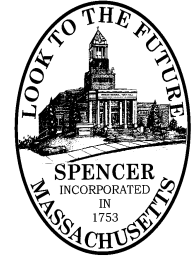


## Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen



Date: February 10, 2020 – Business Meeting  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA  
Present: Chairman Pepe, Vice-chair Monette, Clerk Berthiaume,  
Members Hicks & Woodbury, and Administrator Gregory.

Chairman Pepe called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance

### **Any members that are participating remotely in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law**

None

### **Communications:**

None

### **Citizen Input**

Matt Defosse, 7 Paul's Drive requested a discussion to help improve communication among Town Boards and Committees and would like residents to be involved as well. This is scheduled to be discussed later this evening.

### **New Business:**

#### **FY2021 SEBRSD Budget Discussion with Superintendent Haughey and Comptroller Suter**

Superintendent Haughey, Comptroller Suter, and School Committee Chair Jason Monette were present.

Dr. Haughey noted achievements by the District over the past year including an updated Regional District Agreement approved by DESE, a completed fiscal audit showing sound business practices, and a reduction in the number of students opting to attend other schools via the School Choice program.

Comptroller Suter reviewed the District's current assessment calculations and reported a 3% increase in expenditures and a request for an additional \$752,058 over the minimum required operating assessment. The total budget is \$26,703,411, with \$6.7 million for special education services. He indicated they will continue to work to find reductions as the budget process progresses.

Dr. Hicks asked about the new position listed on website for a Director of Finance and Operations. Dr. Haughey said it is a human resources position to assist with redeploying personnel. Dr. Hicks pointed out that the title is confusing since the words "human resources" are not part of it. Other new positions include a preschool teacher and paraprofessional.

Dr. Haughey mentioned that the cost for the District to send students to charter schools is over \$1 million dollars and pointed out the need to be creative and work on improving internal efficiencies, including sharing of services with other communities in order to remain sustainable.

The District will conduct public hearings on the budget and work towards lowering the increase to the Towns.

### **Discussion on a Request for the Town to Acquire and Operate Pine Grove Cemetery**

Dr. Hicks and Ms. Berthiaume recused themselves from the discussion. They both own burial plots in the cemetery.

Dean Stevens, President of Pine Grove Cemetery and Denise Lacroix were present.

Mr. Stevens reported that the Cemetery expenses exceed the income, with \$25,117 in expenses and only \$13,000 in income for 2018. The grounds are in rough shape with sinkholes and tree work needed throughout. They would like to hand it over to the Town. Denise Lacroix asked to have the request placed on the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Warrant.

Mr. Monette said the Board will need to see a detail list of revenue and expenses prior to placing before voters.

Mr. Woodbury pointed out that if the Town took it over, the actual expenses would be higher due union contracts, insurance, and other costs. He's not convinced that all avenues have been considered for the cemetery to survive on its own. He asked for a line-by-line breakdown of the costs. Mr. Stevens will provide to Mr. Gregory.

Mr. Gregory noted that acquiring real property is a major undertaking for municipalities. An appraisal of the property must be conducted, as well as deed and title research, which is a lengthy process and with costs involved. There is not enough time for the Annual Town Meeting.

Dr. Hicks and Ms. Berthiaume returned to the meeting. Dr. Hicks asked Mr. Gregory to research municipalities operating cemeteries and how burial plot sales are handled.

### **Discussion on a Request to Establish a Means for Boards and Committees to Discuss Common Topics, Subjects, and Projects with the Public**

For efficiency purposes, Dr. Hicks suggested having three Boards/Committees at a time meet with the Select Board, otherwise it would be unmanageable with upwards of fifty people.

Selectmen Berthiaume pointed out that some Boards/Committees may not feel the need to participate in the meeting, therefore it makes sense to reach out prior to scheduling.

Chairman Pepe, Dr. Hicks and Administrator Gregory discuss the process at a later date.

**Review and Act on a Request for a One-Day Alcoholic License from Mary, Queen of the Rosary Parish for March 14, 2020 from 5:30 PM – 10:00 PM**

*A motion to approve the Request for a One-Day Alcoholic License from the Mary, Queen of the Rosary Parish on March 14, 2020 from 5:30 PM to 10:00 PM (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 5/0.*

**Announcement per the Board's Policy for the Meritorious Service Award: Names of nominees may be submitted to the Administrator's Office by 2/24/2020. Nomination Forms can be found on the Website at [www.spencerma.gov](http://www.spencerma.gov), or in the Town Administrator's Office**

Chairman Pepe announced that nominations for the Meritorious Service Award are being accepted through February 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Consider Leadership Hall Induction per the Board's Policy for Leadership Hall: Inauguration for Leadership Hall is an occasional nomination by the Board of Selectmen at the first meeting in February, the Board will consider whether to induct an individual into Leadership Hall**

No action taken on this item.

**Review and Act to Open the May 7, 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant**

*A motion to open the May 7, 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant (Woodbury/Berthiaume) passed 5/0.*

Administrator Gregory noted that the Warrant will be ready to close and sign on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Discuss Topics for the Legislative Delegation Meeting (date TBD)**

Chairman Pepe asked the Board to submit discussion topics for the Delegation by March 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Review and Act on Design Fee Proposal from B. Goba & Associates Architects for Senior Center Code Compliance Project**

Mr. Gregory reported that since the Senior Center project is in the \$300,000 range, a design proposal is required. An RFQ for the design was posted and published in accordance with State Statute. Two firms submitted proposals which were ranked according to specific criteria and both were qualified, however B. Goba & Associates were able to commit to have the project bid complete by April 20, thereby allowing time to bring to the Annual Town Meeting. The total fee is \$40,821.00, which voters will be asked to approve at the STM.

*A motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign a contract with the Architect should appropriation be made at the February 13, 2020 Special Town Meeting (Hicks/Woodbury) passed 5/0.*

**Review Motions for February 13, 2020 Special Town Meeting**

The Administrator met with the Town Clerk and the Moderator to review the STM Warrant with Town Counsel. All reviewed and approved.

*A motion to approve the Motions for the February 13, 2020 Special Town Meeting (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 5/0.*

### **Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Gregory reported that Spencer has been designated as a Green Community by the Department of Energy Resources and noted that CMPRC was instrumental in making this happen. Along with this designation, the Town was awarded a \$162,800 energy improvement grant and is qualified to apply for future grants.

### **FY2021 Budget – Fiscal Projection One**

Mr. Gregory reported that new growth for FY2021 is estimated at \$100,000. He kept the budget as level as possible in order to free up funds for public education, which represents half of the Town's total budget. The only new item is a request for a highway operator position which is estimated at \$70,000 and includes salary and benefits. The District's funding request is \$244,000 higher than the Town's budget is able fund without making reductions. Health insurance is currently estimated at a 5% increase, which may come in lower and will free up some funds.

The Bay Path assessment has increased by 10% due to an increase in the number of students attending.

### **FY2020 Free Cash analysis**

Mr. Gregory reviewed analysis and projected free cash will be at \$885,000 after the Special Town Meeting requests.

### **Board Liaison Reports**

None

### **Citizen Input**

Matt Defosse asked the Board to investigate an email sent to surrounding Towns by the Town Planner relative to solar batteries, which he believes was improper.

### **Board Member and Staff Comments**

Mr. Gregory is working with the Town of Leicester on an agreement to share their Town Accountant for ten hours per week and expects to bring an agreement to the Board at the next meeting. There will be a \$6,000 budget increase to cover salary and benefits.

### **Request for Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A:**

**§21(a), ¶3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for the Police Officers, Police Dispatchers, Utilities & Facilities and Town Hall Clerks Bargaining Units.**

*At 8:26 pm a motion to meet in Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, §21(a), ¶3: to discuss strategy 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: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes,*

**§21(a), ¶2, for the purpose of discussing Contract Negotiations for Non-union Personnel (Town Administrator)**

*At 8:26 pm a motion to meet in Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, §21(a), (2), to conduct strategy in preparation for contract negotiations with non-union personnel (Town Administrator) (Hicks/Monette) passed with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes.*

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie  
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: FY21 SEBRSD Budget docs, Meritorious Service Award Nomination Form, ATM Warrant, Design Fee Proposal from B. Goba & Associates, FY2021 Budget Draft