

Board of Selectmen Meeting:
Memorial Town Hall Conference Room
Chairman:

9-25-2019 @ 5:30pm
Approved April 7, 2020
Selectman Brian Moriarty

Present: Brian Moriarty, Edmund Jaworski, Diana Szydal, Marlene Michonski

Selectman Moriarty opened the meeting at 5:30pm.

Announcements – Ms. Michonski announced Smith Academy homecoming Oct. 19, Memorial Town Hall hours Mon – Thurs 7-5:30pm, Fridays will be for contractors’ work. Ms. Szydal said gala tickets are on sale for the 350th New Year’s Eve gala and are expected to sell out. Selectman Jaworski reminded everyone to check their smoke detector batteries.

Ms. Michonski noted that Oct. 28 is First Responders Day in recognition and appreciation of all they do. She also announced the resignation of Fire Chief Stephen Gaughan. Though saddened to hear this she thanked him and wish him luck. Selectman Moriarty thanked him for his work. Selectman Jaworski thanked him for bringing the ambulance up to paramedic level. He will stay to the end of January.

Public forum –

Resident Mike Cahill expressed interest in the final management letter provided by the accounting firm. – FY18 supplied in draft form. He noted several items which concern him, as a taxpayer. Selectman Moriarty said the Board will meet with the finance team in late October and will release the letter. Ms. Michonski said the Board and financial team are aware of the items. Some have been corrected. Selectman Jaworski said this Board has worked hard with the Finance Committee to make corrections.

Approval of Minutes

Selectman Jaworski moved to approve Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of June 7, 2019, June 17, 2019, and April 30, 2019. Selectman Szydal seconded. All in favor, the minutes were approved.

Permit Applications

Selectman Szydal moved to grant a One-Day Wine and Malt License to The Food Bank of Western MA for the Will Bike 4 Food after party for Sept. 29, 2019. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

A One Day All Alcohol License was granted to the Hatfield Firefighters Association for October 12, 2019, the annual bonfire, pending receipt of the proper insurance certificate, as well as permission to have a ceremonial bonfire on motion of Selectman Szydal, seconded by Selectman Jaworski. Robert Flaherty asked that the Board waive the fee as per Fire Chief Gaughan’s request. All being in favor, the motion was approved.

Fire Chief Job Description

Fire Chief said Ms. Michonski and he have talked about this. The current document is from 2004 and needs wordsmithing. The Town of Berlin was used as an example of having a better job description. The term ‘strong chief’ needs to be included. Chief Gaughan is to send examples to Ms. Michonski. Selectman Moriarty suggested a working session to address only this topic. He assured that there will be a process to find a replacement for the chief. Selectman Szydal said it was premature to go over this now.

Town Administrator

Ms. Michonski spoke about the financial report and Baystate Municipal Acct Group. They continue to reconcile 2019. Progress is being made on the recap and Schedule A. She said Mr. Cole feels he will be ready to close in October and the audit can be set up for mid to late November. Community preservation was submitted yesterday to DOR.

The Collector is proceeding with tax title and has advertised in the newspaper and will be posted on the website. Those affected have until Oct. 1st to pay or make arrangements. There are 18 properties involved, 3 of which have paid. The next step in the process is to put a lien. The town then becomes a stakeholder so we get our money if the property is sold.

The Water department bills are going out and will be due Nov. 1. Real estate bills are out, also. Ms. Strzegowski read the water/sewer rates with 2% increase: water rate was 4.36 and is now 4.45, and sewer rate was 6.97 and is now 7.11. The agricultural rate was 3.14 and was increased to 3.20. Online payments can be made. Ms. Strzegowski gave a figure of \$617,521.16 as the total water usage amount which is up about \$50,000 from last year.

Selectman Szyal moved to commit water bills in the amount of \$322, 226.91, Sewer bills in the amount of \$294,819.25 for a total of \$617,521.16, including 475. flat rate. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Selectman Moriarty believes we went in with a 2% increase. Ms. Michonski talked with Mr. Genovese today about Dave Prickett and will meet with him and the Finance Committee to discuss this. Selectman Moriarty noted the need to get the ball rolling on different things.

Chapter 43D – Expedited Permitting

Ms. Michonski explained we amended zoning bylaws to accept and implement this, and designated a parcel – private property. This is tabled until 10-9. Ms. Michonski has communicated with Mike Ohl and met with Erica Geis. Ms. Michonski is confident the State will be pleased with the information. Nothing will affect conservation.

In response to a question by Selectman Szyal about the Massworks grant, Ms. Michonski said they will make a decision soon. Selectman Moriarty noted it is a strong application. Ms. Michonski said she will report on the 43D application at the next meeting.

Ms. Michonski attended a day-long event sponsored by the Mass Municipal HR Association on paid family medical leave. This must be adopted if the Town wishes to implement it. Ms. Michonski said town counsel said this is optional. An estimate of the cost would be part of a disclosure to the Town.

Janus Bill – the governor is still reviewing this, which allows unions to charge non-members. Ms. Michonski attended a meeting through the Small Town Administrators; the governor was there.

Capital Improvement-

Ms. Michonski drafted a guidance letter and included a current fiscal year spreadsheet.

Future planning. Mr. Barry will be the rep from the Finance Committee to capital planning. Selectman Szyal is the rep from the Board. Ms. Michonski will set up a kick off meeting. Capital planning policy is included in the packet. Approved projects are highlighted; many are underway. Selectman Moriarty said capital improvement planning is to always have a 5 year plan. Departments are asked for immediate needs and capital items. Other Capital Planning committee members are: Jill Robinson, David Keir and Fran Spellacy

Possibly a feasibility study will need to be done for the Council on Aging space. Also for the adequacy for cable tv studio. Selectman Moriarty said CIPC will need to know debt coming off and/or being added.

Selectman Szynal said things may come up but you need a plan. Ms. Michonski said it's important to look at things that didn't get funded. Selectman Moriarty noted that it is up to departments to make their case. Ms. Michonski said a negative is costs that change. Selectman Szynal said putting things off costs money.

Memorial Town Hall Renovation-

Ms. Michonski noted that project meetings with the architects and Mr. Genovese are on Thursday mornings. At this point abatement is nearly complete; the ramp is gone. Selectman Jaworski explained a water line is being installed for the pump because previously, street pressure wasn't sufficient. Three ramp designs are being put together for the back of the building. Selectman Jaworski will get some pricing about options. He described a ramp at the back of the building.

Luminarium, spearheaded by the Hatfield Firefighter Association will be on the Saturday before Christmas Eve, Dec. 21. The Fire Chief is having signs made up. Selectman Moriarty would like a little reminder in with the tax bills. Ms. Michonski reminded that the Board of Selectmen must authorize inserts. Selectman Szynal moved to include an insert regarding the Luminarium in the water/sewer bills. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved. Selectman Moriarty thanked Ms. Strzegowski for making this happen.

Council on Aging Center Improvements-

A plan has been put together based on COAA needs; the entire basement would be occupied by the senior center. Selectman Szynal asked where the 2 other offices would go. Ms. Michonski clarified that an office is being built at the highway garage for DPW. The Administrator's office may go to Inspection Services. This plan was submitted by Jane Betsold previously. Selectman Jaworski assured that there is space to meet these needs. Ms. Michonski is to prepare a feasibility study based on these plans. The Board of Selectmen and Council on Aging Board of directors met and discussed this previously. There is a lot of support for the Council on Aging and the seniors. Selectman Jaworski met with the new housing authority director. They have established a good working relation with each other.

HR Policy – Travel Policy-

Ms. Michonski had made additions in red to the existing policy. Selectman Szynal said the policy should include wording that the town would be compensated if reimbursement for travel is deemed to be non-compliant. The Board will look at this again.

The 350th steering committee will be meeting.

Selectman Jaworski moved to adjourn. Selectman Szynal seconded. The motion was approved and the meeting ended at 6:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ki J. Eno
Executive Assistant