

**Town of Nahant, MA
Board of Selectmen**

**Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 14, 2019 7:00 PM**

**Chesley R. Taylor Jr., Chairman
Richard J. Lombard, Vice Chairman
Francis J. Barile, Recording Secretary
Antonio Barletta, Town Administrator**

Attendance: Chesley R. Taylor, Richard J. Lombard, Francis J. Barile & Antonio Barletta (TA)

1. Meeting Opening 7:00 pm

Pledge of Allegiance- Led by Chairman, Chesley R. Taylor Jr.

a. Opening Comments-

Mr. Barile stated that this past Saturday we hosted an MVP workshop, he read out loud the description of the MVP Committee and explained how this can help us prepare for climate change and how to receive more grants.

T.A added; surveys helped form a lot of the conversations at the workshop but also when the report is released they will host a public meeting for everyone to hear about the report and the process i.e. vulnerabilities identified, next steps and possibly grants we should go for first.

b. ~~Approve February 7, 2019 BOS Meeting Minutes~~ approval is being postponed until next meeting.

2. Citizen's Forum

a. Billy Mahoney- 179 Willow Road- Read aloud a letter on behalf of the lobstermen of Nahant (letter attached)

b. Sharon Hawkes- Director of Nahant Public Library mentioned that the library hosts a Memory Café (they meet on the second Thursday of every month from 10am-12pm). This program is grant funded. She also mentioned that today's Memory Café consisted of a visit from a therapy dog & making Valentine's cards. Sharon presented the board & T.A. with a Valentine's Day card for each.

c. Marilyn Mahoney- 179 Willow Road- Thanked the Director of the Nahant Public Library for providing such a wonderful program.

Mr. Lombard received a letter regarding sale of Town property to Beth Kelley. Mentioned that he would like for our Town council to review.

T.A stated that at the Special Town Meeting this past August, the Town voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell this piece of land. The process is for this to be reviewed by Town Owned Land Study Committee. T.A is a member of this committee. They have been reviewing potential sale. The committee's responsibility is to put forth a recommendation and they hope to

have that recommendation within the coming month. Next committee meeting will be February 21st at 5:30pm.

3. Town Administrator Report

Mr. Taylor mentioned that T.A. has been working on this budget for months and that individually, the board has meet with T.A to review this budget.

T.A. Apologized to all of those trying to get some time with him on other issues, because this has taken up a majority of his time.

Thanked Debbie Waters, Town Accountant, for all of her help and assistance with the budget.

“I and many before me have spoken about the financial concerns of the Town’s budget. The former interim T.A. spoke about the need for an override. The 2015 Financial Operations report from the Division of Local Services identified the concern of our reliance on free cash. The Finance Committee report of last year identified that the Town needs to consider measures to control our expenditures and ways to increase revenue. I agree with all of these statements and the Board of Selectmen, a couple of weeks ago, directed me to create two budgets. One with an override and one without an override. I have spoken about the need to secure our bond rating by investing in our stabilization fund and our OPEB fund. Our OPEB Fund is required to be funded by the state and we only have \$1 in it currently. We also have and aging infrastructure and work needed, it’s important that we secure our bond rating. We have estimated about \$600,000 which is 25% of the total cost to storm related damages from last winter. FEMA will reimburse us 75% but we have to pay 25%. We did a short term borrowing in order to pay for those storm damages, but we have to pay \$600,000 of that.

Regarding the reliance on free cash; Free Cash – it’s not a confirmed amount of money that you are going to receive each year. Financing the Town based on an unconfirmed amount of money is not responsible. We should be using free cash to buy one time purchases, capital needs, putting the money away in stabilization. Last year we balanced our budget with a million dollars on free cash in overlay surplus. We have an expense problem but we also have a revenue problem. We don’t have new forms of revenue coming into Town. It’s either we rezone for new growth/commercial business comes into Town or we do a general override. On the expense side we have to think about how we are paying for services. Maybe restructuring some of the services we have, utilizing grants, investing in energy efficiency to reduce the cost of utilities. We are trying to solve in two ways; be tighter on our expenses and also bring in some more revenue that is going to set the Town up for success in the future.

Last year we had approximately \$240,000 more in free cash. We estimate that this amount is going to continue to decrease over the next two years. We are heading towards a time that an override is needed. If we were to try and borrow \$600,000 for the storm damage as opposed to paying it down with an override, we are adding about \$130,000 to that loan.

In both budgets I have essentially level funded to help with the expenditure side. In total my no override budget is .14% larger than last year’s budget. The bill impact for the average home value of \$640,000 would be an added \$433/year. The override I am proposing is a general override, not a debt exclusion. It would stay on our tax rate.

I landed on this budget with a \$600,000 override. With a \$600,000 override and the other changes I have made on our budget, that budget would be 1.64% more than last year’s total budget. Last year the budget was a 10% increase from the year previous. In override budget we

would be paying roughly \$400,000 on the storm damage, plus putting money into stabilization, OPEB, civil defense, a few capital needs, the schools, also hire a consultant to create financial policies for the Town. I think that this is important- if we are asking for more money from our taxpayers I want to reassure that we are being responsible with that money. In my no override budget; salary related items have a 1% increase. In the override budget it is a 2% increase. We are looking at outside funding sources and this budget is level funded”.

Mr. Barile- with this proposed budget, are we going to pay any of the principal down on our \$1.8 million loan for coast guard housing?

(TA) this current budget does not put any money towards principal of that loan. As of end of FY18 we had \$7,023,270 in outstanding debt. This figure has gone up in FY19. We currently have a very low interest rate with the military housing loan. Given the fact that the interest rate is lower than others, it's not included in this year's budget.

Mr. Taylor they (Peter Barba) had mentioned that they wanted something done in late Feb/March. We had stated that if we have to open the warrant that we could.

(TA) one thing in the budget, regardless of override, is a restructuring of the Chief of Fire's position at the Fire Department. In the past, the Town has gone through many different restructuring; we've had a dual chief, superintendent and a chief, working chief, part-time and full-time. This budget reduces the salary rate to essentially turn it into either a part-time, working, dual role.

A discussion on CPC applications submitted, occurred.

Mr. Taylor- this is the Selectmen's budget that we send to the Advisory and Finance Committee and they make recommendations at the Town meeting.

Mr. Barile as long as both budgets are going to FinCom I'm ok with it, let's make the motion.

Mr. Lombard- I move that the Board of Selectmen vote to endorse the revised Town Administrator and Selectmen Budget for FY2020 and to forward it to the Finance and Advisory Committee for their on-going review in the FY2020 Budget Development process.

Seconded by Enzo

Discussion:

Mr. Lombard we can open the Town meeting in April and postpone it to June and then have the override question somewhere in March/April/May. So that when we go to Town meeting in June, we will have the numbers for July 1st.

Unanimous vote in favor

(TA) again thanked the Town Accountant, Debbie Waters and each Department Heads for their hard work and assistance with preparing this budget.

Mr. Taylor- let's talk about Mr. Lombard's idea, postponing Town meeting, at our next meeting.

(TA) Maybe I can have our legal counsel or the Town Moderator here for the next meeting so that we can have a discussion about it.

4. New Business

- a. Approve Nahant Cultural Council Forty Steps Dance for March 29 & 30th at Town Hall

Mr. Barile- I move that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the Forty Steps Dance hosted by the Nahant Cultural Council for March 29th & 30th at Town Hall

Mr. Lombard seconded

Unanimous vote in favor

- b. Approve Big Ryan, Storyteller for Children's event hosted by Nahant Public Library hosted at Town Hall for February 20, 2019

Mr. Lombard-I move that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the Big Ryan, Storyteller for Children's event hosted by the Nahant Public Library on February 20th at Town Hall

Seconded by Enzo

Unanimous vote in favor

5. Ongoing Business

6. Closing Announcements

Mr. Barile – We don't have an open space committee. We need to have an updated open space plan. I would move that we accept Margaret Alexander, Diane Brandi, Dana Schean. We have three people committed to it and a couple more that want to be on it. I will schedule a meeting with them next week to give them their charge. It's a start with three committed people and a few more interested.

Mr. Lombard can T and I submit a candidate to Open Space Committee?

Mr. Barile- absolutely, we need people.

(TA) I believe the old committee was moderator appointed. I just want to confirm.

Mr. Barile I think it is Dave Conlin. Let's give Dave the names and have him send them a letter. The other thing I want to get going is solarized. Attended a solarized meeting in Swampscott this past Monday with Ellen Goldberg and Nicole Goguen. I want to appoint that committee and have a solarized committee in Town appointed by us. We will get a grant for this. Town will work with MASS CEC, Nahant, Salem and Swampscott as a collaborative to select a solar provider.

Mr. Barile made a motion to appoint Ellen Goldberg and Nicole Goguen for the new solarized committee.

Mr. Lombard seconded the motion

Unanimous vote in favor.

(TA) I can put together a committee description, how many members, term, and responsibility of the committee and provide that to you at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

Mr. Taylor (referencing the postcard mailed to Town residents recently by Keep Nahant Wild)- well done. He read aloud; "East Point is zoned NR. To stop NU all we have to do is enforce our by-laws". He thinks the BOS should be sending to the ConCom, ZBA, Planning Board and Building Inspection because it is their purview. They should come up with an answer and let us know the answer. If our zoning by-laws stand up, I want to know that as chairman.

(TA) It seems like there is some confusion around Town given that there is almost pressure being put on the Board to enforce the By-Law. The By-Law will be enforced when there is something to enforce it upon. There is no building permit in front of the Building Inspector at this point. There is no application submitted to the Town at this point. Without an application it's really hard for the Building Inspector, Concom, ZBA, Planning board...for them to articulate whether or not parts of that project/application does/doesn't effect that By-Law. They can explain what the By-Law is but until an application is in front of them they really can't say whether the by-law has any effect on that said application. That process is legal/unbiased. To be clear, the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator doesn't have a role in that process.

Northeastern has expressed that they hope to submit an application in the near future. They have not told us what will be included. They have also said that they hope to send a draft document of community contributions that would be included if they were to submit an application in the future. That news came in this week.

Mr. Taylor when we receive that information, we make it public.

(TA) Absolutely. The Board has been very clear of being transparent.

Josh Antrim- 267 Nahant Road- He believes there is no interpretation required of this by-law. The by-law is black and white. Nahant zoning by-laws are perfectly clear, black and white. I agree we should prepare for this permit to be filed.

(TA) Town Legal Council is in the process of reviewing our Town By-Laws. Let me clarify; there is nothing to enforce yet, but he agrees with getting prepared. They cannot make a determination before an application is submitted because there is a process they have to go through.

Marilyn Mahoney- 179 Willow- I agree with Mr. Taylor to get proactive as a community and be prepared. We aren't totally in the dark, we know its coming.

(TA) To reiterate, I agree and we do have legal counsel preparing for it.

Mr. Taylor- I will not be seeking re-election.

7. Adjourn:

Meeting adjourn 8:28pm

Meeting Minutes prepared by Bobbie-Jo Blair, Administrative Assistant

Minutes approved by the Board of Selectmen on the _____ day of _____ 2019.

Board of Selectmen