

Present:

Present: Selectmen Brian Moriarty, Edmund Jaworski, Diana Szynal, Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator, Sharon Strzegowski, Collector/Treasurer's Office, DPW Director, Phil Genovese, Town Clerk, Lydia Szych

Selectman Moriarty called the meeting to order at 5:40pm.

Selectman Szynal announced that Saturday night is Hatfield Night at UMass hockey. There is a link on the 350th Anniversary page and website. Also, February 20th is the float building workshop, in this room at 6:00pm. Selectman Moriarty announced officially that Mr. Robert Flaherty was sworn in as Hatfield Fire Chief on Thursday, February 13th.

Confirmation was received from the governor that the Town of Hatfield received a \$20,000 municipal preparedness grant for building resilience to climate change. Ms. Michonski did all the work for getting this grant.

Selectman Moriarty read the Board of Selectmen public participation guidelines.

Selectman Szynal moved to accept the Feb. 4, 2020 minutes. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Appointments/resignations

Selectman Szynal moved to accept Dave Zononi's resignation from the Rec Committee with a thank you. Selectman Jaworski seconded, with regret. The motion was approved.

Appointment to the Board of Registrar's to replace Ruth Kuchyt, Theresa Wozniak, Selectman Szynal moved to appoint Theresa Wozniak to the Board of Registrars and thanked her. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

FY19 Financial Closure Update

Ms. Michonski reported that Justin Cole continues working on the balance sheet. Melanson-Heath and Mr. Cole are to coordinate efforts to get FY19 buttoned up. Things are proceeding in a reasonable manner. Ms. Michonski communicated with the auditor, and Hatfield's audit is scheduled for the week of April 27.

Surplus Items

The old jaws of life are to be put on Municibid. Selectman Jaworski moved to declare listed items as surplus. Selectman Szynal seconded. The motion was approved.

Continued Old Business

FY21 Budget

Ms. Michonski said budgets were due last Friday but are still trickling in. She is drafting warrant articles. Community Preservation have presented their articles. Selectman Moriarty explained that each department was supposed to submit their budgets. A schedule has been set up for the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen to meet with department on both March 6 and 10th.

Capital Projects – Council on Aging has submitted requests for 2 new vans. There followed a brief discussion regarding a PVTA surplus van. The town mechanic and COA Director looked at the vehicle. A service report was obtained and anything that comes up mechanically can be handled through the town vehicle maintenance budget. It will be painted and lettered. Ms. Michonski noted there is no cost to the town to acquire it and thanked Representative Lindsey Sabodosso.

Selectman Szynal moved to accept the donation of a Council on Aging 2015 PVTA van. Selectman Jaworski seconded. All voting in favor, the motion passed.

Municipal Aggregation Power Program-

Townpeople may have received another energy related mailing. Ms. Michonski became aware of this through a resident. She scanned the mailing and sent it to Colonial Power. She was informed it was a Clean Choice standard solicitation which targets communities with aggregation and is a variable rate offer month to month. There is nothing that can be done about 3rd parties soliciting, although they do not get addresses from Colonial Power. Those with concerns could call Eversource.

Selectman Moriarty opened the public hearing regarding the proposed water/sewer rate increase. He read the newspaper hearing announcement.

Consultants Dave Prickett and James Rivers, of DPC Engineering, Eric Meals, WWTP, and DPW Director, Philip Genovese were present.

Selectman Moriarty noted there was an overview a few weeks ago. It is in the paper, and on the town website. He then turned the subject over to Mr. Prickett, Mr. Rivers, and Mr. Meals.

They began with waste water as it is the more challenging item. The Treatment plant was built in 1980, though many pipes under the roads are much older. It would cost \$110 million dollars to build this system today, so it is vital to keep it up.

The Waste Water budget has historically been underfunded and costs have outpaced general inflation. Currently this budget is underfunded by 10-20%. There will be \$32 million in capital needs over the next 20 years. In order to secure long term low interest loans and grants from USDA, Hatfield would have to raise its sewer rates. Mr. Rivers recommended a 25% increase. A 25% increase would mean an average of @ \$10/month or \$120/year. Mr. Prickett noted that for every million borrowed you pay back an additional \$60,000. Selectman Szynal referenced an email from a resident regarding USDA qualifications. Mr. Rivers said he saw that email but noted the population is less than 10k, so median household income would be less.

Mr. Prickett talked briefly about adequately funding the soft costs of pursuing the loan. A reasonable estimate for necessary projects is 8-10 million, perhaps built up in retained earnings. Mr. Genovese said the project would have to be phased if we don't get the grant.

Mr. Rivers answered questions from residents, Mike Cahill and John Wilkes regarding indirect costs that might be included in the calculations for the grant qualification. Mr. Wilkes said 2/3 of the town is on septic and would get no benefit. Mr. Prickett said everybody wins by having a treatment plant. Selectman Szynal noted some of this work will allow us to expand the system.

Mr. Lavallee noted the increase is \$2.17 a week. Selectman Moriarty said our job isn't to do what's easy, it's to do what makes sense. The pipes aren't getting any better. Selectman Szynal said we're not just putting out fires but being proactive. The route 5 project will add customers. Hookup fee will be \$1000.00. Mr. Genovese said cost of tying in to the sewer is much cheaper than a new septic. Selectman Moriarty reiterated the 25% equals only a few dollars per week. Selectman Jaworski observed that delaying would end in increased costs, while trying for the USDA loan at 3-5% with the grant would be cheaper.

Water –

Water rates based on size and capital planning, would be looking at 5% rate increase to fund. Selectman Jaworski noted the town is now on the last phase of the water line. There will always be pipes to be replaced. A 5% increase equals \$1.70/month for the average user. Selectman Jaworski thanked Mr. Prickett and Mr. Rivers.

Selectman Moriarty closed the hearing at 6:47pm.

Selectman Szynal moved to change water & sewer rates as proposed in the handout and as discussed at the hearing. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Memorial Town Hall Renovation Update-

Mr. Genovese said this didn't go well. We closed the town hall and the Sub contractor and contractor only worked 2 out of 5 days. Selectman Szynal said this has inconvenienced employees and residents and what should have been accomplished wasn't. Mr. Genovese informed that they supply us with a weekly schedule. This is the biggest part of the project. Mr. Genovese said additionally that they knew for weeks.

Selectman Jaworski announced that Saturday is Hatfield night at the UMass hockey game.

Selectman Jaworski moved to adjourn at 6:55pm. Selectman Szynal seconded. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Ki J. Eno
Executive Assistant