



Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

Tel: 508-657-2800 * 508-966-4425

November 22, 2021

The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairwoman Cindy McNulty. All Board members were in attendance and participating in the Arcand Meeting Room. Also actively participating in the meeting was Town Administrator Denis Fraine and Administrative Assistant Hilarie Allie. This meeting was accessible to the public either in-person or via the Zoom online option.

FY2022 Tax Classification Hearing

Mrs. McNulty read the public hearing notice for the FY2022 Tax Classification hearing and on a McNulty/Martinis motion the hearing was opened and continued until after the Board heard the next agenda item.

Chili's Change in Manager

Attorney Andrew Upton stated that Chili's Bar & Grill submitted an application for a change in manager at their Bellingham location. No other changes are being requested at this time. Mr. James Dougan, an Army National Guard veteran, has worked at Chili's for 5 years and is being promoted to manager if the Board approves. With no questions from the Board, on a Spencer/ Martinis motion, the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to approve the Change in Manager to Mr. James Dougan at the Bellingham Chili's on Hartford Ave.

FY2022 Tax Classification Hearing Continued

CFO Mary MacKinnon presented an overview of the tax classification process and explained to the Board now that Town Meeting was over, and the final budget has been voted on the goal of this evening was to adopt a factor, adopt a percentage of small business exemption and to adopt an amount of exempt debt. She stated the current split is .89% and explained shifting left would close the gap between commercial/industrial and residential and shifting right would put more of a tax burden on commercial/industrial properties.

Cheryl Hanly, Assessment Technician, stated that in regard to the current fiscal year FY22 value trends, the average value of a single family home increased 7.2% from \$339,000 to \$360,000 and that property values continue to rise. She also stated new growth exceeded expectations coming in at over \$960,000. Mrs. MacKinnon stated with continued strong growth across all sectors her recommendation is to maintain the current factor of .89%. Mr. Spencer asked about the growth of commercial/industrial properties and Cheryl stated commercial properties increased 5% and industrial increased 10.6% and suspects values in the coming months won't have as a dramatic jump as they predict with residential. Mr. Connor stated we should watch this and consider taking away some of the tax burden from residential property owners if commercial and industrial properties don't have as a significant increase in property values. Mr. Martinis agreed with this.

Mrs. MacKinnon pointed out however that this is something as a Town that we need to be careful of because as of right now the top 10 real estate and personal property tax payers make up 26.10% of the tax levy. This is something that the bond rating agencies consider put the Town at a greater risk should something happen to these businesses.

Mrs. Grant and Mr. Spencer both agreed to stay at a factor of .89% and see what happens with the commercial base and residential property growth in the next year. Mr. Spencer also pointed out that regardless of what the Board does with the shift more revenue is not being raised.

Mrs. McNulty asked if there was anyone in the audience present to speak on this hearing. No one responded.

Mrs. MacKinnon directed the Board to the required motions for consideration.

On a Spencer/Grant motion, the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to accept a residential factor of .89 for FY22 tax classification purposes.

On a Spencer/McNulty motion, the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to accept an FY22 small business exemption of 10%.

On a Spencer/Martinis motion, the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to not accept a residential exemption for FY22.

On a Spencer/Connor motion, the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to accept an exclusion for FY22 of \$840,000 for water debt repayment.

On a Martinis/Grant motion the Board voted 4-0-1 with Mr. Spencer abstaining, to continue the Public Hearing to December 6, 2021 at 7PM.

Gifts/Grants Acceptance

On a Spencer/Grant motion the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to accept the gifts and grants as listed herein, with said expenditures to be under the direction of the parties noted:

Amount	From	For/Purpose	Spending Authority
\$18,128.80	Various and on-going donations to the Council on Aging's meals program	<i>To provide healthy meals to our COA members Fund 6182</i>	COA Director
\$300,000	WS Development	<i>Developer is gifting to the Town proceeds to cover the cost of the Hartford Ave road improvement studies. The proceeds will be delivered to the Town based on actual costs incurred. The Town will deposit the proceeds and pay the vendor invoices. Fund 6581</i>	DPW Director

Meehan Properties Discussion

Mr. Connor suggested it was time that the Town stepped in to advance the process of the Meehan properties along with the abutting neighbors. He stated this area is a gateway to the Town and its current state is an eye sore. The options, as he sees them, are that the properties remain as they are currently, that the Meehan group goes before the Zoning Board to modify the properties from suburban zone to commercial business zone, or that an article goes on the May Town Meeting Warrant for a zoning change and the residents vote. Mr. Connor feels that it is in the neighbor's best interest to support the Meehan group and resolve the process through the Zoning Board. In his opinion, this would give them the most control of the situation. He stated he would like to invite the abutting neighbors to an informal sit down to go through these options and answer any questions they may have as well as hear their concerns.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Fraine stated that Rep Soter arranged for Congressman Auchincloss to be visit a couple of properties in Town and will end with a discussion at the Municipal Center on Monday November 29th.

Town Center project is coming along and a televised informational broadcast will be released soon to update residents on the progress and plans of the project.

Daniel M. Spencer Proclamation

Chairwoman McNulty read a proclamation to Mr. Spencer which thanked him for his years of dedication to our Town. Mr. Spencer will be relocating and moving out of state and as a result will resign from the Board as of November 30, 2021.

Mr. Connor stated that it wouldn't make any sense to have a special election right now to replace Mr. Spencer as a new Board member will be elected in May. Therefore, on a Connor/Grant motion the Selectboard will remain as a four member Board effective November 30, 2021 until Town Election in May 2022. Mr. Fraine clarified that any votes taken going forward are a majority vote of those present.

On a Spencer/Martinis motion the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Hilarie J. Allie', written in dark ink.

Hilarie J. Allie
Administrative Assistant