

Board of Selectmen Meeting
Memorial Town Hall

12-12-17
5:30pm

Approved

1-3-18

Present:

Chairman Brian Moriarty
Selectman Cindy A. Doty
Selectman Edmund Jaworski
Ms. Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator

Also present: Treasurer/Collector Laura Lee Bertram, Sharon Strzegowski, Assistant Treasurer, Mike Cahill, Bob Flaherty, Board of Heath Chair Kerry Flaherty, Town Accountant Derek Geser, Town Clerk Lydia Szych, Phil Genovese, DPW Director, Tony Lastowski, DPW Highway/Water Superintendent, Finance Committee members Paul Fisher, Edwina Palmisano, and Elisabeth Rider.

Selectman Moriarty opened the meeting at 5:30pm.

Announcements: Chairman Moriarty reminded the viewers that the Luminarium will be held this Sunday, 12/17/17, beginning at 4:30pm. A complete schedule can be found on the Town's website at www.townofhatfield.org or on the Hatfield Facebook page.

Home delivery service is now being offered by the Hatfield Public Library for town residents who are home-bound due to illness, injury or lack of transportation. For more information, please call 413-247-9097 or email hatfieldpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

The Hatfield Elementary School winter Concert will be 12/21 at 1pm. All are welcome. The HES Chorus will be caroling in Hatfield on Wednesday 12/20 from 1pm – 2:30pm.

Ms. Doty announced that the Historical Society will be taking over the Luminarium next year.

Public Forum - Town Clerk Lydia Szych announced that annual census forms will be going out shortly, and encouraged everyone to fill them out and return them. By law we are required to follow up on any forms that are not returned, and this costs money and time. She thanks you in advance for your cooperation.

Approval of Minutes Meeting minutes of 11/15/17 - motion to approve was made by Selectman Jaworski, seconded by Ms. Doty; there was the following discussion:

- Selectman Jaworski asked if the letter had been sent regarding routes 5 and 10 to support the sewer extension to Representatives Kocot and Rosenberg. Chairman Moriarty reminded the audience that there was a report or study that was done a few years ago and the Town Administrator said she had not yet located this report.
- Ms. Doty mentioned that the front steps of the Town Hall are moving and people should be careful on them. The leaves were removed and there are animals living in the steps. She also mentioned that it would be a good idea to reach out to the Building Inspector prior to renovations being done, in regards to the safety of the balcony. There may be a weight restriction. The DPW had heard that it was shut down due to the weight restriction. The Town Administrator was asked to follow up with the Building Inspector.
- Selectman Jaworski asked if there were any scheduled inspections in December. The DPW director remarked that the engineers have been walking through.

Chairman Moriarty asked if there were any other comments or additions to the minutes. All were in favor of the motion to approve the minutes.

Liaison Change - Chairman Moriarty felt that there was a need to change the liaison to the Emergency Services from Ms. Doty to Selectman Jaworski due to potential conflicts.

Ms. Doty remarked that she spends a great deal of time with the Fire and Ambulance personnel, every year she has returned money back to the town.

Selectman Jaworski accepted the position of liaison, as is the will of the Chair.

Solar Project Revenue Discussion - The revenue that is generated from the solar projects can be earmarked for particular project or projects. More information will come.

State Appointment to the Housing Authority - A motion was made to appoint John Wilkes Sr. to the State Housing Authority under MGL Chapter 121 B Section 5 by Selectman Jaworski. Ms. Doty seconded the motion. All in favor – the motion passed.

DPW Director Report – DPW Director Phil Genovese was commended by the Board on a great job in snow removal. He wanted to remind the residents that there is a town bylaw that they or any contractors hired by town residents should not be pushing or throwing the snow in the streets. Another issue is that the roads are the first priority, so sidewalks may not be cleared right away.

Director Genovese updated the Board on all of the town projects. These can be viewed on the Town of Hatfield website and is updated continually. Selectman Jaworski had a question on the front steps. Director Genovese said that as soon as the ground thaws, this will be done. He also mentioned that we will have some Goshen stone to face the steps. This will be a cost savings.

The Master Sewer plan is going to be a big ticket item, according to Director Genovese. The current treatment plant is 30 years old and only covers 700 residences. Selectman Jaworski asked if we have applied for any grants. Director Genovese said that a grant for \$40,000 was applied for recently.

Ms. Doty mentioned that Straights Road took a long time and asked if it was over budget. Director Genovese said that it was only slightly over budget on the blacktop. He was asked by Ms. Doty if we had used overtime. Director Genovese replied that if he had used prevailing wage, the \$55,000 job would have cost the town over \$100,000.

Ms. Doty asked about the portico facing School Street in the back of the Fire Department bay. She would like this hazard removed. Director Genovese said it would be taken care of by the end of the year.

Director Genovese mentioned that Eversource is paying for 2 or 3 crews to trim trees and cut some down that are near their wires. Selectman Jaworski mentioned that the next time they are planning to do this, we could put something on the website.

Ms. Doty attended their yearly meeting and was informed that they would be doing this.

Chairman Moriarty commended Director Genovese for reaching out to the town of Sandisfield, who recently lost their highway barn and all their equipment.

Mike Cahill asked if anyone in town was keeping an eye on the tree removal, as far as the aesthetics of the look of the trees in the spring. Director Genovese is also the Tree Warden, so he meets with the people cutting the trees once or twice per week, and they are also meeting with the residents before removing trees. If the resident does not want the tree removed, it will not be removed.

Approval of Warrants – The Town Administrator explained that even though the individual warrants had already been signed, by law they would need to be approved.

A motion was made to approve vouchers number 1000 through 1021 for a period of 7/13/17 through 12/7/17 by Chairman Moriarty. Ms. Doty seconded the motion. All in favor – the motion passed.

Request of Reduction of Yearly Liquor Fee – A motion was made to reduce the yearly liquor license fee for the American Legion Post #344 from \$800 to \$500 for 2018 and on a go forward basis by Chairman Moriarty. Ms. Doty seconded the motion. Selectman Jaworski abstained as he is a member of the American Legion. The motion passed. The fee schedule will be updated.

2018 Liquor License Renewals – Chairman Moriarty made a motion to accept the 2018 Liquor License renewals as presented. Ms. Doty seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

2018 Class I and II Renewals – Chairman Moriarty made a motion to accept the 2018 Class I and II License renewals as presented. Chairman Jaworski seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

2018 Automatic Amusement Device Renewals – Chairman Moriarty made a motion to accept the 2018 Automatic Amusement Device renewals as presented. Ms. Doty seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

2018 Entertainment License Renewals – Chairman Moriarty made a motion to accept the 2018 Entertainment License renewals as presented. Ms. Doty seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Change of Manager at Fishtales Restaurant – Ms. Doty made a motion to approve the change of manager at Fishtales Restaurant from George Boudreau to Kereanne MacPherson. Selectman Jaworski seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Extended Hours on New Year's Eve – Double B's made a request to stay open to 2am on New Year's Eve. Selectman Jaworski asked whether all the establishments had the opportunity to stay open. Town Secretary Linda Sassi clarified this question by stating that all of the establishments were mailed packets containing their license renewal information, and a colored piece of paper was included in each one that stated "If you plan to be open extended hours on New Year's Eve, you must ask in writing." The deadline for returning all the license information was November 30, 2017.

A motion was made by Ms. Doty to allow the extended hours on New Year's Eve for Double B's, Selectman Jaworski seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Selectman Jaworski asked what happens if someone else comes in at the last minute. If the Board discussed that if another establishment were to put in a last minute request, they would have to post a meeting and vote.

Personnel Forms – The Board needed to vote on personnel forms as a matter of formality. The funds are already in place for these individuals to be employed by the Town. One employee completed his probationary period, and there were two new hires. A motion was made by Chairman Moriarty to accept the personnel forms for Sean Eckler, Donald Vollinger, and John Grich as presented. Selectman Jaworski seconded the motion. He thanked the people for working for the Town of Hatfield. Ms. Doty remarked that she met all three men. All were in favor. The motion passed.

6:25pm Break for upcoming Finance Team meeting

6:30pm Joined by the Finance Team. Meeting resumed.

Update for 2017 – Town Accountant Derek Geser – We have gone through the reconciliation and found that there is a plan in place to bring down the deficit of \$300,000. Per Chairman Moriarty, he sat in on a recent call with Baystate Municipal Accounting Group, Town Administrator Michonski, Town Accountant Geser, Treasurer/Collector Bertram, and the Department of Revenue and learned that in addition to a \$300,000 deficit there is also \$800,000 in unapplied revenue. Some of these discrepancies go back to 2005. The town is not going to be able to set the tax rate unless the \$300,000 is brought down to zero by the end of December. The Department of Revenue will not allow the town to have access to free cash until this is resolved. Fiscal year 2017 would also have to be audited.

Per Chairman Moriarty, the conference call occurred on 12/7/17, at which time the information regarding the deficit and unapplied revenue was discovered. It is the consensus that the \$300,000 deficit will not be erased by the end of December 2017. This was confirmed in the meeting by the Town Accountant. He is working now on reducing these deficits.

There was discussion about sending estimated tax bills that would be due in 30 days. The Treasurer/Collector indicated that we could not send out an estimated tax bill. A special request to the Department of Revenue would be needed to send out tax bills that would be due in 30 days once the tax rate is set.

Selectman Jaworski asked about the backlog, and do we have a plan going forward. The Town Accountant said that there are three priorities – reconciling the current deficits, applying revenues that are in house and keeping current with monthly bills. He is willing to work on whatever the Selectmen require, however this problem goes back years before he was hired. Operational knowledge has been lost over the years. There are very specific procedures that need to happen, but some have not been followed in years. Chairman Moriarty agreed that the process is painful; however we also need to stay current with 2018.

Selectman Jaworski asked what role Justin Cole from Baystate Municipal Accounting Group was doing. Per the Town Accountant, Mr. Cole took a look at the tax recap and reconciled the fourth quarter; put a plan in place with the Treasurer/Collector and the Town Accountant as to when things should be done. His role has been working with the Department of Revenue and strategic planning.

Finance Committee Member Ms. Rider asked if capital planning projects were being held up. All capital projects approved in May have been funded; however there are no new projects funded. Per Selectman Moriarty, the steps would be completed so that by the end of May we would be up to date.

Board of Health Chair Flaherty asked a question regarding projects brought up in May regarding free cash that would have been brought up in a special Fall Town Meeting, but there is no free cash so that point is moot. Per Chairman Moriarty, there was talk of having a special Town Meeting in late December, which would move money over from one account to another. However it was decided that the better course of action was to work towards bringing down the deficits, that way the money would not have to be moved back.

Bob Flaherty questioned how we can have a \$300,000 deficit, so how can we certify our free cash when the numbers are not true numbers, and how can we state that we have completed July and August in fiscal year 2018 when we do not know what the FY17 books are. The Town Administrator clarified that the deficits are not necessarily tied to 2017. Bob mentioned that he was confused as to why this was happening.

Ms. Doty made a point that everyone was frustrated and there was a need to go into Executive session and figure all this out. Finance Committee member Fisher said that there was a plan in place. Bob Flaherty said he agreed with Ms. Doty and felt that this will not be done until sometime in February and we will still be

behind. He feels that this is a continuous problem. Selectman Jaworski acknowledged that this is the third year that we have had financial problems.

Mike Cahill questioned the efficacy of Justin Cole from Baystate Municipal Accounting, and how much he was costing the town. He recalled that the plan keeps sliding. He felt that this consultant should have recognized this problem months ago. He asked what it will cost the town to borrow. Mr. Cahill felt that his voice represents a good portion of the town. He said there should be consequences if these plans do not work. Selectman Moriarty remarked that the Department of Revenue speaks very highly of Justin Cole and we have made more progress with him than without him. Mr. Cahill wanted to know what Justin's goals for the team are, and when are the deliverables.

Ms. Doty again suggested that we go into Executive session and approach things differently. She cited wasted time and effort.

Ms. Rider asked Town Administrator Michonski what she felt would help. The Town Administrator said this is a team effort, and the responsibility lies here and not with Baystate Municipal Accounting. She feels that the training is a big piece. She also feels that additional staff is needed in the Treasurer's office and the Accountant's office. We would be looking for a clerk. We would also be looking for permanent help. Ms. Michonski said she will make a request of the Select Board for additional help.

Mr. Cahill said that there needs to be some financial oversight. He feels they are flailing. Selectman Jaworski suggested that we might ask Baystate to be a Budget Director. Town Clerk Lydia Szych made a suggestion that we try to get a retired municipal accountant or treasurer to help out.

Chairman Moriarty made a point that there have been improvements, and Baystate is guiding the team. We also applied (at Justin Cole's suggestion) to be part of a collaborative grant. We were denied for this grant, much to their surprise. The Town will apply for the next available grant.

Paul Fisher asked the Treasurer/Collector and Accountant what their opinions were about all of this banter about them. The Accountant said that they were 9 months behind when they walked in the door. Now we are 6 months, but we have a process in place. They need to stay current, but do research to close out the prior 12 years. He is going through boxes to find documents to reconcile unapplied revenue.

Town Administrator Michonski said that the Town Accountant needs more support.

Board of Health Chairperson Kerry Flaherty said that as speaking as an employee, who sees the Town Accountant every day, he is sinking. He needs someone in his office to help him. If money is to be spent, it needs to be spent on a person to help the Town Accountant.

Mike Cahill spoke up again and summed up the problem that everyone had already discussed. There is a two front plan. Ms. Doty said that we are still not moving forward.

Mr. Fisher asked the Town Accountant how the relationship has been going with Baystate, and he answered that Justin Cole is very knowledgeable and has been a big help. The Treasurer/Collector also had the same opinion. She mentioned that he was instrumental in helping them work together.

Mr. Fisher asked if this can be accomplished in a timely fashion, and if not what do you need. The Treasurer/Collector feels that we have made progress, and once the Accountant is ready to move forward, they will be in a good position to do so and to do it well.

Cleaning Service – Discuss and review

Ms. Doty mentioned that the word “process” was left off the agenda; however Town Administrator Michonski said that it was all part of the same subject. The entire packet had not changed since previous meetings.

The cleaning service contract ended on September 30, 2017, and has been working without a contract. Ms. Doty had questions about the process started by the Chief Procurement Officer and then turned over to the DPW. She wanted to know why it was changed, and also why we could not get a janitor. She felt that a janitor would have “skin in the game”.

Chairman Moriarty was not in favor of a custodian because we should not have people vacuuming and cleaning offices while there are people on the phones and trying to work. A custodian would not have enough to do, especially during the day, and if we have construction going on.

Selectman Jaworski noted that it was wrong that Mr. Lastowski was asked to request quotes for cleaning services, and he was not in the position to request bids. Ms. Doty said, “Due to the process that was followed for solicitation of quotes of custodial services that should have gone to the Chief Procurement Officer, I make a motion that we reject the current bids that have been received and we start the process over.” Selectman Jaworski seconded the motion. All in were in favor. The motion passed.

Selectman Jaworski made several points as to why a cleaning service was not working. The building was not getting cleaned, lightbulbs were not getting changed, and soap dispensers were not filled. He said it required 20-25 hours to take care of the building. During construction the person could go over to the library and clean. He feels that this will free up time for the DPW to do their jobs.

Ms. Doty spoke with several department heads and the Council on Aging, who said they would welcome a custodian. Chairman Moriarty asked Mr. Lastowski what his thoughts were on the subject.

Mr. Lastowski said there were issues with previous custodians: noise, an elderly woman tripping on an extension cord, inconvenience on the part of the workers in the Town Hall. Construction was going on, and the departments were finding it inconvenient. The cleaning service ended up under Facilities Management because there was no budget for it.

The DPW would still have to be called in regards to anything involving using ladders, drills, etc. Mr. Lastowski also pointed out that numbers do not lie. Assistant Treasurer Strzegowski mentioned that depending upon who is hired; the benefits can drive up the cost of that employee. She also mentioned that it appears that no one has been speaking to the manager of the current cleaning service to correct these ongoing issues.

Chairman Moriarty asked where the money would come from to pay this salary. Currently there is no money for wages for a janitor. The only way to move the funds from facilities expense line to a wage line is at Town Meeting. So, no matter what the vote, it would ultimately be decided at Town Meeting.

The choice now per Chairman Moriarty would be to keep the present service, rebid the service for the remainder of the fiscal year, or try to work more proactively with the current service.

Ms. Doty suggested riding it out for the next four months. Selectman Jaworski asked why Mr. Lastowski is overseeing the custodial services, when Mr. Genovese is the Director. Mr. Lastowski explained that when anything goes wrong with this building, at any time of day, he is called. However, he does not oversee the custodian. Mr. Lastowski explained that the DPW is such a small department, they do not have titles.

After all the discussion, Ms. Doty made a motion to appropriate the funds in the fiscal 2019 year budget for a custodian position based upon the Town Meeting's reception to that. Selectman Jaworski seconded. Chairman Moriarty voted nay. The motion passed.

Review Financial Policies – These will be reviewed at a high level, and then voted on at a later date.

Human Resources Policy – Section 5 Disciplinary Policy

Ms. Doty brought up that there is no place for a rebuttal in the policy. This would give the employee the opportunity to present his or her side of the story. Ms. Doty made a motion that when the Town Administrator reviews Section 5 Disciplinary Policy code of conduct that we add whenever a complaint is made against an employee that the employee has the right to write a letter of rebuttal to be placed in the file along with the complaint and where that is placed under section 5 will be at the Town Administrator's discretion. Chairman Moriarty seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Smoke-Free Workplace Policy

Chairperson Flaherty from the Board of Health addressed the Board and advised them that the bylaw is very open ended. Complaints have been made regarding cigarette butts left on the handicapped access ramp, and scattered around the building. Chairperson Flaherty told the Selectmen that they will put up signs that indicate that this is a smoke free facility, and that the goal would be to educate the employees and visitors that smoking is not allowed on the grounds, parking lots or walkways.

The Select Board agreed to let the Board of Health take the lead on this one.

Town Vehicles Policy – In reviewing this policy, it was discovered that there is no restriction on smoking in town vehicles. Ms. Doty has received complaints regarding town vehicles with passengers in them. According to our town insurance policy, the passenger would not be covered in the event of an accident which leaves the town open to liability. She also noted that there were town vehicles spotted in a different town after hours. She also noted that there was an instance of a town driver texting while driving.

The policy is well written, however, the only thing that is missing is that we allow smoking. Chairman Moriarty said that a conversation should be had with the DPW Director, prior to any changes.

Town Administrator will send this policy to all. A sign off sheet will be attached.

Chairman Moriarty encouraged everyone to participate in Luminarium.

A motion to adjourn was made by Selectman Jaworski. Ms. Doty seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned 9:10pm

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Sassi

