

TOWN OF GROTON

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**Board of Assessors**

Garrett Boles
Jenifer Evans
Rena Swezey

Principal Assessor

Rena E. Swezey

**7:00 P.M.
Minutes
Oct. 8, 2014**

**Executive Session
M.G.L. c.30A , Sec 21(a)**

Present:

Garrett Boles, Jenifer Evans, Rena Swezey, and Town Council Tom McEnaney .

Mr. Boles called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Mr. Boles made a motion to go into executive session by roll call vote. Boles I, Evans I, Swezey I, all in favor.

Executive Session: # 3 To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

Mr. McEnaney gave a recap of all the negotiations made to date with Shanklin Music Foundation to settle the case as not to go forward with a trial to the ATB on Oct.16, 2014.

The original agreement posed was a yearly tax payment of \$10,000 by the town for a ten year period. This would represent the tax on a single family house in Groton in our higher end neighborhoods. The board felt that was a fair amount as the current taxes are \$18,000 per year. Shanklin came back with a counter offer of \$7,500 for 20 years. We counter offered \$8,500 with a 2% escalator from years 13 to 20.

Ms. Evans explained the position of the board talked about at our last meeting is less than half of the original taxes and Shanklin is not subject to the annual 2.5% increases. This is not fair for the rest of the town to accept the burden of the difference for 20 years.

Mr. McEnaney was unsure how this case would fair at the ATB given the recent cases overturned for exempt properties. It was a 50/50 shot as to winning or losing. If Shanklin lost he stands to pay the tax of \$18,000 per year. If he wins he could pay nothing at all in taxes. The board also asked what could be the total cost to the town to take this to court. Mr. McEnaney said he was not sure what has been billed to date, but it could run upwards of \$15,000 to \$20,000 dollars in court cost. The board is in favor of a pilot agreement to insure some amount of money coming in annually to the town for taxes from Shanklin. The feeling is we are not in agreement to more than 10 years so we do not bind further boards to hold this amount. The amount we feel is fair would be a split between Shanklin's offer and our offer being an annual payment of \$8,750 for 10 years.

Mr. McEnaney will make an offer to Ken Gurge and asked if he has the authority to negotiate an amount that would not go to 20 years but the end dollar amount would be in the range the board would like to achieve for the town. The board agreed to give Town Council the go ahead to negotiate within our peramators to avoid a costly trial.

Mr. Boles made a motion to go out of executive session and adjourn the meeting. All in favor by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

Rena Swezey, Principal Assessor