



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: April 9, 2020 - Special Meeting
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Audioconference Broadcasted Live from McCourt Social Hall
Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Administrator Gregory
Dialing in: Chairman Pepe, Vice-chair Monette, Clerk Berthiaume, Members Hicks and Woodbury, Health Agent Lisa Daoust, Chief Parsons, Chief Darrin, Town Clerk Laura Torti, and Treasurer Collector Rebecca Forand

Chairman Pepe called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of March 19 and March 26, 2020 (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Monette-yes, Pepe-yes,

COVID-19 Update

Health Agent Lisa Daoust reported that a reverse 911 call was sent with the total number of COVID-19 cases in Spencer at six and all are in isolation. She received a \$6,000 grant from CMPRC for COVID-19 expenses.

Chief Parsons reported that first responders can be tested for COVID-19 at Gillette Stadium. He is in contact with MEMA daily. Since funeral homes cannot obtain PPE, they are contacting the Fire Station for assistance.

Chief Darrin participated in a 911 State Department conference where they discussed extending the timeline required for dispatcher certifications.

Town Administrator Update

Mr. Gregory reported:

- The reduced staffing arrangement which went into effect on April 1st is working well. There is at least one employee in each office, and all are maintaining a safe distance.
- Weekly COVID-19 Preparedness audioconferences continue every Tuesday.
- CDBG program funds for entitlement communities will be available through the DHCD with a total of \$20 million in federal care funds having been set aside for smaller communities. Spencer can apply for these funds to be used for a variety of services and PVPC will update the Town as more information comes available.

Review & Act on Coronavirus / COVID-19 Response

Review and Act on Request to Extend the Due Date of Fourth Quarter Real and Personal Property Tax Bills to June 1, 2020 per Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, Section 10(a) (i-iii)

Mr. Gregory reported that the DLS bulletin which provides guidance to municipalities relative to substantial legislation passed to address challenges over COVID-19. He recommends the Board vote to change the due date of fourth quarter Real and Personal Property Tax bills from May 1, 2020 to June 1, 2020 per this legislation. The Board agreed it would be helpful to give residents additional time to pay the bills.

A motion to approve the Request to Extend the Due Date of Fourth Quarter Real and Personal Property Tax Bills to June 1, 2020 per Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, Section 10(a)(i-iii) (Berthiaume/Woodbury) passed 50 with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Monette-yes, Pepe-yes.

Review and Act on Request to Waive Interest and Other Penalty for Late Payment of Any Excise Tax, Betterment Assessment or Apportionment Thereof, Water Rate or Annual Sewer Use or Other Charge Added to a Tax for Any Payments with a Due Date on or After March 10, 2020 Where Payment is Made After its Respective Due Date but Before June 30, 2020, per Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, Section 11

Mr. Gregory noted that pursuant to the new legislation, interest and other penalties for late payments may be waived as outlined in Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, Section 11. The Water Commissioners voted to waive late payments on water bills and Sewer Commissioners are expected to do the same.

Dr. Hicks said it's prudent to do this, particularly with the increase in water and sewer bills.

A motion to Waive Interest and Other Penalty for Late Payment of Any Excise, Tax, Betterment Assessment or Apportionment Thereof, Water Rate or Annual Sewer Use or Other Charge Added to a Tax for Any Payments with a Due Date on or After March 10, 2020 Where Payment is Made After its Respective Due Date but Before June 30, 2020, per Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, Section 11(Hicks/Monette) passed 50 with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes.

Review & Act on Request from Charter Communications to Commence Informal Renewal Proceedings for the Franchise Agreement set to expire on January 31, 2023, in Accordance with Section 626(h) of the Cable Act

The Board reviewed Charter correspondence dated March 17th requesting the Town initiate the renewal process for the franchise agreement in accordance with Section 626(h) of the Cable Act which provides for renewal of franchises without going through the extensive formal procedure specified in Sections 626(a) through (g). Mr. Gregory noted that a Cable

Advisory Committee was formed in 2011 and the Town will follow the same process for this renewal.

A motion to approve the Request from Charter Communications to Commence Informal Renewal Proceedings for the Franchise Agreement set to expire on January 31, 2023, in Accordance with Section 626(h) of the Cable Act (Hicks/Berthiaume) passed 50 with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes.

Review & Act on the Request of National Grid/Mass Electric for the Approval of License Agreement to Install an Anchor and Guy on Paxton Road

Mr. Gregory indicated that this request originated from the Utilities and Facilities Office and is for work on Paxton Road to be completed prior to roadway improvements. A license agreement is first step and allows work to begin and the next step will be when voters are asked to approve an Easement at the Annual Town Meeting. Dr. Hicks mentioned that if any abutters have concerns, to contact the Town Administrator's Office.

A motion to approve the Request of National Grid/Mass Electric for the Approval of License Agreement to Install an Anchor and Guy on Paxton Road (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 50 with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes.

Request for Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A §21(a), 113: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for the Police Officers, Police Dispatchers, Utilities & Facilities and Town Hall Clerks Bargaining Units.

At 6:31 pm a motion to meet in Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, §21(a),(3), to conduct strategy in preparation for contract negotiations with respect to collective bargaining for the Police Officers, Police Dispatchers, Utilities & Facilities and Town Hall Clerks bargaining units (Hicks/Woodbury) passed with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Monette-yes, Pepe-yes.

Chairman Pepe announced that the Board will not reconvene in Open Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, Section 11, Charter Communications Renewal Notice, Paxton Road License Agreement