



Board of the Board of Selectmen

Date: February 26, 2024
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall
Present: Chairman Howard, Vice-Chair Grigg, Clerk Hicks, Selectman Pepe and Woodbury, and Administrator Bridges
Remote: None

Call the Meeting to Order

At 6:00 pm Chairman Howard 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

Announcement: the Board of Selectmen is accepting nominations for the 2023 Meritorious Service Award – Nomination Forms are available on the Town Website or in the Administrator's Office and are due by March 5, 2024

Chairman Howard announced that the Board of Selectmen will accept nominations for the 2023 Meritorious Service Award through March 5, 2024.

Citizens Input

None

Meeting Minutes

Review & Act on the Minutes of February 12, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes of February 12, 2024 (Hicks/Woodbury) passed 5/0.

Public Hearings

Review & Possible Action on the Application of V. Patel to Transfer a Wine & Malt Beverages Package Store License for 94 Spencer Express LLC located at 94 Main Street (previously Express Mart (Citgo))

A motion to open the public hearing at 6:03 pm (Grigg/Pepe) passed 5/0

V. Andy Patel was present to request approval for the transfer of a wine & malt beverages package store license at 94 Main Street.

There were no comments from the public. All license paperwork is in order.

A motion to close the public hearing at 6:05 pm (Grigg/Hicks) passed 5/0

A motion to approve Application of V. Patel to Transfer a Wine & Malt Beverages Package Store License for 94 Spencer Express LLC located at 94 Main Street (previously Express Mart (Citgo) (Woodbury/Pepe) passed 5/0.

FY2024 Spencer Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Application - John O'Leary from PVPC

A motion to open the public hearing at 6:05 pm (Grigg/Hicks) passed 5/0

John O'Leary from PVPC was present to discuss proposed activity for the FY2024 CDBG application for the Pearl Street Improvement Project which includes design engineering services, infrastructure Improvement, construction and will likely include water and sewer utility improvements.

PVPC will provide grant administration services including program and financial management. The grant application is for \$950,000, of which \$850,000 will go to the project and the remaining \$100,000 will cover the administrative services.

U & F Super Pete Boria noted that additional improvements are included in this project than were in previous CODB grant projects.

Dr. Hicks asked if the project includes paving. Mr. O'Leary said the second phase will provide for surface paving and will be a separate grant.

There were no comments from the public.

A motion to close the public hearing at 6:08 pm (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 5/0

A motion to authorize PVPC to submit the proposed FY24 Community Development Fund Grant Application to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities in an amount not to exceed \$950,000, to include the engineering design study project and Phase I construction of the Pearl Street Improvement Project and authorization for the Chair of the Board of Selectmen to sign all required forms, documents and authorizations pertaining to the proposed FY24 Spencer Community Development Fund grant application (Grigg/Hicks) passed 5/0.

Pole Hearing – Review & Possible Action on Request of National Grid to Install (1) JO Pole on Paxton Road, Plan #30794244

A motion to open the public hearing at 6:10 pm (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 5/0

Robert Lane representing National Grid requested permission for the installation of a JO pole on Paxton Road. A memo was sent to the Tree Warden, Highway Foreman, and U & F Superintendent and there were no objections to the pole location.

There were no comments from the public.

A motion to close the public hearing at 6:11 pm (Grigg/Hicks) passed 5/0

A motion to approve the on Request of National Grid to Install (1) JO Pole on Paxton Road, Plan #30794244 (Hicks/Grigg) passed 5/0.

New Business:

Review & Possible Action on Request of Mark Gallant of Dogfather Vending for an Entertainment License for Food Truck Festival, Craft Show & Wrestling Show to be held on May 4, 2024 and June 15, 2024

A motion to approve the Request of Mark Gallant of Dogfather Vending for an Entertainment License for Food Truck Festival, Craft Show & Wrestling Show to be held on May 4, 2024 and June 15, 2024 (Hicks/Pepe) passed 5/0.

Review & Possible Action on Request of Mark Gallant of Dogfather Vending for a 1-day Wine & Malt Beverages License for a Food Truck Festival at the Spencer Fairgrounds on May 4, 2024 and June 15, 2024

A motion to approve the Request of Mark Gallant of Dogfather Vending for a 1-day Wine & Malt Beverages License for a Food Truck Festival at the Spencer Fairgrounds on May 4, 2024 and June 15, 2024 (Hicks/Grigg) passed 5/0.

Review & Possible Action on the ARPA Business Grant Agreements

Administrator Bridges reported that twenty-five grant applications were reviewed and the businesses who showed an economic loss are qualified to receive a grant. If the Board approves, he will sign the agreements and obtain W-9 forms from the businesses.

A motion to approve the following ARPA Business Grant Agreements 2024 (Hicks/Pepe) passed 5/0.

- B.S.D., Inc. Bruce Derosier \$20,000.00
- Cedarwood Kennel Pet Grooming Helen Barnes \$3,000.00
- D.J. Entertainment and Lighting Greg Bedard \$4,993.15
- E.C. House Cleaning Eliana Coca \$3,000.00
- Four Paws Academy Rebecca Pond \$7,846.40
- Granville's Pub Vance Granville \$9,457.70
- KMK Catering Rick Nelson \$8,055.00
- Royal Crest Farms Anthony Moschini \$20,000.00
- Spencer Motor Sales David Boudreau \$17,631.35
- Steve's Bargain Outlet Steve Tellier \$3,000.00
- TCB Realty Bruce Derosier \$8,964.55
- Top Notch Fence Matt and John LaCroix \$10,147.00

Four ARPA applications are still pending.

Presentation from National Grid's Outreach Team on the Central / Western Mass Energy Improvement Project for Replacement of Existing Structures and Transmission Lines with Double-Circuit Steel Monopole and Installation of Optical Ground Wire

Joseph Carroll, stakeholder for National Grid's transmission system improvement project provided an overview on the Central to Western Mass Energy Improvement Project. Mr. Carroll stated that the transmission lines were originally built in the early 1900's and the goal of the project is a complete rebuild, including the installation of new structures, ten of which are in Spencer. The structures will be taller in order to accommodate new wiring and higher voltage operations into the future. The permitting process will include local, state and federal approvals and construction is expected to begin in 2027 and continue through 2032. More information will be provided as the process moves forward.

Request for Letter of Attestation – Regional Dispatch Center Study Grant

Chief Befford and Chief Parsons have been discussing the potential of developing a Regional Dispatch Center with the towns of Charlton, Southbridge, and Sturbridge, with all towns as joint owners of the Center. Grant funds are available for a study and each town must provide a letter of attestation to participate.

A motion to approve the Letter of Attestation for participation in the study of a Regional Dispatch Center (Hicks/Pepe) passed 5/0.

Old Business:

Review & Possible Action on Amendments to the Transfer Station Fee Schedule

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that the Transfer Station budget has an estimated deficient of \$69,944 and to close the gap, Utilities and Facilities Superintendent Pete Boria is proposing changes and increases to some of the fees. Mr. Boria made the following recommendations:

- Make the Transfer Station residential use only
- Eliminate commercial use and recycling use which will save the Town \$40,000 per year
- Increase the annual sticker fee to \$65.00 and sticker fee after January to \$35.00
- Increase Trash bag fees to \$1.75 for small bags and \$3.50 for large bags
- Minor increase in fees for tires and demolition material.

A motion to approve the fee schedule as presented (Grigg/ Hicks) discussion ensued and vote was not taken.

Selectman Woodbury said he is in favor of increasing the large bag fee to \$3, not \$3.50. There was some discussion on increasing the black bag fees and Dr. Hicks suggested increasing the fee to \$10.00 per bag. Selectman Pepe was not in favor of eliminating commercial use for businesses.

The motion was amended to approve the fee for the large green bag fee to \$3 and the black bag fee to \$10, and the remaining fee schedule as presented (Grigg/Hicks) passed 4/1. Pepe-no.

The changes will take effect on July 1st and the increases will begin with the FY2025 sticker sale.

Acceptance of Easements Donation – Cistercian Abbey of Spencer, Inc. (North Spencer Road Bridge)

As part of the North Spencer Road bridge replacement project, the Town was responsible for securing easements on property owned the by the Cistercian Abbey of Spencer. U & F Super Peter Boria said the Abbey agreed to donate three easements located on Hastings Road at the westbound side of North Spencer Road.

A motion to accept the donation of easements from Saint Joseph's Abbey (Grigg/Woodbury) passed 5/0.

Town Administrator's Report

FY2025 Initial Budget Presentation & Review of Capital Requests

The Administrator submitted the first draft of the FY2025 budget. There is a deficit of approximately \$100,000 and for balancing purposes, he removed the Town Administrator line item from the budget. Dr. Hicks said the Town Administrator line item needs to be restored; the Town will not run well without an Administrator.

Mr. Bridges indicated a budget tool known as shrinkage may be used to balance the budget. The tool is used by anticipating a percentage of the revenue that gets turned back to the general fund at the end of the fiscal year. Although shrinkage will reduce the general fund, it will not impact free cash or stabilization and is not a long-term solution. Additional discussion will progress as the budget process moves forward.

Review FY2025 Budget Calendar

The calendar was reviewed.

Citizen's Input

Matt Defosse, Pauls Dr.: asked if solar power is involved in the National Grid improvement project and encouraged citizens to attend Town meetings and write letters to the State in support of Senate Bills S1319 and H2082 with regard to municipal zoning power.

Frank White, 35 R Jones Rd: the Congregational Church wants to fence the area around the foundation where the stairs are located and asked if the Town can assist. Mr. Bridges: a license could be issued by the Town to the Church.

Carl Kwiatkowski, Meadow Rd: asked about installing a traffic light at the intersection of Pleasant Street and Meadow Road. Mr. Boria will review with MassDOT.

Tony Toscano, 89 Hastings Rd: expressed concern with the condition of Hastings Road and asked when the road will be repaired. Mr. Boria said Hastings Road was not part of the FMPC Road Project; drainage work and other underlying conditions need to be identified and necessary funding allocated. He will go on site to view the condition of the road.

Board Member and Staff Comments

Mr. Bridges said the MEAC is finalizing the municipal electricity aggregation plan and will provide an overview to the Board in March.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie,
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: meritorious award nomination forms, license applications, Transfer Station fees, ARPA grants