



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: January 8, 2018 – Business Meeting
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chairman Pepe, Vice Chair Woodbury, Clerk Monette,
Members Stevens and Hicks, and Interim Administrator Ross

At 6:03 p.m. Chairman Pepe called the meeting to order 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 and lawsss

None

Minutes:

Vote to Approve Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2017 Workshop (Woodbury/Monette) passed 5/0.

Communications:

None

Citizen Input

None

Old Business:

Kaitbenski Gravel Permit License Renewal Discussion

Mr. Ross reported that a letter was sent notifying Mr. Kaitbenski that the Gravel Pit has not been properly secured as of January 3, 2018 as required by the Board for renewal of the 2018 license.

A motion to deny the renewal of the gravel permit as it is has not been secured with a gate (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 5/0.

A letter will be sent notifying them of the nonrenewal.

New Business:

Badge Pinning Ceremony – Sergeant James Murray

Police Chief Darrin reported that Detective James Murray is being promoted to Police Sergeant. Sergeant Murray earned his master's degree in Criminal Justice and has been with th Spencer Police for over twenty years.

Sergeant Murray's father, James Murray who retired from the Boylston Police came forward to pin the badge on his son's uniform. Several family members and friends were present.

Senator Gobi, Representative Berthiaume, and Representative Durant were present for the ceremony. Representative Durant thanked Sergeant Murray for keeping the community safe and presented him with a Citation of Recognition for his promotion to rank of Sergeant. Senator Gobi noted that generations of kids have been helped by Sergeant Murray's caring and compassion and thanked him and entire police force for working to protect the community. Representative Berthiaume said he was honored to be a part of the ceremony and noted his pleasure with having Sergeant Murray in Spencer for so many years.

Lieutenant Brett Simarrian from the West Boylston State Police Barracks surprised retired Sergeant Murray with a plaque in honor of his service in West Boylston.

Joint Meeting with the Town Administrator Screening Committee (TASC): Recommend Town Administrator Candidate Finalists & Discuss Interview Schedule

Chairman Pepe Called the joint meeting to order at 6:15 pm. TASC members present were Christine Allesandro, Donnie Berthiaume, Dr. Hicks, Nancy Herholtz, and Frank White. Mary Braney and Chris Woodbury were unable to attend.

Dr. Hicks reported that the TASC interviewed seven of the twenty applicants and announced four finalists: Denise Dembkoski from Billerica, currently the Finance/Personnel Director for the Town of Groveland; Thomas Gregory from Worcester, currently the Assistant Town Manager in Walpole; Chris Heard from Lebanon, Missouri who served as the City Manager there; and Scott Szczebak from Palmer, currently the Director of Human Resources for the Town of Wellesley.

Resumes will be forwarded to the Board and interviews scheduled from 5-7 pm on January 22nd and January 23rd, with two candidates being interviewed at each meeting.

An individual come forward asking to be considered a fifth candidate. Dr. Hicks explained that the TASC completed the screening process and has selected four well qualified candidates. No additional candidates are being considered.

The joint meeting was adjourned at 6:30. All were in favor.

Discussion: Adjustment in Private Snow Plowing Rates – Steven Tyler

Steve Tyler and Eben Butler were present to discuss a shortfall in private plowing due to low rate of payment. Mr. Tyler provided an analysis of rates in nearby communities noting that Spencer pays the lowest on average. He asked the Board to approve an increase in the per hour rate as follows: \$70 for ¾ ton truck with an 8 foot plow; \$75 for ¾ ton with 9 foot plow; \$85 for a 6 wheel dump truck with a 10 foot plow; and \$115 for a bucket loader.

Mr. Butler explained the increase is needed to help offset the high insurance private plows are required to obtain.

Mr. Woodbury questioned the need for a \$1 million liability insurance policy, noting it is extremely high. He believes the increases are reasonable in all categories except for the bucket loader which in his opinion should be increased to \$100, not \$115. He's concerned this increase will not solve the issue and pointed out that there are trucks at the Water and Sewer Departments not being utilized.

Mr. Pepe asked what other towns are requiring for insurance. Mr. Monette said in his experience a \$1 million liability insurance is standard and that part of this issue is private plows can earn more working outside of a municipality. He noted it costs \$75 per hour to hire a truck just to deliver a load of gravel and we are asking private plows to go out in the middle of the night which takes a toll on the vehicle and the person. He would like to approve the rates as requested.

Mr. Ross mentioned a possible minimum payment guarantee, whether it snows or not. He noted that while working in other municipalities he has experienced various departments using employees and trucks with a charge back to the snow removal budget.

Dr. Hicks moved to approve the plow rates as requested for all except the bucket loader and to ask Mr. Butler to obtain quotes from a contractor willing to plow and adjust accordingly. The motion was not seconded.

After some discussion, Mr. Monette said he wants to approve the request of \$115 for the loader noting that the fuel and the amount of work involved cannot be overstated.

The motion was amended to approve the plow rates as requested by Mr. Tyler (Hicks/Monette) passed 5/0.

Mr. Tyler suggested developing a policy on plowing with the Water and Sewer Department. Dr. Hicks agreed, especially during a state of emergency.

Discussion: Initial FY2019 Budget

Mr. Ross asked the Board for feedback on the priorities for the FY19 Budget. He will look at numbers for a fulltime Town Accountant and to add additional funds into Stabilization.

Dr. Hicks wants to restore the services reduced in FY15 before making any new additions. Chairman Pepe agreed and added that he wants to ensure funding to cover the Firefighter salaries at the end of the grant and to utilize some funds to cover a portion of unfunded State mandates and pension costs.

Mr. Monette would like to ensure funding for public safety.

Mr. Woodbury is looking to review the FY18 Capital list at a future meeting and put additional funds into building maintenance. He also pointed out that National Grid is increasing pricing which will add an additional 2-3% to the cost of utilities.

Mr. Ross noted that the Library HVAC system can be completed in phases. He also mentioned that the Police Department is waiting for State funding for a School Resource Officer to come through. He will work with the Finance Committee to create procedures which automatically shift free cash to predetermined budget line items, including capital.

Appoint Voting Delegate for MIAA Annual Meeting

Mr. Ross reported that the MMA and MIAA annual meetings are being held January 19-20 and a voting delegate needs to be appointed. The delegate can be the Chair, the Administrator, or any other member the Board wishes to appoint.

A motion to appoint the Interim Administrator as the voting member for MMA and MIAA (Hicks/Monette) passed 5/0.

Town Administrator's Report:

Mr. Ross reported:

- Issues with the traffic change on Pleasant St. has caused some folks to drive in the wrong lane and advised people to drive with caution.

- He met with attorney Holland from KP Law on the Solar Agreement with Citizens Energy and said the agreement is straight forward and will meet with a representative from Citizens Energy this week.
- He authorized deficit spending for snow and ice today.
- He received the final draft of the salary survey from the Collins Center and noted that Spencer is in line with most areas, though some positions are at top of scale there is top notch talent. He is working on a spreadsheet showing the rates and plans to utilize a 1 to 7 step system rather than their recommendation of 1-15 steps. He will provide additional thoughts and recommendations by the next meeting.
- The Stormwater Bylaw requires the review of drainage and stormwater plans on single family homes associated with wetlands. Conservation is working to make this as efficient as possible.

Board Liaison Reports

- Chairman Pepe noted that the Building Reuse Committee is moving forward.
- Mr. Woodbury asked the Administrator to keep the Landfill Solar Committee in place.
- Mr. Monette met with Mr. Tyler regarding green space by the Sugden building and will meet with the engineer and architect and present to the Board.

Citizen Input

Barbara Grusell, 87 Jolicouer Ave said there is a 12 inch berm in road where Route 31 comes onto Cranberry Meadow Rd. and said the plows have broken it apart. Mr. Monette said that is only a base coat and will actually be a low profile berm when the final coat is complete.

Board Member and Staff Comments

Mr. Stevens asked about the process for the potential traffic hazard on High Street. Mr. Ross will discuss with Chief Darrin and if any change is recommend, the Boad would need to approve.

Dr. Hicks would like to present a certificate to the family of David O'Coin for serving the Town for forty years as Water Commissioner and would like his photo in Annual Town Report.

Mr. Woodbury will follow up with the Highway Department to request painting a temporary delineation at the intersection of Main and Pleasant Street. There was discussion about having a "no left turn arrow" installed to improve safety.

Mr. Pepe said he and Mr. Woodbury are committed to attacking blight and revitalizing the downtown area.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials - Private Snow Plowing Rates Comparison