

Board of Selectmen Meeting
Memorial Town Hall

4-4-17
Approved: June 7, 2017

Selectman Edmund Jaworski
Selectman Brian Moriarty
Ms. Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator

Selectman Moriarty opened the meeting at 6:04pm

Selectman Jaworski announced that he attended the Selectmen's Association meeting where the topic was recreational marijuana. He reported that many towns are asking for a 1 year moratorium. If no bylaws are in place by 4-1-18 then applications will be automatically granted. He attended an additional meeting with Emergency Management Director, Cindy Doty where Eversource cautioned home generators owners to use a transfer switch because thousands of volts are involved. He also reported that Eversource had restored power to over 90% of those affected in Conway.

Selectman Moriarty thanked the Department of Public Works Director Mr. Genovese and the crew who represented as an honor guard for Warren Cows killed by a train in East Longmeadow.

Public Forum-

David Kier, of 86 Bridge St, athletic director at Smith Academy expressed concern regarding access to the playing fields at Center School and asked if there is a plan in place for access after the school is sold. Selectman Moriarty said the purchase & sale includes rights of way of the town to the fields written in. Town counsel has also been asked to verify that both parties are on board regarding expectation around access for safety and upkeep. Ms. Michonski asked if Mr. Kier had seen the RFP as it was written to require easements. Selectman Moriarty said access to the fields has always been part of the process. More information is to follow.

Minutes

Selectman Jaworski moved to approved minutes of 2-28-17. Selectman Moriarty seconded. The motion was approved.

Police Department Appointment

Sgt. Clint Philips recommended appointee Matthew Miazga as a qualified candidate for a part time officer position.

Selectman Moriarty moved to appoint Matthew Miazga as part time officer. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved. Selectman Jaworski said he was impressed by Mr. Miazga's credentials.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Draft

Selectman Moriarty noted this is just a draft of the articles. Ms. Michonski added an amended zoning map regarding Helena Chemical rezoning from rural residential to business. An additional citizen's petition is on pg. 7; it would increase the Board of Selectmen from 3 to 5 members.

Ms. Michonski also added an article to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition for special legislation to create a combined treasurer/collector position. Selectman Moriarty said the majority of articles are the same year to year. Selectman Moriarty read an article requesting the Board of Selectmen be increased from 3 to 5 but with no member being allowed to serve more than 2 terms, or more than 6 years. He thanked Ms. Michonski for her work.

Town Administrator

Regarding the Water/Sewer 2nd half Billing Commitment, Ms. Michonski said she had expected that this would be in the packet. Selectman Moriarty said the Board could vote on this at the next meeting.

There being no further items to be taken up under old business or unanticipated new business, Selectman Moriarty moved to adjourn until 6:30PM at which time the Board will reconvene. Selectman Jaworski seconded. All voting in favor, the meeting ended 6:22PM.

Finance Committee – Discussion of the FY18 budget

Mr. Fran Gougeon, Mr. Sean Barry, Mr. Shawn Robinson, Mr. Paul Fisher

Accountant, Derek Geser, and Phil Genovese, Director, Department of Public Works

Ms. Michonski, Mr. Geser and Ms. Bertram had conference a call with Tom Scanlon today. Selectman Jaworski was also there. The call was to discuss the status of FY16 and where we are with FY17. Schedule A is not filed and local aid payments are being withheld as of March. In order for us to submit Schedule A and balance sheet, information is needed from the Treasurer. Ms. Bertram is having someone come in to work with her. Mr. Geser said Mr. Scanlon will come in the 24th & 25th to work to get documents together.

Mr. Geser said we are submitting a balance sheet but it doesn't balance because of cash variances. Ms. Bertram has been given names of some people who can help by Tom Scanlon. Selectman Moriarty said he did not know how a couple of hours on a couple of Fridays can do 6 months of work. Ms. Bertram will just go with the help that's being offered.

The Board and Finance Committee discussed the possible assistance of Tom Scanlon or Joe Boudreau for the Treasurer and Accountant. Ms. Bertram said Mr. Scanlon has also suggested people she might reach out to. She said clerical help is a key factor in this. Mr. Robinson said something radical must be done to address this issue. Selectman Moriarty said the Board needs to know her progress after Friday. He said this is beyond an all hands on deck. Selectman Jaworski said this was discussed 2 weeks ago.

Mr. Robinson asked about payroll services which were discussed last year. Ms. Bertram said the cost is prohibitive though a lockbox services for payments would be 8-10k/year. Ms. Bertram clarified that we would still have to do all the withholdings and deductions. She said there are big benefits to having payroll in-house. This was discussed with Ms. Bertram saying it would possibly save a day a week for 18k.

Ms. Michonski noted we should have received a local aid payment in March. Mr. Scanlon will be coming 4-24th & 25th. Mr. Robinson said at that point we would not have gotten March, April and possibly May's payment. Mr. Geser said they should turn it back on in May.

There was discussion around Ms. Bertram's plan to have Easthampton's Treasurer assist her for 2 Fridays. Mr. Robinson asked for an email at the end of the day Friday for an update. Mr. Gougeon wondered if this would still be seen as an issue for Hatfield after last year. Selectman Jaworski said he is not sure our software is being utilized to its fullest and asked who we could get to come in and tell us what we need for our town. Ms. Michonski said that is a Paragus strategic goal.

There was discussion of outsource financial services with Mr. Robinson saying the town needs to look at this as an option and include payroll. Mr. Geser said the size of a town doesn't dictate reporting requirements to the State. Some comparisons were made to Hadley which has secretarial support for its Police department.

Selectman Moriarty addressed Ms. Bertram's plan to obtain the assistance of Easthampton's Treasurer, saying for as much help as she offers she will only be here twice. Mr. Fisher said this is a crisis and he could not understand why we're not getting someone to work nights. Mr. Barry said the issue is you need someone with specific experience. Mr. Geser answered a question from Mr. Robinson that is the town submits we get local aid even if there are issues. Mr. Barry said it's a matter of keeping DOR satisfied that we're trying to get things done.

Ms. Michonski noted that Mr. Geser's report contains a number of funds that can be closed out with @10k coming back to the general fund for FY17. Mr. Geser gave an example of a small Board of Health grant. He is trying to condense everything down so reconciliation is quicker. Ms. Michonski noted also that on the budget sheet new growth was updated to 75k in FY18.

Mr. Gougeon said a 1.5% COLA would still be under the levy limit. Mr. Gougeon said the 2nd phase of the water line from Chestnut to Gore is a borrowing. It will cost 1.9 mil to go from Gore to the center of town. The chapter 90 figure is \$222,371. Regarding Mr. Genovese's additional money, the contractual agreement is the salary but the school contributes a portion of it. COLA for DPW union workers was discussed. It is 1.5, 1.5 and 2 % over 3 years.

Mr. Gougeon said you never got COLA on top of salary increase. Two percent is to be put in 2% as a marker and it can be adjusted if necessary. Ms. Michonski asked that the Finance Committee consider the merit increases she recommended. Mr. Robinson said he thinks that opens up a can of worms. Selectman Moriarty asked to start with free cash. There was brief discussion regarding taxes and spending to the levy limit.

Ms. Michonski talked about her requested versus recommended budget. Continuing discussion about Ms. Michonski's requested merit increases she said there had been a similar discussion last year which would have including adding a single line to the budget. Mr. Gougeon said having a merit system with no money available just frustrates everyone. Mr. Barry said we need to be doing performance evaluations. Selectman Moriarty noted there's also the possibility of bonuses.

Discussion continued around merit increases, title changes, position reclassifications and the requests for more admin support across all departments. The concept of a floater was also discussed. Mr. Barry asked who had submitted requests.

Mr. Barry asked what Ms. Michonski thinks the best solution would be as two of the highest paid folks in town say they need secretarial help which means that they are doing secretarial work. She answered that there is a need and she wants to look at this over the next 6 months. Mr. Gougeon has done some comparables, i.e. looked at Hadley, and they are much more highly staffed than Hatfield. Mr. Barry noted this is coming up over and over. Mr. Fisher said clearly our financial house needs to get in order. Mr. Robinson said he sees 2 full time people, with benefits to modernize town government and get caught up. Mr. Gougeon said assessing the need is critical. Mr. Robinson noted Ms. Michonski and the BOS need to lead that process and that can't be done without freeing up her time. Mr. Barry asked if she could come up with an idea in the next couple of weeks and Ms. Michonski said she could. Selectman Jaworski asked about temps or a consultant. Selectman Moriarty said he agreed with Mr. Barry that the highest paid employees shouldn't be doing non-managerial jobs.

Mr. Gougeon suggested bringing all departments and staff together to brainstorm and come up with a scale of who needs help the most. Selectman Moriarty said that could fluctuate.

Mr. Robinson asked if it is realistic to expect this before Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Fisher said Ms. Bertram and Mr. Geser have already made a pitch for additional assistance. Mr. Genovese said he heads the second largest department and now has to submit the bills for the facilities. He took a little survey himself and sent it to some fin members. Hadley's DPW has 2 secretarial staff to assist. Finance Committee did not disagree with Mr. Genovese's need. Mr. Genovese reiterated it's a need, not a wish. Selectman Moriarty asked why Mr. Genovese is inputting all the bills. Ms. Michonski said department heads are responsible for putting bills on bill schedules.

There was discussion regarding the duties of Wilma Davis. Munis, Tyler and Zobrio software systems were briefly discussed. Ms. Michonski said in the future departments will enter their own invoices themselves. Mr. Fisher said we own Tyler but don't use it to its capacity. Mr. Geser said training will be involved here. Mr. Robinson said this is a part of modernizing government. Discussion then turned to a proposed increase of two administrative support positions. Mr. Fisher said however many there are they need to be under the Town Administrator. It was suggested that if Mr. Geser has a full time administrative assistant then Ms. Davis could be used elsewhere. Mr. Robinson we have significantly increased our assistance to the financial departments. Mr. Geser we're making strides now and trying not to fall behind.

Discussion continued around the need for additional resources. Mr. Geser took exception to the idea of a floater as someone else may decide if he needed help during a particular week. Mr. Gougeon said we know we need at least 2 people. Mr. Barry suggested having someone look at the operation and staffing levels from a place that's working so the town will know what's reasonable. It was suggested that a comparison with Hadley be put together as it is the only other small town with a k-12 school system. Mr. Barry said there is a baseline amount of work regardless of the size of the town. Mr. Gougeon is to work on that with Ms. Michonski. Selectman Moriarty said it's good to have a comparable. He said there has to be discussion about department heads that came in for salary increases

Ms. Michonski said the warrant and budget are usually available the week before town meeting – so basically May 1st. Mr. Robinson said perhaps merit raises could be looked at but we should wait on what we're going to do. Ms. Michonski is to have a plan for modernizing town hall. Selectman Moriarty said it does not have to be called a merit raise. Mr. Robinson if we do hire new people then maybe 1 of the longer term people can get a bump.

Mr. Fisher suggested a group update with Ms. Bertram here at the start of the meeting to talk about whatever happens on Friday. Selectman Moriarty said we are to meet next Tuesday. There is a Finance Committee meeting at 6:30 on the 11th.

Selectman Moriarty moved to adjourn. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved. The meeting ended at 8:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ki J. Eno
Executive Assistant