

**TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
NORTHBRIDGE TOWN HALL  
7 MAIN STREET - WHITINSVILLE, MA 01588  
January 12, 2015 AT 6:00PM**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. December 15, 2014

**II. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**III. APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:**

**IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT**

**Local Business Spotlight:**

**V. DECISIONS**

B. Special Town Meeting [February 24, 2015]/Vote to place article(s) on warrant

**VI. DISCUSSIONS**

C. Water Meters

D. Pine Grove Cemetery

E. Mass. Municipal Association Annual Meeting

**VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS**

**IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

**X. CORRESPONDENCE**

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A.

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting  
December 15, 2014**

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Charles Ampagoomian at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. **Present:** Messrs. Marzec, Athanas, Melia and Nolan. **Also Present:** Theodore D. Kozak, Town Manager.

**The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.**

**Presentation: Certificate of Appreciation - Representative George N. Peterson, Jr.** Chairman Ampagoomian presented a Retirement Award to Representative George N. Peterson, Jr. in honor of his retirement and in recognition of his 20 years of outstanding leadership and service on behalf of the Town of Northbridge. Representative Peterson expressed his gratitude, noting that it had been a great experience serving the people of Northbridge, Grafton, Upton, "a little bit of" Sutton, and Westborough. He added that he never thought he would be serving for 20 years and that it had been very rewarding.

**Announcement by Town Clerk Doreen Cedrone: Northbridge is the recipient of the Senator Lou Bertonazzi Outstanding Citizenship Award.** Ms. Cedrone announced that she was there to publicly congratulate the voters of Northbridge because Northbridge won the Senator Louis Bertonazzi Foundation Outstanding Citizenship Award. She added that this had also been achieved in 2008. Ms. Cedrone explained that the award was given to the town with the highest average voting percentage for the past 4 elections and noted that we competed with 19 other towns. Ms. Cedrone explained that the 4 elections included the Special State Election in June 2013, the 2014 Town Election, the State Primary in September, and the State Election in November. She pointed out that she had personally seen Northbridge residents come out to vote in all types of weather including pouring rain, sleet, extreme cold and heat. Ms. Cedrone added that voters turned out at various times of the day including early morning and some submitted absentee ballots due to their busy schedules. She stated that she was very proud of Northbridge voters for winning this award and expressed her thanks to them for their effort and for once again putting Northbridge in the limelight. Ms. Cedrone advised that Senator Bertonazzi would be at the January 26<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen's meeting to present the award to Northbridge. She recognized the election workers who played such a vital role in the election process, working long hours and showing professionalism. Mr. Melia congratulated Ms. Cedrone, noting that Ms. Cedrone and her department work very hard. He thanked her for putting Northbridge in the limelight. Mr. Ampagoomian congratulated and thanked Ms. Cedrone as well.

Mr. Melia spoke on behalf of himself, the Board of Selectmen, and the Police "family", offering sincere condolences to the family of retired policeman David Westbury, whose 17-year old son Jacob was involved in a motor vehicle accident the previous Tuesday and died a few days later as a result of his injuries. He announced that the wake would be held Wednesday at Carr Funeral Home in Northbridge and the funeral would take place the following day. Mr. Ampagoomian noted that David Westbury's wife is Police Officer Kristina Westbury and Jacob's stepmother.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES. November 17, 2014.** A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Nolan, to approve the November 17, 2014 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS/None.**

**APPOINTMENTS/By the Board of Selectmen: Leeann Hansson, Cultural Council.** Present: Christine Fung-A-Fat, Chairman, Northbridge Cultural Council and Leeann Hansson. Ms. Fung-A-Fat introduced Leeann Hansson as a former member of the Cultural Council, noting that the Cultural Council was very pleased to have Ms. Hansson return to the Council pending the Board of Selectmen's approval.

Ms. Hansson explained that she and Ms. Fung-A-Fat are friends, that as a former member she was familiar with the Council and there was a need for new members and she wanted to help. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Nolan, to approve the appointment of Leeann Hansson to the Cultural Council. Vote yes/Unanimous. Ms. Fung-A-Fat noted that the appointment of Ms. Hansson would bring the number of Council members to 5 with the added possibility of a 6th member. Mr. Ampagoomian welcomed back Ms. Hansson to the Council.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT** – Harry Berkowitz: Local Access Issue. Mr. Berkowitz, Chairman of the Cable Advisory Board, explained that he wanted to update the Board of Selectmen on the situation with Charter. He noted that Local Access received a proposal from Charter Communications and Mr. Berkowitz planned to meet with his board to discuss it in January. Mr. Berkowitz commented that Local Access was asked not to publicly disclose the amount but there is a dollar figure involved. Mr. Berkowitz voiced some concern that the settlement would be tacked onto the cable bills. He noted that the Access fees aren't high, mentioning one bill for 22 cents, and a franchise fee for 81 cents. Mr. Berkowitz added that Access gets some of the profit from Charter which Charter offered to increase from 3.5 percent to 3.55 percent. He commented that the big change would be that Charter does not want us to word the license with an exemption for Charter. Therefore, if Comcast takes over the Company the license would stay the way it is with the current increase in channels, which Charter says is mandated by the law. Mr. Berkowitz voiced his concerns regarding getting our original Local Access channels back [Channels 11, 12 and 13]. He noted that Town Manager Kozak has forwarded this information to Attorney Bill Hewig to research whether the law mandates the increase in channels. Mr. Berkowitz said he would report back to the Board of Selectmen with an update on these issues.

**DECISIONS - Northbridge Education Foundation [Kathy Ducey]/1) Request to hold a 5K Road Race on Saturday, April 4, 2015 beginning at 9AM.** Present: Northbridge Education Foundation President/Treasurer Larry Brown and Vice President Kathy Ducey. Mr. Brown explained that the Foundation would like to hold their 4<sup>th</sup> annual 5K road race and added that they received clearance from the police and school departments. Mr. Brown advised that the race starts at 9AM and is usually over by about 10:30AM. A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Melia to grant permission to NEF to hold the road race subject to the safety conditions of the Northbridge Police Department. Vote yes/Unanimous. **2) Request to hang a banner across Church Street from March 15 to March 29, 2015 to advertise the road race.** A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Nolan to grant permission to NEF to hang a banner across Church Street to advertise the road race. Vote/yes/Unanimous.

**Northbridge High School DECA Club [Susan Palmer-Howes]/Request to hold a Boot Drive on Saturday, April 4, 2015 at Memorial and Oviaan Squares from 9AM to 12 Noon to raise funds for an international competition in Orlando, FL.** Introducing herself as the advisor of the Northbridge High School DECA Club Advisor, Susan Palmer noted that with increasing transportation costs she looked for a creative way to raise the funds to finance the trip. She therefore was seeking permission for the DECA Club to hold a Boot Drive. She added that the required age of the participants at the intersections for the Boot Drive would be 18 and would include high school seniors and parents. Mr. Melia commented that he saw no conflict of interest. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Marzec, to grant permission to the DECA Club to hold a Boot Drive as requested and subject to the Boot Drive policy of the Town. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Operation Graduation [Denise Foster] / Request to hold a Boot Drive on Saturday, May 2, 2015 from 9AM to 1PM at Memorial Square.** Denise Foster, Chairman of Operation Graduation, appeared before the Board, asking to run another Boot Drive like the one they had last fall. She added that they would also like to add Oviaan Square to the request. Ms. Foster noted that Operation Graduation understands the requirements of reflective vests, be at least 18 years of age, and include high school seniors and parents. A motion/Mr. Nolan, seconded/Mr. Marzec to approve Operation Graduation's request to hold a boot drive subject to the Boot Drive policy of the Town. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**2015 Annual Liquor License Renewals/Vote to approve subject to the payment of all monies due the Town.** A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Nolan to approve the 2015 Annual Liquor License renewals subject to the payment of all monies due the Town. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**2015 Miscellaneous License Renewals [Common Victualler, Class II, Class III, Automatic Amusement Devices, Entertainment, etc.]/Vote to approve subject to the payment of all monies due the Town.** A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Nolan to approve the 2015 Miscellaneous License renewals subject to the payment of all monies due the Town. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**DISCUSSIONS - 2040 Providence Road –Reuse Study (Present: Eric Smith, Central Mass Regional Planning Commission and Gary Bechtholdt, Town Planner).** Town Planner Bechtholdt reviewed that late in June/July of this year Northbridge applied for and subsequently was awarded a district type of assistance grant through CMRPC where they prepared a reuse study specific to 2040 Providence Road, a former auto salvage yard in the Rockdale section of Town. In August, the Planning Board hosted a public workshop with CMRPC inviting residents to an open forum to review the project initiative and offer ideas about the potential redevelopment of the site. The goal of the reuse plan is to identify potential redevelopment opportunities that are economically viable for the property owner, sensitive to the environment and complimentary to the locus area/the abutting properties. During the workshop and exploring the reuse study to be subsequently highlighted by Mr. Smith, is the concept of creating a mixed use zone for commercial retail and residential use. Once the draft is finalized a representative to the Planning Board may choose to sponsor a zoning amendment article based upon the discussions during the public workshop and the recommendations offered in the report. Mr. Bechtholdt referred to a copy of the draft report in the packet given to the Selectmen. Mr. Smith continued the discussion with a slide presentation of the Reuse Plan to address site overview, goals and objectives, planning process, site characteristics, zoning, clean-up and mitigation, reuse potential, local, regional and state partners, and findings and recommendations. He noted that 3 parcels comprise the site of 2040 Providence Road with ownership of Map 22 Parcel 25 - .71 acres by D&G Recycling, Map 22 Parcel 34 - 25.15 acres by Paul D. Klocek, Trustee, and Map 22 Parcel 27 - .21 acres by the Town of Northbridge. Mr. Smith referred to the site as a Brownfield, “meaning real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant”. He explained that the former auto salvage site contained tires, which are contaminants and cleanup progress has been made. CMRPC brought federal money into the Town with Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESA), which were prepared by Fuss & O’Neill. CMRPC will prepare a report with a description of what is needed to bring the site to the cleanup stage. Mr. Smith noted that the suspected contamination was not as bad as had been suspected. He stated the overall goal is to seek redevelopment of the property by having the site cleaned up and restored to a tax revenue generating property. Mr. Smith added that CMRPC had integrated goals and objectives into the report from the Urban River Vision 2 (2007) and the 1994 Master Plan, the vision of which remains the same. He noted parking and mixed use issues and increasing recreation, particularly biking and walking path opportunities. He mentioned the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Consent Order and Supplemental Environment Project Proposal “SEPP” which spells out taking the property to cleanup and mitigation and requires the property owner to build a walking path to the river and install a canoe launch. He added that there is a Conservation Restriction, which further clarifies development in the area. Mr. Smith further noted that water and sewer and WRTA Transit are available in the area and the possibility of a walking path on the site becoming part of the larger Blackstone Valley Bikeway. He indicated environmental constraints including location in a flood plain and priority habitat. Mr. Smith mentioned funding options such as the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) grant for trail/canoe launch and Blackstone River and Canal Commission Development Review and Grant Clearinghouse. He noted that recommendations would be that the Town adopt a zoning provision that allows for desired mixed use, the Town should support the property owner by assisting and completing the 2015 Recreational Trails Grant and Heritage Partnership Grant Program applications, and the Town

should work with DCR to see about the potential for the trail network to be extended north of Plummers Corner and bringing the Blackstone Valley Bikeway through this area. Mr. Marzec thanked Mr. Smith for appearing before the Board and for a thorough presentation. He asked Mr. Smith if this might be an opportunity for businesses being established in the area provided that they stay outside the existing flood plain. Mr. Smith responded that he would talk to the surveyor and engineer about it. Mr. Bechtholdt commented that since the flood plain is part of the area the available site for development would be reduced to one or two acres and this would be conducive to mixed use properties with the owner cleaning up the site and bringing revenue into the community. Mr. Smith explained that an example of a mixed use structure would be a building with a commercial area on the lower floor and apartments on the upper floors. Mr. Marzec asked about the height requirement of a commercial building on the site to which Mr. Bechtholdt responded that he would check on it. Mr. Melia asked if the hazardous material had been removed from the site to which Mr. Smith responded that it hadn't been fully removed. Mr. Bechtholdt added that a remediation plan would have to be included in the re-development. Mr. Melia asked if there was already enough business in the site area to which Mr. Bechtholdt responded that it would make good economic sense for additional business development in that area with the added benefits of site cleanup and recreation. He noted that the next step would be for the Planning Board to review the final document and if they agree with it to then sponsor a zoning amendment article for mixed-use for the property. Mr. Ampagoomian asked Mr. Bechtholdt if he intended to have additional public workshops to which Mr. Bechtholdt responded that it would make sense to have a follow-up workshop to minimize the impact to the abutters and since the site cleanup would affect them. Mr. Smith suggested that Mr. Bechtholdt post the draft report on the Planning Board website and that comments would be welcome, adding that the CMRPC current project work would end December 29th. Noting the recently passed authorization of the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor, Mr. Ampagoomian asked about the possibility of the site becoming a national park at the federal level. Mr. Bechtholdt responded that this would be more specific to Whitinsville but that it was very good news for Northbridge. Mr. Ampagoomian thanked Mr. Smith for his report and thanked both Mr. Smith and Mr. Bechtholdt for their time.

**Northbridge School Committee [Present: Chairperson Mike Lebrasseur and Superintendent of Schools Catherine Stickney]/Online survey to request feedback from residents on the School Department's budget process for the 2015-2016 school year.** Mr. Lebrasseur explained that a focus of the School Committee is to improve communication to the community as well as create more opportunities to receive feedback and input from the community. He noted 2 things that are underway. Mr. Lebrasseur continued that about 10 days ago the School Committee launched a survey, primarily online, to obtain feedback from parents as well as voters, teachers and staff in the school district that could be used by the School Committee as they develop the 2015/2016 budget. He added that the School Committee would have some continuing decisions to make pending the financial status of their budget and that the survey would help them to prioritize what the community feels is important for their school district. Mr. Lebrasseur noted that the survey is available on the school website (nps.org) as well as the town website and in hard copy at the Administration Building, Senior Center, Library, Community Center, and at the town offices. He encouraged people to complete the survey to provide input. Mr. Lebrasseur added that the School Committee was providing a community input session tomorrow to include discussion on reducing student busing, from 6:00 – 6:45 PM at the High School auditorium. He noted that the School Committee was hoping to hear from parents and community members on their thoughts and questions on this topic. Mr. Lebrasseur requested having a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee and the School Committee, as well as the Town Manager and School Superintendent. Noting that the School Department took a pretty big hit last year Mr. Lebrasseur stressed his belief that these entities really need to work together this year, sooner rather than later. Mr. Marzec thanked the School Committee for putting together the survey. He stated that he would like to be part of the discussion. Noting that the community input session was scheduled for only 45 minutes, Mr. Ampagoomian asked if there would be additional sessions. Mr. Lebrasseur responded that the School Committee chose the session time frame since it preceded their regular meeting but they could certainly schedule additional sessions. He added that if anyone was unable to attend the session they could

certainly reach out to the Superintendent or any of the School Committee members to directly share feedback. Mr. Lebrasseur noted that Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> was the last day of the survey. Noting the traffic tie-up on Linwood Avenue due to student drop off and pickup, Mr. Melia asked if anyone had re-evaluated the routes and given consideration to possibly merging or consolidating some of the routes, which might also help with the busing budget. Mr. Lebrasseur responded that he didn't think that reducing the buses would help the traffic problem. He noted that the minimum requirement would eliminate 8 buses, reducing the budget by \$400,000. Mr. Lebrasseur also noted that the percentage of riders would be greatly reduced with the location limit being 2 miles from the schools for K-6. Superintendent Stickney and Mr. Melia both mentioned the possibility of fee-based busing. Speaking from an educator's perspective, Mr. Marzec commented that when faced with fee-based busing a lot of parents decide to provide their own school transportation for their children. He viewed that situation with inherent traffic problems to be much worse than busing. Mr. Ampagoomian expressed his thanks to Mr. Lebrasseur for his time with the hope that they could work together.

**Alternative Energy Proposal.** Present: Stefano Loretto, Business Development Director, Good Energy. Town Manager Kozak advised that about 6 weeks ago the Board put together a committee as a result of the action of Town Meeting to allow the town to look for a consultant to help with aggregate energy purchase for residential homes. Mr. Kozak explained that the committee met with the director of a company, the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, which represents a number of communities. This company put together a very good RFP, which went out to a number of aggregate companies to establish ratings and determine the best company for the town's needs. That company happened to be one that the Board had been speaking with, Good Energy. Mr. Kozak cautioned that time is of the essence. He noted the dramatic increase in the cost of electricity and that although it's too late to put a plan into effect for this year the hope is to have it ready for next year's winter season. Steven Gogolinski, Chairman of the Aggregate Power Committee and member of the Finance Committee addressed the Board. He noted that the director of municipal management for the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District did most of the work for the project and the committee will recommend to the Board of Selectmen to join his group. Mr. Gogolinski added that Stefano Loretto, the representative for Good Energy, was present to answer questions. Mr. Kozak commented that it's a complex issue and that we're all learning as we go along. He then began to explain how the process works. He stated that 10 or 11 communities in the district are recommending that Good Energy, a consulting firm, help them to find a supplier. If Northbridge joins, it would be part of that group. Mr. Kozak added that the next step would be to approach the Department of Public Utilities (DPU), a State agency, which would have to approve the contract with the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District and Good Energy, making certain that whatever steps are needed to purchase the power that it would be done correctly. He said this takes a few months and hopefully by spring the town would be ready to go out to bid to find a supplier. Mr. Loretto noted that they were the consultants in the selection process for the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD), which at this time consists of 11 towns, 8 of which are in National Grid, comprising approximately 85,000 households. He added that the benefit to the Town of Northbridge would be that it could leverage and be part of a larger group for the purchase of electricity. Mr. Loretto explained that the process, which Good Energy has worked hard to streamline would involve submission to the DPU as Mr. Kozak indicated but he also cautioned that the timeframe for this is unknown and could take 3 to 6 months. He added that the plans for the towns that have selected Good Energy would be submitted next month and they would love to have Northbridge participate. Mr. Loretto advised that the article has already been approved at the Fall Annual Town Meeting and the next step would be the review and approval of Good Energy's professional services agreement, which Mr. Loretto would be happy to send along tomorrow for the Town attorney to review. He concluded that it would be a highly competitive bid and would provide protection from the high volatility currently being seen. Mr. Loretto added that electric rates for the supply portion of billing had significantly increased from 8 cents to 16 cents over the past year. Mr. Marzec thanked Mr. Gogolinski and Mr. Loretto for their presentation. He expressed the view that the public has to realize the enormity of the current market volatility, noting from his experience

that New York co-ops had derived a great benefit from aggregate programs due to their predictability of payments. He added that it would be worth the Town's time and effort to pursue this, especially at this time due to the current volatility, rather than wait. Mr. Nolan asked Mr. Loretto how Northbridge compares to the other communities to which Mr. Loretto responded that there is a significant difference with 5,800 customers in Northbridge compared to 85,000 customers from the communities with similar market conditions involved in SRPEDD. Mr. Loretto added that Good Energy has a history in these programs, handling over 160 communities nationally with a price that was far better than that of most of their competitors, and never having a community leave their program. Noting that SRPEDD highly recommended Good Energy over many other companies. Mr. Kozak then suggested that the Board vote to move this item from Discussions to Decisions so the Board can vote to approve the committee's selection and vote to have Northbridge join SRPEDD. Mr. Melia asked if the current approach would take less time than if the town had handled it without the assistance of SRPEDD and Good Energy to which Mr. Kozak and Mr. Gogolinski responded that it definitely had saved time since they had already performed the groundwork. A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Nolan to move this item from Discussions to Decisions. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Athanas/Yes, Marzec/Yes, Mr. Melia, Mr. Nolan/Yes, and Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes. A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Athanas to accept the recommendations of the Aggregate Power Committee to select Good Energy as the committee's consultant and for the Town to join SRPEDD as mentioned above. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Whitinsville Water Company / Water Meter System Improvements.** Town Manager Kozak advised that a proposal from the Whitinsville Water Company to install meters in the Northbridge system at no cost to the Town and to develop a Service Agreement over the life of the meter system did not pass at the Town Meeting due to a portion of the Service Agreement that was not acceptable. He noted that he had received a letter from the Whitinsville Water Company offering a variation of the original proposal eliminating the binding service agreement. Whitinsville Water Company felt installation of the new meters would be a cost savings to the Town due to the improved accuracy of the meters and replacing all the meters at once instead of on a "piece meal" approach. Randy Swigor, General Manager of the Whitinsville Water Company, appeared before the Board. He reviewed the rationale behind replacing all the meters and the benefit to the town in reduced costs. He noted that the risk to the Water Company in removing the service contract wording would be minimal. Mr. Nolan commented that some residents were concerned about possible harm that could be caused by the new meters due to radio waves. Mr. Swigor assured Mr. Nolan that the use of radio waves with the meters is minimal and not a health risk. Mr. Nolan asked who would own the meters to which Mr. Swigor responded that the Water Company would own them. Mr. Kozak interjected that if the Town paid for the meters the Town would own them. Mr. Nolan asked if everyone would have their meters replaced or if they could opt out. Mr. Swigor said there were no provisions for opting out. Mr. Swigor noted that the meters would run by a 20-year life battery and not by electricity. Mr. Nolan asked about the expected life span of the meters to which Mr. Swigor responded that they have a 20-year life expectancy. Mr. Ampagoomian asked when Mr. Swigor expected to swap out the meters. Noting that the first part of the construction would be a central tower, Mr. Swigor responded that the meter installation would take place in March or April of 2015. Mr. Ampagoomian asked how much notice the customers would get to which Mr. Swigor responded that it would probably be at least a month's notice. He noted that it would be third party installation with a dedicated staff person handling customer calls and questions. Mr. Ampagoomian asked if the third party installers would be registered with the police department so that the police know about installation in residents' homes and residents feel safe by seeing installer identification. Mr. Swigor assured Mr. Ampagoomian that these precautions would be taken. Mr. Kozak had indicated that this would be a discussion and not a decision issue, suggesting that it would be advisable to invite DPW Director James Shuris to speak to the issue. Mr. Ampagoomian thanked Mr. Swigor for his time.

**TIF Proposal – Woonsocket Glass.** Town Manager Kozak explained that Woonsocket Glass is looking to locate and then expand their business at 369 Douglas Road. The Company has approached the Town with a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) proposal. Mr. Kozak noted that a TIF is a program that has existed

for about 20 years, which Northbridge has previously been involved with that forgives some of the taxes for the new addition. He added that it helps the town in that it receives full taxes on the business that was there and the majority of the taxes based on the agreement for the new facility, along with additional employment opportunities, which helps the economy. Mr. Kozak advised that it requires a town meeting vote, which presents a small problem for the company. The company would like to move into the facility and start work this spring, which means they would have missed the Fall Town Meeting vote and the next town meeting would be in May. Mr. Kozak added that the other advantage to a TIF is that the company could apply for forgiveness on State Taxes but it would first need the town to approve a TIF. He noted that time is an issue in that the State would prefer to have the Town approve the TIF first and the addition work would have to be complete before tax forgiveness is granted. Mr. Kozak mentioned that one possibility would be to have a special town meeting for which the company would be willing to pay for to pass an article. Mr. Kozak felt that having a special town meeting would be awkward. Mr. Kozak noted that he happened to be at an economic development meeting the previous week in which the representative from Massachusetts Development who works on the TIF program was speaking about some of the projects and what's happening in the State. Mr. Kozak spoke to the representative about the issue and that it's a "catch 22" with the timing of the town meetings. The representative said that he would talk to his director and get back to Mr. Kozak. He later called back to say that if the Board of Selectmen is willing to negotiate the TIF now and have an article for town meeting he would see if he could help with the process and there would not be a need for a special town meeting. Mr. Kozak asked the Board if it would consider moving the issue to DECISIONS and allow Mr. Kozak to write a letter to the business development that the Board would entertain negotiating a TIF with the company and bring it forward to the May Town Meeting for a vote by the Town. Mr. Athanas commented that he didn't see a problem with it from a business standpoint that TIFs are very beneficial and that this should be moved along more quickly. To Mr. Melia's question whether the company had already purchased the property Mr. Kozak responded that he thought they had. Mr. Melia agreed with Mr. Athanas' comments, noting that the company is moving from Rhode Island which is the type of thing that Northbridge wants to encourage. He added that it makes good sense to move forward on it and he supports it. A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Nolan to move this item from Discussions to Decisions. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Melia/Yes, Nolan/Yes, Mr. Marzec, Mr. Athanas/Yes, and Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes.

**DECISIONS – To accept the recommendations of the Aggregate Committee to participate in SRPEDD and approve the selection of Good Energy.** A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Nolan to accept the recommendations of the Aggregate Committee. Vote/yes/Unanimous.

Mr. Kozak noted that Mr. Melia asked what citizens should do when approached by companies with flyers and phone calls from third party suppliers (should they wait or not wait). Mr. Kozak indicated that it is a complicated issue. He asked Mr. Loretto to comment. Mr. Loretto acknowledged that the Commonwealth is being inundated with mailings, phone calls, door to door solicitations, and gift certificates. He commented that we need to protect residents in a way that we're informing them and offered to provide a website that they gave to the other 11 communities to inform residents. He described it as a link from the town's website. Mr. Loretto noted that the information begins with the statement that the program would not start until the summer of 2015 and any mailings that would be sent to residents would be recognizable as coming from the town of Northbridge. He advises that in considering other offers, residents read all the fine print in the contract. Mr. Loretto cautioned that some companies have ambiguous wording in their contracts, particularly regarding the term of their offer, and to beware of cancellation charges for opting out of a program. Mr. Melia noted that he is advising residents to wait for the town committee to investigate and that it would be advantageous to participate in an aggregate program. Mr. Ampagoomian requested that Mr. Loretto send the informational link so that it can be put on our website. He thanked the Committee and Mr. Loretto, adding that hopefully the project can be completed quickly.

**Woonsocket Glass negotiations for a Tax Increment Financing Program with the Town to be**



**finalized at the May Town Meeting for a vote by the Town.** A motion/Mr. Marzec, seconded/Mr. Nolan to contact Woonsocket Glass to begin negotiations for a Tax Increment Financing Program with the Town to be finalized at the May Town Meeting for a vote by the Town. Vote/yes/Unanimous.

Mr. Kozak recommended contacting the Assessors and Planning offices for discussions with the owner and report to the Board as soon as possible. Mr. Ampagoomian noted that there have been several changes in TIF state regulations to which Mr. Kozak agreed, adding that the process had been simplified. Mr. Kozak cautioned that if this approach doesn't work out there would have to be a special town meeting to address the issue.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT -1) Wreath Presentation:** Mr. Kozak explained that on December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Evergreen Center located in Milford made their annual visit to Town Hall to present their holiday wreath, which was made by their clients. **2) Economic Development Forum:** Mr. Kozak noted that discussion focused on the various programs provided by Mass. Development and offered to communities including the MASS Bizworks Training and Marketing program; and the Economic Development Incentive Program [EDIP].

**3) Legislative Breakfast:** Mr. Kozak explained that the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission [CMRPC] held a legislative breakfast. The topic of discussion was the opiate epidemic in Central Mass. They also discussed the increased use of new smoking products like e-cigarettes and hookah pipes among youth. Various regulations were also discussed. The CMRPC also wants to resume tobacco stings. Mr. Kozak mentioned concern that with the new governor in office and budget priorities information from the governor's office might be delayed. There is concern over local aid.

**4) Road/Bridge Update:** Mr. Kozak commented on the Douglas Road Bridge and Sutton Street projects. The Douglas Road Bridge is pretty much done for the year and will be complete with removal of the temporary bridge in the spring; right now it's passable. Fine paving is continuing on Sutton Street with the State set to complete their work soon. Mr. Kozak added that the DPW is doing a good job repairing the pot holes. He advised that if a pot hole is discovered it should be reported to the Police Department. Mr. Kozak noted that the new machine is working well; the patches are holding.

**5) Burning Permits:** Mr. Kozak announced that the Fire Department will begin issuing burning permits on January 1<sup>st</sup>. He added that this year there will be a slight fee and an application containing information.

Mr. Kozak proposed, as agreed by the staff of the Town offices, that the Town Hall would be closed on the Friday after Christmas and New Year's Day to help the town save on utility bills with the time being made up on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. He requested the support of the Board on this issue. There was no discussion on this.

**SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS. Selectman Nolan 1)** Congratulated the Northbridge Rams in making it to the Super Bowl which he considers to be admirable that they were able to make it and play at Gillette twice now. He added that he is looking forward to their playing next year. **Chairman Ampagoomian 2)** Asked about the flood plan. Mr. Kozak responded that he received a call from Mr. Jolles and he is ready to proceed with the study and will be in touch with the Conservation Commission to get things going. **Chairman Ampagoomian 3)** To the residents of Northbridge he extended wishes for a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanza, and Happy New Year.

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:45 PM**

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Draft*

WARRANT ARTICLE FOR TIF AGREEMENT  
For WGM FABRICATORS SITE, 369 DOUGLAS ROAD

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to prepare and submit to the Massachusetts Economic Assistance Coordinating Council a certified project application for designation of the property located at 369 Douglas Road, Northbridge, Massachusetts, and shown on Assessors' Map 3 as Parcel 21, as an Economic Opportunity Area, pursuant to the provision of Chapter 23A of the General Laws; and further, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a tax increment financing plan with WGM Fabricators, LLC pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 40, Section 59 of the General Laws, in connection with the development of said property; and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take such actions as are necessary to obtain approval of the certified project application and to implement the tax increment financing plan, or take any other action relative thereto.

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