

Select Board
November 17, 2022
Via Zoom Remote Conferencing*

Approved on December 15, 2022 by SW and RC

Stanley Wysocki
Robert Czekanski
Not Present: Emily Winner

Don Lowe, Town Administrator
Jenny Jacobsen, Town Secretary

Mr. Wysocki called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was recorded.

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Czekanski the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 to open a public hearing to make a determination on the factor to be used among the classes of real property, residential, open space, commercial and industrial, and of personal property for the Fiscal Year 2023 tax rate. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

Alex Cervone, the new principal assessor introduced himself to the Board but explained that David Manzello was in attendance and would take the lead in presenting the information to help the Select Board determine whether to have a split tax rate.

Mr. Manzello shared a presentation with the Board to explain the numbers that go into determining the tax levy for the Town. The proposed levy is \$25,241,665 which represents a 4.6% increase over prior year's levy with an excess levy limit of \$104,485. New growth is down again to \$254,472.

The residential property values are nearly 94.6% of our tax burden in town. FY23 values have increased by 21%. FY23 values are based on 2021 sales. Changes in the market would not affect the valuations until FY24 since they are based on a retrospective market.

Mr. Manzello went on to explain that the average single family sale price increased from \$592,800 to \$712,200. Based on the proposed tax rate of 17.50% it would increase the average tax bill by \$685 even with the drop in the tax rate.

Mr. Manzello noted that shifting to a split tax rate would hurt the local farmers since properties in chapter would be considered commercial and would be subject to the commercial tax rate. The Board of Assessors recommended that the Select Board adopt a tax rate of 17.5% with a residential shift factor of 1.00 with a corresponding CIP factor of 1.00.

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 in accordance with M.G.L Chapter 40 Section 56 as amended the percentage of local tax levy which will be born by each class of real and personal property relative to setting the FY23 tax rates and set the residential factor at 1.000 with a corresponding CIP shift factor of 1.000 pending certification of the Town's annual tax recap by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 to close the public hearing. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

Mr. Wysocki asked Mr. Manzello to discuss the impact the estimated borrowing for the school building project would have on the average tax bill.

Mr. Lowe explained that he asked Mr. Manzello to perform the calculations based on a request from the school business manager as an exercise as part of the MSBA process. The assumptions were based on the the current estimated project cost and based on the current approved concept using the high end of the range. The towns were asked to use a 5.5% interest rate as part of the exercise.

Mr. Czekanski did not believe that the numbers were reliable to go to the public with and opined that it was not an appropriate exercise at this point in the process. The final number will not be in until late next summer. Mr. Czekanski went on to explain that the discussion should include what would happen to the tax rate if the school failed to be recertified. Without major changes to the school, he added, the recertification of the school is in danger.

Mr. Wysocki agreed that the cost could fluctuate but suggested that it would be prudent with the rough estimate that we have and the figure provided by the school committee for an interest rate to provide early information to the tax payers.

Mr. Manzello agreed with Mr. Czekanski that the numbers are very fluid. Bolton's share of the borrowing would be \$40,673,356. On a one-year debt exclusion we would be adding \$2,771,266. If this amount were added to the proposed FY23 tax rate it would go from \$17.5 to \$19.42. The average tax bill would increase by \$1,368.31.

Mr. Czekanski commented that if the focus is only on the cost aspect of the project, then there is a responsibility to come up with an alternative that is cheaper that addresses all of the issues at the high school.

2022 GOBBLER ROAD RACE

Adrienne Hoey was in attendance to request approval to hold the 2022 Gobbler Road Race on Thursday, November 24th, 2022. Ms. Hoey had trouble with her sound. The Board reviewed the request in the packet. The race received the approval from the police chief and coordination has been done with the Stow police department.

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 to approve the race as requested. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

BOLTON ACCESS TELEVISION

Nicki McGachey of Bolton Access Television was in attendance to request release of the operation funds for Q3. Ms. McGachey reported that the fall has been very busy noting that in-person events are picking up, noting the veteran's day program, a few concerts, several COA events, and the Parks and Recreation Halloween parade.

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 to release the Q3 operation funds in the amount of \$26,005.47 to Bolton Access Television. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PROJECT UPDATE

The Board received an update from the Chair of the building committee Joseph Gleason, the superintendent of schools Kirk Downing, and school committee member Amy Cohen who is also the chair of the community outreach subcommittee. Mr. Gleason provided a brief overview noting that the committee is moving out of the feasibility phase and into the schematic design phase. The committee voted on a design of a new construction building. The submission of the preferred schematic program has been submitted to the MSBA. Comments are expected by next summer. The building will be a new building with an east west orientation. The features include preservation of the current stadium.

Superintendent Downing added that the committee will be presenting to the MSBA in the next week. There will be a host of activities including several forums, the first of which on January 9th to discuss the public financing. Information will be out after the 1st of the year. Mr. Downing asked to return to the committee with monthly updates to further help to educate the citizens on the project.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Grant Update-Mr. Lowe announced the receipt of the Community Choice Grant in the amount of \$100K to be used to fund the Master Plan consulting. This will mean \$40K of AARPA funds can be reappropriated.

Electricity Pricing-Mr. Lowe reported that he locked the Town in for electricity purchasing from January 2024-January 2026 at 14.26cents/kw. The Town is locked in at 9.94 cents/kw through December 2023.

SELECT BOARD BUSINESS

Public Service Announcements-

Ms. Jacobsen announced that Saturday November 20th is Championship Saturday and the Nashoba Regional School District field hockey team, the girls' cross country team and an individual runner, Adam Balewicz from the boys' cross country team would be competing for state titles.

Bills/Payroll Warrants

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 to approve the bills/payroll warrants W22-9 and W22-9A. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

Minutes

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 to approve the minutes of October 27th, 2022. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

On a motion made by Czekanski and seconded by Wysocki the Select Board voted by roll call 2-0 to adjourn at 7:53pm. (Czekanski-yes, Wysocki-yes)

Respectfully submitted by Jenny Jacobsen

**All attendees participated remotely via Zoom Remote Conferencing pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A Section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place.*