

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: October 4, 2021
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall
Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chairman Woodbury, Vice-Chair Howard, Clerk Grigg, Members Hicks and Pepe,
and Interim Town Administrator Bill Ross
Remote: None

Chairman Woodbury called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A moment of silence was observed in honor of Kevin Hayes who passed away on October 2, 2021. Mr. Hayes served the Town as a Selectman and a member of the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District School Committee.

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

N/A

Citizens Input

Pat George, Pope Street, informed the Board of the upcoming 75th anniversary of the Spencer Exchange Club and requested to have the week of November 29th declared as “Exchange Club Week”. Chairman Woodbury said the request will be added to next agenda.

Bill Shemeth, Dale Street offered his condolences to the family Kevin Hayes.

Mr. Shemeth also expressed concern over the DPHS Building Committee’s lack of public outreach with regard to a new school building. He pointed out that most people expect a renovation and an addition, not a new school building and without public involvement, the project will not move forward.

New Business

Report from Scanlon & Associates on FY2020 Audit Report

Jeff Gendron from Scanlon & Associates explained that the objective of the Audit is to provide an opinion on the financial statement of the Town. The Auditor gives reasonable assurance that the Audit Report is free from misstatement.

Mr. Gendron referenced the report on Basic Financial Statements and noted that the Town has \$2.8 million in reserves. He explained that the audit does not look at every account or transaction, and instead reviews transactions randomly.

Mr. Pepe asked if the Board could make specific requests on future audits and Mr. Gendron said they could. Mr. Woodbury said the Board will make requests when they receive the Audit Engagement letter in the future.

Mr. Gendron proceeded to review the Management Letter and reported the following:

- There were no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies found, however there are some areas to strengthen.
- There are several grant opportunities available in response to COVID-19 and the Town needs to ensure compliance.
- There has been a significant unemployment fraud in the State and the Town should review all notices to ensure no fraudulent activity has occurred.
- The Town should ensure the same procedures and controls are in place when folks were working remotely, and it appears that they were during the closure of the building.
- Improve bank statement reconciliation- cash balance was three months behind. This is a two-step process with the Treasurer and Accountant; the Treasurer balances first each month, followed by the Accountant.
- Review Special Revenue Accounts to ensure they are accurate and that balances have proper supporting documentation.
- Performance Surety Deposits do not belong in Special Revenue Accounts.
- Review Chart of Accounts – MUNIS software is not separating revenue and expense and needs to be revised in the system.
- A policy manual should be kept in each department. Scanlon & Associates can provide a template.
- Police Salary Account was negative due to administrative fees building up in the account. The fees should go into the general fund, with only \$5,000 remaining to ensure the account is not overdrawn.
- Compensated Absences – sick and vacation time should be reviewed annually and funds set aside for these payments in advance.

Other minor recommendations include reconciling the general ledger and enterprise accounts; develop procedures for solar credits for energy bills as there are two bills with solar credits which need to be researched to ensure they are being handled properly.

The State has not provided reimbursements for exemptions and Town is owed \$52,000. The Assessor has a copy of the letter from the State. Mr. Ross will discuss with the Assessor.

Chairman Woodbury noted concern with the Town balancing the budget when the account reconciliation was three months behind.

Mr. Pepe said the Board will craft specifics for the next audit.

Mr. Ross stated that the Town received a clean audit and should be proud of the outcome.

A motion to receive the FY2020 audit documents (Hicks/Pepe) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes, Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

Review & Act on the Spencer Legal Boundary & Proposed Reprecincting Description for Voting Precincts 1 through 4

Town Clerk Sandra Fritze reported that the State is reprincinting all cities and towns and sent a minimal change to Spencer, which shifts thirty-three properties from precinct 3 into precinct 4.

A motion to approve the Spencer Legal Boundary & Proposed Reprecincting Description for Voting Precincts 1 through 4 (Hicks/Howard) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes, Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

Review & Act on the 2021/2022 Winter Parking Ban

A motion to accept the 2021/2022 Winter Parking Ban (Pepe/Hicks) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes, Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

Review & Act to Extend the Interim Town Administrator Contract

Chairman Woodbury would like to extend the contract with Interim Town Administrator Ross through December 1, or sooner, if new Town Administrator is hired. The Board agreed.

A motion to approve the extension to December 1, 2021 (Hicks/Grigg) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes, Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

Town Administrator's Report

Review November 17th Draft Fall Special Town Meeting Warrant

Administrator Ross reviewed the first draft of the Warrant which closes on October 18, 2021. There are currently eleven Articles:

Article 1 – Request for \$35,000 from the Tree Warden for removal of several large trees.

Article 2- Request for Out of District Vocational School Transportation increase in the amount of \$13,269 to Tantasqua Regional School District and \$9,203 to Smith Vocational High School.

Articles 3 & 4 – Seeks authorization to transfer funds to the Water Capital Efficiency Account and the Sewer Retained Earnings Account

Article 5 & 6- Seeks authorization to acquire easements

Article 7 – Seeks to amend the Planning Board Revolving Account. Mr. Ross noted that funds from Site Plan Reviews and ANR's are currently going into the ODIS General Account and advertisements and related expenses are being paid from that account; if the revenue is being moved to the Planning Board Revolving Account, those expenses associated with it must move with it.

Article 8 – Requests authorization to amend the General Bylaws by removing "Article 9a Vicious Dogs."

Article 9 - Requests authorization to amend the General Bylaws by adding language to Section 12 Nuisance and Dangerous Dogs”. “

Article 10 – Authorization to appropriate monies to fund Capital and is TBD.

Article 11 – Authorization to Amend the Zoning Bylaws Section 4.8.9 “Solar Photovoltaic Generating Installations” to add sections and additions to the existing Bylaws.

Review Fall Special Town Meeting Calendar

The Special Town Meeting calendar was reviewed.

Update on COVID-19 Cases

Health Agent Daoust reported that there has been a total of 141 cases since August 1, 2021.

The Rutland vaccination clinics open next week and will offer booster shots in addition to vaccines.

To date, 7,488 Spencer residents have been vaccinated.

Citizen’s Input

Jonathan Viner, 34 Donnelly Cross Road, made the following comments:

- Planning Board needs a Warrant Article to increase the revolving account threshold from \$50,000 to 100,000. Mr. Ross said a request from the Planning Board to increase the amount is needed.
- The Planning Board is looking for a meeting with the Select Board on building enforcement issues.
- Would like to see details in the Audit regarding bond money for the FMPC paving work.
- Received a portion of his public records request for Highway Services and noted that five payment vouchers were authorized by the Highway Foreman. Mr. Ross will check into this.

Board Member and Staff Comments

Mr. Pepe thanked the Fire Chief for holding the Open House at the Fire Station on Sunday and said it was a great time for all.

Chairman Woodbury said a virtual public hearing will be held on October 18th by the DPHS Building Committee on the school building project. Dr. Hicks pointed out the cost for wood and building materials has increased and he is optimistic prices may drop. Mr. Pepe stressed the need for the Committee to reach out to the community. Dr. Hicks will ask the DPHSBC Chair to change the meeting from virtual to in-person.

Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A, §21(a), ¶2, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (Town Administrator), not to reconvene in open session.

At 8:10 pm a motion to enter Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A, §21(a), ¶2, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (Town Administrator), not to reconvene in open session (Hicks//Howard) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes, Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: FY2020 Audit Report; Reprecincting Description for Voting Precincts 1 through 4; Winter Parking Ban; Interim TA Contract; STM Draft Warrant