

**MILLVILLE BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
Millville Town Hall  
290 Main Street**

**February 20, 2018**

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Board Members Present: Chairman Joseph Rapoza; Vice Chairman Jennifer Dean Wing;  
Secretary Thomas Houle; Selectman Roland Barrett and Andrew Alward

Also Present: Town Administrator, Jennifer Callahan; Town Accountant Justin Cole

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The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

The Board of Selectmen observed a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the Parkland Florida High School shooting.

**Announcements:**

- There will be a St. Patrick's Day Celebration at the Senior Center on Monday, March 12, 2018 at 12:00 pm. Advance reservations required, \$10.00 per person.

**Minutes**

**February 5, 2018:**

**On a motion made by Tom Houle and seconded by Jennifer Wing Dean, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes from February 5, 2018.**

**Department/Board:**

**Board of Assessors:**

**Appointment of Peter Mars**

Mr. Mars is seeking appointment to the Board of Assessors. The Chairman read his credentials.

**On a motion made by Jennifer Wing Dean and seconded by Tom Houle, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Peter Mars to the Board of Assessors.**

**Town Clerk:**

The last day to withdraw nomination papers is February 28<sup>th</sup>. The last day to register to vote is March 13, 2018.

**Public Forum/Citizen Comments: (3 minute limit)**

**Resident, Gerry Finn: Grove Street:**

Mr. Finn commended the creation of the new Valuation & Tax Summary pamphlet which explains the financials of the Town. The Town is paying 60% of its budget to the school. This

means that for every \$10.00 a tax payer pays, \$6.00 goes to the school. He is requesting that a detailed audit be done on the school.

Chairman Rapoza requests that this be put on a future agenda.

**Resident, Richard Hurteau 70 Quaker Street:**

Mr. Hurteau asked if the Town completes audits on its books yearly. The Chairman indicated that the financial books are audited yearly by an independent representative.

**Resident, Ronald Marcos 12 Albert Dr.:**

Resident Marcos thanked the Town Administrator for meeting with him today and answering several of his financial questions. He was made aware the Town has been running in a deficient for over the last 10 years.

**Correspondence:**

- KP Law: Title Review Paulette Way & Twin Pond Circle – has been completed of parcels of land along the two roads. This is follow-up of Town Meeting vote to accept both as public ways.
- Blue Wave: January Solar Project Assemblage Update – status report of solar project in Westport indicates construction is on schedule and will be completed by June 17, 2018.
- MA Dept. of Agricultural: New State Apiary Program with resources to encourage new and support existing local honey beekeeping.

**New Business:**

**Joint Pole Relocation Order:**

- **On a motion made by Jennifer Dean Wing and seconded by Joe Rapoza the Board voted unanimously to allow the Secretary to sign the relocation petition of National Grid for 11 poles from 39 Central Street to 158 Central Street.**

**Special Town Meeting:**

The Town Administrator and Finance Director, Justin Cole provided a presentation to the Board of Selectmen about the financial picture of the Town. An historical perspective regarding annual fiscal trends were reviewed. The Town has been working with the Department of Revenue (DOR) to improve its overall financial management practices which has included implementing new accounting and treasurer software systems and hiring Cole as Finance Director to execute best practice changes recommended by the DOR. The past practices were inadequate and outdated. The Town needed a more accurate financial picture which has revealed the Town has been using its one time reserves and free cash to annually balance its past budgets and now those one time resources are depleted. This means the Town continues to have an operational structural deficit, but no longer has the one time resources to balance the budget which is required by law. Details of why the Town is at a fiscal crossroads and the reasons why an operational override is necessary were outlined. The Town has not had any new growth in population for a decade and there has been no significant increase in taxes, town fees or permits to offset this trend. This has also contributed to a substantial decline in total assessed value for

over a decade. This means overall revenues from tax collections have been impacted. Other data was presented showing the Town has had the lowest tax rate in the region for many years and that the average tax bill in Millville falls within State's average in comparison to all communities indicating residents are not being "overtaxed".

The Town Administrator noted that the growth and revenues are flat and the Town does not have a spending problem, but rather a revenue problem. Annual new growth is usually only \$20,000-\$30,000.00. The Finance Director spoke about the nominal growth in the budget which shows a flat trend in overall budget spending. There was a chart showing the school contribution trends from 2006-2018. The Town is limited in raising its levy capacity to meet such increases by only 2.5% every year. The Town has been having difficulty funding the increases to the school budget, while maintaining the smaller municipal services budget each year. In prior years, the Town has had the fiscally imprudent practice of balancing its annual budget with one time revenues, rather than raising taxes.

The Town Administrator reviewed the fiscal strategies she has implemented, including increasing tax collections, reducing tax delinquencies and vigorously pursuing grants. The Town has received approximately \$1.6 million in actual grant funding to address municipal needs which are not currently funded in the budget, including such things as technical assistance, plan development, technology upgrades, road improvements, demolition projects, accessible sidewalks, energy efficiency, public safety, park enhancements, among others. Although the funds are greatly needed, they cannot be used to pay for regular staff wages or to balance the budget deficit. She has also negotiated insurance and inter-municipal agreements resulting in substantial savings.

The Finance Director reviewed the 3 year projections. The budget deficit will be \$687k in FY 2019, \$940k in FY 2020 and \$1.1 million in FY 2021. It will not be possible to cut the budget in order to balance it because the deficit is too large. Even if the Town were to cut all employees at the library, senior center, fire department, EMT services, highway and all of Town Hall, it still would not be enough to eliminate the deficit to balance the budget. To fix the problem and avoid receivership, the Town needs to right size the budget and reset the tax rate to address the revenue shortfall. Residents need to decide how they want to handle this regarding the need for an operational override. The Town Administrator and Finance Director indicated the Board needs to hold a Special Town Meeting in order to make a decision about how it address the future continuation of Town services.

The Board of Selectmen discussed holding public information sessions to inform the public. There will be information provided on the website and cable. It was suggested having a representative from the Department of Revenue speak at one of the information sessions. There was also a suggestion to reach out to the School Committee. It may also be beneficial to invite a member of the Department of Education.

Selectmen Alward wanted both the Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting for an override vote to be held on the same night because it seems like a lot to ask residents to come to two meetings so close together. The Town Administrator recommended to the Board to not do so.

**On a motion made by Jennifer Wing Dean and seconded by Tom Houle, the Board of Selectmen voted 4 to 1 to hold a Special Town Meeting on Monday April 30, 2018 at 7:00 PM to consider a 2.5% override article.**

**Resident, Erika Blake Debra Road:**

Ms. Blake explained that she has been on finance committee for several years and is a professional Accountant. After reviewing the budget over the years, she noted the Town runs on a “shoe string” budget and indeed has a significant revenue problem as opposed to a spending problem. She welcomed the community to come to the meetings and see what the Town is working with in relation to the budget numbers.

**Resident, Mike Staples Thayer Street:**

Mr. Staples explained his taxes have gone up from the last quarter. It was explained the first two quarters are preliminary estimates and the last quarter was the actual. It was also explained the Town has been recently informed it has not previously been accurately assessing properties through the years which has contributed to overall low valuations and low tax bills. The adjustments are being made. The Town Administrator will supply the resident with the name of the new Town Assessor.

**Resident, Jane Reggio, Diane Circle:**

In light of setting a Special Town Meeting, Mrs. Reggio wanted to know the procedural process regarding budget submittal to Town Meeting. Last year the Town had two budgets ready depending how the vote was determined. The Finance Committee will decide how to proceed.

**Master Plan & Zoning Bylaw Diagnostic:**

The Master Plan and Zoning Bylaw Diagnostic is now in the review and comment period. The comments are due the second week of March.

**Old Business:**

**BMRSD: Superintendent Finalist Visits.**

The BMRSD finished the Superintendent Search and the finalists recently visited the schools and Town Hall. Compliments were provided to the Search Committee for including the Town in the search. The school is in negotiation with one of the candidates.

**Town Administrator:**

**Complete Streets:**

The Town has received a \$200,000.00 grant for its Complete Streets Central Street Sidewalk Improvement proposal.

**Demolition Grant:**

The grant funds for the demolition grant have been received. The Town has paid the contractor for work already completed. The final site work will be completed this coming spring.

**Community Compact IT Grant:**

The Town Administrator submitted a grant for approximately \$60,000.00 to improve the security of the Town's Public Safety Network and to install a VOIP Telephone System for Police, Fire and Senior Center in an effort to connect all Town Buildings and reduce communications costs.

**MSBA Accelerated Repair Grant:**

The Town Administrator is working with the Superintendent and the Mass School Building Authority regarding another grant submission for MES capital items as discussed last year. The decision regarding award recipients for this grant cycle will be made by June 2018.

**OSRP Grant:**

The Open Space and Recreational Plan has distributed surveys to the community as part of the grant requirement. CMRPC is working with the Committee to accomplish the tasks. There will be a public forum in the next few months.

**Future Meeting:**

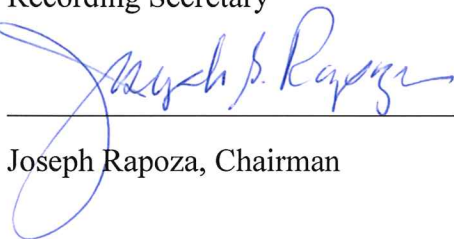
- Monday, March 5, 2018.

**Adjourn:**

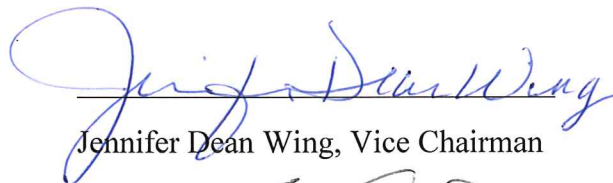


**On a motion made by Roland Barrett and seconded by, Andrew Alward, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Sutherland  
Recording Secretary

  
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Joseph Rapoza, Chairman

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Thomas Houle, Secretary

  
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Jennifer Dean Wing, Vice Chairman  
  
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Roland Barrett, Member  
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Andrew Alward, Member