



## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen**

Date: February 21, 2018 – Workshop  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA  
Present: Chairman Pepe (participating remotely), Vice Chair Woodbury, Members Stevens, Hicks and Interim Administrator Ross.  
Selectmen Monette was absent.

At 6:04 p.m. Vice Chair Woodbury called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Woodbury announced that Chairman Pepe would be participating remotely in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law due to geographic distance.

### **Joint Meeting with the Water Commissioners to appoint Robert Ferreira to fill the Water Commissioner Vacancy until the May 8, 2018 Annual Town Election**

The joint meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm.

Water Commissioners Eben Butler and Norman Letendre recommended Robert Ferreira to fill the vacancy on the Board of Water Commissioners until the May 8, 2018 Election.

*A motion to appoint Robert Ferreira to fill the Water Commissioner Vacancy until the May 8, 2018 Annual Town Election (Hicks/Stevens) passed 4/0 with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Stevens-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes; Butler-yes; Letendre-yes.*

The joint meeting was adjourned at 6:11 pm. All were in favor.

### **Update on Opportunity Zone Program – Town Planner Paul Dell'Aquila**

Town Planner Paul Dell'Aquila attended meeting on the Opportunity Zone program and reported that the program was just announced as part of the recent tax act. Census Tracts have been designated across the State and Spencer is well positioned to benefit from this program. Criteria included demographics, town planning, and identified opportunities in the community. Investors will receive capital gain incentives, which may appeal to investors interested in the Sugden building or the former Lake St. School. Additional details are coming.

*A motion to allow the Town Planner to apply for and support the Opportunity Zone program and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement (Hicks/Stevens) passed 4/0 with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Stevens-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes;*

### **Proposal for a Dog Park at Luther Hill Park - Parks & Rec Member Dennis Brunnett**

Parks & Rec member Dennis Brunnett presented a proposal for a dog park at Luther Hill Park. He reported that the mission is to establish a fenced in off-leash dog park to allow owners and dogs to have a safe place for recreation. Grant funding is available through the Stanton Foundation.

The Parks & Rec Committee wants to establish a dog park on an area at Luther Hill Park (LHP) of between 1 to 2 acres. In order to qualify for the grant, the Town needs to contribute the land, infrastructure and a 10% funding match. Once established, the ongoing maintenance cost is estimated at \$8,650 with an estimated revenue stream of \$9,200 with receipts from a \$2 increase per dog license fee and a nonresident fee of \$25 per year. The Berkshire Design Group has experience with designing dog parks in the State. Mr. Brunnett provided an overview of the process to move forward.

Parks & Rec member Bill Shemeth noted that the dog park as proposed would honor Mr. Luther's vision for Spencer when he donated the park. The Parks Commission fully supports this proposal.

Dr. Hicks noted that LHP beach closes each summer due to bacteria and some of this issue may stem from pet waste. It is possible this may help to control issues surrounding pet waste in the area.

There was discussion on how to you control people coming in from other communities and that the Police cannot be getting extra calls for activities at the proposed park. Mr. Brunnett said it will likely be self-policing with each dog required to have a tag. Security cameras will also help.

Mr. Woodbury noted that while the project is heading in the right direction, details need to be worked out.

Mr. Steven pointed out this type of park would set Spencer apart from other towns the area.

Mr. Brunnett said up to ten grants are awarded per year and he would like to submit an application by the end of March, if possible.

The Board asked him to determine the following: how many grants were awarded last year; can the Town apply for the planning grant without being on the hook for anything; is there a monetary value the Town would be responsible for if they decide not to move forward; details on other dog parks located near bodies of water.

U & F Superintendent Steven Tyler pointed out that LHP is a swimming location and any materials being utilized must be closely examined.

Sewer Commissioner Frank White mentioned that dog urine and other liquids could pose an issue with the water.

### **Review Police Department Policy Amendment Request from Chief Darrin**

Chief Darrin introduced an amendment to the Police Department's policy for handling the mentally ill. Changes include having the option whether or not to transport by ambulance, the option on the use handcuffs on a case by case basis, and logistical changes. The amended policy will be voted on at the March 12<sup>th</sup> Selectmen's meeting.

### **Discussion: Salary/Classification Study**

Mr. Woodbury recused himself from the discussion and left the room.

Mr. Ross reported that a Classification and Compensation study was part of Community Compact grant agreement and entered into with the UMass Boston Collins Center over a year ago. The Study looked at wages and the Collins center generated a report with recommendations for pay grades and steps to attract and retain people working for the Town. The salaries for most positions were on target, while a few were on the low end and a few on the higher end.

Mr. Ross put together a plan consisting of 8 grades and 8 steps. The movement for each step is based on length of employment and a positive employee evaluation. If the Town moves forward with the recommendations, the cost is approximately \$80,000. This Study does not impact any Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA). There is a clause in the clerical unit CBA that allows them to request bargaining on wages if the study indicates they have something to address.

Dr. Hicks asked if people with salaries that came in on the low end will be placed where they should have been since day one and indicated that the COA Director is underpaid and needs to be brought up to the level of her peers. Mr. Ross said they would receive an increase under that plan; however there will be room to move people up to the top as well. He asked the Board to let him know how they'd like to move forward.

Mr. Stevens asked about flexibility for increases based on performance and to reward exceptional performance. Mr. Ross said the Department Head can make a recommendation to the Town Administrator and an extraordinary evaluation may permit being moved up from a step 3 to a step 5, for example.

Mr. Pepe said he is in agreement with the Administrator's suggestions. Mr. Ross said he will work with the new Administrator on how to move forward; ultimately it will end up on the Town Meeting Warrant. The Board will vote on the Classification Study at the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Jim Letendre, Christine Mancini and Mary Williams, members of the COA were present. Ms. Mancini pointed out that the pay scale for the COA Director position needs to be competitive enough to attract people for the long-haul and requested when setting the current Director's salary schedule to consider that she's been in position for 14 years and meets all education requirements. Ms. Williams said there was discussion that an increase would be retroactive for one year.

Mr. Ross said he met with the COA Director Woodbury to discuss adjusting her salary and moving her to a fair and appropriate step.

The Board is satisfied with the recommendations and would like to see a memo on how to implement with a chart of where people will be in the schedule.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm. All were in favor by roll call.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie  
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials – Dog Park Proposal; Police Dept. Policy Amendment; Salary Classification Study