

**Town of Needham  
Board of Selectmen  
Minutes for November 22, 2016  
Needham Town Hall**

6:00 p.m. Executive Session:  
A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman Matthew D. Borrelli. Those present were Maurice P. Handel, Marianne B. Cooley, Daniel P. Matthews, John A. Bulian, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. Recording Secretary Mary Hunt joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

**Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board of Selectmen vote to enter into Executive Session.**

**Exception 6 - To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.**

**Second: Mr. Bulian. Mr. Borrelli polled the Board. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

6:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: No activity.

7:00 p.m. Giving Tuesday Proclamation:  
Annie Healy, Member Services Manager, Newton/Needham Regional Chamber of Commerce met with the Board requesting the Town of Needham officially proclaim Tuesday, November 29, 2016 as Giving Tuesday. Ms. Healy said Giving Tuesday, considered a global day of giving, is designed to celebrate and provide incentives to support local non-profit causes, build stronger communities, and consider the needs of others.

Ms. Cooley read a Proclamation recognizing Tuesday, November 29, 2016 as Giving Tuesday in the Town of Needham.

**Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board of Selectmen hereby proclaims November 29, 2016 as Giving Tuesday in the Town of Needham, and encourages all citizens to remember the many Needham-based non-profits when making their year-end contributions as we join together to give back to the community in any way that is personally meaningful.**

**Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

7:04 p.m. Public Hearing: Tax Classification  
Chip Davis, Director of Assessing, and members of the Board of Assessors including Tom Colarusso, Secretary, and Ted Owens appeared before the Board regarding the allocation of the fiscal year 2017 tax levy among the various classes of property in Town.

Mr. Colarusso read prepared remarks from the “Assessor’s Report FY2017” noting that the combination of a minor downward depreciation adjustment, as well as a slight deceleration in the skyrocketing residential real estate market that Needham has experienced over the last several years has kept the assessments level for the most part in the single family realm when comparing FY2016 to FY2017 values. He said it appears that should this market continue on its present course, upward adjustments to land values, driven by teardown sales, will be required to meet DOR statistical requirements in the next year or two. Mr. Colarusso commented although the chart in the handout papers appears to show that condominium prices have fallen dramatically in calendar year 2016, that is not really the case. He noted the \$660,000 median sale price of calendar 2015 was driven by the sale of numerous very high priced, newly constructed condominium units. He said the result was a rise in the value of older condominiums throughout Town, which basically “rose with the tide.” He said these smaller units are now selling for more than they did in the last year or two. He cited examples saying the two largest complexes in Town, which have the smallest units of square footage and the lowest sale price, have increased in value while lowering the median sale price of condominium units as a whole. He commented it is likely the sale of units in the \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 now under construction, will boost the median sale price again in calendar year 2017. Mr. Colarusso commented the ongoing work at Needham Crossing is beginning to reflect an increase in rents for commercial office space and the imminent conclusion of work on Route 128 will also play a role in continuing the upward movement. Mr. Colarusso commented the rapid growth of business personal property paused to “catch its collective breath” in FY2017 after a dramatic run up last year caused by the replacement of file cabinets and phone systems with high technology equipment in newly constructed facilities. He said the upward trend appears poised to get back on track as the old General Dynamic facilities are replaced with hotels and prime 21st century office space. Mr. Colarusso concluded saying the Assessor’s Office processed thousands of auto excise bills as well as numerous applications for Excise and Real Estate abatements, multiple statutory exemption requests and daily information requests from internal and external sources.

Mr. Davis reviewed with the Board information contained in a handout titled “Town of Needham Classification Hearing FY2017.” Mr. Davis commented the factor to be voted upon is 0.8804718.

Mr. Borrelli invited public comment. No comments were made.

Mr. Borrelli asked for Board comment. No comments were made.

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen establish a residential factor of 0.8804718 for the purpose of setting the Fiscal Year 2017 tax rates. Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

7:14 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:  
**Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.**

**APPOINTMENTS**

1. **Council on Aging** Gary Crossen (term expires 6/30/2018)  
Mary Elizabeth Weadock (term expires 6/30/2019)
2. **Technology Advisory Board** Matthew Howell (term expires 6/30/2019)

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **Ratify a Special One Day Wines & Malt Beverages Only license for Amy Sinclair of Trip Advisor, who hosted an event for HSMIAI on November 16, 2016 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The event was held at Trip Advisor, 400 1st Avenue, Needham.**
2. **Approve and sign the integrated collective bargaining agreement between the Town of Needham and the Police Superior Officers Association dated July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019.**
3. **Approve open session minutes of October 18, 2016 and November 9, 2016.**
4. **Accept the gift of two Koralex II, American made polyester United States Flags from the Norfolk Lodge A.F. & A.M. for the Needham Town Common and the Needham Heights Common to use during the winter months.**
5. **Water & Sewer Abatement Order #1226.**

**Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

7:15 p.m. Cable Television RCN Renewal License Transfer Hearing - Continued:  
Mr. Borrelli referred to the Board of Selectmen meeting on November 9, 2016 in which a public hearing was held as required by the regulations of the Massachusetts Division of Telecommunications and Cable (“DTC”) at 207 CMR. 4.00 and Section 2.6 (g) of the current RCN Renewal License. He noted the Board requested and received additional documentation from the Transferor/Transferee and that the Board voted to hold the record open for additional public comment until November 22, 2016. He said no comments have been received to date.

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen, as statutory Issuing Authority, vote to grant the transfer of the RCN Cable Television Renewal License in Needham, dated July 10, 2012, operated by RCN Telecom Services of Massachusetts, LLC from Yankee Cable Partners, LLC to TPG Capital, which will operate the Needham RCN Renewal License under the ownership and control of its affiliate, Radiate Holdings, L.P.**

**Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved: 5-0.**

7:16 p.m. Mr. Bulian asked discussion of Eversource Energy West Roxbury to Needham Reliability Project be delayed until later in the evening.

7:16 p.m.

Director of Public Works:

Richard P. Merson, DPW Director appeared before the Board with two items to discuss:

1. 2016 Water Restriction Report

Mr. Merson remarked the 2016 Water Restriction on outdoor uses concluded on September 30, 2016. He said due to continued drought conditions in the Northeast a greater restriction was adopted in later July. He said the combination of these efforts initially appears to have had a positive, albeit slight, impact yielding a reduction in consumption of approximately 35 million gallons. Mr. Merson said production from the well field is about 12% less than 2015 offset by an increase of 8.1% from the MWRA. Mr. Merson commented the DPW continued to monitor usage during restriction periods, noting nearly 1600 violation letters were issued for the season.

Mr. Borrelli asked for Board comment.

Mr. Matthews asked about fines and the number of cases that actually ended up having a hearing before the magistrate. Mr. Merson said the initial cases were dismissed, and that the Town has two groups of additional hearings scheduled before the court.

Ms. Cooley, noting the water consumption chart, asked the cause in the jump of consumption in November and December FY2014. Mr. Merson said he thought the jump in consumption was due to the mandate the Town was under to stay below a certain amount at the well field. Discussion ensued on the amount of water necessary for lawns, and the possibility of a message targeted to specific residents.

Mr. Borrelli commented on the number of violations, personnel, effort, going to court, and wondered if the Town is “striking the right balance?” He said that while the impact has been positive, he asked if there may be a more efficient way to handle the process.

Mr. Matthews suggested the Town be systematic in the way it works with the court, making sure the court understands Needham is working under a mandate, and that the case flow is organized so work can be done in an expeditious manner.

2. Downtown Improvement/Streetscape Project Update

Mr. Merson explained work on the Downtown Improvement Project continues during overnight hours. He said installation of curbing, light bases, and conduit will continue through December 2016.

Mr. Handel commented communication with businesses has been helpful. He asked about the condition of the sidewalks when it snows and how will businesses be affected? Mr. Merson said it will be a challenge keeping sidewalks clear and that the DPW is currently discussing the kinds of service that will be necessary. Mr.

Handel suggested better signage making sure residents know it is okay to park on Great Plain Avenue during the daytime.

7:43 p.m.

Eversource Energy West Roxbury to Needham Reliability Project:

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager reminded the Board that at its meeting on October 4, 2016 it referred the subject of the Eversource Project to the Board of Health for its consideration. She said representatives of Eversource Energy met with the Board of Health on November 10, 2016. Timothy McDonald, Director, Needham Public Health appeared before the Board with an update on those discussions.

Mr. McDonald said staff from the Public Health Department and the Board of Health reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report, the Electrical and Magnetic Field Modeling Analysis, and a handful of scientific studies and medical journal articles about EMF and health. He said it is important to recognize EMF's are already in everyday objects people use. He noted the Eversource Energy proposal is to take two overhead lines and move one line underground. He commented modeling analysis shows the EMFs would drop off considerably along the right-of-way as a result of having one overhead line rather than two. He also commented the underground line would have very low levels of exposure because the line is 6ft-8ft underground, and because rates of exposure in going through the street would mean the person passing underneath on the ROW would get a higher level of exposure than someone who is walking over an underground conduit. He said in either case it would not be considered a health hazard based on both Massachusetts and international standards of safe levels of exposure. Mr. McDonald summarized using an electric can opener would have a higher level of exposure. He stated the Needham Public Health Department concluded "that this project does not constitute a clear threat to the health and wellness of Needham residents along the project's planned route" as stated in the Needham Board of Health letter to the Board of Selectmen dated November 14, 2016. Mr. McDonald said given that people may have questions about the independence of outside experts, the Board of Health, as an impartial party, offered its services to either the Board of Selectmen or to Eversource Energy to be present at a public hearing to hear additional concerns or if the public had further questions.

Mr. Borrelli concurred with Mr. McDonald's suggestion of attending a public hearing, as one will be scheduled in the future. He commented people must understand the timing of the project and the impact to neighborhoods.

Mr. Handel commented on the potential effect of fear, saying one way to mitigate the fear is to understand how common it is to have underground wiring in urban areas. He asked Mr. McDonald for comment.

Mr. McDonald said documentation from Eversource Energy shows there are substantial numbers of underground transmission lines in the Southwest suburbs and are more common in Boston. He listed examples of underground lines going

into Newton to Brighton, and Hyde Park to Milton. Mr. Borrelli concurred lines are underground throughout the nation.

The Board thanked Mr. McDonald for the update.

7:53 p.m.

Town Manager:

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager appeared before the Board with three items to discuss:

1. CPA Project Requests

Ms. Fitzpatrick asked the Board to endorse applications for submittal to the Community Preservation Committee for projects on land under the Board's jurisdiction. She noted applications are due by December 1, 2016, and once all applications have been submitted they will be presented to the Board at a future meeting for discussion. Ms. Fitzpatrick said many of the projects (and corresponding funding amounts) will continue to be refined leading up to the 2017 Annual Town Meeting. She commented the Community Preservation Committee will consult with the Board prior to its public hearing during the winter of 2017.

**Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to endorse the following applications for submittal to the Community Preservation Committee for the FY2018 funding round:**

1. **Hillside School Walking Trails - Joint application with the School Committee as the Wellesley land is licensed by the Town**
2. **Rosemary Lake Sediment Removal**
3. **Needham Accessible Reservoir Trail**
4. **Preservation of Open Space - Purchase of Land - Placeholder**

**Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

2. FY2018 Budget Consultation: Best Practices & Budget Priorities and Capital Improvement Policies

Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed the Board's annual statement of operating budget priorities, and proposed the inclusion of a statement of budgeting best practices. Ms. Fitzpatrick said she is interested to hear comment from the Board, noting a vote by the Board would take place at a future meeting.

She also asked the Board consider a revision of the Capital Improvement Policies incorporating the newly created Debt Service Stabilization Fund, adopted in November 2015. She said Board comments are welcome, and a vote could be taken at the next Board of Selectmen meeting on December 6, 2016.

3. Preliminary CIP FY2018

Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed with the Board the preliminary FY2018 cash capital and debt-financed project submissions. She highlighted key items including Public Safety Complex/Station #2, DPW Seasonal Storage Facility at RTS, Fuel Island

Relocation and Upgrade, Needham High School upgrades, Pollard Middle School bathroom upgrades, Rosemary Pool Complex Renovations, Trail Improvements - Needham Reservoir, Traffic Improvements, and Memorial Park Buildings and Grounds Improvements. She noted a full discussion of the FY2018-FY2022 projects will occur at the Board's meeting on December 6, 2016, with final approval of the Capital Improvement Plan scheduled for December 20, 2016.

The Board thanked Ms. Fitzpatrick, Dave Davison, Christopher Coleman, Tim McDonald, and Tatiana Swanson for their work.

8:15 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. Minuteman School District Status

Mr. Matthews referred to prior discussions regarding whether or not the Town of Needham should respond to the vote taken by the Town of Belmont to initiate the process of Belmont withdrawing from the Minuteman School District. He commented that while it is felt the district would be stronger with the Town of Belmont, the decision by Belmont to leave the district is in accordance with the Regional Agreement. He said it was agreed by the Board of Selectmen and the Needham Minuteman Advisory Committee, notwithstanding concerns, that it would be procedurally challenging to object to the withdrawal, prolong existing governance, and end up costing more for the Town of Needham. He recommended Needham take no action.

**Motion by Mr. Matthews that the Board vote to take no action on the notice of the intent to withdraw from the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District received from the Town of Belmont.  
Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

2. Committee Reports

No Committee Reports were made.

8:20 p.m. Adjourn:

**Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting of November 22, 2016.**

**Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.**