



Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

**TOWN HALL, 8 PARK STREET, ADAMS, MA 01220
1st Floor, Board of Selectmen Meeting Room**

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date, the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 6:00 PM at the Adams Town Hall. Board Chair Christine Hoyt opened the meeting. Present: Chairman Christine Hoyt, Vice-chairman Howard Rosenberg, and Members Rick Blanchard, John Duval, and Joe Nowak. *Attorney Edmund St. John III was absent.* Also present were Jay Green, Town Administrator; Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary; Crystal Wojcik, Town Finance Director; Kelly Rice, Town Treasurer and Collector; Paula Wheeler, Town Assessor; and Haley Meczywor, Town Clerk

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The October 4th, 2023 Meeting Minutes were submitted for approval.

Member Blanchard made a motion to accept the September 20th, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented and waive the reading. Member Duval seconded the motion.

Member Nowak noted some minor typographical errors to be changed. Member Blanchard amended his motion to include those changes. *Member Duval seconded the motion. The motion passed with four votes in favor and one abstention from Vice-chair Rosenberg as he was not present for the meeting.*

PUBLIC COMMENT: *None*

NEW BUSINESS:

Ratification of Kyomi Belanger, Administrative Assistant in the Community Development Department

Town Administrator Jay Green read into record the ratification memo for Kyomi Belanger.

Member Nowak made a motion to ratify Kyomi Belanger at a Grade 6/ Step 3 rate of \$20.73 per hour. The motion was seconded by Member Blanchard. The motion passed unanimously.

Winter Overnight Parking Restriction, December 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024, 12am-7am

Town Administrator Green stated that this is a standard procedure that happens in all communities around here. This is a reminder that during the above stated dates and times, there will be no overnight parking permitted. The Adams

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Police Department will use their discretion with enforcement. There are parking passes available in the Treasurer/Collector's office for the municipal lots.

Member Blanchard made a motion to adopt the winter overnight parking restriction from December 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024, from 12am-7am. The motion was seconded by Vice-chair Rosenberg. The motion passed unanimously.

Pumpkin Walk Announcement, Adams Events Committee

The Adams Events committee is excited to be offering this again in partnership with Mill City Productions. The carving will take place on Friday October 27 and then viewing will be on Saturday October 28th and Sunday, Oct 29th.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Tax Rate Classification Hearing, 6:10pm

Vice-chair Rosenberg made a motion to go into public hearing at 6:10pm in order to discuss the Tax Classification. The motion was seconded by Member Blanchard. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Administrator Green stated that this is a Tax Classification hearing. This is not the Town of Adams deciding on a Tax Classification. The Town of Adams, like other communities, is able to vote on a tax shift, meaning what percentage of the Tax Levy is carried by Commercial properties versus personal properties.

Town Assessor Paula Wheeler approached the Board

The FY24 Total Levy is just over 13.1 million dollars. The FY24 total valuation of property (Real, Commercial, Industrial, and Personal) in Town is roughly 747 million. That is an increase of over 94 million dollars over last year.

Fiscal 2024 new growth is over 14 million dollars, which is an increase of over 7 million dollars over last year.

Town Administrator Green clarified that "new growth" is classified as taxable property that did not exist in previous years. New Growth is divided into four categories, Personal, Residential, Industrial, and Commercial.

If we take the levy and divide it by the total valuation, that gives us a single tax rate of \$18.64. Last year's tax rate was \$19.73.

Of that \$18.64, \$1.02 goes directly to the debt exclusion for Hoosac Valley Regional School District. Additionally, the Town of Adams does not charge a residential Sewer User Fee. Instead, that is assessed as part of a property value. On any given year, there is roughly \$2.00 on the tax rate that goes to sewer, which you won't see on the tax rate in other communities.

Last year, the Town of Adams elected a 30% shift to the Commercial properties.

Member Duval asked what caused the new growth increase. Ms. Wheeler stated that the Mill Houses going back on the Tax Roll generated a lot of new growth. New growth is new, taxable property that was not taxed in a prior year because it was not there in a previous year. It is not the same as a property valuation or a property assessment.

Vice-chair Rosenberg asked what the net increase in tax will be. Ms. Wheeler stated that the average family's tax rate will be at a rate \$17.64 which is about \$262.12 higher than last year.

The Tax Rate dropped about a dollar, but because of the valuations the tax bills went up.

Member Nowak stated that he would like to see charts and graphs projected so that folks at home can see what is being discussed. *Member Nowak* also asked who does the five-year re-evaluation of properties. Ms. Wheeler stated that it is Bishop and Associates.

Member Nowak asked about how rental properties are assessed versus single family dwellings. *Ms. Wheeler* stated that all of those factors are accounted for with the computer software.

Member Duval stated that while *Member Nowak* stated that the Tax Rate is always going up, that for clarification purposes the amount of taxes is going up, but the rate has been dropping. *Member Duval* also stated that all communities see an increase in budgets as costs of goods and services go up. That budget, that was approved by the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and Town Meeting Members. Once that budget is approved, those funds must be raised.

Crystal Wojcik, Town Finance Director approached the Board. The overall budget increases by 6.6%, costs that were due largely to an increase in one of the Unions, the addition of a Budget for Greylock Glen, and then insurance costs increasing. The two school districts absorb roughly 43.86% of the Town's budget each year.

Chairman Hoyt asked if there was a place on the website that the Town will put the Division of Local Services graphs on? The Assessor said she will put it on her page on the website and that the Town of Adams' tax history is also there.

Member Duval made a motion to come out of public hearing. The motion was seconded by Member Blanchard. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Duval made a motion to stay with last year's split shift factor of 130% for a residential tax rate of \$17.54 and commercial rate of \$24.23. The motion was seconded by Member Blanchard.

Chairman Hoyt noted that this was a reduction of \$1.01 residential and \$1.42 from last year's tax rate.

The motion passed with four yes votes and one no from Member Nowak. *Commercial*

NEW BUSINESS, Cont.:

Park Street Rehabilitation Project Update, *Town Administrator Green*

There will be no work this fall. Both bids came in well over the amount that we had budgeted for the project. We will be going back to the drawing board with VHB, our engineers, and plan to make another attempt during the spring construction season. It is unlikely that we will be doing a full-depth reconstruction.

Member Nowak asked where Cheshire got the funds to do their roads. *Town Administrator Green* stated that they used the same funding source that the Town of Adams used to repave Howland Ave.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS:

Member Blanchard: None

Member Nowak: There have been executive meetings with the Woodlands Partnership. It is still going on.

Vice-chair Rosenberg: Attended a meeting with the Lieutenant Governor regarding the current housing shortage.

Chairman Hoyt: The Housing Bond Bill was announced today by the Governor.

Member Duval: The Annual Berkshire Regional Planning Commission meeting was held earlier this month. *Member Duval* is no longer the Chairman but rather the Vice-chairman.

Town Administrator Green: Legislation sponsored by Senator Mark for communities under 10,000 in population to create funding in addition to Chapter 90.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Town Administrator Green: Northern Berkshire County Digital Equity Plan Public Workshop, *Tuesday, October 24th @ 6:00pm, at the Adams Visitor Center*. The Digital Equity Plan is a shared community plan to ensure that residents not only have access to the internet, but the skills and tools necessary to access the internet. The purpose of this community workshop is to solicit feedback. Everyone is welcome to join us.

2024 License Renewals Pick-up, Monday, October 30th 10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm at Town Hall

Recording Secretary, Bri Hantman, stated that this year, businesses are being asked to come to Town Hall in order to pick up their licensing renewal paperwork. Additionally, Ms. Hantman is making herself available on October 30th from 10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm in order for folks to come and pick up their licenses.

2023 Trick-or-Treat Hours Reminder, Tuesday, October 31st, 5:30pm -7:30pm

The Board would like to remind the community that Trick-or-Treat will be happening in Adams on Tuesday, October 31st from 5:30pm-7pm. Stay safe and have fun!

Member Nowak observed that the Scenic Train was running recently and it was great to see so many people in Town. Member Nowak stated that Meraki Salon does a great job decorating their window for Halloween. Member Nowak also inquired about who is responsible for controlling vegetation at the solar farm. Town Administrator Green stated that a local contractor is used by the owners of that field. *Member Nowak* asked if VHB, the Town's engineering firm, has had the chance at the retaining wall on East Hoosac Street. *Town Administrator Green* stated that VHB had the opportunity to look at it, and while they have not offered their official feedback yet, they have determined that it does not present an immediate danger.

Member Duval thanked Tim Cota and the rest of the DPW for the work that they do, especially on Powers Street.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Member Blanchard. The motion was seconded by Vice-chair Rosenberg. The meeting was adjourned at 7:27pm.


List of Materials Referenced:


- **October 4th, Meeting Minutes**
- **Ratification Memo, Kyomi Belanger**
- **DLS Tax Rate Chart**
- **DLS Home Value Chart**


Respectfully Submitted by Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary.


Joseph Nowak, Member


Richard Blanchard, Member


Howard Rosenberg, Vice Chairman


John Duval, Member


Christine Hoyt, Chairman