



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: September 25, 2017 – Business Meeting
Time: 6:03 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chairman Pepe, Vice Chair Woodbury Clerk Monette, Members Stevens and Hicks, and Interim Administrator Ross were present.

At 6:01 p.m. Chairman Pepe 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

None

Communications:

None

Citizen Input

None

New Business:

Public Hearing 6:05 pm – All Alcohol Beverages License Transfer from Charlene Stavros d/b/a Ethier's Café to Brydi Ricard d/b/a/ Ethier's Café

Chairman Pepe opened the hearing opened at 6:05 pm.

Mr. Ross reported that all documents are in order.

There were no comments from the public.

The hearing was closed at 6:06 pm.

A motion to approve the All Alcohol Beverages License Transfer from Charlene Stavros d/b/a Ethier's Café to Brydi Ricard d/b/a/ Ethier's Café (Hicks/Woodbury) passed 5/0.

Action Item: Application for a One-day Special Alcohol License of Carol Perron for Gaudette-Kirk American Legion on October 15, 2017

Carol Perron was present to request a One-day Special Alcohol License for a fundraising event being held on October 15th for a one day alcohol license for the American Legion.

Mr. Ross reported that all documents are in order.

A motion to approve the Application for a One-day Special Alcohol License of Gaudette-Kirk American Legion on October 15, 2017 (Hicks/Woodbury) passed 5/0.

Discuss Salary Range for Town Administrator Position

Dr. Hicks reported that the TASC is seeking guidance from the Board for the salary range.

Chairman Pepe noted that salary comparisons were reviewed and a range between \$110,000 to \$125,000 was discussed. After some discussion, the Board agreed that listing a range between \$110,000 to \$130,000 will allow for negotiating room.

A motion to approve a range between \$110,000 to \$130,000 for the TA salary (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 5/0.

Old Business:

Discussion: Sugden Block Demolition Process

Members of the Building and Property Reuse Committee (BPRC) were present including Steve Tyler, Chief Parsons, Corey Lacaire and Jonathan Viner. Mr. Tyler reported that a comprehensive evaluation of the building was completed by Context Studios in December, 2016. The estimate came in at \$5.9 million and is accurate within 10%. All major systems are in disrepair, including windows, brick, waterproofing, basement structural issues, outdated boilers, electrical, elevator, and general fire safety and egress issues. Ongoing issues with the elevator and plumbing have resulted in excessive expense to the Town.

Mr. Stevens asked if one floor at a time could be worked on with creative repairs. Mr. Tyler said that a floor by floor approach is not feasible. The lead architect is in favor of saving buildings of this nature; however he believes this is not an economically salvageable building.

Mr. Monette pointed out that historic preservation value will pay 40% of repairs and if housing was developed on second floor, the Town would receive housing credits. This would need to be done a private party, not by the Town.

Mr. Woodbury said the building is in the historic district, however a new owner would need to apply to have it accepted as a historic building.

Dr. Hicks said he is concerned that someone may buy the building and not repair it. Mr. Ross said conditions would have to be written in the sale.

Mr. Woodbury said he sees no solution for the Town to repair the building. Between \$40,000 to \$50,000 is being spent on utilities and repairs each year.

Chief Parsons said fire fighting the building is a major concern.

Mr. Monette said the cost to raze the building is estimated at \$256,000.

Mr. Tyler noted that any renovations would require the entire building to come up to current code. The BPRC agreed that anything other than having the building razed is not in the best interest of the entire Town.

Mr. Pepe agreed that the Town cannot hold onto the building. He would like the Board to do some creative thinking before finalizing a decision to raze the building.

Corey Lacaire noted it was a difficult recommendation for the BPRC to make.

Mr. Monette said funds need to be allocated for demolition, but hopefully it won't be necessary.

Mr. Tyler noted that the BPRC recommended that leases not be renewed and instead offer a month-to-month rental while closing off vacant spaces. In the event the elevator or any other major system goes down, the building will be forced to close.

A motion to notify tenants that the Town will not renew leases and will allow a month-to-month rental for all leases as they come up for renewal and to give as much notice as possible if the time comes to close the building (Hicks/Monette) passed 5/0.

Spencer Music tenant and resident Wayne Bailey said it would be tragic to tear down the building which is an important piece of history. He suggests a Friends Group be established to make repairs or a private benefactor that loves old buildings. He asked the Board to explore all avenues.

Mr. Pepe said ideas will be explored within the next few weeks.

Chalmers Massage tenant Shirley Chalmers said if the building were fully rented, there would not be a financial loss.

Mr. Woodbury said rent would have to be increased to full market value for the building to be self-sustaining and that is taking the cost of repairs into consideration and that leasing to a Friend's Group is not an option that is best for the Town.

Mr. Nordquist of Gale Dr. said that taxpayers should not subsidize businesses. He suggested using funds from the sale of Lake St. School and Cherry St. Fire Station to pay for razing the building.

Chief Parsons does not believe a Friends Group should be considered. The building should be sold or demolished.

Mr. Pepe would like the Town Planner to meet with tenants to explore options during this process.

Mr. Ross said he we will provide notice to lessees with expiring agreements based on the motion of the Board.

Mr. Pepe thanked the BPRC for their efforts.

A motion to accept the report of the BPRC (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 5/0.

Discussion: Browning Pond Boat Ramp Survey Results – Steve Tyler

Mr. Tyler reported that he discussed establishing and setting the property layout with Mr. Fancy and asked him to outline the next steps to legally establish the right of way.

Mr. Ross will meet with the Scouts to see if some of the expense to move forward can be spared. They may agree to allow access.

Mr. Monette agreed that given the new information with the gate being on Town property, the Scouts may decide to remove the gate, however in order to protect the Town, surveying needs to be done.

Steve Tyler noted that he created a Webpage with information on Browning Pond.

Discussion: Sidewalk Improvements – Steve Tyler

Steven Tyler said he was sorry to hear about someone falling on one of the sidewalks. He pointed out that due to the nature of the sidewalks, there will always be some in disrepair, however they are making strides and it will take some time for the improvements to be complete.

Dr. Hicks commended Mr. Tyler for his negotiation skills, noting he is a great asset to Spencer.

Town Administrator's Report

Review Fall Special Town Meeting Calendar

The calendar was reviewed.

Mr. Ross provided a draft copy of financial policies developed for the Town by the DOR. The Board will review and will discuss at a future meeting.

The TA job description was drafted by Mr. Ross and will provided to TASC committee. He advised the Board to require candidates hold a Master's Degree in Public Administration. Mr. Pepe asked Board Members to provide any comments they have prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Ross met with Chief Parsons to review the process for hiring 4 Firefighters. Job descriptions will be brought before the Board at a future date.

A possible Betterment for Oakland Drive will need to be discussed at a future meeting. Residents of a nearby road are willing to participate and it appears the only way to handle is to bill them and then lower the betterment each year. If the Board decides to move forward, this will need to be part of the Annual Town meeting.

Board Liaison Reports

Mr. Stevens noted that Parks & Rec discussed their vision for the parks and new programming. They will meet with the Board in October to discuss further.

Citizen Input

Highway Foreman and resident Mr. Eben Butler said the Highway is called to the Sugden Block on a weekly basis. He urged the Board to make a decision on the building which is in very bad shape and is costing the Town money.

Board Member and Staff Comments

Mr. Stevens noted upcoming Parks & Recs concerts on Saturdays in October.

Dr. Hicks said the Fire Department is holding an Open House on October 15th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials

Browning Pond Ramp Survey Results
BPRC Recommendations for Sugden Building