 8:00 p.m.*
- *October 27 – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*
- *October 28 – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*
- *October 29 – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*
- *October 30 – 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.(Noon)*

2. Early Voting at Town Hall ends at noon on Friday, October 30, 2020.

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*Early Voting at Town Hall ends at noon on Friday, October 30, 2020.*

3. Tuesday, November 3, 2020 Election Day voting hours at St. Mary's Hall is 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*Tuesday, November 3, 2020 Election Day voting hours at St. Mary's Hall is 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.*

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

1. Massachusetts Department of Transportation informational website on the Route 1 at Central/Glen Streets Improvements.

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has set up a virtual online meeting and informational website on the Route 1, Central and Glen Streets project. Please note that instead of a live remote meeting on a specific date or time, MassDOT has set*

*this up as a virtual online meeting, where attendees can participate at their convenience through November 15<sup>th</sup>. This information detailed below about this has been posted to the Announcements and Current Projects sections of the Town's website, to the local access television channels, and MassDOT has posted physical flyers with this information at various locations in Town.*

The link to the virtual online meeting is: [www.tiny.cc/RowleyInt](http://www.tiny.cc/RowleyInt)

The link to the informational website is:

<http://tiny.cc/MassDOTRowleyIntersection>

**Safety Improvements at Route 1, Central and Glen Streets project - Virtual Online Meeting and Informational Website**

*MassDOT is conducting a virtual online meeting to receive feedback about their proposed project for Safety Improvements at Route 1, Central and Glen Streets. Comments about this project can be submitted through the virtual online meeting through November 15, 2020. The link to the virtual online meeting is: [www.tiny.cc/RowleyInt](http://www.tiny.cc/RowleyInt) [Click here for the flyer for this online virtual meeting.](#) MassDOT has created an informational website about their proposed project for Safety Improvements at Route 1, Central and Glen Streets. The purpose of the informational website is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Safety Improvements at Route 1, Central and Glen Streets project. All views and comments submitted in response to the informational website will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible by the MassDOT. For more information about this MassDOT project, please visit the informational website: <http://tiny.cc/MassDOTRowleyIntersection>*

2. Request for unpaid leave of absence submitted by Ameyla Sabatini

Chairman Pierce read the memo from Deborah Eagan about this request.

Dave Petersen moved to approve this unpaid leave of absence request, Deana Ziev second, all in favor, roll call vote— Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

3. Accept donation of labor from J. Cotter Electric Service, Inc. for repairs made at Town Hall Annex and Town Hall

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*Jim Cotter of J. Cotter Electric Service, Inc. graciously donated labor for repairs to a light fixture at the Annex and an electrical outlet at Town Hall.*

*Please vote to accept this donation. Does the Board wish to send Mr. Cotter a thank-you note?*

Joe Perry moved to accept this donation and to send a thank-you letter, Bob Snow second, all in favor, roll call vote– Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Sign lease with SBA Steel LLC for lease of land for wireless communication facility

Chairman Pierce read the following:

*On September 21, 2020 the Board voted to award the lease of land off Smith Lane for a wireless communications facility to SBA. The Town received one response to a Request for Proposals issued on August 19, 2020.*

*The lease agreement has been reviewed by Town Counsel Tom Mullen and has been signed by SBA Steel LLC.*

*Now the Board needs to vote to approve the lease and authorize Chairman Cliff Pierce to sign it.*

Bob Snow moved to approve the lease and authorize Chairman Pierce to sign it, Dave Petersen second, all in favor, roll call vote– Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

### **MINUTES:** October 5, 2020

Bob Snow moved to approve the minutes of October 5, 2020, Dave Petersen second, all in favor, roll call vote– Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. Halloween Trick-or-Treating, Saturday, October 31 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Please see Town website for COVID-19 requirements. Trick-or-treaters are asked not to approach any household that does not have exterior lights on.
2. Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day for Town residents on Saturday, November 7, 2020 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Rowley Highway Department, 40 Independent Street

## **ADJOURN**

Chairman Pierce called for a motion to adjourn. Bob Snow so moved, Deana Ziev second, all in favor – aye- roll call vote – Bob Snow – aye; Joe Perry – aye; Dave Petersen – aye; Deana Ziev – aye; Cliff Pierce – aye.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Lydon  
Assistant Town Administrator

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Meeting memo regarding 1:00 p.m. Joint Meeting Board of Assessors - Tax Classification Hearing
2. Tax Classification Hearing Notice
3. Tax Classification Hearing Notice advertised in Newburyport Daily News
4. Presentation spreadsheets from Board of Assessors for Fiscal Year 2021 Tax Classification Hearing
5. Meeting memo regarding 1:20 p.m. Appointment: Neal Duffy, Regional Coordinator, Green Communities, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources to discuss the Fuel Efficiency Policy and Green Communities Program
6. Draft Town of Rowley Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy
7. Guidance from Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources regarding Criterion 4 – Fuel Efficient Vehicles
8. Meeting memo regarding Election Business #1: Early Voting Schedule – Rowley Town Hall, 139 Main Street
9. Meeting memo regarding Election Business #2: Early Voting at Town Hall ends at noon on Friday, October 30, 2020.
10. Meeting memo regarding Election Business #3: Tuesday, November 3, 2020 Election Day voting hours at St. Mary's Hall is 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
11. Meeting memo regarding General Business #1: Massachusetts Department of Transportation informational website on the Route 1 at Central/Glen Streets Improvements.
12. Meeting memo regarding General Business #2: Request for unpaid leave of absence submitted by Ameyla Sabatini
13. Memo from the Personnel Department regarding unpaid leave of absence request submitted by Ameyla Sabatini, including enclosures
14. Meeting memo regarding General Business #3: Accept donation of labor from J. Cotter Electric Service, Inc. for repairs made at Town Hall Annex and Town Hall
15. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #1: Sign lease with SBA Steel LLC for lease of land for wireless communication facility
16. Lease with SBA Steel LLC for lease of land for wireless communication facility
17. Draft minutes of October 5, 2020
18. Meeting memo regarding Announcements



