

Minutes

Board of Assessors

Room 105

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

5:00 PM

The meeting convened at 5:01 PM in Room 105. Present were: Board members: Peter Barbieri, chair, Mary Greendale, and Jeffrey Marshall. Staff: Kathryn Peirce and Kevin Rudden.

1. Sam Tyler, chair, and Len Engel of the Governance Committee met with the board to discuss a proposed Annual Town Meeting article that would give the Town Administrator the power to hire a Principal Assessor with the consent of the Board of Assessors.

Sam Tyler said the Governance Committee is looking at “beefing up” the Special Act of 1988 that authorized the Town Administrator position and its authority. The Town Administrator only appoints four positions now, which is a low number compared to comparable towns. It makes sense to add the Principal Assessor position because it is part of the financial team along with the Treasurer/Collector and Town Accountant – who also are appointed by the Town Administrator. Sam Tyler asked for the Board of Assessors’ thoughts on this proposal.

Jeffrey Marshall said the board involved Travis Ahern throughout the process of selecting Kathryn Peirce’s replacement as Principal Assessor. There is a question about who should do the Principal Assessor’s annual review when the board only works with that person for one hour each week.

Mary Greendale read an e-mail from Travis Ahern stating that if the Town Administrator hires a person, then he is the one who would fire that person if there is just cause.

Peter Barbieri added that it needs to be spelled out in writing who will be involved if the Town Administrator wants to terminate a Principal Assessor but the board wants to keep that person. Peter Barbieri asked to review a draft of the proposed Annual Town Meeting article and drafts of job descriptions detailing who reports to whom.

Sam Tyler noted that warrant articles are due to be submitted by March 21, but any changes could be worked out prior to the Annual Town Meeting. He asked whether the board would approve placing the article on the warrant, subject to both the board and Travis Ahern agreeing on details prior to the Annual Town Meeting. The consensus of the board was to do so.

2. Sam Tyler also asked Peter Barbieri and Mary Greendale what they thought about expanding the Select Board from three to five members. Peter Barbieri said the town has a tough time getting people to run for the Select Board with only three members. Mary Greendale said she is ambivalent about expanding the board, but noted it takes longer to get things done when there are five members. She said the real issue is to figure out the Town Administrator's role and "see what's left" for the Select Board to do. Both Peter Barbieri and Mary Greendale said the town needs to decide the role of the Select Board and executive office before deciding whether to expand the Select Board.
3. Mary Greendale made a motion, seconded by Jeffrey Marshall, to approve the March 8, 2022 regular session and executive session meeting minutes as written, with authorization to make the executive session minutes public. The motion carried 3-0-0.
4. Board members reviewed the March 9 memo Kevin Rudden sent to Travis Ahern following the March 8 budget meeting with the Finance Committee. Peter Barbieri and Jeffrey Marshall made suggestions on revising the memo and then submitting it to the Finance Committee.
5. Kevin Rudden asked the board members if they supported placing an article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant that would authorize the board and the Select Board to negotiate a PILOT tax agreement with the developers of the solar photovoltaic system

on the former Bird property at 39 Marshall Street. The consensus of the board was to support the article.

A motion was made by Jeffrey Marshall, seconded by Mary Greendale, to adjourn the meeting at 5:44 PM. The motion carried: 3-0-0.