



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

Date: February 26, 2018 – Business Meeting

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA

Present: Chairman Pepe, Vice Chair Woodbury,  
Members Stevens and Hicks, and Interim Administrator Ross  
Mr. Monette was absent

At 6:00 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**

None

### **Communications:**

Mr. Woodbury announced that a retirement celebration will be held for Police Sergeant George Edwards on April 6<sup>th</sup> at the Salem Cross Inn

### **Citizen Input**

William Shemeth III, 6 Dale St. said that Sergeant Edwards helped the Town through difficult times and expressed his appreciation for his service.

### **Old Business**

#### **Update on the Mass Division of Local Services Financial Policy Recommendations**

Finance Committee Chair Mary Braney reported that the Committee discussed the policy recommendations by the DLS and is considering two articles for Town Meeting: 1) readopt MGL 32 section 20, which has been modernized; and 2) adopt the prudent investor law.

DLS also recommends that the Town adopt an article to reduce the amount of time the Treasurer/Collector needs to wait to place a hold on permits if taxes are owed. At one time municipalities were required to wait for an entire year and this allows a hold to be placed when taxes are owed within a shorter timeframe.

### **New Business**

#### **Action Item: Vote to Join the Opioid Civil Suit against Opioid Drug Manufacturers and Distributors**

Mr. Ross reported that law firms are going after drug manufacturers and distributors to stop opioids from being overprescribed. He advised the Board to join the civil suit as there is no direct cost to the Town, unless there's an award.

*A motion to join the Opioid Civil Suit against Opioid Drug Manufacturers and Distributors (Hicks/Woodbury) passed 4/0.*

#### **Action Item: Appointment of a Select Board Member to Serve on the SEBRSD Agreement Study Committee**

Dr. Hicks reported that the SEBRSD agreement needs to be renewed and East Brookfield is in agreement. Chairman Pepe will speak with Mr. Monette about being the Board's representative on this committee.

*A motion to Appointment Mr. Monette to serve on the SEBRSD Agreement Study Committee (Hicks/Woodbury) passed 4/0.*

Dr. Hicks is willing to assist Mr. Monette as an alternate member.

### **Review SEBRSD FY19 Preliminary Budget & Possible Vote on Assessment**

Dr. Hicks noted that increases in Special Education and Out-of-District Placements are a large part of the budget increase.

Kara Westerman, Director of Special Education Services reported that as of June, 2014 Spencer had nine students in the English as a Second Language (ESL) and that number has since increased to fifty-two students in 2017. The State is not providing the required funding and this is creating an additional strain on the budget. Compliance issues in this area need to be addressed. There is a request for a fulltime Speech Language Assistant; a second Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA); a special education teacher and aides, and a nurse for Wire Village. A partner's classroom program is being looked into to provide programs in-house. There are currently four special education teachers at Wire Village School.

Dr. Hicks noted that these items need to be added or the situation will morph into a larger issue.

Chairman Pepe said the issue of being brought into compliance should be addressed first. He pointed out that the Board must balance services for the entire Town, which incurred devastating reductions in FY15. Restorations are being made gradually and he asked the District to make use of opportunities to do the same.

Comptroller Suter reported that the proposed budget includes \$1 million in increases, in addition to salaries and \$450,000 in health insurance costs. Otherwise, it's a level service budget.

Dr. Hicks noted that bus routes could be reduced to save on transportation cost.

Additional discussion on the budget and capital will take place at the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Action Item: Vote to Approve the Request of Mary Queen of the Rosary for a Special One-day Alcohol License for their Annual St. Patrick's Day Event**

*A motion to approve the Request of Mary Queen of the Rosary for a Special One-day Alcohol License for their Annual St. Patrick's Day Event (Hicks/Stevens) passed 4/0.*

### **Town Administrator Report**

#### **FY2019 Budget Update**

Mr. Ross reported that the budget is moving along. He met with the Town's liability insurance agent and was informed that there will be a 3% increase in liability insurance. They also discussed insurance costs for the Landfill Solar project. He met with each Department Head to review their budgets.

#### **FY2019 Initial Capital Outlay Requests**

Capital Committee will begin the review process on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Update on the Landfill Solar Project with Citizens Energy**

Mr. Ross will meet with Citizen's Energy to finalize the lease agreement.

## **Board Liaison Reports**

Chairman Pepe reported that the Economic Development Committee met recently and discussed the Opportunity Grant, façade program, events at fairgrounds, and a blight study.

Mr. Stevens announced that his son has arrived back in the States from his deployment in Afghanistan. He thanked all for their prayers and interest. The Board thanked offered their thanks for his service.

## **Citizen Input**

Mr. Shemeth said he appreciates the assistance from Bill Ross on behalf of the Finance Committee and Parks & Rec. He suggested a park at a vacant lot be considered as a focus of the CDBG.

Mr. Atchue, Meadow Rd., thanked Mr. Ross for stepping in during the transition of a new Town Administrator. He asked about littering fines in Town, noting it is getting out of hand with mattresses, couches, and TV's being dumped. He suggests implementing a \$2,500 fine if anyone is caught dumping and a reward be provided to anyone who reports it.

## **Board Member and Staff Comments**

Mr. Ross reported that dam work at the Fish & Game is complete. Margaret Washburn provided a report to the Fish & Game notifying them of their responsibility to open and close the dam valve.

Mr. Gregory will be officially onboard on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Ross said he enjoyed working in Spencer and with the Board. The Board appreciated having his expertise during the transition and thanked him for his assistance.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie  
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials- DLS policies; SEBRSD draft budget,