

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: January 24, 2022
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall
Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chairman Woodbury, Vice-Chair Howard, Clerk Grigg, Member Hicks, and
Town Administrator Jeffrey Bridges
Remote: Pepe

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

Chairman Woodbury announced that Mr. Pepe will be participating remotely in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law

Meeting Minutes:

Review and Act on Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2022

Dr. Hicks would like to make some additions to the minutes and will review with Ms. Savoie.

A motion to table approval of the minutes until the next meeting (Howard/Hicks) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes; Hicks-yes; Howard-yes; Pepe-yes; Woodbury-yes

Citizens Input

None

Communications

Mr. Bridges announced that MassDOT will hold a public hearing on February 17, 2022 on the Meadow Road project and advised the Board to contact him if they would like to speak at the hearing.

New Business:

Public Hearing 6:00 PM - Review & Act on the Application of Rajendrakumar Patel for Underground Storage of Combustible Liquids (gasoline & diesel fuel) at 353 E. Main Street under MGL Chapter 148, Section 13

Chairman Woodbury opened the public hearing opened at 6:05 pm.

Mr. Bridges reported that the applicant is requesting to have the Fuel License updated to reflect his ownership of the existing operation at 353 E. Main Street. Chief Parsons has approved the application.

The Applicant, Raj Patel was present and indicated there are no changes being made to the business and request is merely to put the License in his corporation's name.

Mr. Woodbury said he is aware of the situation and that there are no issues/changes with the tanks. Chief Parsons noted that the License needs to be amended to reflect the updated ownership since it was not changed when Mr. Patel purchased the business. The License remains with the property and the name should have been updated at the time Mr. Patel took ownership; this will correct that oversight.

Martine Prouty, 335 E. Main Street said she wanted to be certain there were no changes to size of the tank. Mr. Woodbury confirmed that nothing is changing with the tanks or the business.

The hearing closed at 6:11 pm.

A motion to approve the Application of Rajendrakumar Patel for Underground Storage of Combustible Liquids (gasoline & diesel fuel) at 353 E. Main Street (Hicks/Howard) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes; Hicks-yes; Howard-yes; Pepe-yes; Woodbury-yes

Right of First Refusal for property owned by Laureldale Trust on Paxton Road, identified as Lot 6, Parcel ID: R45-7

Mr. Bridges reported that the Conservation Commission reviewed the request and sent a letter recommending that the Board waive the Right of First Refusal for this parcel.

Attorney Nelson Ezen, representing the property owners indicated the request for a waiver of the Right of First Refusal will allow the owners to remove the parcel from Chapter 61 and divide the lot to convey to another relative.

A motion to waive the Right First Refusal for property owned by Laureldale Trust on Paxton Road, identified as Lot 6, Parcel ID: R45-7 (Hicks/Howard) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes; Hicks-yes; Howard-yes; Pepe-yes; Woodbury-yes

Update on Coronavirus / COVID-19 Cases

Health Agent Daoust reported:

- There have been 1,053 Coronavirus cases since August 1, 2021, with a total of 2,213 through January 19th.
- Over 7,609 Spencer residents have been fully vaccinated, with 801 partially vaccinated and 3,666 boosted.
- At-home test kits have been ordered and should arrive within two weeks.

- Up to four at-home COVID test kits are available per family from the Federal Government. Ms. Daoust will contact the Post Office to resolve an ordering glitch impacting multifamily units and senior housing.

Chairman Woodbury wants to see case numbers broken down weekly to provide the most up-to-date information to assist in determining when to safely reopen the Senior Center.

Review & Act on Request from the Board Health Agent for use of ARPA Funds for Public Health Nursing

Health Agent Daoust is requesting authorization for the use of up to \$65,000 in ARPA funds for public health nursing expenses through the remainder of the fiscal year; this amount will also cover expense incurred by the previous Nurse.

A motion to approve the request of the Health Agent to spend up to \$65,000 in ARPA funds (Hicks/Grigg) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes; Hicks-yes; Howard-yes; Pepe-yes; Woodbury-yes

Selectman Grigg questioned the need for minor tasks being assigned to the Nurse. Ms. Daoust explained that the Nurse has access to the State Maven System.

Chairman Woodbury asked if the PPE delivery items are being provided by the Nurse or the Town. Ms. Daoust said she will provide PPE going forward and the Nurse will handle the delivery.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that a Notice to Proceed has been sent to the VHB Engineer to change to the Pleasant/Main Street traffic signal to an all-pedestrian phase.

State Forecasted Revenues & Budget Outlook

Administrator Bridges reported:

- He received notice from Senator Gobi's Office requesting earmark and ARPA projects be submitted for potential funding. He asked the Board to send their project ideas to him and he will create a list.
- The Fire Department was awarded a \$13,000 grant to purchase equipment.
- The Senior Center would like to reopen with participants wearing masks and if there are no objections, the Director would like to open this week. Dr. Hicks asked about the recourse if a participant shows up without a mask and refuses to leave the building. Mr. Bridges will follow-up with Chief Darrin on enforcement options. Chairman Woodbury pointed out that the Board previously took action to close the Center and agreed to revisit their decision at their February 7th meeting. Dr. Hicks mentioned that the Board gave the Director the authority to reopen at her discretion

and said his only concern is to protect the elderly and to ensure everyone is wearing masks.

- The economy and the State are financially healthy. Mr. Bridges asked the State Rep Berthiaume and Durant to make local aid a priority.
- Health insurance costs are expected to increase between five to eight percent.
- Town revenue is still below pre-COVID numbers and may have an impact on the budget. Mr. Grigg asked if ARPA funds can be used to offset the revenue loss. Mr. Bridges said the revenue loss can be restored to the amount that was lost with the use of a specific formula to meet the requirements of Treasury Department.

Dr. Hicks asked if ARPA funds can be used for HVAC to improve ventilation in the lower level of Town Hall and to pay for the salt shed project. Mr. Bridges said the salt shed is unlikely, however HVAC is under review. He will also review all capital projects to determine if any of can be funded through ARPA.

Personnel Items: Temporary Administrative Assistance for the U & F Department

Administrator Bridges reported that a Senior Clerks at the U & F Department will be out for eight weeks and he would like Conservation Agent, Laruen Trifone to assist the other Clerk during that time. The union is reviewed the request and the only concern was to ensure the position remains a fulltime position, which it will.

Dr. Hicks said his concern is placing someone with a higher salary rate in a role with a lower rate and he does not want to set a precedent. Mr. Bridges indicated that the salary is comparable between the two positions, with both in the \$23.00 per hour range.

Chairman Woodbury asked about the learning curve for Ms. Trifone and what the benefit would be compared with using a senior worker at the U & F Office. Mr. Cundiff said the benefit is having access to an in-house staff member. Mr. Bridges will work on a schedule with Ms. Trifone for approximately fifteen hours per week. Senior workers may fill in as well.

A motion to approve the Temporary Administrative Assistance for the U & F Department (Grigg/Hicks) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes; Hicks-yes; Howard-yes; Pepe-yes; Woodbury-yes

Citizen's Input

None

Board Member and Staff Comments

Mr. Bridges relayed that the ARPA Survey had a glitch and will be back up on Town website with a link to the survey and to the guidelines for use of the funds provided by the Treasury

Department. The survey results will be collated, and a full report provided to the Board. The Police and Fire Department will post a notice on their social media accounts.

Mr. Cundiff asked the Board to contact him if they would like to reserve time to speak at the MassDot public hearing on the Meadow Road project.

Request for Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A, 21(a) (3), to discuss strategy with respect to potential litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigation position of the Town and the Chair so declares: Mass Broken Stone

A motion to enter into Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A, 21(a) (3), to discuss strategy with respect to potential litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigation position of the Town and the Chair so declares: Mass Broken Stone (Hicks/Grigg) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes; Hicks-yes; Howard-yes; Pepe-yes; Woodbury

Request for Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A, 21(a) (3), to discuss strategy with respect to potential litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigation position of the Town and the Chair so declares: Bedus Insurance Claim

A motion to enter into Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A, 21(a) (3), to discuss strategy with respect to potential litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigation position of the Town and the Chair so declares: Bedus Insurance Claim (Hicks/Grigg) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Grigg-yes; Hicks-yes; Howard-yes; Pepe-yes; Woodbury

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: Fuel Application; Right of First Refusal for Laureldale Trust, ARPA guidelines and survey