

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
8/14/12**

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The Board of Selectmen met in the Joseph F. Bilotta Meeting Room, Town Hall as scheduled with David Matthews, Steven M. deBettencourt, Paula Bertram, Tom Alonzo, and Town Manager Kerry Speidel present. Carl "Ernie" Sund was absent from the meeting.

Regular Meeting opened at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**7:00PM PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Matthews commented that it was noted at last week's meeting that Lunenburg was ranked 56 out of 351 towns in Massachusetts for the tax rate and that some members had discussed that we should be closer to average and other members felt that discussing the tax rate is only half of the discussion because it is only half of the equation which includes both tax rate and valuations. He stated that it's misleading to focus on just one or the other, you have to look at both, and that the real information is what you find in your tax bill. He went on to state the following figures: FY11 the average property tax bill in Lunenburg was \$4,064. Average property tax bill for the State was \$4,537. This puts Lunenburg 10% below the State average. Lunenburg ranked 149 out of 337 communities that were reporting. FY12 the average property tax bill in Lunenburg was \$4,174. Average property tax bill for the State was \$4,711. This puts Lunenburg 11% below the State average, which was the amount of what was requested for the recent override which was voted down and would have put Lunenburg at the State average. FY12 sees Lunenburg ranked at 115 out of 338 reporting communities. This information is available at the Mass DOR website under Local Officials & Data Bank Reports. Mr. Matthews stated that facts are a better basis rather than opinion or half truths for decision making & for understanding fiscal realities of our town.

Dave MacDonald and Joanna Bilotta Simeone, members of the DPW Building Committee, spoke to announce the upcoming DPW open house & Big Truck Night which will be held on August 20 from 3-7PM at the DPW. This event is an opportunity for the public to see the newly renovated facility and equipment from the DPW, Police, & Fire Departments. There will be activities for children, food, and a flu clinic provided by CVS.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**APPOINTMENTS**

**CURRENT BUSINESS**

1. **Chapter 100 Auctioneer License, 133 Leominster-Shirley Road, 09/15/12** – Ms. Speidel presented the Chapter 100 Auctioneer License request from Petrowsky Auctioneers Inc. scheduled for 9/15/12. The application has been filed, application fee paid, and a copy of the Auctioneers license is included in the BOS packet.

Mr. deBettencourt stated that this is surplus equipment from Padula Brothers Inc. who will be moving to Lancaster MA.

Mr. deBettencourt motioned to grant the Chapter 100 Auctioneer License to Petrowsky Auctioneers Inc. Mr. Alonzo seconded. On vote, motion carried, 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

7. **MSBA Contract, Feasibility Study (taken out of order)** – Mr. Matthews stated that the MSBA Contract/Feasibility Study was distributed to the BOS yesterday via email. They are still awaiting input from Town Counsel but believes that there were no issues with the contract.

Ms. Speidel stated that there was also a certification which Town Counsel had to provide and did so today which is included in the packet that was distributed this evening.

Mr. Alonzo requested that in the future if these packets are available sooner for the BOS to review, before Town Counsel has completed their review, then they should be distributed sooner to the BOS for examination rather than receiving them the night before, considering it is a fairly lengthy document.

Ms. Bertram stated that she was pleased to see that within this contract there was some ability to attempt to recoup some of the cost from previous studies and saw no other issues with the contract.

Mr. Matthews asked for a vote from the board to authorize his signing of the contract for the BOS. Ms. Bertram motioned to approve the vote. Mr. deBettencourt seconded. On vote, motion carried, 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

Loxi Calmes, School Superintendent spoke and explained what the upcoming steps in the process were going to be. She believes that they have only tackled about 10% of the things needed to do and that this was a critical first step. She said that today they received word from MSBA that pending the signing of the contract this evening, they are ready to submit for the request of services for the project manager and also begin the feasibility study. She said that they are excited about this because it means they have completed the maintenance review, enrollment study, and all of the items that are required for the eligibility phase. She encouraged the public to check out the School Committee website to stay on top of the progress.

**2. EPG Solar, Offer to Purchase Net Metering Credits** – John Londa, Director of Facilities & Grounds, explained the numbers that went into the value of the Net Metering Credit. He explained that there are two components which are the supply cost, which is based upon what the current rate is of power per KWH. He said that he thought the rate that EPG Solar had submitted was a little high. The current rate is .062 cents per KWH and EPG was using 7 cents per KWH. The second part has to do with distribution costs which consist of distribution, transmission, and transition which all average out to be approximately 11.9 cents per KWH. Based upon what EPG Solar had proposed, the savings for the first year look to be about \$78K. Beyond that they are using a 2% escalator for each year for the cost of the credit to the Town. He stated that it is difficult to figure out what will happen 15-20 years from now. Currently it's slightly over 6 cents per KWH and there have been some substantial fluctuations in the cost of power over the last 5 years. Right now it is at a low, which is being driven by the cost of natural gas. He believes that the Town has little to risk, but a lot to gain from purchasing the Net Metering Credits.

Mr. Alonzo asked where EPG Solar's charge back to the Town of 12.88 cents was coming from. Mr. Londa replied that they are taking the costs of distribution, transmission, and transition and adding 1 cent to that per KWH.

Ms. Speidel informed Mr. Londa that EPG had revised the cost of the KWH to 6.6 cents which will be a savings of \$84K annually.

Ms. Bertram voiced her concerns about entering into a 20 year agreement with anything, as a municipality. She stated that technology is constantly changing and new technology will come forward and she asked what Mr. Londa's gut reaction was to this power source. Mr. Londa replied that his biggest concern would be if the Net Metering regulations changed 10-15 years from now. As far as a long term contract, the panels themselves typically have a warranty of at least 20 years and a life span of around 25 years. He does not think there is much risk in going into a long term contract and feels that you would need one in order to have a project like this.

Mr. Matthews stated the Regional Assessor is reviewing again the projected revenues for this project so that they can begin to talk about a Pilot.

Ms. Speidel stated that she had met with the Regional Assessor today and said that previous information which the Assessor had presented to the BOS stated that if you look at the value of the project you're looking at \$45K-\$55K per MW. She discussed other communities that are negotiating PILOT's along with their costs and said that the Assessor thinks that the \$14,207 in taxes is good because the highest he has seen moving forward is \$12K. The Assessor would like more information from EPG regarding their lease so that he can factor in the land cost. Ms. Speidel said that she feels that they have to consider what PILOT's are being negotiated for versus what the value is.

Ms. Bertram stated that she is very concerned with the numbers because there is a huge difference between \$45K-\$55K and \$14K. She can see why they want to move forward with the project but at the same time she does not want to do it at the expense of the taxpayers. She would like to hear more from the Assessor at how he arrived at his value and she would

like to understand why there is such a discrepancy. Ms. Bertram does not want to take something to Town Meeting as a Net Metering agreement, then not be able to reach an agreement with the developer and not see this project go forward.

Discussion ensued amongst the Board concerning a timeline for meeting with the Assessor regarding the tax issue, and being able to set a date for Special Town Meeting in a timely manner. Although there were no BOS meetings scheduled for the rest of the month it was decided to hold a BOS meeting on Tuesday August 28 at 7PM at a location TBA.

**3. Set date for Special Town Meeting** – After due and diligent discussion the BOS decided to open the warrant for STM on 8/24/12 with a close date of 9/4/12. STM has been scheduled for 9/25/12.

**4. Special “One Day” Liquor License, Michael J. Laughlin, 322 Northfield Road - Withdrawn**

**5. Earth Removal Permit Renewals, List of Locations attached** – Ms. Speidel presented a review of all of the outstanding Earth Removal Permit renewals to the Board. She explained that they are granted for a 1 year period beginning on September 1 of each year. The Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer has done site inspections on all of the outstanding permits. She asked that if board chooses to renew these permits that it be done contingent upon receipt of the completed application, contingent upon payment of the permit fees, and are current on all payment of taxes. There are a few applications that are still outstanding at this time with payment of fees, and one property that is not current on taxes due to the death of the property owner and the heirs are working through some issues with the estate. Ms. Speidel announced the lists of locations requesting Earth Removal Permit renewals.

Mr. Alonzo moved to approve the Earth Removal Permits with the caveat that all of the requirements for the permits, as detailed by the Town Manager, are met. Mr. deBettencourt seconded. On vote, motion carried, 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

**6. Report on Lunenburg Relief Project 2012** – Ms. Speidel presented an overview report on the Lunenburg Relief Project, which was spearheaded by Rick Hill, and held on July 14, 2012 at the Library. Most of the donations were made on that day but a few more were mailed in. In total 100 donations were received, with some donors giving to multiple causes, which totaled to \$\$27,328. They are as follows:

	<u>Donations Received</u>	<u>Donation Ranges</u>	<u>Total</u>
Library	19	\$20 - \$500	\$3580
Road Maintenance	19	\$10 - \$500	\$3330
General Fund	4	\$10 - \$1000	\$1110
Public Safety	17	\$10 - \$500	\$2200
School Dept.	35	\$10 - \$5000	\$12,110
Senior Center	26	\$10 - \$1000	\$4998

All donors received a receipt at the time of the donation and some departments have sent out letters acknowledging the donations to donors. Ms. Speidel would like to place an ad in the Lunenburg Ledger thanking all who donated and would like input from departments on what to include in the ad.

Mr. Matthews thanked everyone who came out and donated and stated that he is sure that all the departments would find good uses for every dollar which was given.

#### **8. Minutes/Warrants/Action File Issues**

Minutes: None

<u>Warrants:</u>	8/13/12	W 4P13	\$467,427.77
	8/14/12	W 9 13	\$174,959.87
	8/15/12	W 10-13	\$344,482.66

Action File Issues: None

**9. Committee Reports** – Mr. Alonzo reported that the Finance Committee met last Thursday and discussed the closing of the FY12 budget.

## **10. Department Reports – None**

**11. Town Manager Reports** – Ms. Speidel reported that a resident of Lunenburg with expertise in telephone contracts volunteered her time to review all of the phone services for Town Departments and the School Department and to make a recommendation on better services to save the Town money. She stated in an email to the Town Manager that the consulting company that the Town worked with in 2010 was able to have the rate per line dropped from \$33 - \$13 per line which is a significant savings. She suggested that it would be less expensive to switch the phone system over to a voice over IP in the future but until fiber comes through it would not be a good move due to voice quality not being good for business and they would not be able to offer a competitive rate. She also recommended that Comcast be contacted and ask them to update the HSIA on all accounts. She could not find any other savings that could be achieved given the work that was done back in 2010.

Mr. Alonzo thanked the Town Manager for the report and acknowledged the IT Director Nancy Strom, and she is doing a good job with keeping up with the telephone items and with the stability of the network in town. He also noted that Voice Over IP will become a viable solution when we have fiber. The Mass Broadband Institute will be bringing fiber through Lunenburg which is slated to be going live no later than July of next year and requested that we plan ahead to prepare for it.

**OLD BUSINESS** - Mr. Matthews distributed the Town Managers Goals to the board which had been discussed in a previous workshop for review.

### **APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS**

- 1. Extend appointment of Myleen Mallari, as Acting Treasurer-Collector from August 21, 2012 to September 4, 2012** – Ms. Speidel stated that the position of Treasurer/Collector has been advertised and applications have been received. She will be conducting interviews this week and would like to extend the appointment of Myleen Mallari as Treasurer/Collector until 9/4/12. At that time she will be ready to make a recommendation of a person to serve as Treasurer/Collector on a regular basis.

Mr. Alonzo moved to continue the appointment of Myleen Mallari as acting Treasurer/Collector through September 4, 2012. Ms. Bertram seconded. On vote, motion carried, 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION** – None

Being no further business Mr. deBettencourt motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bertram seconded. The board voted unanimously to adjourn regular session at 8:15PM.

### **UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Doherty, Recording Secretary  
Board of Selectmen*