



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: January 28, 2021
(rescheduled due to technical difficulties on Jan. 25th)
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Place: Audioconference Broadcasted Live from McCourt Social Hall
Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Administrator Gregory
Remote: Chairman Hicks, Vice-Chair Woodbury, Clerk Howard, Members Berthiaume
and Pepe.
Also remote: Health Agent Daoust, Fire Chief Parsons

Chairman Hicks called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. and announced that 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 currently meeting remotely and as such, all votes will be taken by roll call in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law.

Review and Act on Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2021

A motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 11, 2021 (Howard/Woodbury) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Berthiaume- yes, Hicks-yes Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

Citizens Input

Matt Defosse, Pauls Drive, asked about status of the Solar Moratorium. Mr. Gregory said there is no word from the Attorney General's Office yet, however the 90-day review expires on February 21, 2021 and more will be known at that time. Mr. Defosse read a statement summarizing the recommendations of the Solar Bylaw Advisory Committee (SBAC) report expressing concerns on solar development and urged the Board to act to limit solar development, adhere to the recommendations of the Open Space Plan to protect the residents of Spencer.

Bill Shemeth, Dale Street, thanked Eben Butler and the Highway Department for their outstanding work on behalf of the parks. He would like to see a vaccine clinic set up in Spencer to allow seniors and the public to get vaccinated as early as possible.

Kurt Nordquist, Gale Drive, responded to Mr. Defosse's statement on solar development and noted the importance of maintaining the rights of the property owners to allow solar installations on their property. Dr. Hicks wants to ensure the development is done properly to protect the rights of all the citizens.

Review Correspondence: Coronavirus Aid Letter from Senator Warren

There were no comments on the Coronavirus Aid Letter from Senator Warren.

Review and Act on Coronavirus / COVID-19 Response

Dr. Hicks

Health Agent Daoust reported:

- There are currently 617 confirmed Coronavirus cases in Spencer, with 63 active.
- Vaccines will be available at Big Y beginning on February 1st.
- A notification form has been published on the website for residents to sign up and will be notified when vaccine clinics are available.
- The State will open a call center for senior residents .

Dr. Hicks asked if CARES Act could cover the cost to create a local Spencer call-in center to help coordinate vaccines. Ms. Daoust will check into it and report back; she indicated that all four Brookfield's' will be involved in the clinic.

Mr. Woodbury noted that 32% of Spencer residents are senior citizens and a call center would be beneficial.

Mr. Pepe asked how the vaccine is being distributed locally and suggested holding drive-through clinics. Ms. Daoust said that the public health nurse has applied for the vaccine and is waiting for approval. Ms. Berthiaume noted that drive-through clinics are best suited to warmer climates. Dr. Hicks suggested exploring areas such as the Highway Garage to be used as a drive-through.

Chief Parsons is working with Agent Daoust to set up a clinic when the vaccine is available. He noted that the State website is difficult to navigate and is in favor of a local call center. He expressed frustration with the State for opening Phase 2 of the distribution when Phase 1 is not complete and there are not enough vaccines.

New Business:

Review and Act Right of First Refusal for MGL Chapter 61A Land (13.60 acres) owned by Mike and Michelle McGourty on Hastings Road, identified as R43, Parcel 16-1

Chairman Hicks asked to hear from Attorney Maloney, representing the property owners on this property. Mr. Maloney was not dialed into the meeting.

Mr. Woodbury noted work has been done on this property prior to any approvals from the Town.

Dr. Hicks said the Board will review at their February 8th meeting when the attorney is present to answer questions on why the regulations were not followed for this process.

Review and Act on Request to Ratify Town Administrator Appointment of William Cundiff as Utilities & Facilities Superintendent

Dr. Hicks welcomed new Utilities and Facilities Superintendent William Cundiff.

Mr. Cundiff said he received a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and his experience includes municipal work for large civil engineering firms and for the past twenty years he has worked for the Town of Douglas where he supported the Community Development Director, obtained grants, and worked on stormwater and school building projects.

A motion to approve ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of William Cundiff as Utilities & Facilities Superintendent (Pepe/Woodbury) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Berthiaume- yes, Hicks-yes Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Review & Act on the Request to Appoint Interim Appointment Board of Health Member; Consider Statements of Interest from Marcelina Machado and Jennifer Konisky

Dr. Hicks said one of the candidates has withdrawn her request to serve on the Board of Health; however there is another interested individual who will submit a volunteer form. A decision will be made at the February 8th meeting.

Board of Health member Lee Jarvis asked if they could review the qualifications and make a recommendation to the Select Board. Dr. Hicks agreed. Mr. Jarvis said that he may resign in the near future.

Review & Act on the Request to Expand the GoTo Meeting Platform to improve Public Remote Meetings

Administrator Gregory reported that the GoTo Meeting platform has been in use since March, with generally with good results and noted the Steven Tyler has been using it with his firm and offered suggestions to make the application easier.

Mr. Tyler pointed out that remote meetings are here to stay and recommends the purchase of additional GoTo Meeting licenses and laptops to be paid from the CARES Act; one for the U & F Office and one for ODIS. A dedicated meeting name and phone number can be used for each department.

Dr. Hicks asked Mr. Gregory to review and provide a recommendation at the February 8th meeting.

Review and Act on Planning Board Revolving Account Audit Proposal from Melanson CPAs

Dr. Hicks reported that he called four accounting firms and received a proposal from Melanson CPA's to conduct the account audit for \$4,500.

Mr. Gregory explained that Melanson's rate for the initial review is \$140/hour and after the initial assessment, a senior level person will examine at a slightly higher rate. The amount will be charged to the Town Accountant expense account and any deficit will be addressed at the Annual Town Meeting in May.

A motion approve as presented (Howard/Woodbury) passed 3/2 with a roll call vote: Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-no, Pepe-no

Mr. Pepe noted the high cost for twenty-five hours and his concern it could go higher. His hope is for this to be done internally.

Ms. Berthiaume indicated she is not comfortable proceeding with only one quote, or with the process as outlined. Dr. Hicks said he tried to obtain three quotes, but other firms were too busy. He believes this audit will ensure the issue does not recur.

Mr. Howard noted his experience with issues from the School Committee in the past and the fact that the Sewer Department was unaware of funds in their account and believes there are areas that need to be addressed.

Mr. Woodbury said he has confidence in the firm and believes enough errors will be found to justify the expense.

Town Administrator's Report:

Preliminary FY2022 Budget Discussion with Revenue Projections

Mr. Gregory presented a summary sheet of the General Fund Sources & Uses. \$350,000 was carved from the general fund for one-time expenses with \$50,000 to OPEB and \$251,740 to Stabilization, which is currently at 1.4 million.

The FY2022 Revenue Projection One was reviewed. Mr. Gregory said that new unrestricted revenue is projected at 383,809; \$100,000 for new growth; \$100,838 for local receipts (an estimate closely tied to the economy); \$84,063 in State Aid, with an overall total of \$668,710 in new revenue to the General Fund which is intended to cover fixed causes. He pointed out that an increase of \$115,000 from the Worcester Regional Retirement System and a potential increase in the SEBRSD budget at over \$300,000, not much is left over for municipal side resulting in a very challenging year.

Citizen's Input

Jonathan Viner, Donnelly Cross Rd asked about the concerns raised at the ZBA meeting relative to the RFP for the Lake St. School project. The RFP was not for demolition of the existing building and construction of a new structure.

Dr. Hicks will speak with Mr. Gregory and a discussion will be added to the next agenda.

Board Member and Staff Comments

Ms. Berthiaume reported that information from the School Building Committee has been posted on the Town website.

Mr. Pepe noted that the Lake St. School project is a worthwhile project which will serve the Town well.

Mr. Howard noted that the Architect for the Senior Center project billed for charges which were not approved by the Town. Mr. Gregory explained that a number of additional site visits occurred as a result of change orders; therefore requests were made for reimbursement which were not part of the original fee. The Finance Committee is willing to accommodate three of the five site visits and directed him to negotiate with the Architect.

Request for Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A: §21(a), ¶12, for the purpose of discussing Contract Negotiations for Non-union Personnel (Police Chief)

Chairman Hicks announced the purpose for the Executive Session per MGL, Ch. 30A, Sec. 21(a), paragraph 2 for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations for non-union personnel (Police Chief) and announced that the Board of Selectmen will not reconvene in open session.

At 7:08 pm motion to enter into Executive Session per M.G.L., Ch. 30A, Sec. 21(a), paragraph 2 for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations for non-union personnel (Police Chief), (Woodbury/Pepe) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Berthiaume- yes, Hicks-yes Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes,

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: Planning Board Revolving Account; Melanson CPAs Proposal; FY2022 Budget Projections