

Approved March 15, 2022

Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
February 15, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.  
59 Main Street, Hatfield, MA  
Virtual GoToMeeting

Present: Select Board Chair Diana Szynal and Members Edmund Jaworski and Brian Moriarty. Also present were Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Sharon Strzegowski, Treasurer/Collector; Garrett Barry, DPW; Bobby Betsold, Darryl Williams, Chair, Kimberly Baker, Sean Barry, Diane Brzozowski and John Wilkes, Jr. of the Finance Committee; Bernie Smiarowski, Attorney Isaac Flescher, Jarrod Glanz-Berger, Rajiv Srinath; Robert Flaherty, Fire Chief; Michael Dekoschak, Police Chief; Michael Wood, Interim Superintendent; Danielle Staniewski and Christy Boudreau, School Committee members; Susan Berry

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Szynal called the meeting to order at 5:31p.m.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Susan Berry presented before the Select Board to speak about the Route 5 & 10 water project. She informed the Board that she supports, in part, local businesses. She questioned why the Select Board was not supporting two local businesses with the raw sewage pumping station being put on their properties. After she presented her case to the Select Board, Diana Szynal, Chair reminded Ms. Berry the matters have been addressed multiple times. Mr. Routhier addressed the Select Board and mentioned the pump station plans have been changed multiple times and the second time they had bolsters left in the driveways. Chair Szynal reminded the Board that this matter is pending litigation and the Select Board cannot discuss pending litigation. Selectman Moriarty reminded everyone that public forum is for residents to bring a matter before the Select Board but that there is no back and forth with the Board. Ms. Michonski will follow up with the engineers on this matter. Mr. Routhier asked the Select Board if there has been an outcome on the gas leak. Chair Szynal told him not to our knowledge and that the matter is pending litigation as well. There will be another meeting with the residents on West Street in the spring.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Marlene Michonski informed the Select Board that the Town was notified by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission that the Town has been awarded \$20,000.00 for district local technical assistance grant to update the Town's recreational and open space plan.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** Selectman Moriarty made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of February 1, 2022 and February 8, 2022, Selectman Jaworski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, minutes approved.

## POSTED BUSINESS

TOPIC 1 DPW Report: Presentation of pavement preservation from Garrett Barry, Highway Superintendent and Bobby Betsold. Mr. Barry and Mr. Betsold presented a presentation on how to stretch the Chapter 90 funding for pavement preservation. Mr. Betsold pointed out that asphalt roads need to be looked at as an asset of the Town. In some communities, roads are the largest asset. There is 30 miles of paved road and 10 miles of gravel roads in Hatfield. The road asset for the Town is just below \$12,000,000.00. An average road has a life of approximately 20 years. Annually the Town loses approximately \$600,000.00 on deterioration of roads. Mr. Betsold said roads need to be maintained yearly. The ideal plan, Mr. Betsold said, is spending \$1.00 per year to maintain the road versus \$8.00 to \$10.00 on rehabilitating of a road after it has deteriorated. Mr. Betsold told the Board that chip seal is the widely used variation. It's a high applied layer of crumb rubber modified asphalt with heater, treated cover aggregate. It seals and waterproofs that surface and give a highly cracked resistance surface. Also, from a recycle standpoint, this uses approximately 1,500 recycled tires per mile. This was applied on three roads in Town. Mr. Betsold informed the Board that over time with cars driving over the product, it actually smooths it out. Mr. Betsold wanted to get the Select Board thinking about keeping the roads in Hatfield in good condition.

PVPC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Overview of membership and participation in program: Ms. Michonski informed the Board that she spoke with Mr. Barry asking if the Town has a project which would qualify under TIP project. The Town does not. Chair Szynal mentioned that TIP projects are very detailed and that you have to have the funding before starting a project. Chair Szynal stated at this time she received a text message from someone inquiring about "bridge" monies from the state. Chair Szynal asked if Hatfield received any of this money. Ms. Michonski stated that this is something new from the week before. Mr. Barry said a criterion of that grant is a bridge cannot be longer than 10 feet long, 6 feet wide and no bridge in Hatfield qualifies for such funding. Chair Szynal asked Mr. Barry if anyone attends TIP meetings and Mr. Barry stated he goes to meetings that would qualify Hatfield for money.

Chair Szynal requested the Select Board go out of order.

Proposed Host Community Agreement: Bernie Smiarowski, Isaac Flescher, Attorney; Jarrod Glanz-Berger (Lessor) and Rajiv Srinath (Lessee) presented before the Select Board. They informed the Select Board they are looking for the Board's approval of a host agreement for adult use cultivation establishment on the property located at 139 North Hatfield Road. Hatfield Farmacy will be one of four tenants on the parcel, they will all be adult use cultivators. Attorney Flescher used the standard Host Agreement used by other cities and towns. Chair Szynal asked what the status of the Planning Board is. Mr. Glanz-Berger informed the Board that they have been before the Planning Board in January requesting a special permit. Mr. Glanz-Berger stated they were before the Conservation Commission and had their RDA a negative determination. Now they are on the Planning Board agenda with Berkshire Design Group. Chair Szynal asked if Farmacy needs to get approval from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission prior to coming before the Select Board. Ms. Michonski said no, Farmacy is exercising their right to gather all the information. Ms. Michonski reviewed the Agreement and it was similar to other Host Agreements. However, since she had questions she forwarded the Agreement to town counsel for his review and is waiting to hear back. Ms. Michonski does not anticipate any issues

with the agreement. She would recommend to the Board pending town counsel's approval, to go ahead and sign the agreement. Selectman Moriarty wanted to inform everyone the steps the Select Board may or may not take is just one of many steps in the process of Farmacy moving forward to the Cannabis Commission. Chair Szynal also mentioned one step does not mean all steps are easy. If the agreement is approved tonight, they still have many hurdles to jump over. Selectman Moriarty stated there are many pieces to the puzzle but wanted everyone to know that if the Select Board approved and signed the Host Agreement doesn't mean they get a license. Chair Szynal asked how big the first parcel is. Farmacy replied 5 acres. Ms. Michonski reminded Farmacy the next step is a community outreach event. Chair Szynal stated she felt comfortable signing the Agreement after she heard from town counsel if there are any legal issues and we could approve it at a later meeting. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve Hatfield Farmacy, Inc. Host Community Agreement for the Siting of a Recreational Cultivation Marijuana Establishment in the Town of Hatfield at 139 North Hatfield Road dependent upon town counsel's review of the agreement, Selectman Jaworski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, agreement approved.

TOPIC 2      Comcast License Renewal Update: Ms. Michonski informed the Select Board she and John Novak had a meeting with Comcast and it went well. There were questions, clarifying some things and Comcast will review the proposed plan and get back to her. Thank you - John Novak for your hard work.

Request for use of SA Park in June: Ms. Michonski informed the Board she has received a request from New England Swing Orchestra Director Ted Wirt to use the Smith Academy Park on June 16 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm for a concert. There was discussion between the Select Board members as to who controls the calendar of events for the park. Further, Selectman Moriarty felt the requests for use of the park should not be brought before the Select Board and we need to come up with a plan for someone to run and facilitate this. Chair Szynal feels everyone should come before the Board. Chair Szynal stated there should be a standardized application prepared for anyone who wants to use the park. We need to be consistent with everyone to include looking for proof of insurance. Selectman Moriarty stated as the park gets busier with concerts, events and possibly weddings, it should not be handled and run by the Select Board. He doesn't know who should be in charge of the park but it should not be the Select Board. Ms. Michonski said she will pull things together and get back to the Board.

SA Park Pavilion Architectural Services – Approve CO#1: Ms. Michonski is asking the Select Board to sign the Agreement. Chair Szynal questioned what the change is. Ms. Michonski informed the Board they are looking for an additional \$3,330.00. This project will be put out to bid again for a total contract of \$14,308.00. Ms. Michonski informed the Board the original funding for this project remains intact. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to increase \$3,330.00 to Fitch Architecture & Community Design for additional architectural services, Selectman Moriarty seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

Ms. Michonski asked the Board if they wanted to hold off on New England Swing Orchestra's request. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the New England Swing Orchestra's

request for the 16<sup>th</sup> with a rain date of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

**TOPIC 3      FY2023 Budget Reviews/Annual Town Meeting Business with Finance**

Committee: Chair Szynal informed everyone that three budgets will be looked at tonight. The Fire Department, Police Department and school.

Fire Department/Ambulance: Chief Flaherty presented before the Board and Committee with his budget. Chief Flaherty previously met with the Finance Committee regarding hiring new personnel as Hatfield can no longer sustain its EMT and Fire Departments as volunteer. His budget increase is probably the biggest increase. The increase on the fire side is \$180,000.00 and would be for staffing and full-time staffing, not per diem. Per diem is a bit cheaper but he is having a hard time finding staff at per diem. Chief Flaherty wants to be sure that residents have the proper care when it comes to a fire or EMT. Chair Szynal asked the Fire Chief what the difference was in calls for each year from 2019 to 2021 and he responded the three year trend was 8% on ambulance and 17% on fire. Chief Flaherty said he averages 1 call a day. Mr. Williams asked Chief Flaherty to explain the difference between having full time personnel versus using other towns to answer our calls. The Chief said that Hatfield in the future will need to begin paying Northampton for calls when calls are routed to Northampton. The sum could be between \$270,000.00 to \$290,000.00 a year from South County. That is only the privilege of using South County, they don't have an ambulance in town, it's just for them to cover the call. Selectman Moriarty asked Chief Flaherty the additional funds are \$447,000.00; if you rely on South County it would cost \$290,000.00 with no guarantee of an ambulance; it's not a huge difference to know that an ambulance is in Hatfield at all times and you have round the clock fire and ambulance service.

Police Department: Chief Dekoschak presented before the Select Board and Finance Committee with his FY232 budget. Chief Dekoschak would like a 2% for salaries and an additional 1% increase for part time salary. Other than that, the Chief said his budget is the same as before. Chair Szynal does not have any questions. Chair Williams asked the Chief are you covering 16 hours a day/7 days a week with one person on, is that correct? Chief said his call volume is the same but we are not equipped to handle more at this time. Mr. Williams asked about the new law with the training. Chief Dekoschak has kept overtime costs down and there have been no major incidents to burn up payroll. Mr. Williams asked if the new law would increase a budget item and Chief said most of his people have done the training with just a couple officers still needing a little more training.

School Department: Michael Wood, interim superintendent, Danielle Stanisewski and Christy Boudreau presented before the Board. Mr. Wood presented his budget to the Select Board and Finance Committee. The school put together a level services budget which looks at FY22 and maintains both schools. We maintain 2 preschool classrooms, kept electives, sports teams for

FY23, replacement cycle, and continue to support existing software necessary to support math program, for one. The budget contains the same staff, school choice and two positions were added this current year. We have the same number of students, administrators and assistants. Chair Szynal mentioned the budget reflects an additional 10 students for school choice. Mr. Wood said they are hoping to capture more school choice students. Selectman Moriarty asked Mr. Wood as he was looking at current enrollment, there are 26 in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade which will be moving up, theoretically, to Smith Academy; Smith Academy has 41 students in grade 12 which will be graduating this year, so there is automatically a loss of 15 students. According to your projection, you will need 25 school choice kids, is that doable? Selectman Moriarty went on to say this is the way the School Department is basing their budget. Mr. Wood said that is the goal, they are looking at advertising and push it out there to get more school choice or town children. Selectman Moriarty mentioned that the number of students have declined over the last few years and if the School Department is basing it's numbers on the number of school choice children with a decline over the last few years, they could be in trouble in years to come. Mr. Williams asked Mr. Wood if you don't get the school choice numbers up, how will you handle this? Mr. Wood stated that the master plan is being looked at. Selectman Moriarty asked if Mr. Wood were to advertise, what attraction would Mr. Wood put out there to gain student from Hadley, Frontier, Northampton? We have done advertising before and other schools have caught up with us and advertise as well. What can we offer them that a student can't find anywhere else? We need to stand out differently. Mr. Wood said there is not a change to the number of staff. Mr. Wood said the department is doing the budget earlier than usual so they can deal with this issue now. Mr. Wood told the Select Board and Finance Committee that the School Committee finds grants. Mr. Wood informed the Select Board and Finance Committee that his total budget for FY23 is \$6,540,740.00 or a 7% increase. Mr. Wood said that negotiations are beginning for the school department. He is still waiting to hear if there would be federal funding for schools. The federal government has been paying for the food service. Because of changes in federal funds, the school would be looking for an additional \$455,343.00 of new funds because of the changes in the federal funds and school choice funds which the school will not have. Mr. Williams asked about transportation. Mr. Wood said there are currently 24 applications for transportation. Selectman Moriarty questioned Mr. Wood about the \$355,000.00 total from COVID funds and he wanted to know if those funds would be carried over or are the funds spent? Mr. Wood answered \$165,000.00 for this year for FY22 and will be budgeting \$88,000.00. Selectman Moriarty said he needs to know if there are COVID funds left. Mr. Wood said in FY21, FY22 and FY23, the funds have been spent over those times. Selectman Moriarty we are asking the town for an additional \$455,343.00 on top of the \$5.2 million that the town already paid? Chair Szynal asked what the COVID funds were spent on. Mr. Wood replied staff positions, teacher position, speech pathologist assistant, special education and different equipment. Selectman Moriarty pointed out that by using grant funds for staffing positions, when the grant is no longer available, then they run out. Selectman Jaworski pointed out another union contract, under instruction you have \$400,000.00 but you haven't negotiated another contract and then you begin negotiating which may cost additional monies. Mr. Wood said they have goals for the negotiations and they have funded those goals. Selectman Jaworski noted that this is a big increase. Mr. Williams told Mr. Wood that if it comes down where the money is just not there,

what items could be cut from their budget? Mr. Williams mentioned that a 2½ override and new growth would only bring in an additional \$300,000.00 and we need to know where other cuts could be made. Chair Szynal informed everyone that with the three departments we just heard from, that money is already gone. Chair Szynal informed everyone that this budget is a projection and this is just the beginning. Selectman Moriarty pointed out we have to spend as a community for the school but we are already above that.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

## **UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS**

## **ADJOURN**

Selectman Moriarty made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m., Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor, aye, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully,

Karen Brodeur  
Executive Assistant