

Saugus Board of Selectmen
November 28, 2017

*****MEETING MINUTES*****

AGENDA
Saugus Board of Selectmen
November 28, 2017 at 7:30 PM
Town Hall Auditorium, 298 Central Street
Saugus, MA

Call to order.

Public Hearings:

7:30 PM Saugus Board of Selectmen will conduct a public hearing for the purpose of determining the percentage of local tax levy FY 2018 to be borne by each class of taxable property within the Town of Saugus

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The Saugus Board of Selectmen met on November 28, 2017 at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall Auditorium, 298 Central Street. Present: Selectmen Scott Brazis, Jeffrey Cicolini, Jennifer D'Eon, Mark Mitchell and the Chairman Debra Panetta. The Town Manager Scott Crabtree was also present.

The Chair called the meeting to order and congratulated Selectman Mitchell on the recount held yesterday and thanked all involved and said it was a very professional process. The Manager thanked the workers and volunteers and said it was no small task and thanked the Superintendent and school IT personnel for providing overhead projectors and said the recount was a good test of the new voting machines and they are very accurate. Selectman Mitchell thanked the volunteers and those that helped with the recount. The Manager thanked the Veterans School Principal and custodial staff.

Public Hearings:

7:30 PM Saugus Board of Selectmen will conduct a public hearing for the purpose of determining the percentage of local tax levy FY 2018 to be borne by each class of taxable property within the Town of Saugus

Michael Serino, Chairman of the Board of Assessors was present with member Dan Kelly and Deputy Assessor Ron Keohan and first congratulated the Board on their election.

Chairman Serino explained in accordance with Chapter 369 of the Acts of 1982, the Selectmen must hold a public hearing, duly advertised, to determine the percentage of the tax burden to be borne by each class of property. The Assessors cannot proceed to seek approval from the DOR for FY18 tax rate until the public hearing has been concluded with vote of the residential factor. The Board has 4 options:

- 1.) vote a single tax rate which would result in all properties taxed at \$14.06 per \$1,000 evaluation;
- 2.) vote the minimum residential factor which would mean a residential rate of \$11.59 per \$1,000 evaluation and \$24.60 per \$1,000 evaluation on commercial, industrial & personal property;
- 3.) vote discount for open space; and
- 4.) voted exemption. If this is selected the residential factor would increase to compensate for exemptions and would result in a \$16.52 tax rate.

Chairman Serino said historically the Selectmen have chosen the minimum residential factor and if chosen would result in the residential tax rate decreasing from \$12.05 to \$11.59 per \$1,000 evaluation; and commercial, industrial, personal property will decrease from \$25.78 to \$24.60 and noted average residential tax bill will be \$4,477 (-\$16.00). Chairman Serino pointed to exhibit "D" in the packet: comparable tax rates.

In conclusion Chairman Serino said he hopes this presentation was helpful to the Board and to residents as well.

Chairman Panetta said the Selectmen have always favored Option 2 and pointed out other communities shift the burden as well and said valuations went up last year and asked if the reevaluations are completed. Chairman Serino said 2/3 of the properties are completed and 1/3 will be completed next year. Chairman Panetta asked when the debt override will kick in. Chairman Serino said not this year. The Town Manager explained they are discussing with financial advisors and it will not hit until 2019. Selectman Cicolini asked if next year they could include average tax bills because he feels that tells the true story. The Manager agreed and said Saugus average residential tax bill is \$4,400 and last year Lynnfield average residential tax bill was \$8,219. Selectman Cicolini asked about levy limit. Deputy Assessor said we aren't going as high as we can go, there is excess capacity. Selectman Cicolini said the decrease in commercial rate is huge. Deputy Assessor said that can be deceiving because there are big businesses and small mom 'n pop averaged. The Manager said he did a quick search of tax rates for last year and found: Lynnfield \$8,200; Melrose \$5,746; Reading \$7,485; Stoneham \$6,212; and Wakefield \$5,438 and noted this year Saugus average will be \$4,400.

Any to speak? None.

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Selectman Cicolini moved to close the hearing. Chair seconds 5-0.

Selectman Cicolini moved the Board vote to adopt the minimum residential factor as recommended based on presentation. Chair seconds 5-0.

The Chair announced a forum at the high school and DEP will be here regarding Wheelabrator expansion.

The Deputy Assessor thanked the Board for accommodating him this evening by holding the hearing early. Board Members wished him the best of luck.

Selectman Brazis moved to adjourn. Chair seconds 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Reed, Clerk