



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: June 1, 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, Library
Director Donohue, Town Clerk Torti, Moderator Shemeth, Finance Committee
Chair Braney

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. Public participation is not mandatory unless such participation is required by law, though Citizens Input will be a part of the meeting if residents wish to dial in.

A moment of silence was observed to honor Rutland Police Detective John Songy, who died on May 29th from coronavirus.

A moment of silence was observed to honor Jean Desmaris who died on May 30th. Ms. Desmaris faithfully served the Town as a member of the Historical Commission.

A moment of silence was observed to honor six Spencer residents who died from coronavirus.

Vote to approve Meeting Minutes of May 11 & May 18, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes of May 11 and May 18, 2020 (Hicks/Woodbury) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Monette-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

Review and Act on Coronavirus / COVID-19 Response

Health Agent Daoust reported:

- A reverse 911 went out on May 28 . The total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Spencer is currently 41 with 10 active cases.
- Governor Baker's "Safer at Home" advisory remains in effect.

- Face coverings are required to be worn in public when social distancing is not possible
- All recreation areas are open to public, except for Powder Mill Park.

Police Chief Darrin reported:

- The Department received electrostatic cleaners which A. Arsenault & Sons help to fund through their Hope Tree.
- The State is supplying 200 washable cloth masks to provide to the public.

Fire Chief Parsons reported:

- He is working with a consultant to review reimbursements for COVID-19 items.

The Board agreed to hold meetings in June on the 15th and 22nd and will also meet on June 30th prior to the ATM.

Administrator Gregory reported:

- The Governor's phased in opening plan gives municipal buildings the green light to open, however he does not expect it to occur for several weeks. The implementation process is a challenge and is needed for the health and safety of employees and the public. He will discuss the process with his staff.

Review and Act on Phased Reopening for Library

Library Director Cheryl Donohue reported that the Library is committed to moving forward with a phased in reopening plan in the safest way possible. The curbside service will begin on June 8th with contactless delivery of items placed directly in the trunks of vehicles. She asked the Board for their support.

A motion to support the phased opening of the Library, beginning on June 8th (Hicks/Monette) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Monette-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Review and Act on 1/12th Budget for July 2020

Mr. Gregory indicated that the Department of Revenue (DOR) advised communities to submit a 1/12th budget as a contingency in the event the Annual Town Meeting does not appropriate the FY2021 budget. He presented a budget for July which incorporates expected payments due for FY2021. If the Board approves, he will submit to DOR and be prepared to deficit spend in July if the ATM is not able to take place on June 30th.

A motion to approve the 1 /12th Budget as presented (Woodbury/Monette) passed 5/0 by roll call vote Berthiaume-yes; Hicks-yes; Monette-yes; Pepe-yes; Woodbury-yes

Town Administrator's Report

FY2021 Budget – no new updates at this time.

The Board will vote on borrowing for Phase 3 of the Road Improvement Project and will close and sign the Annual Town Meeting Warrant at the June 22nd meeting.

Mr. Gregory noted that the logistics at the DPHS Gym will work well for the ATM. The plan is to have residents enter the building on the side facing the parking lot and exit from the door inside the gym which faces the parking lot. Check-in will be in the lobby entrance.

Dr. Hicks recommended placing a table on the far end of the hall by the restrooms to allow length for people to stand apart from each other and keep out of the weather. It would be best to enter the gym from the doors in that area as well. Mr. Gregory will take it under advisement.

Citizens Input

Jonathon Viner, 34 Donnelly Cross Road asked the Board for direction on a date to begin to hold public meetings in the Town Hall.

Mr. Gregory noted that State Legislation leaves the decision on when to hold meetings to the Chair of a Board or Committee and said they can meet remotely. Chairman Pepe asked about opening the Town Hall. Mr. Gregory pointed out that while we can open now, a plan with staff on the details needs to be in place to ensure employees and the public are safe. The Building Inspector needs to be involved due to a 25% occupancy limit for every room in the building. Other communities are not starting implementation until July and will be phased-in over time, which is what he sees happening in Spencer.

Mr. Woodbury noted complaints about not holding hearings with the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. These meetings need to move forward.

Mr. Gregory asked ODIS Director Paul Dell'Aquila to reach out to the land use boards to discuss holding meetings remotely. There was discussion on holding physical meetings to allow the public to view important documents. Mr. Viner noted his concerns with the public involvement through digital means.

Matt Defosse, 7 Paul's Drive said he is in support of having meetings physically open to the public.

Mr. Gregory will review the guidelines and report back to the Board.

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 Unit

At 7:28 pm a motion to enter into executive session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A: §21(a), ¶3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for the Utilities & Facilities Unit (Berthiaume/Hicks) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Monette-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

§21(a), ¶2: to discuss strategy with respect to contract negotiations for Non-union Personnel (Town Administrator)

At 7:28 pm a motion to enter into executive under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A: §21(a), ¶2: to discuss strategy with respect to contract negotiations for Non-union Personnel (Town Administrator).

The Board will return to open session if they finalize the contract.

Review and Act to Approve the FY2022 Contract with the Town Administrator

At 7:34 pm the Board reconvened in open session. Chairman Pepe announced that a contract has been agreed upon between the Board and the Administrator.

A motion to approve the contract with the Town Administrator for 1-year (Hicks/Monette) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Monette-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

The Board thanked the Administrator for his efforts.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: 1/12th Budget for July, FY2022 Contract with TA