



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: Monday, April 28, 2014
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chair Woodbury, Vice Chair Berthiaume, Clerk Stevens, Member Fritze and Administrator Gaudette. Selectmen Pepe arrived at 6:28 pm.

At 6:00 p.m. Chairman Woodbury called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of April 7, 2014 as amended & Business Meeting of April 14, 2014 (Berthiaume/Fritze) passed 4/0.

Citizen Input

John Bailey, 24 Mechanic St. said he's been trying to get the Town to enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with regard to the barbeque grills on the Main St sidewalk in front of Whitco. Chairman Woodbury is aware of the concerns and previously referred the issue to the State. He will contact Mr. Bailey to discuss offline.

Richard Wicz, Woodside Rd. asked why the \$15.00 increase in the Transfer Station sticker fee was not gradually worked in, instead of in one lump sum. He also asked if anything could be done about the large pole impeding the crosswalk by Mechanic and Main Streets. Mr. Gaudette noted the area is scheduled for improvements as part of the downtown revitalization project.

Communications

Annual Town Meeting is on Thursday, May 1, 2014 and Annual Town Election is on Tuesday, May 13, 2014.

Chairman Woodbury noted that Parks & Rec member Mark Lammi thanked the Highway Department for working to maintain the parks.

Mr. Pepe arrived at 6:28 pm.

New Business

Action Item: Renewal of MIAA Health Insurance Plan (BCBS) for Active Employees

Administrator Gaudette reported a 3.75% increase in health insurance rates was avoided by employees agreeing to increase their co-pay amounts from \$15 to \$20. Mr. Berthiaume thanked the employees and the union groups for their ongoing efforts to keep costs down.

A motion to approve the MIAA rates for FY15 (Berthiaume/Fritze) passed 5/0.

Old Business

Action Item: Spencer Rescue Squad (SRS) Contract Amendment - Gary Suter

Mr. Suter reported he has not heard back from N. Brookfield on his proposal for regional ambulance service. In the meantime, a second ambulance has been staffed and he expects it will bring in revenue for SRS. The goal is to staff it from 8 am to 6 pm beginning in June. Mr. Fritze asked how many days are currently being staffed. He also expressed concern over medics working a 24 hour shift. Mr. Suter said hours fluctuate at this time, though the Advanced Life Support (ALS) crew can remain in Town when not needed on a call. The State is about to change protocol to limit when lights and sirens can be used which will lengthen the time it takes to get to the hospital.

SRS was awarded a grant for two chest compression devices, each valued at \$14,000. Mr. Suter mentioned that \$53,000 was raised from the 2013 Ambulance Subscription Drive. The 2014 drive will begin soon. Currently, unpaid bills are estimated at 12%. Mr. Berthiaume mentioned that the legislature tried to change the practice where insurance companies send payments directly to patients, and instead have payments go directly to the ambulance service; it was vetoed by the Governor twice. He attended a program sponsored by CMRPC where he learned some of the high cost of ambulance service is being driven by improperly dispatched calls. Many are dispatched as Advanced Life Support (ALS) when they are actually Basic Life Support (BLS). Increased dispatcher training will help to alleviate the issue.

A motion to accept Part 3, Section C as an addendum to the Spencer Rescue Squad (SRS) Contract as written (Berthiaume/Fritze) passed 5/0.

Town Administrator Performance Review

Selectmen Berthiaume reported that the Administrator's performance evaluation showed a 1.5 point increase over last year. The public review will take place at the May 12th meeting.

Town Administrator Report

Final preparation for May 1, 2014 (vote plan for Article 7 reductions if necessary)

Administrator Gaudette reiterated that a "Plan B" needs to be in place to determine areas to reduce if Article 6 (Meals Tax) is not passed.

Chief Darrin provided an overview of streetlights to allow the Board to make a decision in this area. There are currently 955 streetlights, of which 116 are privately paid and 839 are municipal, with a repair budget of \$86,000. Nighttime crashes involving fatalities are statistically higher and streetlights help to improve safety. It is estimated between 20-25% of the streetlights are not safety driven and could be turned off, however it must be done on a case by case basis by physically viewing each one. Mr. Pepe noted there is not enough time to tackle for this budget. Mr. Berthiaume is in favor of the additional \$74,000 in Town

Hall cuts and \$26,000 in Streetlights, but does not want to touch the Fire Department or Stormwater items.

A motion to include Town Hall cuts and Street Lights as "Plan B" if the \$100,000 Meals Tax fails (Berthiaume/Pepe) passed 5/0.

Board Liaison Reports

Mr. Pepe noted the Sugden Block Committee may have an RFP in place by July. Collective Bargaining with the Teachers Union will take place in May.

Mr. Fritze is waiting to hear back from National Grid on the gas line for Town Hall.

Mr. Woodbury went to the Transfer Station with Mr. Fritze, Mr. Butler, and Mr. Tyler, to view single stream recycling.

Mr. Stevens attended a Regional Economic Development Committee meeting.

Citizen Input

Kurt Nordquist, Gale Dr., thanked the Town on behalf of the School Committee for sweeping school parking lots. He also thanked the Congregational Church, Highway Department, and the many volunteers for cleaning the Town on Spencer Pride Day.

Bill Shemeth, 6 Dale Dr., thanked the organizers of Spencer Pride Day. He asked the Board to be mindful that houses may be broken into, or people attacked in areas where streetlights are turned off. He wants to ensure that residents on private roads are not treated differently and urged voters to support the Meals Tax and the Town Services Override.

Board Member and Staff Comments

Mr. Pepe has a scheduling conflict and will arrive late for the Town Meeting. He and the Board thanked the Fire Department for quickly containing the fire at Whitco.

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials:

MIIA Health Insurance Renewal Notice
SRS Contract Amendment
Override Matrix