



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: October 21, 2013
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chair Woodbury, Vice Chair Berthiaume, Clerk Stevens, Members Fritze and Pepe and Administrator Gaudette.

At 6:06 p.m. Chairman Woodbury called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Discussion: Spencer Rescue Squad Update- Contract Discussion

Gary Suter, Executive Director of the Spencer Rescue Squad (SRS) was present to discuss the timeline of events leading up to the termination of services between SRS and the Town of Paxton. After operating without a contract in place, SRS provided Paxton with a deadline to sign a new contract. Paxton notified SRS of various concerns, including personality issues, which SRS was not given the opportunity to resolve. Paxton decided not to renew the contract and as of October 4th all services were officially terminated.

Chairman Woodbury expressed concern with the impact this may have on Spencer since the contract was based on SRS having an agreement with Paxton and Spencer. Mr. Suter asked the Board to allow six to eight months for them to seek out other communities and work on a new contract. Mr. Woodbury noted that the Board has a responsibility to the Town to investigate alternative options in the event regional efforts do not materialize.

As far as service to Spencer, during the next 6-8 months when the primary vehicle is on another call, mutual aid will be the main back-up. Mr. Fritze pointed out that Charlton is not available for mutual aid and the Town will need to rely on Leicester at night with an estimated 18-20 minute response time and E. Brookfield during the day. It was noted that the police are typically the first to respond and are trained to stabilize patients until the ambulance arrives.

Mr. Suter assured the Board that SRS will not seek additional funds from the Town.

A motion to authorize Administrator Gaudette to work with Gary Suter on an addendum to the SRS contract (Berthiaume/Pepe) passed 4/1.

Discussion: SEBRSD Budget Update

Administrator Gaudette reviewed a list of proposed budget cuts amounting to \$633,888, which is still not nearly enough to cover the \$1.1 million shortfall if the SEBRSD budget passes. Cuts include closing Town Hall two days per week, thereby reducing the workforce of hourly employees by two days per week, closing the Senior Center, Fire Station and Transfer Station.

Mr. Berthiaume pointed out that the Town has worked hard to streamline costs since 2008, all the while still operating smoothly and now to be in a position faced with these cuts is just

wrong. He mentioned that districts in surrounding towns are at a 50/50 split for retirees' health insurance, while SEBRSD is at 90/10 and asked the School Committee to vote to change.

Mr. Woodbury said that the proposed cuts would be devastating to the Town and he hopes work will be done by the School Committee to avoid this situation at all costs.

Discussion: SEBRSD District-wide Meeting Preparation

Mr. Gaudette reviewed the plan for District-wide meeting being held on Saturday, October 26th, which is a School District meeting where voters from both towns will participate in the vote.

The particulars of the meeting and complexity of the logistics were discussed. Mr. Woodbury mentioned his concern for accommodations for those with disabilities, especially the hearing impaired. Administrator Gaudette asked that those needing special accommodations to contact him. He will also look into a sign language interpreter.

Moderator Peter Adams informed the Board that after much thought and research he has decided to allow amendments to motions. He acknowledged this will further complicate the situation; however the goal is for an agreement to be reached. The School Committee has to option to accept or reject.

School Committee member Kevin Hayes asked if precincts will be in place. Mr. Gaudette said voters will be separated by Town, not precinct. Mr. Hayes said he is hoping the School Committee will come to an agreement at their meeting tomorrow and avoid the need for the District meeting. He apologized to the Board for not speaking up when asked if the Committee had a problem sending the existing budget to the Towns knowing the affect it will have on services. School Committee member Kurt Nordquist also apologized to the Board for not speaking up at the time and is not in favor of the current budget.

Other Business:

Chairman Woodbury read a letter of appreciation to the MASS DOT for their outstanding work with underwater repairs for the Thompson Pond Bridge.

Mr. Pepe would like an update on the Fire Station Annex building as an agenda item for the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm. All were in favor.

Referenced Materials:

SRS Contract & Timeline
SEBRSD Budget Material

Respectfully submitted

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant