



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: November 4, 2019 – Business Meeting
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Vice Chair Monette, Clerk Berthiaume,
Selectman Hicks and Woodbury, and Administrator Gregory.
Chairman Pepe participated remotely.

Vice-chair Monette called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance

A moment of silence was observed in honor of Raymond Bosse and Richard Fiske, both have faithfully served the community.

Announcement

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

Dr. Hicks announced that Selectmen Pepe will be participating remotely in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law. All votes will be taken by roll call.

Meeting Minutes

Vote to approve the Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes October 21, 2019 (Woodbury/Hicks) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Communications

None

Citizen Input

Kurt Nordquist, Gale Drive, said was upset to learn that the individual responsible for the motor vehicle crash which fatally injured Kenneth Wheeler was not sentenced in accordance with the seriousness of the crime, and instead was given probation and a \$250 fine. Dr. Hicks also saw the report and noticed how inadequate the sentence was. He asked the Administrator to send a letter to the Judge in the case expressing the Board's concern over the inappropriate sentence, given the serious nature of the crime.

New Business

Tax Classification Public Hearing 6:00 p.m. - Review & Act on the Tax Classification for FY2020

At 6:03 pm a motion to open the hearing (Woodbury/Berthiaume) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Principal Assessor Linda LeBlanc presented options for the FY 2020 Tax Classification which include a Minimum Residential Factor/Single or Split Tax Rate; option to grant an Open Space

Discount; option to grant a Residential Exemption; and option to grant a Small Commercial Exemption.

A motion to keep the tax rate for Minimum Residential Factor of One/Single Tax Rate (Hicks/Berthiaume) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Mr. Monette would like to look at the tax base next year to consider increasing taxes on non-owner-occupied commercial apartment houses to shift some of the burden. Ms. LeBlanc said all apartments are considered residential and cannot be classified differently.

A motion to close the hearing at 6:10 pm (Berthiaume/Hicks) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Al Atchue, Meadow Road, indicated he would like to see a presentation on the screen next year. There were no other comments from the public.

Public Hearing - FY2018 Community Development Block Grant Program

A motion to open the hearing at 6:11 p.m. (Berthiaume/Woodbury) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Ted Harvey, Senior Planner with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) reported that this is the seconded public hearing for the FY2018 Grant and is being held as a requirement for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding process. Current activities include engineering design for improvements for Cherry/Wall/ /Lloyd Dyer and housing rehab. Rehab availability is estimated at between twelve to fourteen units. Currently there are five applications in process and any others interested may apply with PVPC.

A motion to close the hearing at 6:17 p.m. (Berthiaume/Hicks) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

National Grid Pole Hearing - Act on Request of National Grid to Install (1) JO Pole on Sherwood Drive Plan #28644145

A motion to open the public hearing at 6:18 p.m. (Woodbury/ Berthiaume) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Laura Napolitano, representing National Grid reported that the new pole installation request is to reduce excessive distance on Sherwood Drive and will also replace the existing anchor.

A motion to approve the request as discussed (Woodbury/Berthiaume) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

A motion to close the public hearing at 6:19 p.m. (Woodbury/Berthiaume) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Review & Act on the Common Victualler's License Application of Lisa Gilman d/b/a Haymakers Grille to be located at 152 Main Street

Lisa Gilman was present to request a Common Victualler's License for a breakfast and lunch restaurant at 152 Main Street.

A motion to approve the Common Victualler's License Application of Lisa Gilman d/b/a Haymakers Grille (Hicks/Berthiaume) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Review and Act on SEBRSD Notice to Appropriate \$400,000 from Excess & Deficiency for the Purpose of Funding the DPHS Feasibility Study

A motion to approve the appropriation of \$400,000 from Excess & Deficiency for the Purpose of Funding the DPHS Feasibility Study (Woodbury/Berthiaume) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Review and Act on the Adoption of the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plan

Town Planner Paul Dell'Aquila and CMRPC Associate Planner Peter Peloquin were present to provide background on the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Mr. Dell'Aquila reported that the Hazard Mitigation process began three years ago in order to establish actions which would reduce risks through identifying the greatest hazards such as floods, wind, and severe storms. Adopting the Plan will allow the Town to receive future grant funding.

Mr. Peloquin noted that Hazard Mitigation involves Public Safety, Highway, and other departments working together to make improvements, including drainage and culverts; working on a transportation evacuation plan; and relocating vulnerable citizens to a shelter or other safe space.

Reggie Gerard said he owns property at the bottom of Cherry and Mechanic Street and since the new drainage was installed, the basement is continually flooding. Mr. Gregory will check with Mr. Krukowski to determine what action needs to be taken.

A motion to adopt the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plan (Hicks/Berthiaume) passed with roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes, Woodbury-yes.

Review and Act on Senior Center Occupancy Issue

Fire Chief Parsons and Alternate Building Inspector Will Cassanelli were present.

Chief Parsons reported the change of use for the Maple St. School from educational use to use as a Senior Center, the storage of clothing donations, and a request for the storage of bingo supplies, all of which have created safety concerns. He met with the State Fire Marshall and clarified it is a building code issue, not a fire code issue. The State Building Inspector instructed Alternate Building Inspector Cassanelli to authorize use of the cafeteria level only. Chief Parsons met with an Architect from Context Studios to review the report on the building from 2017, which at that time, referenced the installation of a sprinkler system. The Architect will perform further analysis and provide a definitive answer on the need for the sprinkler system. The estimated cost is \$285,000, and since the building is in good shape otherwise, he recommends a system be installed.

Alternate Building Inspector Will Cassenelli noted that \$285,000 is a rough estimate. Whenever a change of use occurs, it triggers the need for major items, such as a sprinkler system. There was never a Certificate of Occupancy in the building. All public buildings must be inspected and are required to have a valid Certificate of Occupancy.

Dr. Hicks said the 60-person capacity cannot continue. Seniors are entitled to have a Senior Center.

Mr. Woodbury noted that the Town needs to spend the money on the sprinklers on behalf of the seniors, who deserve a safe space.

Mr. Monette said the decision is being forced on the Town and believes the Board and residents need to work together to protect the Town. In the end, the goal is to have a building equal to or better than the current one.

COA Chair Christine Mancini read a statement outlining how far the Senior Center has come over the years, from an inadequate space at the Fish and Game to the current building. Closing the first floor will cause a disruption in the progress and will impact many who rely on the socialization the Senior Center offers. A long-term solution is needed to continue the legacy.

Dr. Hicks advised continuing the discussion at the next meeting, after the report on the sprinklers comes back from the Architect. If required, a funding request could be made at a Special Town Meeting, or Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Gregory noted that the \$285,000 estimate does not include site work necessary to connect to the building, or an upgrade for the fire alarm, which when factored in brings the estimate closer to \$300,000. \$30,000 will be needed from the current budget to arrange for plans to be drawn up for an RFP.

Mr. Pepe asked if anything beyond the sprinkler system is needed in the building. Chief Parsons said no.

The Board agreed to continue discussion until the next meeting.

Town Administrator's Report

Review Motions for Special Town Meeting Warrant

Motion assignments for the Warrant Articles were reviewed.

Review Special Town Meeting Calendar

The calendar was reviewed.

Board Liaison Reports

Chairman Pepe said the EDC met to discuss outreach for downtown revitalization.

As liaison to SBAC, Dr. Hicks indicated he would like to have a discussion on battery storage for solar facilities on the November 18th agenda.

Mr. Dell'Aquila pointed out that there is one project with battery storage currently going through the process and it cannot be changed midstream.

Citizen Input

Bob Cerba, 23 Summit Street, said the needs of senior citizens are last on the list and wants that to change.

Frank White, Sewer Commissioner said he is aware of the water issue at Mechanic and Cherry St., with water going into the sewer system.

Chris Woodbury, 4 Briar Cliff Lane, said the Senior Center is a gem and needs to be properly fixed.

Board Member and Staff Comments

Mr. Woodbury noted that a tree lighting and Christmas Caroling will take place on November 30 at the green space by the Sugden Building from 5 to 8 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: Tax Classification Presentation; N. Grid Pole Petition, Common Vic License App, SEBRSD Notice; FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plan; Senior Center Occupancy Issue Notice from Building Inspector; STM Warrant Motions