

Meeting Minutes of November 6, 2018

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Tuesday, November 6, 2018 beginning at 6:00pm in the Selectmen's Conference Room.

Members Present: Manuel Silva, Chairman; William Rooney; Derek DeBarge; Brian Mannix

Members Absent: Carmina Fernandes

First Order of Business: Pledge of Allegiance

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Visitations:

Tax Classification Hearing:

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to open the Tax Classification Hearing at 6:15pm. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Mr. Silva: Ok. Who is going to take on the explanations?

Ms. Barry: That would be me, Beverly Barry, Chairman, Board of Assessors, you all have before you the Executive Summary, I presume. Ok. So.

Fiscal Year 2019 is an Interim Year Adjustment. The work is completed and has been approved by Department of Revenue.

Fiscal Year 2019 Values are as of 1/1/18 and are based on sales between 1/1/16 and 12/31/17; our current assessment level is approximately 94%. The DOR allows assessment levels between 90 and 110%.

Values increased as a result of the interim adjustments by approximately 1% to 2%. The total valuation of the Town increased by 2.4%.

The New Growth increased by 5.6% from \$617,457 last year to \$651,756 this year for Fiscal 2019; this increase is attributable to more new construction and land splits including subdivisions in 2017 than in 2016.

The minimum residential factor is 87.1427.

The Tax Levy has increased by \$2,609,951.98 (6.8%), from \$38,585,108.38 in fiscal 2018 to \$41,195,060.36 in fiscal 2019 and is (1.8%) below the maximum allowable levy of \$41,970,017.00.

The tax rate @ 100% will be \$19.82 compared to last year's \$19.01, (+81 cents) a 4.3% increase.

Under the current classification rate of 100%, the average single-family tax bill will increase by \$259 (6.1%), from \$4,211 last year to \$4,469; the average commercial tax bill will increase by \$528 (5.6%) from \$9,421 last year to \$9,950.

Any attempt to shift more of the tax burden from the residential to the Commercial, Industrial & Personal (CIP) Classes would result in significant increases to the CIP taxes since these taxes comprise only 20.3% of the total value of the town.

The impact of any further shift is illustrated in tables 2 & 3 on page two. If you flip it over onto page two you will see that the fiscal value from last year compared to this year for the total town \$2,078,459,150.00 for FY2019. If you go down you will see that compared to last year the average single-family value last year was \$221,500, this year the average single-family value is \$225,500 which is about a 1.8% increase. The tax bill would reflect that \$4,469.00 for FY2019 versus last year \$4,211.00 this is an increase of about \$259. Just a side note on that \$95 is due to the new school and the senior center. So. As you see in the other charts it tells you what the shifts are and what the CIP would end up taking on as far as the residential rate if the tax rate was split at all. The assessors are in full unanimous vote to keep the single tax rate.

Mr. Rooney: When you just mentioned, Ms. Barry the \$95 being attributed to the new school and the senior center or just?

Mr. Alves: The total borrowing.

Ms. Barry: Yes, total borrowing.

Mr. Rooney: 95 of what? The 4469?

Ms. Barry: No, of the \$259 increase.

Mr. Rooney: Oh, of the increase.

Ms. Barry: Without that the taxes would have increased about \$164.00.

Mr. Rooney: I see. The other question I have, you would think I would get this after eleven years. Where you talk about the minimum residential factor of 87.1427 can somebody explain to me what that residential factor is?

Mr. Alves: That's the factor that we can collect, I believe from taxes from the residential class. Manny, am I wrong on that one?

Mr. Silva: The minimum residential factor is the least amount we can possibly tax residents. We cannot tax residents below that amount. That would be a shift, the 87.1427 is a shift of a 150% of the commercial.

Mr. Rooney: I see. Ok.

Mr. Silva: Although there is legislation that have gone to 175 and 200 but that requires special legislation to be able to reduce that minimum residential factor. That is the absolute least we can tax residents. So, if we do that then residents ... 13% approximately, benefit or increase.

Mr. Rooney: At least for now, my last question is, where it mentions that the CIP taxes comprise only 20.3% of the total value, do you have what that figure was last year?

Mr. Alves: It was pretty close to the same.

Mr. Rooney: Do you know if it has gone up or down?

Mr. Rosa: It's in here actually, it's on page two. So, right at the very top second item down.

Mr. Alves: Second line on table 1.

Mr. Rooney: I am missing it. Under commercial?

Mr. Rosa: At the very top, page two.

Ms. Barry: Commercial, Industrial & Personal.

Mr. Alves: So, about a 1.4% increase from last year.

Mr. Rooney: I see. Ok. Alright. That's all I have for now.

Mr. Silva: Anyone else have any questions?

Mr. DeBarge: I do. So, what would the average person, if they ask about the split tax rate and how that would help your average single household.

Mr. Alves: It would lower their bill and put the difference on the commercial part of it.

Mr. DeBarge: How much would it lower their bill?

Mr. Rosa: If you look at page two at the bottom. It will show you what the shift is. So, if your basing on 105%, 110% that will give you the...see the rate change...that's the rate change would save.

Mr. DeBarge: Ok. I see, so none is what we have the 4469 and then below that is the 105%, so what does that mean?

Ms. Barry: The tax rate would go down about \$56.

Mr. Rosa: The average tax payer would save \$56.

Mr. DeBarge: Ok I see.

Mr. Silva: Then the commercial pays that.

Mr. DeBarge: The commercial pays that, ok.

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Ms. Barry: So, where one goes down, the other goes up.

Mr. Rooney: Going back to you indicated that of the \$259 increase for the average single-family home \$95 of that is attributed to the two projects.

Mr. Alves: I think that is more of a total of all debt projects. But a good .25 out of the .42 cents of debt is the new project.

Mr. Rooney: Ok. alright. You answered it. Thank you.

Mr. Silva: Any more Mr. DeBarge?

Mr. DeBarge: No

Mr. Silva: Mr. Mannix, any questions? You have a lot I know.

Mr. Mannix: I have sat here the last five years just listening to this, as far as I am concerned its like beating a dead horse. You are increasing the taxes for the average homeowner by 6.1% the average social security bill for the senior citizens in town went up 2.8% so once again, they're on the losing end and they are going to continue to be on the losing end. We spend more money faster than it comes in instead of going out we do nothing to so slow down spending we do nothing to restrict spending and for some reason we are bleeding heart liberals for every commercial property there is in town. I have argued for five years that the split tax rate would be very beneficial for everyone and it would hurt the commercial people the least of everyone. The present way we are doing things, it really means nothing. Taxes this year is another \$259 for the average home owner. The only question I really have is, what does the assessors think over the next two or three years what the average increase would be for all of our bonding money and everything else, we are talking about the school, we are talking about .25 cents on top of .42.

Mr. Alves: You are probably looking at the same increases the next couple of years.

Mr. Mannix: Your talking or saying that they aren't going up?

Mr. Alves: It's an estimate.

Mr. Mannix: I like estimates.

Mr. Alves: It's going to be expensive for the next couple of years. There is no hiding that.

Mr. Mannix: All I am saying is your talking its \$95 this year, would you anticipate next year it could be \$85 or \$125?

Mr. Silva: If I may, I think Kim might answer that, because it all depends on how much were going to bond. This year we are not going to bond much in such a preliminary stage, but next year you might have a little more ...

Ms. Collins: I can't tell you every year exactly what it's going to be.

Mr. Mannix: I am not looking for exact.

Ms. Collins: I know that it goes from .25 cents to roughly .40 cents. Some years it will go down to .35 cents but its going to be between .25 and .45 cents.

Mr. Mannix: I am just going to make a fool out of myself and I'm going to assume there is a possibility it would be close to the .35, .40 or .45 cents rather than the .25 cents. I don't mind doing that to myself.

Ms. Collins: Some of the years, yes.

Mr. Rosa: If you want to think worst case scenario.

Mr. Mannix: I'm not thinking worst case, I'm thinking reality scenario. The problem is if we put all of these smoke screens up and say all of these things and then when you go down the road three years and you look back I must say that I am more right, not you as a person, but than you are. It is all we do, we spend, and we spend, and we spend, and we don't really come up with the real numbers. Nobody can come up with the real exact number, I understand that. But I sit here, and I look and the last three or four years everything has been going up 4% or better. The average home owner, he is not going up 4% or better. I would be willing to bet every homeowner, not every but most homeowners would be loving it if their income went up 2% or better every year. If we do that and when I say we, I talking about the town, I am not talking about individuals, and we don't seem to do anything to try to slow it down or to

stop it. There is a lot more we can do and a lot more we should do. That has always been my point and we don't do it. There is a whole lot of reasons why we don't, without getting into those everybody has their own thoughts and ideas of how to do that. That is what I sit here and look at, I am not saying I'm looking for a 4% decrease every year, no I'm not saying that. But I am saying we are not slowing anything down. We sit here, and we talk all year, the Board of Selectmen, the DPW, we talk all year, gee we got to do something, we got to look at the future, we got to maybe take a step back we got to maybe say no to somebody. Guess what a year from now, we are right where we are I am saying the same thing. The work you have done, I am not disputing any of the work you have done. It will pass with a 3-1 vote because I am not going to vote on it, for it. I just believe there has to be somebody that stands here and says to people please slow down. I plant the seed year after year after year, that's all I am doing is planting a seed. That seed hasn't popped out of the ground yet. Not like working on a farm, eventually that seed begins to grow. Here I have said this over and over again, that seed don't have a chance. Too much rain it must have rotted away. I'm sorry.

Mr. Rosa: Can I say something.

Mr. Mannix: Yes, I am all done talking.

Mr. Rose: I agree with some of the stuff you are saying as far as trying to get taxes under more control. I agree with what you are saying to be quite honest with you. Me personally I actually voted against the school and against the senior center because I thought one of the main reasons people are complaining about their taxes. If you approving these magic projects are taxes aren't going to go down, they are going to go up. Even if the town adds no additional spending, zero additional spending the tax levy is going to increase, because people's salary increase, it's just natural. Again, that is if new development stays the same its still going to increase the levy. You voted in the senior center, the school system so people have to expect that their taxes are going to increase. That is something that the voters voted on. So, anyone who voted yes and thinking their taxes are going to decrease they are kidding themselves. I agree with you hopefully going forward we can look at some other things that are going to be coming up because I am sure there are other things that come up for vote in front of the Board here to either approve or disapprove. Then serious discussions need to be had at this level. If it goes up to the Town to vote, then residents need to really think about whether or not they want to approve these other things that come up for vote. I understand your frustration, unfortunately it is what it is. We can only do the best we can do. I just wanted to say that.

Mr. Mannix: I commend you for all your work, a lot of work goes into all this with everyone who is involved in it. I understand that. Ok, but the same token, we need to go into other directions to make things better in the end.

Ms. Collins: Earlier when I said the between the .25 and .45 cents we are specifically talking about the senior center and the school. I think Joe had mentioned that total excluded debt is like .42 cents. That other debt is coming off in the next couple of years, that's why you will see the number go from .25 to .35 cents to .25 cents.

Mr. Mannix: New debt may go on. As far as I have been in this town, when the old debt goes off, guess what, all of a sudden, we have money now because we are going to lose this \$300,000 we are paying out each year, so all of a sudden, we will find ways to spend and make it come back.

Ms. Collins: I also think it is important to look at the fact that the capital projects are much lower than they have been in previous years because people have looked at them and said we are only going to approve the leases, we are not doing any more debt. In addition to that, if we would have used, because we didn't use free cash and if we would have kept the budget the way it was, we would have had over a dollar increase in taxes alone without the projects. So, what everybody worked really hard to do, was to bring that budget down and watch our spending. So, we are looking at a .60 cent increase instead of over \$1.00 and then excluded debt on top of that. So, I don't think its that nobody wants to do anything, I think we are trying to do as much as we can to work on the budget.

Mr. Silva: I have to agree with you as far as taxes, this however, as you know, explained before they are just not going to go down, unfortunately, but we have to limit the increases. Doing this is, is not the proper way to go. By example, just go to Longmeadow which did it a few years ago. And it was chaotic. You have to back away and not do it. What happens is you start to have vacancies in properties because the rents go up. We just saw, I don't know if you all heard on the news that Papa Gino's is going, Lowes is closing down stores, now is it attributed to taxes maybe not, but everything compiled is. So, unfortunately business is not being really prosper like a lot of people think. Its difficult. So, this to me is

not the way to go, not with such a small, well it's really not that small here, I was just on that side of the table last night and now I'm on this side of the table. We only have 11%, Wilbraham has 22%, 23% and its getting significant which it doesn't impact as much but for instance, shifting 50% the average commercial is going to go up \$5,000 is that a job, maybe. So, we have to look at all different scenarios. I have a couple of questions.

It might not be so much this, in our generating plants we lost \$4.7 million dollars. Where did it go?

Mr. Alves: You mean MMWEC?

Mr. Silva: No, in your numbers. There is \$4.7 we lost one of the generating plants.

Mr. Alves: That was the solar on the dump.

Mr. Silva: Right, so that came off that tax role, but where did the funds go? Where are you getting that \$4.7 million in revenues?

Mr. Alves: Our growth absorbed that. You lost the value and you gained the value back through your growth of the town.

Mr. Silva: No, no, they are still going to get a tax bill are they not?

Mr. Alves: They do get a tax bill.

Mr. Silva: Is it in local receipts? Because I didn't see it there. As a matter of fact, our local receipts for in lieu of taxes it's a lot lower this year. I don't know why.

Mr. Alves: Honestly, Kim and the Board of Selectmen sat down with a re-cap sheet and the receipts.

Mr. Silva: No, no re-cap sheet.

Mr. Alves: But the local receipts are part of that. You sat down with Kim to squeeze those numbers. You guys have set these indirectly.

Mr. Silva: No, No, No, Joe. No, No

Mr. Alves: Manny, Kim provides the local receipts, you guys approved them.

Mr. Silva: That's understood, but we don't have the values in front of us. We took \$4.7 million which by the way is the right thing to do, because we put it on the tax role the previous year, so the tax payers now have to front that. But anyways, if we are taking \$4.7 million off of the assessments right, so now the commercial is lowered by 4.7 and we only have 1.2 actually commercial went up more because of that. That 4.7 you still have to have, in lieu of tax, you have to do an in lieu of tax.

Mr. Alves: There was an agreement signed by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Silva: Right, so, I was just wondering, we will get into it after, but I am just wondering why the in lieu of tax from last year actually went down this year when this came off and its supposed to go over to the local receipts.

Mr. Alves: The Board has signed that document, which is like an in lieu of taxes, we don't have an in lieu of taxes with them that agreement through the Selectmen in an in lieu. So, there is a couple of mechanisms in there that they built in and it was very sly of them, that if we charge them taxes in turn they are going to remit them back to us which is illegal. Second of all, their adjusting the rate they give us to make that difference back.

Mr. Silva: Yes, it comes out to be a wash. But in the numbers and the calculations don't work that way. So, I am just wondering if that in lieu of taxes put into the in lieu of tax payments, because we didn't lose, unless I have missed something, we didn't lose in lieu of tax payments, have we?

Ms. Collins: No, are you asking why on the local receipts the amount from in lieu tax have not gone up?

Mr. Silva: No. It went down.

Ms. Collins: You are asking why its not going up though because of this?

Mr. Silva: Right, it should have gone up. Because this is going there, because it is an in lieu of tax, and yet it went down. Just wondering if our local receipts are a little iffy that's all. Because I will tell you I was in re-cap today to go over the numbers because I didn't have these early enough, unfortunately.

So, I was in there today, and that's another thing before we break up to discuss with the Board. Looking at it, I was just wondering, wow if we've taken \$4.7 million in lieu of tax payments they should have gone up not down.

Ms. Collins: That amount is the amount based on the estimates that we had when we talked about the tax re-cap. If anything has changed, then I have not communicated to Joe about any changes. If it needs to increase, then...

Mr. Silva: If that does need to increase that would change the rate a little bit.

Ms. Collins: Yes, it would.

Mr. Silva: Thank you. We will find it, I just thought you had an answer as to where it went. But anyways, the other question, do we know how many commercial, did you go for commercial and residential exemption. So long ago, I don't remember.

Mr. Alves: Not yet, we haven't done those.

Mr. Silva: So, Ok. Then I will let you explain the commercial exemption and the residential exemption first I guess.

Ms. Barry: Alright, the votes that we need to be taken.

The Residential Exemption: The selectmen or mayor with the approval of the Council may grant a residential exemption to all Class One, Residential properties that are principal residents of the taxpayer on January 1st.

Amount: The exemption may not exceed a 20% of the average assessed value of the Class One Residential properties. To calculate the exemption the assessors first determine the average assessed value of all residential parcels, the adopted percentage is applied to this amount. The assessed value of each residential parcel that is the domicile of the taxpayer is then reduced by that amount. Rev 01/14 Assessment Administration Law, Procedures and Valuation Property Tax Classification.

Tax Rate Impact: Adopting a residential exemption increases the residential tax rate. The amount of the tax levy paid by the class remains the same but because of the exempted valuation it is distributed over less assessed value. This higher rate creates a shift within the class that reduces the taxes paid by homeowners with moderately valued properties. Those taxes are then paid by owners of rental properties, vacation homes and higher valued homes.

Mr. Rooney: Again, I ask this question every year, one of these days I am going to write it down.

Mr. Silva: No, then the public wouldn't know.

Mr. Rooney: Well that may be. Based on your recommendation, we are voting not to grant. Correct.

Ms. Barry: Correct.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge that the Town of Ludlow not grant a residential exemption to all Class One Residential Properties. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Mr. Silva: Discussion; Do we know the amount, or how many would benefit or how many would not?

Mr. Alves: No, not a total of residents, or homes.

Mr. Silva: If you could next year, just have a, very simple to do, not a lot of work, you could have the number of people who would benefit a reduction in taxes. What this does is, actually lower taxes for the lower end properties and the people who can't afford it as much as. So, it would be nice to see it now, not saying I am in favor of it, it's just nice to see that number if you could. And that goes the same before we go to commercial. It would be nice to see the number of commercial properties that would benefit with the 10% exemption.

Mr. Alves: We get a list every year from the state.

Mr. Silva: Not necessarily Joe.

Mr. Alves: It would take a lot of field work to double check and cross those out.

Mr. Silva: You would have to review them a little bit and try to see which ones would benefit. All those that are under \$1 million, it would be nice to just see a number. At least you would know how many would benefit in town. Some of these lower end commercial properties are vacant if it benefits, maybe we think about it.

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Mr. Rosa: I kind of think of it as a double taxation.

Mr. Silva: It is.

Mr. Rosa: You are adjusting someone because they can afford more of a more expensive building and I'm sure if he has a bigger building he is employing more people and then you give him a higher tax burden as a result of it. Dis-apportion ate is what it comes down to.

Mr. Silva: Yes, it all is however, these laws are passed. We don't make them.

Mr. Alves: Again, that is both residential exemption and small commercial exemption. Its like a micro-tax. A split rate within those classes.

Mr. Silva: Well communities do it.

Mr. Alves: Apart from Mr. Mannix, we are against the split-rate but this allows other mechanisms to split the rate even further.

Mr. Silva: Again, I am not saying that I would be for it, I just like information for everybody to see.

Mr. Alves: The second one is attainable, the third one, we have to look at that one.

Mr. Rosa: We can make it happen, even if you rely on the DORs figures.

Mr. Silva: I believe residential went up to 35%. The exemption.

Ms. Barry: Small Commercial Exemption: The selectmen or mayor, with the approval of the council, may grant a small commercial exemption to all Class Three, Commercial properties that are occupied by businesses with an average annual employment of no more than 10 people and an assessed valuation of less than \$1,000,000.16.

Amount: The exemption may not exceed 10% of the assessed value of each eligible Class Three, Commercial property.

Eligible Business: For a business to qualify, the Director of the Department of Workforce Development must certify that it had an average annual employment of 10 or fewer people at all locations during the preceding calendar year. By July 1st of each year, the Director provides assessors with a list of businesses that met that employment criterion. If a sole proprietorship or partnership does not appear on the certified list, the assessors may determine whether it met the employment criterion for the preceding calendar year.

Tax Rate Impact: Adopting a small commercial exemption increases the commercial and industrial tax rates. The amount of the tax levy paid by those two classes remains the same, but because of the exempted valuation, it is distributed over less assessed value. This higher rate creates a shift that reduces the taxes paid by owners of properties.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge that the Town not grant a small commercial exemption to all Class Three Commercial Properties. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge that the Town adopt a single tax rate for the coming year, factor of 1. Vote 3-1. 1 opposed.

Mr. Mannix: Our Governor a month ago, three different times on television stating that he was pushing for total support of passing a bill as soon as possible for everyone sixty-five years and older can decide they don't have to pay their taxes until they either die or sell the property.

Mr. Rosa: Delaying their taxes.

Mr. Mannix: Property taxes.

Ms. Barry: Deferring them.

Mr. Mannix: Our illustrious Governor has stated that repeatedly, all down in Boston on the TV Stations and everything else. I wonder if we, or anybody else has taken a look into that and what our local political figures and elected officials think of that. Because I am saying to you right now, if you gave me the opportunity of not paying my taxes till I died, well I hope to live to be 100 years old. At the same token, if our community here is 28% senior citizens I believe, I think the Governor was stating that the state was 21% if all of a sudden 14% of that 28% decided they were not going to pay their taxes and they died and the house was sold, granted 20, 30 or 40 years down the road it will all balance out, but the first 6, 8, 10 or 12 years because of a number of people, you may have a better idea of how many elderly people own houses in town. He didn't put any stipulations on or rules or regulations, he is just stating that the larger, he went into the average tax bill went up 4% for the x number, he went into a whole lot of little meaningless details. But I have yet to see anybody challenge him or anybody else.

Ms. Barry: I haven't heard anything.

Mr. Mannix: I think maybe it is something that the Board should look at, think about.

Mr. Alves: I haven't heard anything, is this their primary residence? Because you talk about older demographic, they own most of the commonwealth. So how do you maneuver around that.

Mr. Mannix: 65 and older.

Mr. Rosa: If the Town adopted that, let's just say for the sake of argument, I am just saying for the sake of argument.

Mr. Mannix: Excuse me, mandated for every city and town in the commonwealth, as he stated.

Mr. Rosa: You are not suggesting that the Town do this, you are just suggesting if it was mandated?

Mr. Mannix: I am saying he is saying he is going to do that. He doesn't anticipate a problem.

Mr. Rosa: I don't see how that would work. If it was to pass.

Mr. Silva: It is passed. It is a deferral on the books. Deferral of taxes is on the books and if anybody applies they have to qualify, they do have qualifications. He may want to broaden it. For deferrals right now, you must qualify both income, assets in other words, you can't have money for deferred taxes. You have to be pretty much in the poverty range or the, but you have deferrals right now, its on the books if somebody applies you are going to have to, its always been there, its not new.

Mr. Rosa: The hardship clause 18?

Mr. Silva: No that's not 18.

Mr. Alves: We have over 70 senior exemptions. But again, the qualifications, you really have to be.

Mr. Rosa: If he mandated that state law and there were no requirements,

Mr. Silva: there would have to be

Mr. Rosa: I'm just saying if there wasn't, the town would have to borrow money to run every year, so that would increase the cost of running the town.

Mr. Silva: Most likely there would be local options. But I do say that the elderly exemptions in this town are very very low. Those should be looked at, you should be bringing it to us and to the town meeting floor to get those increased. I think you still have clause 41c.

Mr. Rosa: Very low, meaning people applying for them?

Mr. Silva: No, the qualifications. They haven't been broadened in quite some time. I might be wrong but last time I looked, the limits are very low.

Mr. Rosa: The Board is responsible for making those adjustments?

Mr. Silva: You should look at it and recommend what adjustments should be made and bring it to town floor for approval. There are 41c, 41c ½ there is even colus in some of them. So, when the elderly get bound, their social security is not going up that much. So, we should be helping out.

Mr. Rosa: Sounds like a good agenda item.

Mr. Silva: You should take a look at it, yes.

Resident Mr. Albano: In regard to the governor, he has another bill that he signed regarding the senior abatement program. I think he bumped it up to \$1500. Probably for different areas or towns.

Mr. Silva: Again, most likely it would be a local option and that is part of what I think the assessors should be looking at and to bring to the town meeting floor. I don't believe that if he would adopt that, or just mandate it, the state would have to, probably not going to do that.

Resident Mr. Albano: A couple of other things, now that I am standing. Mr. Mannix you said it was 36% seniors in the town?

Mr. Mannix: Between 21 and 28%

Mr. Albano: I thought it was like 63% senior

Mr. Mannix: No, no. A lot of us old people around, but not that many. Look in this room, its only Mr. Rooney and yourself and myself. Over 60.

Resident Mr. Albano: One more question. What does the committee consider average home price?

Mr. Rosa: \$225,500

Resident Mr. Albano: What happens how long will that stay in effect regarding re-eval? When are we set for re-evaluation?

Mr. Rosa: Every year

Mr. Silva: Not re-evaluation. Your confusing, there is an interim adjustment and it happens every year now. It didn't before, now it does. When proposition 2 ½ was voted in that was actually on the books, but everybody kind of went to the three-year re-eval and now its not even three-years but now its five-years with interim adjustments every year. So, if you fall off your parameters, every year, you'll adjust every year. But the actual certification is done now every five years. I don't know when Ludlow did...

Mr. Alves: We did ours last year.

Mr. Silva: You did yours last year. So, five years from now is the full-scale evaluation.

Resident Mr. Albano: So, the average home is what amount again please?

Mr. Silva: \$225,500

Mr. Mannix: \$225,000 and some change.

Resident Mr. Albano: So, what happens to the people above that?

Mr. Rooney: They pay more. They pay the same tax rate, but its based on per thousand of their valuation.

Resident Mr. Albano: So, the people who don't live in an average home, do they have a good idea of what they will be paying?

Mr. Rooney: Well if this rate were to come to fruition, what is it, \$19.82, per thousand of the valuation of the home.

Mr. Silva: So, \$450,000 you are paying almost \$500.

Mr. Mannix: A little over 6% is added to whatever your paying now.

Resident Mr. Albano: Does any body know how many houses were taken this year for back taxes?

Mr. Rooney: Tax Title you mean? Small number.

Mrs. Villano: I don't know how many are in tax in process, but there are three that have been taken completely in tax titles.

Resident Mr. Albano: How many?

Mrs. Villano: Three right now

Mr. Silva: Sometimes they recover they recoup.

Mrs. Villano: I do not know how many are in process. It takes almost three or four years to get completely into a tax foreclosure. You have to be in the rears for so many years, then it gets into a whole process to try and recoup and make arrangements, then it goes to land court and then it goes into tax title foreclosure.

Resident Mr. Albano: I don't know if anybody here that works or retired, I'm retired, and I get to drive around a lot. I have never seen so many homes for sale in this town this year or the last couple of years since I have been in this town. I take notice a lot of that stuff.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Albano, I got to say that's not due to taxes that's due to what's happening in the market. The market is right now booming and as you can see where the average sale went up that's what happening out there, the sales, they are getting their dollars.

Mr. DeBarge: It's the weather.

Resident Mr. Albano: There are a lot of houses going up that I am in shock about.

Mr. DeBarge: The weather, they are all going down south.

Resident Mr. Albano: Cheaper taxes

Mr. Alves: There is new proto-call, normally I would have you sign the paperwork, this year you have to physically go on the computer and click yourself your signature. Hopefully, you guys have done the password and your login.

Mr. Rosa: Your gonna have to Mr. DeBarge, your gonna have to.

Mr. Silva: That was my note to the Board, that you do have to go on and go see the clerk have her give you a password.

Mrs. Villano: I already sent emails to every one of you individually with all that information.

Mr. Silva: I didn't get one.

Mr. DeBarge: What

Mrs. Villano: Like a month ago.

Ms. Barry: I must be the only one that did it.

Mr. Mannix: That was long time ago, we deleted it all and through it all away.

Mr. Alves: You need a new login you can't use your Wilbraham one.

Ms. Barry: We did it at our meeting.

Mr. Alves: It would be nice to submit tomorrow. Most of the stuff has been submitted, I'm just going to wait on those two items. The LA 5 and the recap sheet. So, you just have to click on and it saves automatically, and you don't got to do much.

Mr. Silva: You're not gonna get it tomorrow?

Mr. Alves: I know where you guys live, I will just track you down.

Mr. Rosa: It's obviously a priority if you guys can get it done in the next couple of days.

Mr. Rooney: Can we come in and do it?

Mr. Silva: Come in and see the clerk, she is going to have to set you up with a password.

Mr. Mannix: Why can't they come into your office?

Mr. Alves: They can come in tomorrow I can have Ellie forward what the clerk already sent out and we can get to work.

Mrs. Villano: I don't have it with me, I will have to go into my computer and find it.

Ms. Barry: Its easy, if I can do you guys can do it.

Mr. DeBarge: See you tomorrow.

Mr. Silva: Anything else? Were good.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to close the tax classification hearing at 7:00pm. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

Board of Public Works

Mr. Silva stated that Board of Public Works was scheduled as a visitation, but they have resolved a couple of issues and they will be coming in with their Quarterly Meeting with the Board within the next couple of meetings or so.

Mr. Mannix asked if the BPW Quarterly Meeting has been scheduled yet?

Mrs. Villano stated that it has not been scheduled yet.

Parent Representation - Ludlow High School Field Renovations

Patricia Gregoire & Natalina Tulik

Mr. Mannix stated to start with the condition of what fields and property you want to address.

Ms. Tulik stated that they want to address the track and the field in the back of the high school.

Ms. Gregoire stated that the track has been there for about 15 years and in the last 5-6 years they noticed that the track most specifically has been deteriorating and there are areas of the track where there are large pieces missing. In the last couple of years, it has gotten to the point where the students that utilize it from the track and field team and the cross-country teams have had limited use of the track area because of the shape it is in. The upcoming track and field season have been informed that all their meets will be away, because it is to the point where they cannot use the track at all. The price tag that goes along with this project is in the area of \$1.2 - \$1.5 million. This has come up as a capital improvement project in the past, but it has been bumped every time. This has been an ongoing need for a while. They are looking to see what the town can do to help fund the project, because even with all their fundraising efforts, that won't come close to the price tag of the project.

Mr. Silva stated that when you mention \$1.2 - \$1.5 million what is the scope of the project you are looking at?

Ms. Tulik stated that the track itself is \$600,00 and then with the fields, it is about \$500,000 - \$600,000 and then they are also looking at including a maintenance plan to be put in place.

Ms. Gregoire stated that the entire track would have to be totally replaced with a whole new one. This track is not only used by the school, it is also used for a lot of town events.

Mr. DeBarge stated there needs to be a lot of discussions with the school committee because they have a budget, they need to communicate with us as well. When it was asked about what the town can do, that encompasses everybody, because everybody uses that field. The baseball field needs to be redone also. So, we are talking about the whole scope of everything in that whole back area. This needs to be a come together of everyone, that includes the school. We cannot tell you any numbers right now, it is going to be a work in progress. His biggest question on this is, what has happened in these past seven years when this track has been going steadily down and down and down. What was the contingency plan for replacement or when this thing was breaking down?

Ms. Tulik stated that the Facility Improvement Team has faded since the start of the LDAA, they do still have funds from fundraising of about \$4,000. It wasn't just for the track it was for any type of facility that needed it.

Ms. Gregoire stated that this goes back to when the whole facility was constructed, it was built and put together, but there was never any forethought to moving forward five, ten, fifteen, twenty years down the road, as to what is going to happen when things start deteriorating. As far as the other fields we have in town, we have 9 soccer fields, 2 football fields, three tennis courts, six basketball courts, three baseball diamonds but we only have one track. We have back up plans for all our other fields, but not the track. It is to benefit the town. It is a community place.

Mr. DeBarge stated that it needs to be talked about as a full community project. We as the Board of Selectmen understand and feel for the kids that have to have away matches. We need to have a dialog with the school to come up with a plan for the possibility of putting our resources together. He thinks that is where we need to start.

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Mr. Rooney stated that he finds it to be a bit of a disjointed effort, you have the Board of Selectmen, the School Committee, FIT, LDAA and the business community. What is the plan? He has heard different numbers on the price tag. It is hard to sit here and say here is what the town of Ludlow or on the non-school side part of it, is willing to put in, when we don't know everything involved. There has to be a plan, or committee or group that is a little bit more all encompassing than what we have now. In addition to that, timing is everything. The timing is not good for this. We have a new school, a new senior center and a new communications system for the police going in. There is only so much we can do. There has to be a plan that has to come from the school committee, in conjunction with us. It has to be a collective effort, and we are not there yet. Are we looking for grants?

Mr. DeBarge stated that we are 100% committed to it, but monetarily is where the timing comes in. We all know how vital it is, we must get everyone else into as well, unless the school can come up with \$2 million.

Mr. Silva stated that it is not going to happen right now. There are a lot of projects going on right now. Are we committed to helping? Of course. You must get a more concrete number, and design plan, etc., so that people can jump in.

Mr. Mannix stated that this is school property and the school committee should be in charge. They need to get the ball rolling. They need to come and talk to everybody. They need to sit down with us and work some things out of what can be done here, there, etc. We don't have the money.

Ms. Gregoire stated that the whole point for them meeting with the Board was to make sure we are all on the same page. To put the word out there that at some point in time we may be looking to the Board whether it comes from the LDAA or the School Committee.

Mr. DeBarge stated that the committee or other volunteers from the LDAA do the same thing that you are doing tonight to the school committee to meet with them and talk to them about the same exact thing and see where that takes us.

Correspondence:

279. Governor Charles Baker and Mass DOT – informing the Board that the Chapter 90 apportionment for FY2019 for Ludlow is \$839,793 and supplemental amount of \$139,965.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

280. Sgt. Brian Shameklis, Police Department – informing the Board that the Police Department was awarded two electronic radar speed signs as a part of a grant.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Rooney to file. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

281. Amy Priest, Business Administrator, DPW – informing the Board that the Board of Public Works set the sewer rate for the billing period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Rooney to file. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

282. Susan Urban, Office Assistant, Planning Department – informing the Board that a Public Hearing for the construction of the new elementary school is scheduled for November 8, 2018 at 7:20pm in the Selectmen's Conference Room.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

283. Michael Vedovelli, Manager Community Relations, Eversource – informing the Board of upcoming Eversource maintenance work that will be occurring in the Town of Ludlow along the 301 line.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Rooney to file and put on LCTV. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

- 283a. Michael Vedovelli, Manager Community Relations, Eversource – informing the Board of upcoming Eversource maintenance work that will be occurring in the Town of Ludlow along the right-of-way.
- Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 4-0 all in favor.
284. Brian Shameklis, Chairman, Safety Committee – requesting the Board to approve an additional street light to be added to an existing light pole on Swan Avenue. This request comes after a lengthy discussion about the safety issues that arise from this poorly lighted area.
- Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Rooney to approve the additional street light to be added on Swan Ave. Vote 4-0 all in favor.
285. Mary Jane Handy, Director of Accounts, Dept. of Revenue – informing the Board of the available funds or “free cash” approval as of July 1, 2018 for the Town of Ludlow.
- Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 4-0 all in favor.
286. Melinda Kinney, Senior Director, Government Affairs Charter Communications – informing the Board of changes to the Channel line-up.
- Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 4-0 all in favor.
287. Office of the Attorney General, State of Massachusetts – copy of a Petition of Charter Communications Inc., on behalf of Its Subsidiaries and Affiliates for a Determination of Effective Competition in Massachusetts Communities listed in Appendix A and Kauai, HI and accompanying filings.
- Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 4-0 all in favor.
288. Denise J. Williams, Director of Regulatory Compliance and Planning, Charter Communications – informing the Board of the annual Form 1240 and Form 1205 rate justification filing for 2019.
- Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. Mannix to file. Vote 4-0 all in favor.
289. Joseph Batista – Board to approve a Common Victualler License and Entertainment License for Joey Bats Café.
- Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve the Common Victualler License and Entertainment License for Joe Bats Café. Vote 4-0 all in favor.
290. Gloria Faria, Committee Chairman, Ludlow Rotarian – requesting permission for the Ludlow Rotarians & Mainly Drafts (horse drawn carriage) to hold their Annual “Toys for Tots” Christmas Parade on Sunday, December 2nd. Also requesting a police presence on the parade route (the same route as last year).
- Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Rooney to approve Gloria Faria the Committee Chairman of Ludlow Rotarians requesting permission for the Ludlow Rotarians & Mainly Drafts to hold their Annual “Toy’s for Tots” Christmas Parade on Sunday, December 2nd and the police request. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Unfinished Business:

Board to approve and sign (4) copies of the contract between the Town of Ludlow and The Ludlow Library Technicians.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign (4) copies of the contract between the Town of Ludlow and The Ludlow Library Technicians. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Board to appoint Joseph Wlodyka to the Zoning Board of Appeals, his appointment was inadvertently missed in May 2018.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to appoint Joseph Wlodyka to the Zoning Board of Appeals effective as of today. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Board to appoint Ronald Cellillie as a Democratic Election Poll Worker. Approved by the Democratic Committee.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. Mannix to appoint Ronald Cellillie as a Democratic Election Poll Worker. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Board to sign and Common Victualler License and Entertainment License for Joey Bats Café. Approved.

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

New Business:

Board to approve and sign (3) copies of the Estoppel Certificate for the Net Metering Credit Purchase Agreement between the Town of Ludlow and GLC-MA Ludlow. (Ahana Renewables is selling its Solar business to CleanCapital)

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign (3) copies of the Estoppel Certificate for the Net Metering Credit Purchase Agreement between the Town of Ludlow and GLC-MA Ludlow. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Board to approve and sign (3) copies of the Estoppel Certificate for Section 30 of Solar Facilities Lease between the Town of Ludlow and GLC-MA Ludlow.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Mannix to approve and sign (3) copies of the Estoppel Certificate for Section 30 of Solar Facilities Lease between the Town of Ludlow and GLC-MA Ludlow. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of August 7, 2018

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve the Board of Selectmen's Minutes for August 7, 2018 with all members present other than Mr. Mannix. Vote 3-0, 1 abstention.

Board to approve and sign Executive Session Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2018.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve the Executive Session Minutes of September 18, 2018 with all members present. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Board to approve and sign Executive Session Meeting Minutes of October 2, 2018 (first session)

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve the Executive Session Minutes of the Board of October 2, 2018 with all members present. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Board to peruse the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2018

Board to peruse the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of September 4, 2018

Board to peruse the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of October 2, 2018 (2nd session)

Board to peruse the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2018 (1st session)

Residential Comment:

Mr. Albano asked Mrs. Villano if any one had mentioned to her about repairing street lights in this town? Is there something in the works for that?

Mrs. Villano stated that the street lights are all owned and repaired by Eversource. When we hear of a light that needs to be repaired we put it into the queue and Eversource repairs them.

Mr. Mannix stated that you can call Eversource yourself or the police department and they can call them.

Mrs. Villano stated that you can go online to Eversource to put in a request to have a street light repaired. I know the DPW has been sending in several that have gone out recently. You can call the police department, the DPW.

Mr. Albano stated that Putts Bridge 6 out of the 10 lights on the bridge are out. The right-hand corner of the bridge, that light is out. There is a light by the Library on East Street, that one is out. There is a light by the Library that shines into the big open parking lot shining right into people eyes, when you are on the bridge coming into Ludlow that is when you see it. That should be adjusted down. On East Street there is 13 lights out. These are the new street lights. It is very dark, especially on the bridge.

Mr. Mannix stated that the lights on East Street would have to be fixed by Eversource, but the ones on the bridge maybe the state. Maybe the DPW could find that out. The light in the Library parking lot does need to be angled differently, it does blind cars coming off the bridge.

Mr. DeBarge stated that Mr. Albano is absolutely right. They need to be fixed and adjusted.

Mr. Rooney stated, if you are coming into Ludlow from the bridge and you look to the right you will see a big liquor sign on top of Pieroways. It is an eyesore, and there is no liquor store there. Could we send a letter to the landlord perhaps asking him to take it down? He is not sure if there are any by-laws that would fit within that. That store hasn't been there for twenty-years, or more.

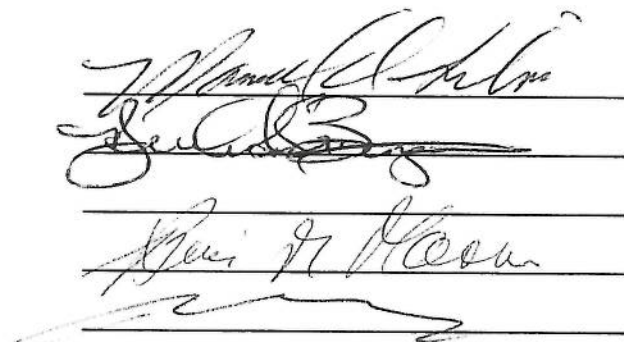
Closing Comments:

Mr. Mannix stated that Veteran's Day is next week, please honor your Veteran. He would love to see as many people as possible in town to turn on a green light outside of your house to show support for all Veterans and you can turn on a blue light in support for police.

Mr. Silva stated to be nice to a Veteran this weekend. Also, the Night in Portugal had twelve recipients getting scholarships for college. It was a very nice event, very well attended, with over 400 hundred people there. Thank you to the donors.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. Mannix to enter into Executive Session for Fire and Police contract negotiations at 7:18pm and we will return to open session. It is detrimental to the bargaining and litigation for this session. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Moved by Mr. Rooney, seconded by Mr. Mannix to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting. Vote 4-0 all in favor.



Ludlow Board of Selectmen

All related documents can be viewed at the Board of Selectmen's Office during regular business hours.

