



**Town of Berlin
Municipal Office Building
108 Shed Road**

**Berlin, VT. 05602
Regular Select Board Meetings
1st & 3rd Monday of Each Month**

Special Meeting

**Monday, February 22, 2010
6:00 PM**

Selectboard Members: Brad Towne, Chair; Susan Gretkowski, Vice Chair; Roberta Haskin, Secretary; Jonathan Goddard, Nancy Driscoll. Present: Jeff Schulz, Town Administrator; Patti Lewis, Town Treasurer. All items are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

APPROVED MINUTES

Brad Towne called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Accounts Payable/Vouchers

There were no vouchers.

Grand List Errors and Omissions - Parcel #00039-010 and #00039-010.100

Jeff Schulz stated that the property owner, **Tom Pelham**, provided the information on these parcels. He stated that the Board had asked the Listers recommendations on this issue. **Jeff** stated that **Mike Domingue**, Lister, had written a letter concerning this issue. He stated that **Mike** had given him a contact at the State Tax Department and **Mike** stated that this is a grievance issue not an errors and omissions issue. **Jeff** stated that in speaking with **Doreen**, State Representative for the Tax Department, that there was not a lot of involvement of the Tax Department regarding Current Use and that the Listers provide the State with the assessment and amount of acreage and the State puts the Lister information into their formula and gets current use values which they send back to the Listers for preparing the Tax bills. **Jeff** stated that he had received some information from **Patti Lewis** concerning the Grand List, and that there are discrepancies in some of the information between the Town and State records such as, the number of acres in the 2008 Grand List versus the 2009 Grand List. He stated that in reviewing the records, there are discrepancies in information at both the State and Town level. **Jeff** stated that in reviewing the Listers Handbook, if there is a problem with the assessment it would be a grievance, but if there is a problem with the information and in how it was entered into the system it would be an error and omission. He stated that, in this case, the information is leading toward suggesting an error and omission but that he believes there should be more investigation into the matter as it does not look like the State has updated all of the information needed. **Nancy Driscoll** asked if it would be feasible for a Lister to sit down with the State Representative to compare the records and tell where the discrepancies are and fix them. **Jeff** agreed that a meeting between the Listers and the State Tax Department would be feasible. **Susan Gretkowski** stated that it would be helpful if the Listers could address the numbers in the letter that **Tom Pelham** wrote, and either agree with the numbers or disagree and update the Selectboard as to why the Listers disagree with the numbers. **Muriel Morse** stated that she had not been able to review the assessment as yet, but agreed that the values needed to be reviewed on **Mr. Pelham's** property. She asked if **Mike** had met with **Tom Pelham** regarding the property values. **Jeff** responded that as of Friday, **Mike** had not talked with **Mr. Pelham**. **Jeff** suggested writing a memo to the State Tax Department regarding this issue to determine the best way to

work out this issue. He stated that he had asked **Mike** to update the Board as to the status of the Grand List. **Jeff** stated that **Mike** wrote a letter stating that the Listers will start getting the Grand List updated. **Jeff** stated that he believes there is a need for the Listers to work on the Grand List updates throughout the year rather than right before the Grand List is due to the State. He stated that this could eliminate the need to ask for an extension of the date to file the Grand List with the State. **Jeff** stated that it appears that the Listers have not yet started working on the 2010 Grand List updates. **Muriel Morse** stated that she has been a Lister since last March and that **Mike** begins site visits in early April rather than as the information comes into the office. **Jeff** stated that at the last Selectboard meeting he provided the Board with a timeline on the Listers deadlines which included the beginning of April and early May for filing the abstract with the Town Clerk.

Approval of Liquor & Tobacco License(s)

Motion by **Susan Gretkowski** to adjourn the Selectboard and convene the Liquor Control Board. Second by **Jonathan Goddard**. Motion carried 4-0.

Jeff Schulz reviewed the liquor license applications from Twin City Lanes and Applebee's Restaurant. He stated that there are no issues with these applications and recommends approval.

Motion by **Nancy Driscoll** to approve the liquor licenses for **Twin City Lanes** and **Applebee's Restaurant** as presented. Second by **Jonathan Goddard**. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion by **Roberta Haskin** to adjourn the Liquor Control Board and reconvene the Selectboard. Second by **Susan Gretkowski**. Motion carried 4-0.

Town Meeting

Jeff Schulz stated that the Board has a copy of the Warning for Town Meeting and reminded the Board that the Pre-Town Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 PM on Monday, March 1st. He stated that the Town portion of that meeting will be first on the agenda and the meeting will be held at the Elementary School. **Jeff** stated that the process is to go through the articles and discuss them. He stated that the big item on the Town portion is the FY11 budget. **Jeff** stated that, at the last meeting, the Board had asked him to have a flip chart on the budget for Pre-Town Meeting. He stated that he and **Rebecca Richardson**, Administrative Assistant, had put together a general guideline for the budget discussion on the flip chart. **Brad Towne** stated that he would like the Selectboard and School Board have a joint meeting at some point. **Jonathan Goddard** stated that, although he is not running for re-election to the School Board, he would mention to the Board that the Selectboard is interested in having a joint meeting. **Brad** suggested an April or May meeting with the School Board and another before both Boards start the budget sessions. **Jeff Schulz** suggested that a topic of discussion for both Boards at a joint meeting would be the increase in education taxes over the next few years. He stated that the Planning Commission is in desperate need of new members. **Robert Wernecke** stated that the Development Review Board is in good shape, but could use another alternate. He stated that at this time there has been no progress on the subdivision regulations and he believes that this is an item that the Planning Commission should make a priority. **Bob** stated that the Town should take every opportunity to advertise the vacancies on the committees. **Muriel Morse** stated that not everyone knows what the Planning Commission's work consists of in Town. **Nancy Driscoll** asked for clarification on the description of the Planning Commission's duties. **Jeff** stated that the Planning Commission meets twice per month and their role is to do long term planning. He stated that the Commission works on updating the Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations and the Town Plan. **Jeff** stated that he has been working with the Commission on updating the Town Plan. **Roberta Haskin** asked that when the Board presents the budget at Pre-Town Meeting can changes be made to the budget. **Jeff** stated that because the budget is voted by Australian Ballot, no changes can be made to the budget at Pre-Town Meeting. **Susan Gretkowski** asked if the Pre-Town Meeting is going to encompass the discussion on ballot items that are discussed on the floor at Town Meeting. **Jeff** responded that he did not see why it could not be discussed, but that it would be discussed on the floor at Town Meeting and will probably not be discussed before then due to time constraints. **Patti Lewis** asked if the Board would address the Charter Change at Pre-Town Meeting. **Brad Towne** stated that the problem eliminating three elected positions, is that it would eliminate the voters right to participate in government. He stated that he understands the reasons for the charter change but he cannot agree with it and would not be the person to discuss the Charter Change at Pre-Town Meeting. **Roberta Haskin** asked how the Board is going to present the Charter

Change. **Brad** stated that the best way to present the charter change is to give the facts behind the change and let the voters decide without presenting any input of the Board on this topic. **Roberta** stated that she also has some concerns on this issue as well. **Brad** stated that the Board should be prepared to answer questions on the financial aspects of the Charter Change. **Susan Gretkowski** stated that **Nancy Driscoll** has done some work on presenting the Charter Change and could probably answer the questions that may come up in Pre-Town Meeting. **Nancy Driscoll** stated that she has no problem presenting the Charter Change. **Jeff Schulz** stated that the Board needed to keep the time frame in mind at Pre-Town Meeting but that there should not be a big problem if they take a little more time for discussion. He stated that as far as the financial aspect of the Charter Change, the figures are pretty accurate and consistent with other towns. **Jeff** stated that other communities of the same size as Berlin have been able to conduct business with a part-time assessor and the challenge would be finding someone who is qualified and is the right fit for Berlin. **Nancy Driscoll** stated that without having looked into hiring an assessor, the Board cannot be definite on the cost for hiring an assessor. **Brad** stated that if you looked at the towns with an appointed assessor through VLCT, you could get a good idea on how much a hired assessor should cost. He stated that the other portion of the Charter Change would be to hire an assistant to do filing and paperwork for the assessor. **Brad** stated that the Administrative Assistant could handle that part of the work, but it would take away from what that person already handles in the office. He stated that he doubts that the Town could hire an office assistant for the assessor for less than \$15,000 part time. **Brad Towne** asked about the School Board perspective on Town Meeting. **Jonathan Goddard** stated that the School Board would be presenting their budget and how they have kept costs down and eliminated some positions to keep the budget from increasing. He stated that there will be changes, not only on the School Board, but also with the principal and to work toward making the School ADA compliant. **Jonathan** stated that there are two bond articles on the ballot regarding life and safety equipment.

Motion by **Susan Gretkowski** to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 PM. Second by **Jonathan Goddard**.
Motion carried 4-0.

For the Select Board:

Rebecca Richardson, Administrative Assistant