

**MINUTES**  
**WILLIAMSTOWN BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**October 26, 2009**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**Present:** Tom Costley, Chairman, David A. Rempell, Jane B. Allen, Ronald Turbin, Thomas E. Sheldon

**Others Present:** Nancy Thomas, Albert Bessette, Robert Peck, Chris Lemoine, Peter Fohlin, Kathy Poirot

- 1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING STATEMENT:** None
- 2. SELECTMEN'S MINUTES:** October 13, 2009 – Mr. Rempell moved to approve the October 13, 2009 minutes. Mr. Turbin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
- 3. LICENSES AND PERMITS:** Request from Mezza Catering for a One-Day Wine & Malt Beverage License from 9 p.m. – 2 a.m. on October 31 at 777 Cold Spring Road, Williamstown, Nancy Thomas, President. Ms. Allen moved to approve. Mr. Sheldon seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
- 4. PUBLIC HEARING:** Chairman Costley opened the public hearing at 7:05 P.M. for a request from Verizon New England and Massachusetts Electric Company for permission to locate poles, wires, cables and fixtures, including necessary anchors, guys and other such sustaining and protecting fixtures to be owned and used in common by petitioners, along and across the following public ways: to place one (1) jointly owned pole numbered T.8S/E.8S on the Northwesterly side of Henderson Road at a point approximately seven hundred seventy-five feet (775) feet Northeasterly from the centerline of North Hoosac Road to provide lateral support for existing pole T.8/E.8, located on the Southeasterly side of Henderson Road. Mr. Bessette, Jr., representing Verizon explained the pole was previously supported by a guy wire attached to a tree and the tree was recently taken down. The pole would take the place of the tree. Mr. Costley closed the public hearing. Mr. Rempell moved to approve the request as presented by Verizon New England and Massachusetts Electric Company. Mr. Turbin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
- 5. ITEMS FOR SELECTMEN'S CONSIDERATION:**
  - A. Cemetery Rates & Capacity** – at their meeting on October 13, Cemetery superintendent Chris Lemoine distributed a survey of area municipal cemetery rates. During the October 13 meeting selectmen discussed those rates that included the average rates and further discussed an increase by rounding figures proposed in the average cost lines. The Board unanimously voted to place the item on the October 26 agenda for consideration. Mr. Sheldon moved to approve the following rates as discussed at the October 13 meeting effective immediately: Lots to be broken down into land sale and perpetual care cost - Resident Lot: \$50 land sale/\$400 Perpetual Care; Non-Resident Lot: \$50 land sale/\$850 Perpetual Care; Weekday Interment: \$450; Saturday Interment: \$600; Weekday Cremation: \$150; Saturday Cremation: \$250; Ground Thaw: \$150; Disinterment: \$450; and Re-interment \$450. Mr. Turbin seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Mr.

Costley said the rate increase is reasonable since there hasn't been an increase in eleven years and the rates were arrived at by looking at the regional municipal rates average and rounding up or down from them. Ms. Allen addressed grave availability. Mr. Lemoine asked the Board to focus on the availability at Eastlawn as the Southlawn graves are being filled by South Williamstown residents. Mr. Rempell asked if there is other available land that the Board should keep their eyes on in order to increase capacity. Mr. Lemoine said there isn't any that he knows of. Mr. Sheldon asked Mr. Lemoine if he would submit a capacity report in one year.

- B. FY2011 Revenue Forecast** – Mr. Fohlin presented Town revenue projections in a Five Year Estimated Financial Plan in a handout for the upcoming FY 2011 budget. He said revenue for the next year is projected to be four-tenths of a percent less than this year's budget. New growth and motor vehicle excise tax is expected to be down a total of \$225,000 in addition to the expectation of less state aid. Mr. Rempell suggested the Board look into increasing the local meals and room tax as a possible way to help the Town's revenue in the coming fiscal year. Mr. Fohlin said increasing the meals and room tax is something that should at least be part of the conversation when looking at solutions for the FY2011 budget.
- C. Confirmation of Town Manager's Appointment to the Historical Commission** – Robert Vavasour – Mr. Rempell moved to confirm the Town Manager's appointment of Robert Vavasour to the Historical Commission. Mr. Turbin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
- D. Appointment of Democratic Representative on the Board of Registrars** – the Williamstown Democratic Town Committee voted to forward three names to the Selectmen for consideration as Democratic Registrars. The following names were presented for nomination: Mark Windover, Debby Dane, and Tela Zasloff.. Mr. Turbin moved to nominate Mark Windover named first on the list presented. Mr. Rempell seconded and the motion carried 4-1, with Mr. Costley voting against.
- E. Sister City Bluefields Nicaragua** – At its August 10 Selectmen meeting the Board encouraged Robert Peck, a former Williamstown resident and an organizer of winter study programs for Williams College to Bluefields, Nicaragua, to seek more information on his request that Williamstown enter into a "sister city" relationship with Bluefields, Nicaragua. Mr. Peck has traveled to Bluefields for many years and has a working relationship with its Mayor, Dr. Harold Bacon. Since the August meeting, Selectmen received a letter from Mayor Bacon requesting continued efforts to establish a "sister city" relationship with the Town. Mr. Peck said he would not be able to play an active role in a "sister city" program due to his many other commitments. He said he'd be happy to recruit people in the community to be on a committee. He added that a "sister city" relationship would allow cultural exchanges between Williamstown and Bluefields ranging from organizing pen pals to representatives from each community visiting one another. He urged the Board to go to the "Sister City Organization" website and look at the possibilities. Mr. Costley said that the formation of a committee to support the project should be a private and grassroots initiative. Mr. Rempell said the benefits could be extremely dramatic in that subgroups could benefit from this relationship. Mr. Fohlin said if there is a group of private citizens interested he doesn't see what could be wrong with responding to Mayor Bacon's letter. Ms. Allen asked if a Town Meeting vote would be necessary for a "sister city" relationship. Mr. Fohlin said he didn't think it rose to the level of Town Meeting. Mr. Turbin said he endorsed the formation of a committee. Mr. Rempell moved to endorse the establishment of a "sister city" committee to form a relationship between Bluefields, Nicaragua and Williamstown

and to have the Town Manager respond in writing to Mayor Bacon. Mr. Sheldon seconded and the motion carried 4-1 with Mr. Costley against.

- F. Water & Sewer Warrant - \$117,840.54 – Mr. Rempell moved to approve the water and sewer warrant in the amount of \$117,840.54. Mr. Turbin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
- 6. PETITIONER’S REQUEST:** None
- 7. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT:** Mr. Fohlin said the Department of Revenue has approved Williamstown’s property values in writing and the public review period is in process from October 21 to November 3. The Tax Classification Hearing will be held at the November 9 selectmen meeting at 7:05 p.m.
- 8. OTHER BUSINESS:** Mr. Turbin reminded the Board that the MMA Conference information is available and he would coordinate sign up.
- 9. ADJOURN:** Ms. Allen moved to adjourn at 8:52 p.m. Mr. Turbin seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The next Selectmen Meeting is Monday, November 9, 2009 at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Sheldon, Secretary