

**Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087**

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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

TOWN HALL BUILDING  
8 PARK STREET  
TOWN CLERK  
ADAMS MASS.

CLERK \_\_\_\_\_

**Wednesday, September 18, 2019, 7:00 p.m.  
TOWN HALL, 8 PARK STREET, ADAMS, MA 01220  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Board of Selectmen Meeting Room**

**CALL TO ORDER:** On the date above, the *Board of Selectmen* held a meeting. The meeting was called to order by *Chairman Hoyt* at 7:00 p.m. Present were *Vice Chairman Bush*, *Members Duval*, *Blanchard*, and *Nowak*. Also present were *Town Administrator Green*, *Town Counsel Ed St. John III* and *Town Assessor MacDonald*.

***The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.***

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The August 23, 2019 minutes were presented for approval. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to waive reading and approve the August 23, 2019 meeting minutes as presented, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Vote: unanimous.***

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Application for Transfer of License:**

An application to transfer the Common Victualer license from *Las Pizza, Inc. dba Domino's Pizza*, 80 Summer Street, Adams to *Jozon Enterprises, Inc., dba Domino's*, 80 Summer Street, Adams. Valerie Melton, District Manager advised that this would be one of fourteen establishments in the District. The business is still operating and transferred ownership last Monday. Ms. Melton gave input about her experience in working with the Town to transfer the business, and noted it was very positive. She outlined all of the locations of the district establishments. She explained the updating that is taking place in the facility and modifications being made. ***Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the transfer of the Common Victualer License from Las Pizza, Inc. dba Domino's Pizza, 80 Summer Street, Adams to Jozon Enterprises, Inc., dba Domino's Pizza, 80 Summer Street, Adams, second by Member Blanchard. Vote: unanimous.***

**One Day Wine & Malt License Applications:**

An application was received for a One Day Wine License from Cheryl DeMarsico, *DeMarsico Winery*, 66 Roberts Drive, #211, North Adams, MA for *Ramblefest*, October 13, 2019 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. ***Motion made by Vice Chairman Bush to approve the One Day Wine License for DeMarsico Winery on October 13, 2019 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., second by Member Duval. Vote: unanimous.***

**PUBLIC HEARING: Tax Classification Hearing, 7:10 p.m.**

***At 7:10 p.m. Motion made by Member Blanchard to open the Public Hearing for the Tax Classification, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Vote: unanimous.***

*Town Assessor MacDonald* gave background information on the annual tax classification hearing. She reviewed the tax rate summary and how it is comprised. The Tax Levy calculations and debt exclusion were outlined, to create the total tax levy. She reviewed the math used to create a single tax rate. She reviewed the shifts that have taken place in the past and advised typically the Town goes for the 115% shift. If approved, a 115% increase would be 49 cents, which would be a tax rate of \$21.88. Last year the residential tax rate was set at \$21.39 and the commercial rate was \$25.40. She noted that state receipts were up from last year. The new growth for 2020 including residential, commercial and personal property is \$2.8 Million, and \$1.8 Million is from Personal Property and Utilities, which include telephone wires, and gas lines. She noted that budget and valuations drive the tax rate, and as they go up, the budget goes up. She advised that there has been activity on Howland Avenue, and the good housing market this summer will also be reflected in next year's assessments. It was pointed out that the new gas station on Howland Avenue has helped because not having businesses in buildings hampers the tax base. It was recognized that the Board Members have been working very hard at on bringing in businesses and trying to fill businesses on Summer Street and Park Street. It was noted that two large blocks of apartments on Park Street have been worked on and some of these locations are the key to business growth. It was pointed out that the Town has invested in façades on Park Street and getting the retail and restaurant businesses into those two buildings are a key goal for the Board. Board Members noted they are looking forward to getting apartments in across from Town Hall. It was noted that sluggish growth was not for lack of trying. It was explained that Chapter 70 and other funds have been flat funded since the middle 1990's and state mandates have gone up. Many children in the school system have special needs which require extra money and staffing to educate them. It was recalled that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts indicated the School District would be reimbursed 100% for transportation costs but this has not happened. The number of rental properties was noted and it was pointed out that some landlords that do just what is necessary to make it livable for a renter, because the more they put into the property the real estate taxes go up and the cost is deferred to the renter, who is not willing to pay the increased cost. It was explained that there are a number of well-kept homes in the community that are being sold for more than assessed value, but the downtown doesn't meet the threshold. It was pointed out that Adams has an elderly population that requires funding to take care of their needs. It was noted that investors are needed to put money into the community instead of relying on grant funds. Extenuating circumstances making tax rates difficult to adjust were explained and it was pointed out that the Board had authorized some free cash in the past to be put toward reducing the tax rate. The current Free Cash amount was noted. It was pointed out that this is the most the Town has had in a long time and it will be added to. It was noted that the corporate park is nearly full, and the Town will work hard to find a second corporate park location to have businesses registered in this community. Credit was given to the Volunteer Fire Department and it was pointed out that citizens are fortunate to have them for a community of this size. It was emphasized that the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator are working extremely hard to work with businesses and on growth efforts. It was expressed that there is hope in the near future to announce a road map for recruiting businesses and using tools to show that Adams is a welcoming community to all. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to close the Tax Classification Hearing, second by Member Bush.***  
***Vote: unanimous.***

*Board Members* noted that they are investing in our community and working to keep the commercial rate as close as possible with the local communities. It was explained that the average tax bill is a median rate for communities and the lowest for property values. Adams is one of only two communities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that pay for sewer fees on the tax rate.

If that is taken off, the Town would be required to institute a sewer fee. In order to properly compete with other communities it would need to be researched. It was emphasized that the Town is fiscally sound and stable. If the Town of Adams budget was calculated without the sewer costs included, the tax rate would be \$19.88 before the additional sewer fee was added separately. It was noted as not being an exorbitant amount. It was further explained that the water bills pay the portion for street lights and the volunteer fire department which does an outstanding job. It was pointed out that the community hurts itself by squashing growth like the Cumberland Farms or 40R and needs to look at the whole picture instead of just information being passed around. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to maintain the 115% shift, Residential Rate of \$21.88 and Commercial Rate of \$25.99, second by Member Bush. Vote: unanimous.***

***Makayla-Courtney McGeeney, Bright Ideas Brewing, 111 Mass MoCA Way, North Adams MA for Ramblefest, October 13, 2019 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Adams Visitors Center. Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the One Day Malt License for Makayla-Courtney McGeeney, Bright Ideas Brewing for Ramblefest on October 13, 2019 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., second by Member Duval. Vote: unanimous.***

#### **Facility Use Requests**

##### ***Reid Field:***

***Adams Lassie League, Inc. for Youth Softball Program, September 1, 2019 to November 1, 2019, subject to working with the ACS League, on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and alternating Fridays. Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the use of Reid Field by Adams Lassie League, Inc. for Youth Softball Program, September 1, 2019 to November 1, 2019 on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and alternating Fridays from 3:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in scheduling cooperation with the ACS League, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Vote: Unanimous***

##### ***Renfrew Field:***

***Patrick Mahoney, HVHS Girls' Soccer, JV and Varsity on October 21, 2019. Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the use of Renfrew Field by HVHS Girls' Soccer, JV and Varsity on October 21, 2019 from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., second by Member Blanchard. Vote: Unanimous***

***Patrick Mahoney, HVHS Varsity Football, October 18, 2019, October 25, 2019. Brief discussion took place on the responsibility of cleaning the bleachers and general restroom cleanliness as it taxes the DPW staff. Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the use of Renfrew Field by HVHS Varsity Football, October 18, 2019, October 25, 2019 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., second by Vice Chairman Bush. Vote: Unanimous***

***Patrick Mahoney, HVHS Boys' Soccer, JV and Varsity on October 4, 2019. Motion made by Vice Chairman Bush to approve the use of Renfrew Field by HVHS Boys' Soccer, JV and Varsity on October 4, 2019 from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., second by Member Blanchard. Vote: Unanimous.***

##### ***Town Hall, Board of Selectmen Room:***

***BART Charter School, Student Council Retreat, September 27, 2019. Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the use of the Town Hall Board of Selectmen Meeting Room by BART Charter School on September 27, 2019 from 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. for the Student Council Retreat, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Vote: unanimous.***

### ***Visitors Center:***

*ProAdams, Ramblefest, October 13, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., to include the use of the lawn, parking lot, fire pit, and bathrooms. Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the use of the Visitors Center by ProAdams for Ramblefest on October 13, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., second by Member Blanchard. Vote: unanimous.*

### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

***Town Administrator's Report:*** There are several job openings and the Town is receiving applications. A screening committee will narrow down the most qualified three DPW Director candidates for the Board. The Route 8 Project Right of Way work has commenced and it is almost wrapped up. The Community Development office has worked laboriously and painstakingly on it. The Greylock Glen is the subject of continued conversations with the State Representative and Senator in meetings with the relative Cabinet Secretaries to keep it a topic on Beacon Hill. The Town has received the completed design package for the Outdoor Center. The Hoosac Valley Coal and Grain Project on Cook Street is continuing work on the environmental cleanup review. The Forest Wardens Truck 1, the front line firefighting vehicle, is no longer working and the pump is obsolete. Forest Warden Kleiner found a replacement and information on this will be forthcoming next week. The Community Development Block Grant was awarded in the amount of \$800,000 and \$250,000 is earmarked for the Housing Rehabilitation Program. The Ashuwillticook Rail Trail Project has received notice that engineering funds for the portion from Lime Street to North Adams have been approved and are funded by MassDOT. *Member Nowak* advised that MassDOT was doing their annual inspection of the bridge on Cook Street. He advised that the Town gardens and shrubbery patches are weed infested, and there is not enough manpower to have it properly addressed. He noted that the new tree plantings should be watered as they are looking weak. The Grounds Foreman will be advised. An assessment is being made on what tasks the DPW can do and what skillsets staff has versus hiring a private contractor. It was noted that one DPW laborer with landscaping skills took care of the Adams Station and plans by Columbus Day to do the work at the Visitors Center. *Chairman Hoyt* announced that Town Administrator Green represented the Town of Adams on iBerkshires TV, which will be aired, and focused on a joint conversation between the Cheshire and Adams Town Administrators.

***Town Counsel Report:*** *Town Counsel St. John III* advised he prepared for a trial on a Housing Court matter, drafted two letters for licensing issues, drafted a petition, researched a cemetery deed issue, and worked on an issue for the Town Clerk.

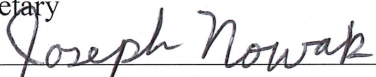
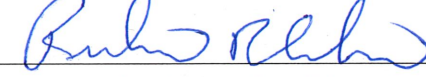
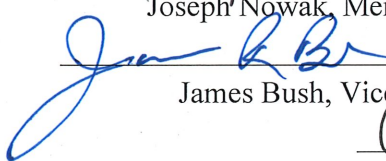
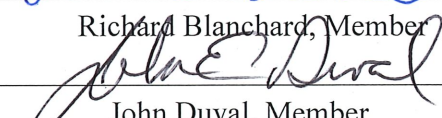

***Sub-Committee and Liaison Reports:*** *Member Nowak* advised he attended the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership meeting and the committee was dissolved. He reported that they reached the quota of communities signed into the program and under legislative mandates. A Bill has been drafted and is at the State House. At the next meeting bylaws will be put together and they will be reviewed in January. He noted that there are a lot of communities from northern Berkshire County and northern Franklin County and they represent a diverse population. He noted there will be a letter coming to see if each community will have a representative on their Board. *Vice Chairman Bush* advised that on September 9<sup>th</sup> there was a Parks Commission meeting where the reconstruction of Russell Field next year was discussed. He advised there was a Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (NBCC) meeting that covered topics from last year and the coming year and there are different agendas for each workshop. He attended another meeting for NBCC on the topic of food, food distribution and security. They also discussed affordable and safe housing, affordable and safe transportation, and economics. *Member Duval* advised that Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and the Berkshire County Selectmen's Association annual meetings will be held tomorrow. He announced that on October 8<sup>th</sup> the Lt. Governor will be holding a Twenty First Century Statewide Conference for municipal staff.

Chairman Hoyt advised that there was a public forum held last evening at the Visitors Center on 40R which was well attended by residents. Town Administrator Green was thanked for putting on a well-balanced and well informed panel for information. Attorney Dubendorf was present and offered his field of expertise. Community Development staff put together the materials for the 2.5 hour public forum. Northern Berkshire Community Television put together a video recording of last night's forum and it will air Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 p.m., Sept 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. and Monday, Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> 7:30 p.m. It will likely repeat the following week. Those unable to attend and are interested in learning more are encouraged to watch it.

**Announcements and Good of the Order:** Vice Chairman Bush advised of the Live Well Exposition at the Visitors Center from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and the Walk to End Alzheimers at the Visitors Center at 8:30 a.m. for registration and the Walk at 10:00 a.m. Member Duval advised that Charter Communications notified the Town that they are going to drop Fox College Sports and the Sports Pass Tier. He reported that he talked to the Town Assessor about concerns of the community. He noted the focus is more on the community itself, on road and bridge repairs, and the status of the infrastructure in the community. He noted that the Board of Selectmen is working on growth in the community. He requested a workshop be held on improving this community. He pointed out that the Board is getting more involved in the goals and their status, and the Town Administrator's work on the goals set, to get working on them.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion made by Member Blanchard to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Bush. Vote: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary

 _____ Joseph Nowak, Member	 _____ Richard Blanchard, Member
 _____ James Bush, Vice Chairman	 _____ John Duval, Member
 _____ Christine Hoyt, Chairman	