

Present: Chairman Dan Haskins, Selectman Colton Andrews, Selectman Seth Alexander, Town Administrator Ronald Boucher, and Town Treasurer Kelly Haskins.

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Haskins called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. and called roll call.

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. Treasurer's report.

Chairman Haskins moved the Treasurer's report to the beginning of the agenda. Mrs. Haskins began telling the board that Quarter 3 real estate tax bills were sent incorrectly. The town's vendor Kelley & Ryan Associates, Inc. had included interest through Quarter 4. Mrs. Haskins had prepared and sent a statement to residents explaining the error, and that they received incorrect information. It is included with the revised bill. The Town alerted residents through a notice post on the Town website, the Town Hall digital billboard, and the Town's Facebook page. She also programmed an automatic email response, as well as included a message on her voicemail addressing the mistake. Mrs. Haskins followed up with Kelley & Ryan Associates, Inc. to address the issue and to make sure it doesn't happen again.

For fiscal year 2025, the Town billed a total of \$2,213,831.90. As of January 5, 2026, the outstanding balance is \$16,091.00 that includes 14 parcels that are not currently in tax title. Mrs. Haskins plans to do another taking some time in February if they remain unpaid. She is hopeful some of these taxpayers will come in to pay this remaining balance as she has been in touch with some.

An additional \$25,530.10 relates to subsequent tax title accounts which were 14 parcels. This represents unpaid taxes for which the Town had already placed a lien on the property due to earlier delinquencies. These newer unpaid amounts were added to the existing account, increasing the total redemption amount for the property owner without requiring a new tax taking.

As of January 5th, 16 accounts remain in tax title with a total balance of \$266,759.64, including interest and fees. Of these, 8 are on payment plans, 2 are Land of Low Values, and 2 are in the process of closing. This leaves 4 accounts for which we will continue the

foreclosure process on. Some residents have been working with Mrs. Haskins on payment plans which has been working for both the residents and the Town.

IV. NBSU to continue discussion on percentage adjustment.

Chairman Haskins moved the discussion on Northern Berkshire School Union percentage adjustment before the other items on the agenda. He began with reiterating that Clarksburg is now responsible for 54% of union costs, which overall doesn't seem like a fair breakdown. The board's proposal is for all towns to start at 10%, except for the Town of Monroe who would start at 5%. Selectman Andrews added that the overall discussion has been varied, but he feels the Town needs to look at these percentages from a long-term lens. He is also curious to know what the other towns have to say about this proposal but didn't have high hopes they would be on board right away. Selectman Alexander said he was also interested in the input from taxpayers, especially those with children attending NBSU schools.

Chair of the Clarksburg School Committee Laura Wood was introduced to comment on the matter. Though she agreed with the board's proposed numbers, she felt as though the voting power from each community on the union board may raise some flags with the percentages agreed upon in the proposal. Chairman Haskins made it a point to say that at the joint school board meeting, Clarksburg had one vote compared to other communities. Selectman Andrews added that even with Clarksburg contributing 54%, the voting blocks are not evenly distributed.

Chairman Haskins said that if change goes through, Clarksburg could save around \$70,000.00, which could in turn go back into the elementary school's needs. Town Administrator Ron Boucher requested to speak through the chair, to which Mr. Haskins accepted. Mr. Boucher inquired if this proposal would be implemented for this fiscal year budget. Ms. Wood said she didn't know for sure. She added she is hopeful for an open discussion on the proposal with the other communities and thinks there may be some support to be pushed onto other members.

Chairman Haskins told the board he had met with Superintendent of Schools John Franzoni to discuss the proposal, and he too agrees for changes to be made and for Clarksburg to have more voting power. The system that deciphers town percentages has been in place since 2018 and is the same structure from when the agreement was adjusted.

He also told the board that he has put in a request with the Town Accountant for a report on the percentages trend for the past 8-10 years.

V. Approve meeting minutes from December 15th.

Chairman Haskins presented the board with the minutes from the Select board meeting from December 15th, 2025.

MOTION: Selectman Andrews motioned to approve the meeting minutes from December 15th, 2025. Selectman Alexander seconded, and all were in favor.

VI. DPW report.

Department of Public Works Superintendent Kyle Hurlbut presented to the board beginning with the water problems happening on Southern View Drive. There are 2 residents who have been without water since November 27th. His theory is that it could be galvanized lines closing up that will need to be fixed in the near future. There are currently contracts in the works to jump onto a larger line in the area to hopefully boost the water flow. Thus far, the cost for materials to fix this issue has costed \$16,000.00. Mr. Hurlbut said he has been looking for a pinhole break or anything that could be causing this for the last month and a half or so. He was also recently alerted the week prior of one house on Mallard Ave. that is losing water as well due to a galvanized line. He told the board that Clarksburg owns the lines, but North Adams owns the water. Mr. Hurlbut also said that he has been in contact with the city and has received permission to dig into their road to find the problem. The Town's grant writer, Bryanna Malloy has also been working on getting a grant to fund this issue as well.

Selectman Andrews asked Mr. Hurlbut about expansion tanks and if the problem will get worse for other residents. Mr. Hurlbut was unsure due to his lack of knowledge on water supply. He suggested to the board to consider increasing the maintenance budget per year or even per quarter. Currently, the Town collects \$12,000.00 per year for maintenance, but Mr. Hurlbut suggested charging \$5.00 more per quarter to make the total budget \$15,000.00 instead.

Chairman Haskins acknowledged the severity of the issue, and said the main priority is to get these residents running water again. He was in agreeance with Mr. Hurlbut to increase the maintenance budget as we can't take more money from other Town accounts for water lines.

Selectman Andrews explained that the infrastructure has not been well-taken care of and thinks we need to look into a larger infrastructure upgrade.

Mr. Hurlbut continued with his report and said the Division of Ecological Restoration grant has extended out by one year for West Road. Ms. Malloy has also requested a small culvert grant for gravel roads. The Town garage has also looked into a new roller for gravel roads, however Mr. Hurlbut explained that Clarksburg only has about ½ a mile of a gravel road so he's not willing to spend much on a whole new piece of equipment.

The bridge repair on Middle Road has been signed over to Massachusetts Department of Transportation; therefore, the state has the overall say of what can and can't be done. Mr. Hurlbut still has not been able to read the report on the Cross Road 1-lane bridge but will check his email when time allows.

Mr. Hurlbut explained to the board that salt from the Town garage has been an issue as he plans to cut down usage on secondary roads in Clarksburg. He also said that the DPW is going to start waiting until snow builds up before plowing so quickly. They will conserve product by only hitting hilly areas in town. Chairman Haskins inquired how low the stock pile of salt was, to which Mr. Hurlbut said it is getting so low that they are starting to use older material. This was due to the recent ice storm that hit Clarksburg. He did look at a new 1-ton truck with a sander that costs \$191,000.00. The last Town truck did not have a sander.

The DPW also hired a new laborer and gave him one year to receive his hoisting licenses. Applicants for the position who already had these licenses were requesting too much pay for the position. He has suggested less expensive resources for the new laborer to get the licenses, including classes from Berkshire Community College.

VII. Discussion on ARPA funds.

Town Administrator Ronald Boucher said there is \$20,422.00 left for funds and there is a quote from Powers Generator that is only good for 90 days, which has expired. It is \$21,851.00 to install the generator. The electrical work is done, and the Town must purchase tanks from H.A. George. Barriers are put up and the Town requested a new quote from Powers Generator. It is a possibility to have to pay the difference. Chairman Haskins asked if Mr. Boucher knew of any extra funds from town maintenance, to which Mr. Boucher said there may be some. Chairman Haskins is hopeful to have the bid by next Select board meeting.

VIII. Discuss Department of Conservation and Recreation land acquisition.

John Morris of 935 Mohawk Trail spoke to the board on his issue with the DCR acquisition of the land on Florida Mountain. His related cousin had purchased the land, and Mr. Morris expressed his concern of the pollution experienced due to the water contamination. He had received a quote from a lawyer as they are involved in a lawsuit against the Commonwealth. He told the board that there is a waterfall on the land, and that his family's property is located at the bottom of the fall. The state is interested in the top of the waterfall, and Mr. Morris believes the state is interested in minimizing the amount of value on his property. He told the board that the DCR expressed their interest in part of Mr. Morris' family's property but not the part that is polluted. He also attended a superior court hearing on December 17th with the state and the DOT, and the state wants the suit to be dismissed because of the pollution claiming sovereign community. According to law 21E, it doesn't apply to polluted properties, but it does to parts of the property. Mr. Morris' concern is that if the state gets the suit dismissed by 21E, there will be no clean up of the pollution, and residents will suffer if everything flows downhill. He suggested the board to contact the Massachusetts state representative or state senator to show concern and interest in this matter. Mr. Morris requested the Select board to hold off on signing any agreements.

Selectman Andrews asked Mr. Morris if he knew of any value to the water resource on the parcel and if it can be used in his favor against the state in the lawsuit. Mr. Morris said they have investigated it multiple times but that there is nothing available to use. Mr. Andrews then asked if the town owns any part of the parcel, to which Mr. Boucher said Clarksburg only owns ¼ of an acre. He also said that the Town of Florida has already signed off on their area. Mr. Boucher offered to contact Jennifer Soper from DCR for a Facetime call, but Mr. Andrews said he would much prefer her to come in person to discuss. Mr. Morris also said that he would be willing to have his lawyers present for that meeting. The board then negotiated a date for the next meeting to be held on Monday, January 26th.

IX. Town Administrator Updates.

Town Administrator Boucher introduced the Town's Animal Control Dianna Worth to comment on the complaints of a loose dog throughout the Town. She explained to the board that located on North Eagle Street, a resident's dog has been unleashed without barriers and disrupting other properties. She has alerted the owner multiple times for over 4 months and has

sent many fines to which the resident has ignored. Ms. Worth has received phone calls and video recordings about the disruption of the dog on their properties as well as throughout the North Eagle area. She told the board the dog has reached over to Inga Ave. Residents are extremely angry about the situation.

Ms. Worth has sent notices and tickets in the mail, and went to the residence to which they would not open the door to her. She contacted the Boston Animal Protection Center to find out what more she can do, and the only advice they had given her was to continue fining the owner and if they choose not to pay to take them to court. The board would need to sign off on a warrant issued by the court to remove the dog from the home entirely.

Selectman Andrews said the board can request the owner's attendance at the next meeting to explain their side. If the owner does not appear, the board will then need to make a decision on moving forward with their options. Mr. Andrews said the owner would then no longer have a reason to say they were not addressed. Chairman Haskins asked Ms. Worth how many phone calls she had received about the dog, to which she said easily more than 10. She has had to leave her full time job to come to locations the dog was spotted when residents call her. She told the board she has been telling residents if they are able to catch the dog that she will then take it and keep it until the owner pays their fines.

Selectman Alexander suggested sending a certified letter explaining to the owner how many complaints Animal Control has received and express the repercussion of having the dog removed from the home. Although the board and Ms. Worth were sympathetic to the idea of removing a pet from a home, ultimately this has become a safety issue to the community. Chairman Haskins asked Ms. Worth if she knew if the dog is aggressive, to which she explained the dog is quite friendly, but is causing a nuisance among property owners. The dog has been seen urinating and defecating on residents' properties, as well as digging up bushes, and has even run across one resident's pool cover. She told the board it has been about 6 months of this occurring.

Selectman Andrews and Selectman Alexander made an agreement for Mr. Alexander to visit the dog owner as he is a neighbor to them. The plan is to explain the severity of the issue, and to give them an opportunity to come into the next Select board meeting to explain their side. From there, a request for appearance will be sent certified letter as official documentation.

Town Administrator Boucher thanked Ms. Worth for her time presenting to the board, and continued with his report. He told the board that the Clarksburg Elementary School roof is officially finished, and that the Town had received the final invoice. There was a slight issue with the address recorded on the invoice from D.J. Wooliver & Sons Roofing Inc., but that they would make the correction and send over a new one. The Town purchased a new battery for the town’s Tahoe truck that Chief Williams will have license plates and a new inspection sticker put on. Mr. Boucher said that the Town has officially placed Romana Messer as the full time Town Assessor. He also submitted a Mass Works precontract form for the south Middle Road artery project, and finally on his report, told the board that the Town’s lawyer office KP Law had increased their legal fees to \$250.00 per hour.

X. Public Comment.

Chairman Haskins opened the floor to any public comments or questions, to which there were none.

XI. Adjourn.

MOTION: Chairman Haskins motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:54 p.m. Selectman Andrews seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Markell Shea

Town Executive Assistant

Selectboard,

Dan Haskins, *Chair*

Colton Andrews, *member*

Seth Alexander, *member*