

**STOCKBRIDGE SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday, October 12, 2023**  
**6:30 p.m.**  
**ZOOM MEETING - TOWN OFFICES, 50 MAIN STREET**

**Present:**

Patrick White, Chuck Cardillo, Jamie Minacci and Mike Canales

**Call to Order:**

Chuck opened the meeting and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special Permit Hearing for the property of Jane Iredale located at 106 Interlaken Road.

Mike noted that they received a request to withdraw the application for a special permit for Jane Iredale at 106 Interlaken Road. After review with the architect and the Building Inspector, it was decided that the special permit they have now allows them to build the proposed structure with habitable space above it, not an ADU. An amendment was not needed.

Tax Classification Hearing

Michael Blay, Principal Assessor began by stating that evaluations have been set for FY24. He continued that the hearing is to select a residential factor, adopting a residential exemption and a small commercial exemption.

The Board of Selectmen have the option of shifting the burden of the levy to the Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property classes. This would result in a split tax rate with the latter being higher than the residential tax rate.

Shifting the Burden: The Selectmen can decide to shift the tax rate up to 150%. If you do shift the burden, it must create a Residential Factor that is no lower than the Town's historical Factor. Michael said that we are currently estimating a tax rate of \$7.37 if a residential factor of one is adopted. This is an estimated overall decrease of \$0.77 over last years' tax rate of \$8.14.

There have been expanded Minimum Residential Factor Parameters that fall under Chapter 200(12) that allow the maximum C.I.P shift to go as high as 175% for Fiscal Year 2024, but there are additional guidelines that pertain to these maximum shifts.

The Board of Selectmen also have the option to allow a Residential Exemption, Open Space Discount and Small Commercial Exemption.

Residential Exemption. Michael reviewed calculation of Residential Exemption and the disbursement. The new Residential tax rate is estimated to recalculate at \$7.99; an increase of \$.62 cents for FY24(using 20%). Only the owners of property that are residents of Stockbridge will get the possible benefit to Residential Exemption. This will not apply to renters or second home owners. He also reviewed estimates using 35%.

The Small Commercial Exemption, if adopted may be up to 10 percent of the assessed value of each eligible Class Three, Commercial Property with an average employment of less than 10 people and an assessed valuation of less than \$1,000,000. Mike estimated 8 eligible parcels. The tax rate for the Commercial class increases. The reduction in taxes does not go back to the small business. It only benefits the owner of the commercial property. The adoption of this exemption is basically a shift in the tax burden to the larger commercial and industrial properties in Town. It creates an automatic split rate. At least two of the eight eligible parcels are empty store fronts and Patrick suggested adopting it. John Hart asked what the tax rates were for surrounding towns, all of which are higher. He felt that anything that would benefit residents should be instituted. Mike Canales stated that 984 properties will see a decrease in their tax bill and about 550 that would see an increase of less than \$100 and the remaining properties of about 400 would see a tax increase. After hearing some public comments Chuck moved to close the evidentiary portion of the public hearing and allow the Board to deliberate. Patrick read his statement with his position on the tax rate and the need to keep a robust and well-rounded community. He questioned if future employees will be able to live here. The RTE is a tool that the Town can use, he recommended a RTE at 35% but said there are options. Chuck made a motion that they approve the residential factor of one. Jamie seconded. Aye Patrick, Aye Chuck, Aye Jamie. Chuck asked for a motion for the RTE. Patrick made a motion for 35%, there was no second. Patrick made a motion for 20%, there was no second. Chuck made a motion that they don't adopt the RTE. Jamie seconded. Aye Jamie, Aye Chuck, Ney Patrick. Chuck made a motion that they do not accept the small commercial exemption. Patrick felt that it should be considered. Patrick said he would vote no on Chuck's motion and Patrick made a motion in favor of the small business exemption. Jamie seconded; discussion continued; Aye Patrick, Aye Jamie, Aye Chuck.

Take action on Change of Manager Application for Once Upon a Table Inc. Avi Maloney, owner of Once Upon a Table Inc. introduced Nixon St. Bernard as proposed new manager for the alcohol license. Chuck made a motion that they accept the change. Patrick seconded; all were in favor.

Appoint Cathy Buffoni to the COA Board

Chuck made a motion they appoint her to the board. Jamie seconded; all were in favor.

Take action on one day alcohol license applications for Berkshire Botanical Garden on October 21st from 6-11PM and November 4th from 6-11 PM. Patrick made a motion to approve. Chuck seconded; all were in favor.

Future of community media as we face declining cable subscriptions and pending legislation S.34/H.74 "An Act to Modernize Funding for Community Access Centers"

Rich Frederick, executive Director for CTSB, presented the power point below with discussion.

A presentation slide with a blue gradient background and white circuit-like lines on the left and right. The title "IMPORTANCE OF CTSB" is centered at the top in white, all-caps. Below the title is a bulleted list with four items, each preceded by a white dot. The text in the list is white.

## IMPORTANCE OF CTSB

- CTSB serves Lee, Lenox, Stockbridge, Great Barrington and Sheffield. Our three cable TV channels 1301, 1302 and 1303 are funded by roughly 6500 cable subscribers who reside in the 5 towns.
- CTSB records and broadcasts town and school board meetings, community events, sports, parades, The Fall Festival of Shakespeare and so much more.
- CTSB also serves vulnerable and marginalized populations in our community such as the elderly, students with disabilities and non-English speaking communities, etc..
- We are a vital service to your community. CTSB provides the community a voice on such important issues as PCB contamination.

## WHY NOW: MAJOR TECHNOLOGY SHIFT

- Technology is changing the way we view Television.
- Streaming video is replacing traditional cable TV boxes along with CTSB's current funding model.
- CTSB will suffer drastic funding losses now that Spectrum has made the Xumo stream video box available and will severely impact services provided by CTSB.
- Massachusetts is proposing a 5% streaming tax legislation on companies like Disney, Hulu, Netflix and Spectrum to support community television. Senate bill.34 and House bill.74 needs to be passed during February 2024. This act is called "An Act to Modernize Funding for Community Media Programming".
- From Mike Wassenaar, President of The Alliance for Community Media  
"If this bill is not signed into law we will be back in two years to discuss closures and layoffs."

## WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

- We need your support to continue offering full CTSB services to your community!
- Send a letter to state and federal representatives expressing your concern and support for Massachusetts bill S.34 H.74. Letters should be sent by your town and residents.
- Many letters are needed immediately and no later than October 31<sup>st</sup>. Letters should be sent to: Governor Maura Healey, Senator Paul Mark, Representative William Smitty Pignatelli and Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier.
- CTSB will continue to update you on MA bills S.34 and H.74
- Thank you for your time and support.

Discussion:

How to develop strong relationship between the Mohican Community and locals from Stockbridge.

Rich Bradway, President of the Stockbridge Land Trust, said that now as land owners the Stockbridge Munsee Community will have a presence in Stockbridge; an important step forward would stand to benefit from a mutual partnership. Rich felt that there were many misconceptions with how the Munsee Community would proceed as land owners. Chuck suggested creating a small committee, 3-5 members, as a focal point where everything would go through. Patrick said that he would take the lead on starting the process.

M.G.L. Chapter 60 Section 3A - Selectboards' approval to include the attached insert with the tax bills concerning payment options. Patrick suggested adding that donations to the scholarship fund and aid for the elderly be also added. Patrick made a motion to approve it with that change if possible. Chuck seconded; all were in approval.

Set Trick or Treat Hours - October 31st from 5PM-7PM

Announce Halloween Parade and Pumpkin Walk – October 27th from 6PM-7:30PM

Announce Monday, October 23, 2023 Special Town Meeting at 6:00pm for the 8 Town Regional School vote and the Senior Work off.

**Adjournment:**

With no further business, Chuck adjourned the meeting.

Please see <https://ctsbtv.org/government-channel-1303/> to view the full meeting.