

Board of Selectmen Meeting:
Memorial Town Hall
Chairman: Selectman Jaworski

4-23-2019 @ 5:45pm
Approved: August 22, 2019

Selectman Edmund Jaworski, Chairman, Selectman Brian Moriarty, Selectman Cindy Doty, Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator, Phil Genovese, DPW Director, Sharon Strzegowski, Collector's Office, Edwina Palmisano, Treasurer's Office.

Selectman Jaworski opened the meeting at 5:45 pm.

Selectman Moriarty moved the town report be dedicated to former Selectman, Jeff Boyle. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Announcements –

Ms. Michonski noted a press release regarding Luther Belden Farm and its robotic digestive system. Also, it was Hampshire COG or HCG released a statement about a 3-step plan prior to its cessation of operations. Ms. Michonski has sent an email to departments.

Public Forum –

Jean Hobbie, School Nurse, talked about increasing town funding for health insurance coverage for town employees.

Minutes

Selectman Moriarty moved to approve the Board of Selectmen minutes of Jan. 23, 2019. Selectman Doty seconded. The motion was approved.

Stephen Herbert – Urban Grown

Mr. Hebert came before the Board regarding a planned host agreement for a proposed business at 55 Depot Road with son, Michael and team member, Joe Sikowski. Mr. Herbert distributed a draft host community agreement. He has a provisional license from the Cannabis Control Committee and has been already before the Planning Board. Mr. Hebert described the planned security and odor control at the proposed site.

He said they will work with the Police Department for security. There will be no signage, no retail sales, strictly cultivation.

Selectman Jaworski said he sees no issues once Planning Board qualifications have been met. A Planning Board meeting and public hearing is planned for June 5. They will also meet with the conservation commission regarding a nearby stream. Selectman Doty said this is cultivation only, and also wholesale sales and deliveries to dispensaries and manufacturers. They have signed a purchase & sale agreement and hope to close the middle of May.

Waste Water Treatment Plant Gravity Thickener Bid Award-

Ms. Michonski noted three bids were received and recommended awarding to Pride Environmental and Construction as per Mr. Dave Prickett's recommendation. Selectman Jaworski moved the Town of Hatfield conditionally award the Gravity Thickener Upgrades Project to Pride Environmental & Construction of East Taunton, MA, for the total bid, in the amount of \$299,999.00, contingent upon receipt and review of the necessary bonds and insurance certificates from Pride Environmental & Construction.

Selectman Moriarty seconded. The motion was therefore approved. Ms. Michonski will notify Mr. Prickett.

Student Conservation Association Agreement-

Ms. Michonski recommended the Board sign this agreement which town counsel has seen.

Selectman Jaworski moved to approve the agreement between the Student Conservation Association and the town. Selectman Moriarty seconded. The motion was approved.

IT Support – Admin Services Agreement

Ms. Michonski has a contract for IT support services for the town with HCOG. Their service contract was awarded to Paragus. Of 2 options for municipalities, she feels Option 1 is in best interest of the town. Ms. Michonski described the differences from the previous contract in response to a question from Selectman Moriarty. Ms. Michonski still feels we should be exploring other opportunities and has shared other concerns with the Board.

Selectman Jaworski moved to accept Option 1 for IT services presented by Ms. Michonski. Selectman Doty seconded. The motion was approved.

HR Policy –

Section 21 – Use of Building and Town Property. Ms. Michonski said the Board had reviewed the vehicle use policy and all employees signed acceptance of that policy.

She inserted verbiage under Section 21.2 – Protecting Town Data, and under Section 21.5 Information Technology. Selectman Jaworski moved to accept changes to the HR Policy as presented. Selectman Moriarty seconded. The motion was approved.

Architecture EL Update –

Ms. Michonski had a conversation with Mr. Shea. Costs have not been identified for moving/storage which could be between \$800 to \$1000/month for @ 6months. Selectman Jaworski said this needs a follow-up conversation. Ms. Michonski said it has been recommended the town lease storage space at Bensons and use work release program inmates for moving. Selectman Moriarty said we have time to decide. Ms. Michonski is to obtain more information for the Board. She said estimates are the middle to the end of July for the start of construction. Ms. Michonski has contacted Council on Aging they should be out by July 1.

Ms. Michonski has added a warrant article to take care of a FY19 deficit for snow and ice. Selectman Moriarty said every city/town has it taken off the recap sheet. Ms. Michonski informed that Mr. Cole is not planning to attend town meeting. Selectman Moriarty pay for snow and ice in arrears as we've done. Mr. Cole recommends it as an article on the warrant. Selectman Moriarty said we have to pay it, so what if the article didn't pass? Selectman Jaworski asked about the next meeting with Mr. Cole. Ms. Michonski said there have been some issues getting reports to the auditors in a timely manner. Tony Roselli met with Ms. Michonski. Mr. Fisher asked if there has been comment from Baystate regarding reports. Ms. Michonski informed that Mr. Cole said he is ready, but he has not completed the work. Selectman Moriarty said the auditors are in, so the expectation is that it has to get done. Ms. Michonski said Mr. Roselli was scheduled to be here the 1st of April, so he has concerns. Ms. Strzegowski said everything was supposed to be here Monday morning for the auditors.

Finance Committee members Betsy Rider, Paul Fisher, and Darryl Williams arrived. Members Sean Barry and Diane Brzozowski were absent.

The Finance Committee minutes of April 16 were approved on motion of Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Fisher, and none being opposed, the motion was approved.

Ms. Michonski read the article regarding a petition for insurance in response to a question from Mr. Williams. She said she cannot speak to the petition. Mr. Williams said we estimate we have \$300,000.00 with additional income, and estimated growth. He said the Finance Committee is struggling with how to spend that money as the school is seeking \$169,000. Mr. Williams quoted the health insurance percentage quotes as brought forward by Ms. Palmisano. Ms. Rider said about 60% currently participate.

Ms. Rider used a whiteboard to document the figures gone over during subsequent discussion of funding for increases to salaries, health insurance, and department expenses. A discussion about insurance ensued with Ms. Rider suggesting a health reimbursement arrangement contributed by the town. Ms. Strzegowski said we will be doing flexible spending next year.

Selectman Moriarty said it was necessary to look at the big picture and come up with a plan which must be well thought out and not personal. Jessica Corwin, Hatfield Elementary School Teacher said Hatfield's tax rate is artificially low and paid for by underpaid employees. Mr. Williams said we do have a low tax rate but a more important number is the valuation of houses.

Mr. Williams said there are hot button items that need to be addressed. These include water/sewer rates that don't pay the bills for those depts as rate increases of 2.5%/year are not enough. Selectman Moriarty noted there is no longer a cushion of school choice money and special education costs are expensive. More businesses in town are needed. Lydia Szych said if the petition is not passed at town meeting there is nothing the selectmen can do. Mr. Williams suggested the teachers be part of the whole process. There will be a meeting April 30th at town hall at 7pm. The petition is article 17.

Mr. Williams mentioned the library is asking for \$576 to maintain their grant. Ms. Strzegowski asked to get on next Tuesday's agenda. It needs to be determined where the department will go next year as Ms. Palmisano would like to retire.

A 2% COLA was discussed. Ms. Palmisano advised that 2% would equal \$26,000. Ms. Michonski talked about IT support saying Windows 7 will no longer be supported so she wants to replace 12 computers at a cost of \$14916. She advised that a remote backups project be deferred.

Ms. Michonski discussed office operations including the need for temporary help for admin staff leave. Office operations also includes the postage machine, which is paid quarterly, paper, and the copier lease. Money to pay Baystate Municipal Accounting was put into Town Administrator expense, which is now in deficit. Where to put money for Baystate Municipal Accounting was discussed. Selectman Moriarty noted that Mr. Cole was appointed as the official accountant. After additional comments by Mr. Williams and Ms. Strzegowski, Selectman Jaworski suggested having this discussion in a couple of months. Ms. Michonski needs to be able to cover the admin office and is looking for \$3,000.00 for a temp if necessary.

The Treasurer/Collector's budget will be discussed next week. The Town Clerk has changed some things from the Clerk to the Elections/Registrations side. Baystate Municipal Accounting Group is being paid out of the accountant's 56942 salary. Assessors expenses are going up because this is a revaluation year.

Certain capital items were discussed, I & I, ambulance, Jaws of Life, wheelchair van for school. Mr. Williams noted the necessity of having Mr. Genovese present for discussion of the van. Selectman Jaworski asked about using the van for students in the morning but Council on Aging in the afternoon.

John Robert found a grant for school safety locks. The vehicle lease was discussed. Ms. Rider asked about water/sewer rates. Ms. Michonski is to look at operating expenses and collections. There needs to be a conversation with Mr. Pricket and Mr. Genovese.

Selectman Doty said Eric Meals has done a whole spreadsheet about it. Ms. Michonski has the proposal and it is well put together and realistic. Selectman Moriarty said we can ask for rates but we need expansion. Mr. Williams suggested meeting in June to discuss this. Ms. Michonski will ask if we could get technical assistance from PVPC. She also noted that Mike Ohl, Comprehensive Environmental, did a study years ago.

Next week's schedule was briefly discussed. Ms. Michonski's will provide updates around the tree warden budget, ambulance, police department expense, and talk to Mr. Genovese regarding a wheelchair van. Mr. Cole's request to pay snow and ice out of free cash was discussed. Ms. Palmisano will ask for the auditors' opinion on this. Selectman Doty asked about the animal control officer pay noting he hasn't had a raise in 15 years.

The Board of Selectmen went over the first 10 articles at the request of Selectman Moriarty. Ms. Michonski said article 19 is being pulled. Ms. Strzegowski talked about the set-up of a tax title fund. She explained that there would be a lien on everyone in tax title so they cannot sell their house. She also explained a change regarding licensees in arrears for longer than 12 months which would result in improved communication between departments.

Ms. Rider moved to adjourn. Mr. Fisher seconded. The motion being approved, the Finance Committee meeting adjourned. Selectman Moriarty moved to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting. Selectman Doty seconded. The motion was approved and the meeting ended at 8:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ki J. Eno
Executive Assistant