



TOWN OF ADAMS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2017 – 7:00 PM

ADAMS TOWN HALL, 1st FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

On the above date the **Board of Selectmen** held a meeting at the **Adams Town Hall** at 7:00 p.m. **Chairman Jeffrey Snoonian** presided the meeting. Present were **Members Joseph Nowak, John Duval and Richard Blanchard**. Also in attendance was **Town Administrator Tony Mazzucco**. *Town Counsel, Ed St. John III* was absent.

The Select Board Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no comment by citizens at this meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing regarding the Change of Beneficial Interest/Transfer of Stock & Change of Manager of Liquor License for Zing Financial, LLC, dba Adams Ale House, 8 East Hoosac Street, Adams MA 01220, 7:10 p.m.

Chairman Snoonian gave a brief overview of the reason for the Public Hearing and read the legal notice. The public was asked for their comments or questions regarding this interaction, and none were presented.

Motion made by Member Duval to open the Public Hearing regarding the Change of Beneficial Interest/Transfer of Stock & Change of Manager of Liquor License for Zing Financial, LLC, dba Adams Ale House, 8 East Hoosac Street, Adams MA 01220

Second by Member Blanchard

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Motion made by Member Duval to close the Public Hearing

Second by Member Blanchard

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Motion made by Member Duval to approve the Change of Beneficial Interest/Transfer of Stock & Change of Manager of Liquor License for Zing Financial, LLC, dba Adams Ale House, 8 East Hoosac Street, Adams MA 01220

Second by Member Nowak

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

NEW BUSINESS

Letter to Charter Communications regarding WWLP station removal

Chairman Snoonian gave an overview of the letter received from Charter Communications indicating the removal of the WWLP station from the Adams area. A draft letter was initiated by Member Nowak on behalf of the Board to be sent to Charter Communications, and copies to be sent to all of the delegation.

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE, ADAMS, MASS.
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TOWN CLERK



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*Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve and send the letter to Charter Communications
Second by Member Duval*

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Resolution regarding a lease purchase agreement for the purpose of financing "Camera System(s) & Related Equipment"

Chairman Snoonian gave an explanation of the Dash Cameras. Four run off of VCR and some are not currently functioning. These are needed for risk management and are important for officer safety. The proposed expense would be \$40,000, which includes with 5 year warranty. The intention is to have the same type of unit in every vehicle and they may be replaced every five years. The grant is for first the year and will be a line item in Fiscal Year 2018 budget.

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised that *Watchguard* was chosen because they specifically make police cameras and they are the best vendor from the quotes received under the procurement laws as the lowest reasonable and responsible bidder. Related equipment listed is thumb drives and brackets. The video is activated when the lights come on and usually have a two minute feedback. The Town did not select audio units because there is not appropriate infrastructure to handle it.

Motion made by Member Duval to approve the Resolution regarding a lease purchase agreement for the purpose of financing "Camera System(s) & Related Equipment"

Second by Member Nowak

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Approval of Revenue Anticipation Note (R.A.N.) and Execution of Documents

Chairman Snoonian explained that this is cash flow borrowing and is only done when it is needed. Our money comes in twice a year and sometimes run a temporary deficit and borrowing will be in the amount of \$750,000 which will be paid back once taxes come in. The due date is May 21, 2017.

Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the RAN and execution of documents

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Approval of Town Budget for FY2018

Chairman Snoonian invited Board Members to hold for discussion any budgets they desired and all others will be put forth for approval. The following budgets were held for discussion: Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Finance Committee, Employee/Retiree Benefits, Town Clerk, Assessors, Community Development, Agricultural Commission, Parking Management, Town Hall, Highways, Recycling Center, Cemeteries, Parks and Grounds, Recreation, Adams-Cheshire Regional School District, and McCann School.

Motion made by Member Duval to approve all budget lines that were not held

Second by Member Nowak

Unanimous vote

Motion passed



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Each held budget line was discussed individually.

Board of Selectmen Budget - \$60,000 for Slum and Blight Removal and is a placeholder.

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised the Town will be taking down another building or two this year. The *Slum and Blight Task Force* will reconvene and anything with a safety issue may be taken down. The Town needs to have money on hand to demolish the building or take down tax-acquired properties. The first step is to auction the buildings off. The Town can take property after 3 years of taxes not being paid, but there must be notices issued and land court. A lien can be placed on a property. This process is dictated by state law. Community Development Block Grant funding was considered for possible funding for this purpose and was explained to only partially fund programs.

Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the Selectmen Budget

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Town Administrator Budget – The Agricultural Fair annual Citizen Petition is transitioning now as a line item in the budget for reimbursement. Whatever upgrades done there will be accounted for.

Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the Town Administrator Budget

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Finance Committee Budget – Current tax rate is \$22.37, and there is an estimated shift on the residential rate and levy capacity numbers and it is a state formula that is submitted to the state. The tax rate is set in the fall. It was noted that the tax increase is 100% education related, and not due to municipal costs.

Board Members expressed concern about reaching the \$25 levy limit in the next couple years. Setting limits and policies to avoid reaching the levy limit was discussed. It was noted that the 10-year revaluation did not help much. Consideration was given to think about a couple of areas to reduce to bring the rate down. It was noted that the school district is not the same entity as a town but including it as part of the community's budget is important. A tour of the Town Hall Roof was requested since \$175,000 was requested for this project and there has been no damage or leaks noted. The process of not using free cash to pay down the tax rate was requested to continue, and the Town Administrator was requested to continue to look for ways to reduce the tax rate. Reserve Fund spending was compared over past years. It was recommended that the *Budget Sub-Committee* meet throughout the year to adjust the Budget and get approvals from the Board. There was a discrepancy noted in the numbers. It was noted that the finances are heading in the wrong direction and policies and benchmarks need to be in place to keep the levy limit from being reached. Reserve Fund transfers are up to \$68,000 and it was pointed out that the Town may have to avoid purchases during the year in the future. The *Financial Management Policy* that will be adopted will address this, but there are some concerns with the policy. Discussion took place about whether the School is making sacrifices, and what the School District needs to bring the students to a Level 2. It was noted that the Town was cutting everything possible but the School District needs a lot more money. It was expressed that the Town is looking at cutting things like how well the roads are plowed and police services but the School District bill and increasing salaries is not cut. A concern was expressed about the School District's ability to manage their budget. A suggestion was made to cut the Reserve Fund to \$100,000.



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Town Administrator Mazzucco will give a tour of the Town Hall to show the roof peeling up, brick problems and he noted leaks happen when it has been let go too far. The capital project would be funded from Free Cash, which has historically been used to plug the budget. Reserve Fund transfers are still going forward, and if there is more snow the numbers will increase. The Town always has \$175,000 in the Reserve Fund in the budget every year and Stabilization comes out of what is left of the reserve fund. He advised he would find out why the numbers are different from the Town Accountant. Only town meeting has the authority to move funds from one budget to another but School Districts are able to move money around. He pointed out that in the past he cut staff and services, and the Town could use more money too and the municipal budget has shifted to the point it is reaching a breaking point. The Town continues to have sound financial policies. He expressed concern that the Board's intention was not to approve the municipal budget. Cutting reserve fund to \$100K would shave \$.15 off the tax rate.

Motion made by Member Duval to reduce the \$175,000 Reserve Fund to \$100,000

A recess took place at 8:01 p.m. and the meeting was called back to order at 8:06 pm.

Motion to reduce the \$175,000 Reserve Fund to \$100,000 was withdrawn from Member Duval.

Board Members discussed the potential replacement of the roof on Town Hall. The clock tower wood is rotted on the side and if this is not addressed it will increase later repair costs. Deferred maintenance of Town buildings was also noted as worrisome and the Town Hall roof needs to be done to avoid needing more repairs later on. Continued dialogue took place about the tax rate being around \$22.30 as of next fiscal year, and it will continue to creep toward the \$25 mark. Board Members explained they are not looking to cut employees but something has to be done to show there is a plan. It was noted that there have been cuts to the Police and DPW and without those the Town would be at \$25 already. One Member noted that municipal spending has dropped every year and a harder line should be taken with other entities whose budget doesn't ever seem to go down. Pittsfield was given as an example as they are laying off 80 teachers. The next municipal steps would be to close down the *Council on Aging* and *Library*, reduce or eliminate maintenance of vehicles, and provide only minimal plowing. It was expressed that this could be a reality in the next three years. Members noted that more businesses are needed in the community and the Town has not been aggressive enough in recruiting businesses. The *Economic Development Commission* was charged with this and has not reported back. The *Greylock Glen* is an important resource, and having transportation and broadband would help build business. It was noted that studies show this area has a lower income population. The Revaluation showed an increase of 96% of the properties, and the increase in taxes was discouraging to citizens. It was noted that the School District is lagging despite low cost property in a safe community. Nearly 50% of the students are SPED students. Overtime of Town employees was listed as a concern, as was over-salting of the roads. Members expressed they did not know how much more could be cut from the budget, and since state cuts have jeopardized student spending the Towns have to stop it through growth. There was a concern about how to pay for unforeseen items and emergencies without the *Reserve Fund*.

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised the debt exclusion does not count toward the \$25 levy limit. He advised that people are not coming here for the schools and with the amount the School District says they need to be sustainable, in a few years there would be no municipal employees and still hit the \$25 limit. He advised the Economic Development Commission is citizen-led and nothing is happening. He expressed it was difficult to bring in businesses and discussed having a leakage analysis. He said there was \$150,000 put into a study in a different community and it did not bring in any business. He explained the bond release. He reviewed the results of the Revaluation and noted that commercial values are low and the buildings have not been selling, but the Town has a lot of foreclosures. He advised last year there was \$30,000 less in overtime due to the mild winter.



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Motion made by Member Duval to reduce reserve fund from \$175,000 to \$125,000

No second

Motion failed for lack of a second

Motion by Member Blanchard to approve the Finance Committee line as presented

Second by Member Nowak

Voted in opposition was Member Duval

Voted in favor were Chairman Snoonian, Members Blanchard and Nowak

Motion passed

Employee/Retiree Benefits Budget - This budget was held to explain that there is no change this year.

Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the Employee/Retiree Benefits Budget

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Town Assessors Budget – Citizen Elizabeth Bushey requested this budget be held and told the Board the Town Assessors need to put something in place when a property is demolished because it becomes another eyesore for the Town. No budget concerns were raised.

Motion made by Member Duval to approve the Town Assessor's budget

Second by Member Blanchard

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Town Clerk Budget – Member Duval asked about voting machines, and it was explained that the Town can no longer get parts and repairs for the machines. They are not in bad shape but cannot run without a company to service them. The amount requested is \$46,000, and Williamstown and North Adams are replacing theirs.

Motion made by Member Duval to approve the Town Clerk budget

Second by Member Blanchard

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Community Development Budget – Member Nowak expressed concern about the new state administration talking about doing away with Block Grant funding. He asked the Board to write a letter to express how important it is for our community.

Consensus was reached by Board Members to put together a letter to vote on next week.

Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the Community Development budget

Second by Member Blanchard

Unanimous vote

Motion passed



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Agricultural Commission Budget – Member Nowak expressed a desire to get this Commission back up and running to be able to put in for grants. The Town has been allotting them \$500 each year and they have not held a meeting in five years.

Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the Agricultural Commission budget
Second by Member Blanchard
Unanimous vote
Motion passed

Parking Management Budget – The Town will have a *Parking Meter Attendant* for the summer on a part-time basis for \$7,400. It is hoped that this position will bring in enough funds to pay for itself, and that the meters are fixed.

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised this position will be funded out of the Parking Meter Fund. The Police Department will empty the money, and the boxes are rarely full. The coin chutes get jammed and the Parking Attendant will be given tools to fix them. The Parking Attendant will work 15 hours a week during July, August, September and October and 5 hours per week on the other months. Board Members requested consistency year-round, and asked for notices to be given to violators ahead of time before tickets are issued.

Motion made by Chairman Snoonian to approve the Parking Management budget
Second by Member Blanchard
Unanimous vote
Motion passed

Town Hall Budget – The Town Hall Roof project would not affect the tax rate because it would come out of Free Cash. It is a bad financial idea to pay the budget with free cash, and the Town had been deferring building maintenance by doing this in the past.

Board Members gave the argument that there needs to be a policy on whether to reduce Free Cash or not to keep as far from the tax levy as possible. The suggestion was again made to look at separating the sewer portion from the tax bill.

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised the sewer rate is about \$2 on the tax rate, and that would push hitting the levy limit about 10 years out. He advised he would hire a consultant to look at it because the average resident may pay less and some businesses may have an enormous increase. Equity could be an issue.

Motion made by Member Duval to hold off on the Town Hall roof repairs for one year
There was no second
Motion failed for lack of a second

Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the Town Hall budget
Second by Member Nowak
Voted in favor were Chairman Snoonian, Members Nowak and Blanchard
Voted in opposition was Member Duval
Motion passed



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Highways Budget – Town Administrator Mazzucco advised he had entered the amount incorrectly on the F450 with the plow kit, and the amount of the Jaw Bucket. The increase comes from Free Cash, not operating funds. He requested the Board authorize the change from \$51,000 to \$68,000, and reduce the Jaw Bucket from \$8,000 to \$7,000.

Motion made by Member Blanchard to amend the Highways budget line 06429 from \$50,000 to \$68,000 and reduce the replacement of the Jaw Bucket amount from \$8,000 to \$7,000

Second by Member Nowak

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the Highways Budget as amended

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Recycle Center Budget – Town Administrator Mazzucco advised the Town is going to a solid waste pay-per-throw trash landfill system effective July 1st, September 1st or October 1st. He advised he has been working on this for a year and a half. The Town will be moving more toward a user fee system.

Board Members expressed concern that the attendant shed needs to be brought there.

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised the shed cannot be brought in without electricity, and he can ask the DPW to put it in this week.

Motion made by Chairman Snoonian to approve the Recycle Center Budget

Second by Member Nowak

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Cemetery, Parks and Grounds Budget – Member Nowak asked for a status of the money that had been previously allocated for the study for the Russell Field.

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised it is on the Community Development's list but the department has been understaffed and Director Cesan needs to hire a second person because she is working on grant funds.

Board Members expressed this is important for the children. It was noted that the end of Orchid Street could be valuable for soccer and is used for parking for the Agricultural Fair. It could be open for the Fairgrounds for parking. A request was made to expedite the study for Russell Field.

Parks Commissioner Scott Cernik noted that 2 years ago the Town allocated funds for this project and it just needs an RFP. He expressed his opinion that after 2 years there has been plenty of time to send out an RFP to get it done. He pointed out that it has been 5 years since the money was approved and a couple years since the money was allocated he something needs to go forward.

Town Administrator Mazzucco was advised to make this a priority for Director Cesan.

Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the Cemetery, Parks and Grounds Budget

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed



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Recreation Budget – In years past \$15,000 was in the budget and last year \$9,000 was in the Budget. This year it is back up to \$15,000 and not in the Municipal budget.

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised this will be a warrant article for Town Meeting. The Town used to provide this and has gotten a lot of complaints on both sides. The citizens need to decide if they want it to be done or not, and if so it comes from free cash or will otherwise be unfunded.

Parks Commission Chairman Cernik inquired when this transitioned from the Town of Adams to being run by the Youth Center. He recalled that Town of Adams employees used to be paid and got benefits to run it, and then the Town reached out to the Youth Center to take it over and now it is being cut.

Motion made by Chairman Snoonian to approve the Recreation budget

Second by Member Blanchard

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Adams-Cheshire Regional School District Budget – It was announced that the ACRSD budget was not approved for a second time. Town Administrator Mazzucco set forth a budget which showed a \$410 difference between the Superintendent's proposed budget and the Town of Adams budget amount. He requested the Board Members approve to amend it up by that \$410.

Board Members expressed that they had done their best to fund the District. Some Members attended the meeting where the School Committee voted in a school closure. Members indicated they had heard there was a letter sent by the Town of Adams indicating a promise to pay for the ADA lift and the stairs in the back of the C.T. Plunkett School for \$22,000, and if it was sent it would be honored. An inquiry was made whether mold testing was done in the C.T. Plunkett boiler room, and a concern was raised about the air quality of the schools. An inquiry was made about when the intake air was last tested, and the Town Administrator was asked to look into it.

Town Administrator Mazzucco advised the ADA lift is in the Capital Improvement Plan and the Town needs to look at the stairs. The Building Commissioner will look at it for bracing. More money is needed to finish the C.T. Plunkett boiler roof, and he would have bid documents prepared before Town Meeting. This will need to come out of Free Cash. He was requested to provide a copy of the letter to the Board. Town Administrator Mazzucco advised he is trying to get the state to pay for both projects of the Old Town Hall and the ADA lift. The mold inquiry was a politically motivated complaint but will be checked into, as well as the air quality.

Motion made by Chairman Snoonian to amend the Adams-Cheshire School District budget in the amount of a \$410 increase

Second by Member Duval

Unanimous vote

Motion passed

Board Members continued discussion about the ACRSD budget. A 3% increase amount for the ACRSD budget was considered. Cost savings in areas that do not impact education. Building maintenance and upgrades for the schools were touched on, including windows, zone heating, and duct work. It was pointed out that future maintenance is important and putting in a cheaper boiler.



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Motion made by Chairman Snoonian to approve the amount of \$4,940,831 for the Adams-Cheshire Regional School budget
Second by Member Duval
Unanimous vote
Motion passed

McCann School Budget – **Member Blanchard** noted that Town employees and town departments have taken serious cuts and are making a great effort to responsibly budget. He noted that this budget is generally not that high but this year the assessment to the Town doubled.

Board Members expressed doubt that 14 extra students could cost this much. It was noted that McCann did not vote on insurance changes last year or this year, and there need to be community discussions throughout the year to reduce health insurance costs. It was pointed out that the formula is not McCann's fault but they will hopefully show they are doing something to lessen the cost. Board Members said they would like to meet frequently with Superintendent Brosnan, and have budget meetings over the summer to work on it.

Town Administrator Mazzucco noted that the split is 75/25 for health and dental for McCann employees, and ACRSD is at 70/30. He noted there is nothing wrong with the formula and the actions show that McCann is not doing everything they can to reduce costs. He pointed out that the Town of Adams has cut benefits and staff in comparison. He advised that unless 5 of the towns vote it down the budget will go through and the Town of Adams should vote against it to send a message. He informed the Board that McCann is not adding any staff.

Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the McCann budget as presented
Second by Member Nowak
Voted in favor were Members Duval, Nowak and Blanchard
Voted in opposition was Chairman Snoonian
Motion passed

SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

School Committee

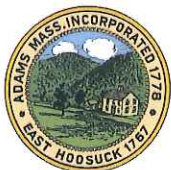
Member Nowak advised he attended the School Committee meeting and left early because he was discouraged that though the 4/3 vote took place some individuals were saying it was not fair because it was top-heavy. He noted that it has become a grudge match.

Member Duval pointed out that the School Committee went through a process, had a study done and then voted that Cheshire Elementary School was closing. Trying to change the School Committee budget to add the school back cannot be done because it would require the vote to be rescinded. The decision has been made, the staff has been communicated to of their new positions and it is now prolonging the situation and creating anxiety. The School Committee needs to vote on the budget and move it forward.

Stormwater Management

Members Duval and Nowak advised they will be attending the BRPC meeting on stormwater.

9:38 p.m. Member Blanchard left the meeting. Adams-Cheshire Regional School District Superintendent Robert Putnam entered the meeting.



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School Budget Vote

Superintendent Putnam updated the Board that the ACRSD School Committee took two votes on the budget, and both failed. The budget presented for both schools to stay open failed. The meeting was stopped and will reconvene another day to revisit the budget. He advised that Attorney Grandchamp was in attendance to guide the School Committee, and they would need to rescind the vote to keep both schools open. They are currently in a deadlock and they plan to meet on Monday. Massachusetts law requires an approved budget to be presented to the towns by the 30th of April. If not, the towns would have to pay an amount, similar to 1/12, and the state would step in by December. Bernie Lynch, a consultant, has been contacted to come in April to meet with the Finance Committees, Boards of Selectmen, and School Committee to facilitate working effectively on this.

Member Duval expressed interested in including McCann School in the facilitation.

Town Administrator Mazzucco noted he was in disagreement because Adams needs communication issues with Cheshire and the School Committee addressed.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Town Administrator's Report

Pinnacle Park

The Town has issued an official *Cease and Desist Order* today for Pinnacle Park.

Town Counsel Report

Town Counsel St. John III was absent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER

There were no announcements made.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Member Duval to adjourn

Second by Member Nowak

Unanimous Vote

Motion passed

The Board of Selectmen Meeting adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary

Member, Board of Selectmen

Vice Chairman, Board of Selectmen

Joseph Nowak

Member, Board of Selectmen

John E. Duval

Chairman, Board of Selectmen