

**Town of Tyringham  
Board of Selectman  
May 2, 2014  
6:30 P.M.**



**Selectman present:** Chris Johnson, Peter Curtin, Jerry Miller

**Town residents present:** See attached sign in.

Chris Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:40 P.M. and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to determine whether the Selectman will sponsor an Article for the Town Meeting Warrant. The purpose of the Article will be to change the eligibility requirements for health insurance for Town employees working less than 20 hours a week on a regular basis.

Jerry Miller provided a historical background by explaining that the Selectman had voted in February to eliminate health insurance benefits for elected officials working less than 20 hours a week. The vote allowed elected officials, currently receiving health benefits, to remain on health insurance until such time that they either resigned or were voted out of office. The Finance Committee recently held two public meetings to discuss the proposed budget for FY14-15. The new format for the town warrant and town budget breaks each individual category into single line items rather than as one combined item. As a result of this change, it became very transparent to town residents of the exact costs of providing health insurance to elected officials. During the public budget meetings, the Finance Committee and the Selectman heard from town residents who stated that they were no longer in favor of offering health insurance benefits to elected officials or any employee working less than 20 hours a week. The feedback from town residents was very strong in regards to this request. As a result, the Selectman and Finance Committee drafted the proposed Article below for inclusion on the Town Warrant at Annual Town Meeting.

**Article 3. To see if the town will vote to provide subsidized health and dental benefits only to "Employees", as defined under Chapter 32B of Massachusetts General Law, who duties regularly require no less than 20 hours per week in service of the town during the regular work week of employment and to administer new requirements as follows:**

- 1. New requirements effective as of July 1, 2014;**
- 2. All eligible employees shall submit weekly timesheets to demonstrate satisfaction of the 20-hour requirement;**
- 3. Those who are currently receiving subsidized insurance benefits, but will no longer qualify for such benefits under the new requirements, shall continue to receive such benefits until the later of 12/31/2014 or the end of the individual's current term (current term means the**

**term not yet completed as of May 13, 2014 and does not include any term beginning after 6/30/2014).**

A discussion was had in regards to the individuals that would be affected by the proposed Article. It was determined that Chris Johnson and Margaret Desantis' benefits would terminate on 12/31/2014 and Peter Curtin and Pamela Curtin's benefits would terminate in May 2015 after the 2015 Town Election.

A discussion took place in regards to the need to provide sufficient time for the individuals affected to be able to obtain replacement coverage. Chris Johnson stated that he had already begun the process with his employer. Pamela Curtin stated that she believed the enrollment period at her husband's employer was during the month of December.

Margaret Desantis stated she believes she will still qualify for the health benefits. She believes that her current responsibilities require her to work more than 20 hours per week. She stated that it would be very difficult to complete a timesheet since her work often includes time on the telephone. The Selectman stated that they would need to meet with her to discuss her duties and determine a way to verify that she meets the eligibility requirements of 20 hours per week on a regular basis. There was discussion regarding the term "regular" basis. Margaret stated that she had spoke with Town Attorney Pollard and he told her that the 20 hours per week only needed to be an "average" throughout the year. The Selectman will need to follow up with the Attorney in regards to this issue.

A discussion took place regarding the eligibility requirements for retirement and what the Town's obligations are to its retirees. The Selectman admitted that they did not fully understand the retirement requirements and the Town's obligations to its retirees. The proposed Article however does not affect Town retirees receiving health benefits. The Selectman will need to follow up with the Berkshire County Retirement Board to learn more in regards to this topic.

**Motion** – Jerry Miller made a motion to place Article 3 on the Town Warrant for the 2014 Annual Town Meeting as it has been proposed. The motion stipulated that the Selectman requested review and feedback from Town Attorney Pollard and State Representative Pignatelli. The motion was seconded by Chris Johnson. A vote was called: Miller – Aye, Johnson – Aye, Curtin – Abstained. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45.

Selectman Meeting

5/2/14

Name

Pam Curtin  
Peggy Desautels

Tom Bann

Lewis Scott

Barron Adams

Joannette Van Ballegooyen

ED NARRD

Charles Slater

Dan Puntis