

Board of Selectmen Meeting:
William Belden Training Room
Acting Chairman: Edmund Jaworski

April 17, 2018 @ 6:00 p.m.
Approved: May 29, 2018

CALL TO ORDER 6:00 p.m.

Announcements-

Selectman Moriarty was not in attendance due to a death in the family. Selectman Jaworski said the Board sends condolences. He announced that Smith Academy would present the musical, Shrek this week. Ms. Michonski noted that she is invited to Smith Academy for a Community Partners event promoting internships.

No one was present for Public Forum.

Approval of Minutes

Selectman Jaworski moved to approve the minutes of April 12, 2018. Selectman Doty read the minutes and seconded. The motion was approved.

AP Warrant

Selectman Jaworski moved to approve voucher 1038 for \$82,946.12. Selectman Doty seconded. The motion was approved.

Water/Sewer Abatement

Mr. Genovese has approved this for abatement. Selectman Doty moved to approve an abatement of \$593.70 for 115 Elm Street. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Posted Business

Class II Application - Big B's Auto Body

After discussion with owner, Brandon LeBlanc, Selectman Doty moved to approve the Big B's Auto Body Class II license application. This business is located at 4B Linseed. Selectman Jaworski seconded and the motion was approved.

Town Administrator Report

Ms. Michonski said a letter from HCOG is in the packet. They are assessing their structure and will contact her with more information.

Discussion concerning the ballot question combining the treasurer and collector into 1 position and making that position appointed resulted in Selectman Jaworski moving to put it as one question. He read the question and said it would be for the town to determine. Selectman Doty seconded. There being no further discussion the motion was approved.

The Board discussed an email from the Town Clerk and from the Police Chief, proposing an amendment to the town bylaws and the addition of a new section pertaining to political or campaign signs. Selectman Jaworski moved to agree to the town clerk's request to see if the town will vote to amend the town bylaws, and read the proposed bylaw. Selectman Doty seconded for discussion. Mr. Genovese said it's a maintenance nightmare. Selectman Jaworski said this has 2 parts, because it involves town roads but the rules for routes 5 & 10 are different. He said this concerns impairing drivers' sightline. The motion carried.

The Board took a short break at 6:20 p.m. to await the arrival of the Finance Committee.

The meeting resumed when Finance Committee members arrived, Ms. Betsy Rider, Mr. Shawn Robinson, Mr. Paul Fisher, and Mr. Darryl Williams.

Ms. Michonski said Terry Williams, DOR, may come out and walk the Finance Committee through the use of the budget spreadsheet. She said we need to have all our debt plugged in. Special Town Meeting figures were not formatted.

Budget

Mr. Geser said everything is up to Mr. Cole now. Mr. Williams said he is still hoping for May 1st. FY2017 may not be audited by May 1st. Mr. Geser is to go through miscellaneous revenue, and is in the process of closing the books, and straightening out some debt issues. Mr. Cole is expected Thursday at the financial management team meeting. Mr. Robinson wants an email update after Thursday.

Selectman Jaworski turned the meeting over to Mr. Williams, Finance Committee Chair. He said some items from the last meeting were to be addressed: departments were asked to come back with 1% and 2% reductions. Also, the budget for FY19 is \$293,000.00 over the levy limit. Grant anticipation loans were to be addressed by Ms. Palmisano and Ms. Strzegowski.

Ms. Michonski discussed with the Finance Committee and Board the effects that percentage reductions would have on departments and the levy limit. Also discussed was \$45,000.00 in revenue mentioned in a letter distributed by the Fire Chief.

Mr. Robinson said he thought the \$50,000.00 should stay where it is. This was discussed with Mr. Williams saying they want us under the levy limit. Mr. Fisher said free cash is the answer to our current financial troubles. The 2% reduction would put us \$59,000.00 under the levy limit. Ms. Michonski said Mr. Cole recommended adding \$50,000.00 to our excess capacity after he looked at the workbook.

Mr. Geser and Ms. Michonski suggested options around the snow & ice deficit. Finance Committee discussed having Baystate Municipal Accounting direct what should be done. Selectman Jaworski asked if Mr. Cole could stay until the Board of Selectmen meeting after his meeting with the financial team on Thursday.

Discussion between Mr. Genovese and finance committee members focused on the vehicle lease program. When suggested the elimination of the program temporarily Stephen Gaughan, Fire Chief expressed opposition in putting it off because it's infrastructure and said we need a police car, and ambulance breakages are costly to repair.

Mr. Genovese described the lease as being up in January. It is \$31,000 every year and this year the request was for 2 cruisers and a pick-up truck. Without it the police vehicles will have to be repaired. It will not pass inspection, and there is no money budgeted for repairs. He said he has cut the cleaning service because the building will be under construction and perhaps the school janitors could do 5/hours per week. Mr. Genovese asked why he was being asked to cut more than the \$20,000.00 he was originally asked to cut. Mr. Williams asked to talk about other options knowing how hard it was to get the lease program through. Mr. Genovese said he has a DEP mandated item for which he must plead for another year.

Mr. Williams informed that the school committee is meeting on the 23rd to discuss what they would be cutting. Mike Paszek said a 2% cut would be some programs and 2 teachers. Mr. Williams said that any cuts that eliminate positions would necessitate money to go into unemployment. Mr. Robinson suggested a 2% cut except for education.

The possibility of the release of free cash by the Department of Revenue was discussed. Ideas were floated regarding the possibility of delaying the budget or Annual Town Meeting. It was expressed that the hope that free cash if released by DOR could be used to take care of some of the budget issues, possibly to pay some of the loans, and the rest could be put into stabilization.

Mr. Williams said if DOR will release some free cash the town could possibly pay some of the loans. There was discussion regarding splitting Annual Town Meeting with warrant articles to be taken up during session 1 and the budget and money articles at session 2. Mr. Robinson said using free cash for operating is one of the things you don't do. He suggested cuts to DPW expenses. Health insurance options were also discussed and Ms. Strzegowski explained the town's participation in Hampshire COG insurance trust which absorbs some of the cost. Alternative insurance plans and flexible spending were briefly discussed. Ms. Rider asked if she could talk to the COG.

There was brief discussion around borrowings with Ms. Palmisano. She talked about amounts associated with Phase 2 Renovation and for a second external ramp. The amount of 1.325 million will be on the tax rate in 2020. Mr. Williams said the million is debt excluded.

Ms. Szych asked if any of the Finance Committee could make the meeting with Mr. Cole. Options were discussed for possible 1% and 2% cuts. If the town gets free cash then cuts could be restored. Mr. Genovese said DOR is looking for us to be under the levy limit. Ms. Szych discussed with the Board and Finance Committee the possibility of having Annual Town Meeting in 2 parts with a second section to go over money items. A 1% reduction as Plan B could be shown to DOR on Thursday. Selectman Jaworski said it had been a very good discussion, and now we have time to think about it. Ms. Michonski said DOR wants to see us get our financial management in order.

Ms. Michonski described budget items for health insurance, and Baystate Municipal Accounting. At ATM we cannot take care of current year budget items. Mr. Williams suggested coming back at 6:30 Thursday. Ms. Michonski talked about the town upgraded server and software programs that need migration. She said migration is not covered under the Assesspro agreement. Ms. Strzegowski said we're migrating away from Stratus for online payments.

Finance Committee discussed a \$1,000.00 amount requested to transfer from finance reserve to the IT budget. Mr. Robinson moved to make the transfer with Mr. Fisher seconding the motion. All voting in favor the motion carried. Mr. Robinson requested electronic copies of the budget. Ms. Rider requested a copy of the warrant. Mr. Robinson moved to adjourn the Finance Committee. Mr. Fisher seconded the motion. The Finance Committee meeting then adjourned at 8:10pm.

Continuing with their meeting the Board of Selectmen read and discussed the warrant articles. Article 2, to refund \$46,000.00 to CPC was deferred from last year; this item could perhaps be for a second session of Annual Town Meeting. There are articles to combine the collector and treasurer positions. Ms. Szych said this should mimic the exact language of the ballot. Additionally, there is an article to allow a town government study to increase the 3 member Board of Selectmen to 5 members.

Other articles addressed possible amendment to the zoning bylaws to allow for recreational marijuana and allow for imposing a 3% sales tax on it. Additionally, there were articles addressing prior year bills and the possible transfer of money from ambulance surplus.

Mr. Geser said he will talk to Mr. Cole about surplus going back into the budget and if it needs to be voted the same day.

Ms. Michonski then discussed with the Board a possible Special Town Meeting and a draft warrant. Ms. Szych said the warrant should be designated session 1, or session 2 with no second date on the warrant in case the session 2 can be taken up that night. Session 1 articles can be taken up and then assigned a date. This is to be passed by town counsel.

Selectman Doty moved to adjourn. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion being approved the meeting ended at 8:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ki J. Eno
Executive Assistant