

TOWN OF WILTON

SELECT BOARD MEETING

WILTON FIRE STATION

DATE: Monday, November 5, 2018

TIME: 6: 30 PM

PRESENT: Chairwoman Kellie-Sue Boissonnault, Selectman Kermit R. Williams, Selectman Matthew S. Fish, Town Administrator Paul C. Branscombe, Administrative Assistant Janice Pack

Chairwoman Boissonnault opened the meeting and invited everyone to join her for the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

MACC BASE AGREEMENT SIGNING - Mr. Branscombe told the Board that Mont Vernon had invited him to come with the contract for them to sign tonight. As he is unable to be in two places at once, Chief Olesen agreed to bring the contract to Mont Vernon; he is very familiar with the MACC Base Agreement. Chairwoman Boissonnault said that all of the Select Board members would plan to attend the MACC Base Meeting to be held on the 14th in Milford.

TODD HAYWOOD, ASSESSOR - Selectman Williams asked Todd if we were all up to date in terms of the tax card entries. Todd said that we do 20% each year, and we are up to date except for the ones that have been just completed. We did the pickups, and those were entered. For the 20%, we just need to update the data that is already in the system. These need to be in before the first tax bill of 2019, but cannot be done until the new tax rate is set. Next we'll be working on the equalization ratio study which is due December 15th. Then early in 2019 we'll begin abatements.

Selectman Williams said it has always concerned him that we value properties that we're not going to collect any taxes on; it doesn't make any difference on the money we're collecting for the town, but it does make a difference to the county. Todd said there is a land code that does identify those properties as exempt, and so they would not be included for tax rate setting. Selectman Williams asked if everyone we provide abatement for, like the little park across the street and the Masons, are included? Todd said yes.

Selectman Williams asked how we can update our tax map. He is concerned that we have some errors. One was identified this year: there was a plan to do a development and the person thought he had a parcel to build additional houses on but it actually turned out to be town property. Todd said that the tax maps should've been updated recently. The Planning Board gives them the changes, and NRPC does the updates.

Selectman Fish said we shouldn't rely on tax maps for that information, we should rely on the survey; he said that in the case Selectman Williams was speaking about, it was a very poor, sloppy survey and the surveyor should've been reported to the Surveyor Licensing Board. Todd said that we could have the town remapped, and deed research done, but it could be pricey. Selectman Fish said that our maps are increasing in accuracy as when changes are made, these are noted. Todd

said that as we acknowledge these changes, we forward them to the mappers to correct. Selectman Fish asked what the benefit would be in spending that kind of money to do the deed research; Todd said that when Lyndeborough recently did this, a lot of acreage that was reassessed; there had been tax dollars that were not being collected. Todd said that assessments are an annual event, and you have 4 months after the tax bills go out to appeal.

The transfer to Vision's upgrade (V-8) or Avitar was discussed. Todd uses both software systems. At the end of the year, the Vision software we are currently using will no longer be supported and we will either need to pay a substantial amount to upgrade, or switch to Avitar. There are pros and cons to both. It doesn't make sense to have to enter things twice the way we are doing it now. Vision charges less for the bare bones option, but if we want to go back into the history base, it would add \$2200 for each year of history. While the history doesn't have to be kept, we have been paying to keep it so far. Todd would like to retain at least one year.

Switching to Avitar would mean that Avitar would convert the properties. The next 5 year valuation would be done soon, so that wouldn't be a huge issue. There is the issue of moving data, and the issue of compatibility.

Selectman Williams stated that the Vision system was tied into NRPC's GIS database; Todd said that we give that report to the state, so it would be the same with either company. Todd said we pay Vision annually to host on the website; Avitar has similar extracts. Mr. Branscombe said he'd want everyone to be on the same page, and we will ask Avitar come in to present, and include Michele and Norma as Avitar has a Building Permit package, too.

Todd asked if the 2 lots that the Fire Station is on could be merged. Selectman Fish will take care of that with Jim Lavacchia and the Planning Board.

Selectman Fish asked about 79D and 79F. He said that typically barns sit on a piece of land where they have a disproportionate assessment. 79F allows for agricultural land underneath barns to be placed into current use. Todd said that 79D is at the Selectmen's discretion and doesn't have to be voted on at Town Meeting; it protects the structure and design. 79F may be more advantageous to the taxpayer as it allows you to assess the land underneath the barn, giving the opportunity to access the land at a lower rate; this would have to be adopted at Town Meeting.

Selectman Fish asked Todd how many landowners would benefit from 79F. Selectman Williams asked if it had to be an active farm; Todd said livestock or logs, fruit, etc. He said that Lyndeborough adopted this a few years ago. Todd agreed that it was a significant burden in Matt's case to be accessed almost the same for a 30 acre lot with just a barn on it as his neighbor with the large house on a same size lot. Selectman Fish would like this Board to put forth a warrant article to adopt 79F. Chairwoman Boissonnault asked to discuss this at another meeting. Selectman Williams said looking at 79F, the qualifying structure has to be used to store livestock or wood or crops and he wondered if it would include certain property owners in Town. Todd said that it does have to be an active farm, but the Board would have the opportunity to review each request.

FUND BALANCE POLICY - This form has been brought before the Board several times and has not yet been adopted. It has been revised once again. Selectman Williams said that his objection to this is that it sets something in place that sets a policy that previously was the current Board's purview. It has been a decision that each Board makes each year, and he doesn't like the idea of

this Board telling future Boards what to do. Mr. Branscombe said that it could always be revised again. Selectman Fish asked for a brief synopsis of the policy. Mr. Branscombe said that it protects the Town from going below a certain level of emergency funds in the Fund Balance. Chairwoman Boissonnault said that we have found that this town has not put a lot of policies into place, and she is in favor of it. Selectman Williams said that DRA already requires us to meet certain guidelines. The unassigned fund balance is money that is not otherwise allocated. It's like a rainy day fund. The main use of the unassigned fund balance has been to modify the tax rate. The Select Board is allowed to take a portion of the unassigned fund balance to lower the tax rate. **Chairwoman Boissonnault made a motion that we accept the Fund Balance Policy. Selectman Fish seconded. Chairwoman Boissonnault and Selectman Fish were in favor; Selectman Williams abstained. Motion passed.** The Fund Balance Policy was signed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

Mr. Branscombe shared the ordinance which was put together by Sergeant Frechette and Kelly St. Pierre. These are ready for next week's Public Hearing. He shared the binder which contains all local ordinances currently in effect in the Town. Chairwoman Boissonnault said it would be good for the Board to each have a copy.

Jamie Dow from DRA will be here tomorrow at 2:00 PM to meet with Mr. Branscombe and the Select Board. The point of the meeting is to discuss the Ambulance Revolving Fund and how we need to fix a few things that have not been done the way they were intended to be done. Selectman Williams said the MS-535 should've been done last April; the tax rate cannot be set without Jamie's acceptance.

Reps from Ricoh will be coming in tomorrow to talk about scanning. We did encumber the funds for this project, and now need to move forward with it.

Mr. Branscombe handed out information for the Board to review on Melanson & Heath; a brochure of their qualifications and what they do. They were our auditors many years ago. He also reached out to Plodzik & Sanderson who said they would consider an RFP if we put one out. Apparently they did a single audit that the Board refused to pay for about 11 years ago. Mr. Branscombe would like the Board's blessing to put out an RFP; Chairwoman Boissonnault said she is in favor of that.

Kevin Veratti from SAU 63 cannot take on our IT work at this time. Allan Treadwell from Twin Bridge Services will be here on Thursday morning to give us a proposal. Alexis Pittman came in today and spoke to us about doing our IT Services. He also handles IT services for the Town of Harrisville and High Mowing School. He said he would charge us \$125/hour. Selectman Williams said he knows Alexis very well, and he would feel comfortable with him doing our IT work.

The Inter-Municipal Agreement is ready for signing. On Wednesday the Town of Lyndeborough will be signing it, and then it will be brought to the other towns for signature. This Agreement was signed by the Select Board.

Mr. Branscombe shared an email from Jim Lavacchia who was disappointed about the answer from the DOT on our crosswalks. He thought it might be a good idea to have a traffic study done. This would give us the ammunition to go back to the DOT and try again to get the crosswalks put in. Chairwoman Boissonnault said it was very disappointing that the DOT wasn't taking more interest in this safety issue.

Financial Procedures Policy – this was revised again after a conversation with the Town Treasurer. **Selectman Williams moved we adopt this as printed. Selectman Fish seconded. All were in favor; motion passed.** This document was signed.

Chairwoman Boissonnault asked if in Mr. Branscombe's opinion, the Select Board had succeeded in putting policies in place, and Mr. Branscombe said "Yes".

Melissa from Cupcakes 101 has asked Norma for a reduction in the permit fee for the sign she would like to put up. Because this is in the Commercial District, the fee is \$100. The brackets are already up. This would set precedence; is this grandfathered? Selectman Fish said that because the Planning Board has spent so much time on signs over the past years, he feels that we should not waive this. Perhaps the Planning Board should revisit the permit fee. Selectman Williams said he would not object to reducing the fee to \$50 because it is a small sign, 20" by 30". Selectman Fish said as long as we're going to do this with everyone going forward so it's fair. Selectman Williams said he would be happy to encourage retail businesses to put up signs. Chairwoman Boissonnault said perhaps we should revise the cost structure. **Selectman Williams moved to reduce the fee for this sign application to \$50. Chairwoman Boissonnault seconded. All were in favor; motion passed.** Mr. Branscombe will advise Norma, and he will ask her to speak to the Planning Board to look into revising the sign permit fee schedule.

Mr. Branscombe shared an email he had received from a former employee with the Board. His thought is that there is nothing further to discuss. An action was made, and the Board stands by it. Chairwoman Boissonnault said that it was clear, case closed, nothing to rehash as a decision has been made.

SELECT BOARD ITEMS

Selectman Williams wanted to talk about the issue with the gravel and the land next to the wells and the Quinn's pit. He has done some research on that. The town used the reservoir and was told that we needed to drill wells. That particular part of town is a drift aquifer and the Quinns came along in 2004 and asked to lease a piece of the land that the Water Commission purchased with ratepayer money. The land is titled in the name of the Town. Selectman Williams said the agreement was that the money would go to the Water Commission to potentially purchase land from the Quinns.

Selectman Fish said what caught his attention was that Selectman Williams asserted that the Water Commission could not own land or assets when presented with a bill for the dam. Chairwoman Boissonnault said that the Water Commission is still covered under the Town. Selectman Williams said the reservoir is not something that the Water Commission uses now or will ever use. He said if he believed that the Water Commission still controlled that property, he would suggest that they sell it, but as things stand now, it's Town property and should be used for the benefit of the residents of the town. Selectman Fish said it was concerning that a Town entity has a title to any property. Selectman Williams said that the water system is owned by the Town

of Wilton. However, the state government took some elements of the Charter and turned it into law. Commissioners of the water system are authorized to raise money for the operation of the system without having to get permission from the Select Board. Chairwoman Boissonnault said by her understanding when the Town took over the reservoir the water commission should've had that body of water relabeled so it wouldn't be considered a water source. If the water commissioners had taken care of that problem, then there might not be this letter of deficiency. The Water Commissioners should've taken responsibility to have it reclassified so it wouldn't have become a burden to the taxpayers.

Selectman Fish said that he agrees that each Board has the right to make the decisions that they do, but the rules haven't changed and there still isn't clarity. The opinions change but the facts do not. He wants to know if there could be a clear delineation between the two. Mr. Branscombe said that the Water Commission IS the Town of Wilton, much like the Select Board is the governing board of the Town of Wilton. Selectman Williams said he would like to have our new lawyers review the Charter of the Water Commission and to give advice as to how the Water Commission relates to the Town of Wilton. Tom Shultz had noted there are about 100 houses in the Town of Milford who are served by the Town of Wilton. Chairwoman Boissonnault asked if that part of the legal bill would be paid for by the Water Commission; Selectman Williams said he was sure that the Water Commission would pay for half of the legal bill for providing this review. Selectman Fish asked what has changed since 2008; Chairwoman Boissonnault said that we inherited the land AND the letter of deficiency. Chairwoman Boissonnault said that the Water Commission has paid the \$750 dam registration bill every year until this past year. She wanted to know why that changed.

Selectman Fish said he's working up by Stagecoach Road and he's explained the situation update there to residents; instead of closing the road, they're building a bridge.

Chief Olesen brought back the signed copy of the MACC Base Agreement. He said that Jason Johnson was at Mont Vernon's meeting tonight, and they'd like Mr. Branscombe to draft a letter regarding the extension of the contract. Mr. Branscombe will contact Laurie in Mont Vernon about the letter. Chief Olesen said that someone was making remarks on the Milford PD Facebook page about the equipment. Joe Torre joined the table; he is a former member of the MACC Board. He said that for 4 years the new equipment line has been zero because of Milford's vote. There has been no new equipment purchased for 4 years. The budget process has not been supported by Milford. The 5 year Inter-Municipal Agreement is expiring. Milford sent a set of changes they wanted to have made which would give them more flexibility; Wilton and Mont Vernon want to move forward with an agreement and they feel that Milford would like to extend the current agreement for a year to buy some time and bring this before their Town Meeting to find out what the Town wants to do. Joe said his opinion is that MACC base exists for the next 10 years because there is an agreement between 2 towns. The current agreement says that Milford must give at least a year's notice. Selectman Williams said that we don't have another option right now. Chairwoman Boissonnault said that's why it's important for all to attend the MACC base meeting on the 14th.

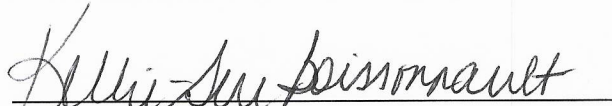
APPROVALS – MINUTES, MANIFESTS, SIGNATURE FILE

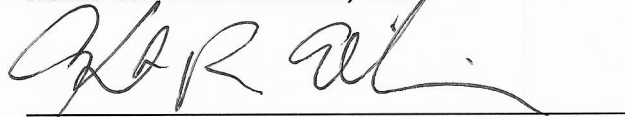
Chairwoman Boissonnault said that the Select Board needs to appoint the ballot inspectors, which is a position that needs to be held for 2 years. **Chairwoman Boissonnault motioned to appoint Bill Condra, Bridget Mooney and Cheri Falk as ballot inspectors; a 2-year position. Selectman Fish seconded. All were in favor; motion passed.**


Chairwoman Boissonnault let Selectman Fish know that she had spoken to the attorney for clarification on Selectman Williams being present during voting. He confirmed that Selectman Williams is allowed to be there but because he is on the ballot, he is not allowed to handle the ballots. Selectman Fish said that he had received confirmation from the Moderator that he was not concerned with Selectman Williams being there, or with having continuous Select Board coverage during the process.

Selectman Williams motioned to adjourn, Selectman Fish seconded. All were in favor; motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:13 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:
Janice Pack, Administrative Assistant


Kellie-Sue Boissonnault, Chair


Kermit R. Williams


Matthew S. Fish