

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: November 8, 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.

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

None

Meeting Minutes: Review and Act on Meeting Minutes of September 13 and October 18 & 21, 2021

A motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 13, October 18, and October 21, 2021 (Hicks/Howard) passed 5/0.

Citizens Input

Matt Defosse, Paul's Dr: requests residents vote yes on Article 8 for Solar bylaw changes.

Bob Cirba, 23 Summit St: concerned over the lack of transparency with the license agreement between the Senior Center and the Courthouse. Moving forward he wants to see more transparency.

Donnie Berthiaume, 240 Charlton Rd: announced that the Christmas Parade of Lights will be held on Dec. 4th with rain date of Dec. 5th. Dr. Hicks will contact Norma Cormier, the oldest resident of Spencer to request that she be the Grand Marshall.

Jonathan Viner, Donnelly Cross Rd: asked about his meeting request between the Planning Board and Select Board to discuss building inspector enforcement issues; requested additional backup for vouchers signed by the Highway Forman and Administrator Ross told him there is no additional backup; is still waiting for the accounting on the \$19 million dollar road improvement project.

New Business

Chief Parsons, Spencer Fire Department & Dan Golden, Hayden Lodge to Present Donation to the Spencer Police for the Purchase of a Police Canine Vest

Chief Parsons and Dan Golden were present. They approached the Police Department to assist with the purchase of a vest for the K-9 dog, Curtis. After pooling funds, they provided Chief Darrin with a check to purchase the vest. Chief Darrin thanked both groups for their support.

Review & Act to Appoint Jeffrey K. Bridges as Town Administrator Subject to Contract Negotiations

Chairman Woodbury announced that the contract between Jeffrey Bridges and the Town is complete.

A motion to appoint Jeffrey K. Bridges as Spencer's Town Administrator (Hicks/Howard) passed 5/0.

Mr. Bridges thanked the Board for the opportunity and said he is excited to begin his role as Spencer's next Town Administrator.

Review & Act on the License Agreement with the Massachusetts Trial Court for temporary use of the upper floor of the Maple Street School

Mr. Ross relayed that he had discussions with the Massachusetts Trial Court beginning in June for the temporary use of the upper floor of the Maple Street School/Senior Center. He discussed the particulars with the Council on Aging early in the process. The Town was responsible for only a few items, which included: fixing ceiling tiles, installing dispensers in the bathrooms and getting the water fountain working. All other repairs and improvements are the responsibility of the State. The lease will amount to \$94,000 per year and will support the building. The State will pay 38% of the utilities. No trials will be held in the location, it will be restricted to arraignments and holding only.

Mr. Woodbury clarified that members of the Board of Selectmen did not participate in any of the negotiations.

COA Chair Chris Mancini said the COA had only two stipulations for this license agreement: that there be no interference with the Seniors and that the safety of seniors be assured. She requests the name be changed from Maple Street School to the Senior Center and that the income be clearly earmarked for that building. Mr. Ross noted that any expenditures will need to go through the CIPC process.

Senior Center Director April Caruso said that the Seniors are in favor of this Agreement and reiterated that it will not impact any programs.

Mr. Pepe said he appreciates all the work involved and thinks it is a good idea, although he expressed concern that outreach to the neighborhood was lacking.

Mr. Ross noted that the negotiations were straightforward and commends the Court's Attorney, Christopher McQuade for his responsiveness, along with Building Inspector Duane Amos and Fire Chief Robert Parsons.

A motion to approve the License Agreement with the Massachusetts Trial Court for temporary use of the upper floor of the Maple Street School (Hicks/Howard) passed 5/0.

Mr. Pepe wanted his concern noted for the record over the lack of communication to the public during the process.

Review and Act on Traffic / Pedestrian Signals at Main and Pleasant Streets

Dr Hicks reported that a pedestrian was struck and killed at an intersection in Boston which is the same type of intersection at Pleasant and Main and allows the flow of both pedestrian and vehicle traffic. He would like this changed to protect the pedestrians.

A motion to ask the Town Administrator for a recommendation on what can be done to protect pedestrians (Hicks/Howard) passed 5/0.

Chairman Woodbury asked U & F Superintendent Bill Cundiff if the traffic lights at the intersection will need to change with CVS going in on Main Street. Mr. Cundiff agrees that it is a concern and will need to be looked at it.

Dr. Hicks asked if in the meantime, temporary measures could be implemented. Mr. Cundiff is working with Chief Darrin to have signs ordered. Mr. Ross suggested a short-term solution may be for all traffic lights to turn red to allow pedestrian crossing, though it will cause traffic to back up.

Jonathan Viner advised the Board that VSB already completed a study on this intersection.

Review & Act on the 2022 Board of Selectmen Meeting Calendar

A motion to approve the 2022 Meeting Calendar (Grigg/Pepe) passed 5/0 passed with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes, Hicks-yes, Howard-yes, Pepe-yes, Woodbury-yes

Old Business

Review & Act to Approve the Police Department Revised Policy for Internal Affairs

A motion to Approve the Police Department Revised Policy for Internal Affairs (Pepe/Hicks) passed 5/0.

Review & Act to Approve the Police Department Policy for School Resource Officer

A motion to Approve the Police Department Policy for School Resource Officer (Hicks/Pepe) passed 5/0.

Review & Act to Approve the Police Department Policy for Pandemic Response

A motion to Approve the Police Department Policy for Pandemic Response (Hicks/Grigg) passed 5/0.

Town Administrator's Report

Review & Act on Motions for November 17, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles

The Board reviewed the Special Town Meeting Motions and Chairman Woodbury assigned Articles to Board Members.

Moderator Shemeth said he will review Article 7 (Dog Bylaw Changes) with Mr. Ross and Town Counsel; he noted that the Finance Committee deferred their decision on Article 8 (Solar Bylaw Changes) since they have not received the report from the Town Planner.

A motion to approve Motions for the November 17, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles (Grigg/Hicks) passed 5/0.

Update on COVID-19 Cases

Health Agent Daoust reported: there has been a total of 225 cases since August 1, 2021. Rutland vaccination clinics are open to Spencer residents; 7,139 Spencer residents have been fully vaccinated to date; in 2020 there were a total of fifteen deaths from COVID-19 and in 2021 there has been nine deaths caused by complications from COVID-19.

Citizen's Input

Matt Defosse, 7 Pauls Dr.: urged residents to vote yes to amend the Zoning Bylaws for Solar on Article 8 and suggests all Articles be published in the newspaper.

Bill Shemeth, Dale St.: the traffic light at Pleasant and Main is a public safety issue; a price tag cannot be placed on public safety; the CVS project needs to be publicized.

Board Member and Staff Comments

Dr. Hicks: solar decommissioning is a concern; Highway Foreman should not sign invoices it should be the Superintendent.

Mr. Pepe: suggests implementing spending limits in line with the position.

Mr. Ross: signature approval is required by the Superintendent and the Administrator, in the case, a consulting firm filled in for the U & F Superintendent, which is why the Foreman signed.

Mr. Grigg: asked about a meeting with the School Building Committee. Mary Braney: the meeting is being held on Dec. 7th at Wire Village School.

Chairman Woodbury: Facilities Lead Ed Lamoureux is a great addition and has already accomplished a lot.

Mr. Ross: the Sewer I & I study is proceeding; the 2021 audit proposal will be on the next agenda and he will ask that they review the paving program; PILOTS are now illegal in Massachusetts, all solar projects go on the tax rolls; the invoice supplied to Mr. Viner based on his records request has the hours actually worked; Congress passed the infrastructure bill and Massachusetts will received \$12.5 billion dollars.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: Police Department Policies; STM Warrant Motions