



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: Monday, April 7, 2014
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 6:05 p.m. Chairman Woodbury called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Town Administrator Report

Discussion: Review proposed FY2015 Budget, Warrant, and Capital Plan

Administrator Gaudette reviewed FY15 Budget documents, including the Budget Pro Forma, draft of Proposition 2 ½ Override Questions, memo on the Tax Impact of Overrides, and the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. As of the last meeting, the budget deficit amounted to \$584,000; since then the FinCom petitioned the Board to place article on warrant for a Local Meals Option Excise Tax of .75%, which will add an estimated \$100,000 of additional revenue, thereby reducing the deficit to \$484,000. This is on the draft Warrant and does not have to go on the Ballot. If approved, it will take effect on July 1, 2014.

Current options include keeping the number at \$584,000, or moving forward with Mr. Gaudette's recommendation and reducing the override amount to \$484,000 which adds back some services, including allowing Town Hall to be open three days per week. This Override amount results in an increase of \$110 per year on the average tax bill.

Mr. Stevens would like to see a 1% or \$100,000 reduction in the budget. Mr. Berthiaume explained that certain costs are fixed and cannot be cut; this proposal actually amounts to a 2.5% reduction. He believes reducing the budget for the sake of reaching a certain number is the wrong thing to do. Spencer has one of the lowest tax rates in the area. The deficit did not occur as a result of the Town; it is a result of the School District budget.

Mr. Stevens noted one example for reduction is the \$90,000 for Stormwater Management. Mr. Gaudette said this is mandated by the State; towns of similar size have entire departments dedicated solely to Stormwater. After additional discussion on areas to reduce, Selectmen Stevens said he will rely on Administrator Gaudette to find areas to cut. Mr. Gaudette said there is no way to go below current staffing levels without eliminating services. He has not heard any mention of a reduction in services, only staff. Chairman Woodbury mentioned reductions made in the past have never been restored. He noted the Board continues to perform due diligence.

The draft Warrant was reviewed. Administrator Gaudette will research to determine if Article 20, a debt exclusion request by the SEBRSD, may be made contingent upon the passage of the Override. Holds were placed on Article 2 (consent agenda for a variety of actions), Article 6 (meals tax), & Article 20 (SEBRSD Debt Exclusion).

A motion to approve the Warrant Articles as written, except for Articles 2, 6, & 20 (Pepe/ Stevens) passed 5/0.

A motion to approve Warrant Article 2 as written (Pepe/ Berthiaume) passed 5/0.

A motion to approve Warrant Article 20, contingent upon an override (Pepe/ Stevens) passed 3/2.

A map from the DOR was reviewed highlighting communities currently implementing the local Meals Tax Option. Mr. Stevens said he is opposed to the Meals Tax and does not want additional taxes on behalf of restaurants, or to set this type of precedence.

Discussion: Review proposed Ballot Questions

The three Ballot questions were reviewed. Mr. Pepe mentioned there is not enough detail in the SEBRSD request to upgrade technology. It will be up to the District to provide additional detail for voters to make an informed decision.

Action Item: Vote to Set & Close the May 1, 2014 ATM Warrant

A motion to set and close the May 1, 2014 ATM Warrant (Berthiaume/ Fritze) passed 5/0.

Action Item: Notice to Town Clerk re: Ballot Questions

A motion to ask the Town Clerk to put all questions in their present format on ballot (Berthiaume/ Fritze) passed 5/0.

Meritorious Service Award Nominations

The Board will vote using a secret ballot for the Meritorious Service Award at the next meeting. An award will be presented at the Annual Town Meeting for 2013 and another for 2014.

Other

A motion to induct a person (secret) to Leadership Hall (Fritze / Berthiaume) passed 5/0. This award will also be presented at the Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Pepe said he and Mr. Berthiaume attended an Eagle Scout presentation for Chris Hawes. They were very impressed with Chris, noting he ranked first among vocational students in Massachusetts.

Mr. Berthiaume noted the addition at Bay Path is scheduled to open in August.

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials:

FY15 Budget Pro Forma

May 1, 2014 ATM Draft Warrant

May 13, 2014 ATE Draft Ballot Questions

Tax Implications Memo

Capital Plan

DOR Local Option Meals Tax Documents`