



## **Board of the Board of Selectmen**

Date: March 11, 2024  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Place: McCourt Social Hall  
Present: Chairman Howard, Vice-Chair Grigg, Clerk Hicks, and Selectman Woodbury, and Administrator Bridges  
Remote: Selectman Pepe and Selectman Woodbury (at 6:44 pm)

### **Call the Meeting to Order**

At 6:00 pm Chairman Howard called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance

### **Announcement Any members that are participating remotely in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law**

Chairman Howard announced that Selectman Pepe will be participating remotely in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law, and as such all votes will be by roll call.

### **Citizens Input**

Matt Defosse, Paul's Dr.: read information on solar relative to the Dover Amendment, which prevents local governments from making zoning changes that restrict the use of land or structures, including solar and encouraged the public to look up House Bill #'s S1319 and H2082.

Roger Foss, 39 Gold Nugget Rd: would like the Board to place a referendum on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant to adopt the Community Preservation Act. The Act provides a mechanism for funding projects, including the preservation of open space and historic sites, parks, and affordable housing. A small surcharge on some property owners would cover the cost of participating and those property owners who cannot afford the surcharge would be exempt. If the Board does not place it on the Warrant, Mr. Foss said he intends to organize a Citizen's Petition.

### **Communications**

None

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Review & Act on the Minutes of February 26, 2024**

*A motion to approve the minutes of February 26, 2024 (Hicks/Pepe) passed 3/0 by roll call: Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes,*

### **New Business:**

**Review & Possible Action on the Request of Wedgewood Weddings d/b/a Fern Hill Barn for One-day Special Alcohol License for an event to be held on March 15, 2024, from 6 pm to 8 pm**

*A motion to approve Wedgewood Weddings d/b/a Fern Hill Barn for One-day Special Alcohol License for an event to be held on March 15, 2024, from 6 pm to 8 pm (Hicks/Pepe) passed 3/0 by roll call: Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes,*

### **Review & Possible Action on the 2023 Meritorious Service Award Recipient**

Chairman Howard announced that the Meritorious Service Award policy is to recognize public servants who have demonstrated many years of selfless contribution to the welfare of the Town of Spencer and its citizens. A total of five nominations were received: two for Mary Braney and one each for Al Atchue, Carl Kwiatkowski, and Kurt Nordquist.

Dr. Hicks noted that Mary Braney continues to be a tireless volunteer for the Town and serves on multiple boards and committees. He believes she is deserving of the award. Selectman Pepe agreed.

*A motion for Mary Braney to receive the 2023 Meritorious Service Award (Hicks/Pepe) passed 3/0 by roll call: Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes,*

### **Referral to the Planning Board per MGL Chapter 40 A, for Review and Public Hearing and Recommendation of the proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaws Pertaining to Large Scale Solar Projects and Energy Storage Systems**

Laurne Vivier, Town Planner/Conservation Agent worked with the Planning Board on Zoning Bylaw amendments related to large scale solar projects and energy storage and was present to request that the Board refer the amendments to the Planning Board for public hearing and recommendation to Town Meeting in accordance with MGL Chapter 40 A. Ms. Vivier presented an overview of the proposed amendments based on goals set forth by the Planning Board for the 2024 Solar Bylaw amendment.

*A motion to refer to the Planning Board for public hearing and recommendation under MGL Chapter 40 A (Hicks/Pepe) passed 3/0 by roll call: Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes,*

The Board thanked Ms. Vivier for her outstanding work on these amendments.

### **Town Administrator's Report**

#### **Discussion on the FY2025 Initial Budget and Capital Requests**

Administrator Bridges submitted the latest draft of the FY2025 budget. After receiving the additional school numbers, increases in transportation and capital expenses have added to the budget deficit which is currently \$190,000. Discussion will continue at the joint meeting with the Finance Committee on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Bridges reported the following:

- Congratulations to Town Clerk Sandra Fritze and her staff for a job well done with the Presidential Primary.
- New Police Officer Nicholas Nuttall will begin work on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

- Representative Richard Neal's Office notified the Town that \$959,000 has been approved for the Sewer Collection System, thanks in part to Dr. Hicks and Selectman Woodbury for their work to obtain the funding. A formal letter will be sent to Congressman Neal from the Board.
- PJ Albert resumed work on Meadow Road.
- A presentation on the Municipal Electricity Aggregation Plan will be provided at the next meeting; the Board can review the plan in advance.
- The Central Mass Housing Alliance will recognize Lieutenant Hodgerney as the Homeless Hero of the Year.

### **Review FY2025 Budget Calendar**

The calendar was reviewed.

### **Review Town Administrator's Annual Performance Evaluation**

Chairman Howard reported that he and Vice-Chair Grigg conducted the Town Administrator's annual performance review and calculated the overall rating for Mr. Bridges at a 3.76 on a scale of 1 (below average) to 4 (below average). Chairman Howard said the rating is the highest he has seen in a while and thanked Mr. Bridges for his service. Mr. Bridges said it was his honor.

### **Review & Possible Action on the following Contracts / License Agreements / Change Orders / Bids:**

#### **Central Massachusetts Law Enforcement Counsel Mutual Aid Agreement**

Chief Befford indicated the agreement allows communities in Central Mass to pool resources.

Mr. Woodbury began remote participation at 6:44 pm.

*A motion to approve Central Massachusetts Law Enforcement Counsel Mutual Aid Agreement (Hicks/Pepe) passed 4/0 by roll call: Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes*

#### **License Agreement with the First Congregational Church to install a Fence on Town Property**

*A motion to approve (Hicks/Pepe) passed 4/0 by roll call: Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, (Woodbury-yes)*

#### **Commonwealth of Massachusetts Standard Contract – Earmark for Parks & Rec**

*A motion to approve the contract for grant with Powdermill Park (Hicks/Pepe) passed 4/0 by roll call: Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes*

#### **Contract Amendment with Howard Stein Hudson for Main and Ash Street Improvements Complete Streets Project.**

U & F Superintendent Peter Boria requests approval for an amendment to the Howard Stein Hudson contract in the amount of \$18,500, which will be paid with Chapter 90 funds.

*A motion to approve the contract amendment with Howard Stein Hudson (Hicks/Pepe) passed 4/0 by roll call: Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes*

**Citizen's Input**

Matt Defosse, Pauls Dr.: thanked Ms. Vivier and the Planning Board for their work on the solar amendments and suggests owners be responsible for batteries and panels from beginning to end. Ms. Vivier confirmed that the Bylaw requires them to be responsible.

**Board Member and Staff Comments**

Selectman Woodbury commended Ms. Vivier for her work on the Solar Bylaw amendments; he wants to ensure battery parks are in a safe area in the event of fire; Ms. Vivier confirmed that there is a 300-foot setback requirement.

Dr. Hicks voiced concern with solar battery parks near homes with regard to public safety.

Selectman Pepe said he will work with the Administrator on ARPA funds for the community.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie,  
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: meritorious award nomination forms, alcohol license application, FY2025 budget draft, contracts and agreements as listed.