



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: May 18, 2020
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, Police Chief Darrin, Fire Chief Parsons, Town Clerk
Laura Torti, U & F Superintendent Bill Krukowski

Chairman Pepe called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and announced the meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, pursuant to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus. In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have suspended public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. We are meeting remotely and broadcasting live on Spencer Cable Access to ensure public viewing access. Citizens Input will be a part of the meeting if residents wish to dial in. The meeting is being broadcast live on Spencer Cable Access.

Communications: Happy 102nd Birthday to Norma Cormier – Spencer's Oldest Resident

Dr. Hicks announced that he had the pleasure of presenting Norma Cormier with the Boston Post Cane earlier today. Ms. Cormier turned 102 years old on May 13th and is Spencer's oldest resident.

Review & Act on Coronavirus / COVID-19 Response/Update

Health Agent Daoust reported:

- A reverse 911 went out on May 14th. The total number of active COVID-19 cases in Spencer is currently 34 with 18 active cases and 16 that have recovered.
- New guidance issued from Governor Baker was announced today with a new Safer at Home advisory.
- As of May 6th, face coverings are required to be worn in public when social distancing is not possible, per Order of the Governor.
- No more than ten people are allowed in public gatherings, except in an unconfined outdoor space. Additional guidance will be provided on May 19th relative to opening of local parks and recreation areas.
- Phase 1 of the reopening plan for businesses is on the Town website.
- All businesses will be inspected prior to reopening to ensure they are complying.

Dr. Hicks asked if the parks would be opened prior to next Selectmen's meeting; the hope is to have people out enjoying the facilities when social distancing is possible. Ms. Daoust will

provide an update after receiving guidance from the State and a reverse 911 call will be placed informing residents when the facilities open.

Mr. Woodbury asked if face masks are required by people working in front of a plastic shield. Ms. Daoust said masks still need to be worn.

Chairman Pepe asked if churches, construction, and trades are being inspected. Ms. Daoust will send a letter to all business requesting their reopening plan and will inspect each business.

Administrator Gregory said there is uncertainty around reopening municipal buildings at this time. The plan is to continue with the rotating schedule for the next few weeks until further guidance is provided by the State. He will provide a reopening plan to the Board.

Chief Parsons reported:

- If necessary, the Board of Health may fine people up to \$300 for not wearing a mask.
- Churches will not be ready to reopen this week. They need to meet requirements regarding face coverings, adequate airflow, and traffic flow during services. The Building Inspector will notify them of the number of occupants allowed. There are a lot of restrictions for businesses and the Health Agent will need to inspect.

Chief Darrin reported:

- Most Health Departments are comprised of only one Agent. The State does not expect the Agent to inspect each business prior to opening. A template for businesses to follow is being provided by the State.
- The crime rate has dropped, however mental health issues, drug use, and domestic violence are on the rise.
- With the additional freedom there will be more traffic and enforcement will be stepped up.
- Cruisers are being disinfected daily.

Discussion: Appointment of Temporary Registrars

Town Clerk Laura Torti informed the Board that some of the Registrars are in a high-risk health category with regard to Coronavirus and is concerned about putting people at risk and wants to protect the election workers. She will ask the Board to appoint temporary registrars soon and wants people to be mindful of the risks.

Discussion: New Road Construction with U & F Superintendent Krukowski

Administrator Gregory reported that U & F Superintendent Krukowski drafted a presentation on the progress of Phase I and Phase II of the Comprehensive Roads project. The \$6.9 million dollar borrowing for Phase III will begin after the FY 2020 Audit is complete. The

hope is to have the funds available in early July, which will conclude the \$19 million appropriation approved at the 2016 Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Krukowski presented an overview of work completed during Phase I and Phase II of the project which began with drainage improvements, followed by paving of several roads including Thompson Pond Road, Paxton Road, South Spencer Road, Tom Casey Road, Hebert Rd, GH Wilson Road, Marble Road, Clark Road, East Charlton Road, Borkum Road, William Casey Road and Sunberg Road . An issue occurred with chip seal failing on some roads which caused the product to delaminate. He is working with the Contractor to resolve the issue. The likely cause is from new asphalt not being fully cured prior to chip seal installation. The Contractor will reapply chip seal on Borkum Road, East Charlton Road, William Casey Road and a section of Sunberg Road.

Review & Act on Tree Removal at 125 Northwest Road Pursuant to MGL Chapter 87, Section 4

Administrator Gregory reported that a public tree hearing was held and a resident asked for reconsideration on the removal of a tree 125 Northwest Road. Pursuant to MGL Chapter 87, Section 4, the Board needs to decide whether to move forward with the tree removal. Mr. Krukowski noted that the tree has evidence of vehicle and plow strikes and constricts the road width below 18 feet. The road is being reclaimed with the plan to restore the full width and he requests the Board authorize removal of this tree.

Dr. Hicks drove by the tree in question and said that it jets out more than others, therefore in the interest of public safety the tree needs to be removed. Mr. Woodbury also drove by and is in agreement.

A motion to approve the removal of the tree at 125 Northwest Road (Woodbury/Monette) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes Hicks-yes, Monette-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

Discussion: Town Administrator Evaluation

Chairman Pepe and Vice-chair Monette reviewed the compiled evaluation with Mr. Gregory. The total score is a 3.0 on a rating scale of “1 - below average” to “4 – outstanding”.

Town Administrator Report/Update

FY2021 Update

Mr. Gregory is waiting for clarity on the FY2021 State Aid number. In the meantime, the budget is balanced based on pre-Covid-19 estimates.

Review June Meeting Dates

June meetings are scheduled for every Monday, with June 1, 15, and 29 being tentative.

Citizens Input

Christine Mancini, 55 Borkem Road and Chair of the COA said she has not received any updates on the Senior Center project from Mr. Gregory. Mr. Gregory is providing information to Director Pam Woodbury and will copy Ms. Mancini going forward. She asked the Board to fund the project now, as an emergency to get the work done while the building is closed. Mr. Gregory explained that emergency funding is not an option, State Statute allows for emergency funding in situations such as hurricanes, tornados, or other natural disasters. Ms. Mancini asked to have the Town Meeting Article for the project at the beginning of the Warrant. Mr. Gregory and Moderator Shemeth agreed.

Mr. Gregory noted that the Senior Center project rebid dates are June 10th for the file sub bid and June 17th for the contractor bid. The Board will decide whether to green light the project and appropriate funds at their June 22nd meeting.

Bob Cerba, 23 Summit Street said there have been consistent problems trying to move this project forward and that the senior residents need to be supported in getting this project done.

Adam Lamb, 24 Ash Street asked if the Board viewed the tree at 125 Northwest Rd. prior to their vote. Mr. Woodbury and Dr. Hicks viewed the tree. He also asked if the failed chip seal is under warranty. Mr. Woodbury believes it is covered.

Matt Defosse, 7 Paul's Drive asked if solar sites are being monitored to ensure codes are being followed with the limited Town Staff available at this time. Mr. Gregory said there is no reason for a deficiency regarding oversight of the projects. He will speak with the ODIS Director and respond to Mr. Defosse.

Request for Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A §21(a), ¶3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for the Utilities & Facilities and Town Hall Clerks Bargaining Units.

At 7:57 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/Monette) passed with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes Hicks-yes, Woodbury- yes, Monette-yes, Pepe-yes.

Mr. Pepe stated that an open meeting could have a detrimental effect of the bargaining position of the Town. The Board will not reconvene in Open Session.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant