

Approved: April 26, 2022

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.
59 Main Street, Hatfield, MA

Present: Select Board Chair Diana Szynal, Members Edmund Jaworski and Brian Moriarty; Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Darryl Williams, Chair, Kim Baker, Diane Bzozrowski, John Wilkes, Jr., Finance Committee; Sharon Strzegowski, Treasurer; Robert Flaherty, Fire Chief; Bobby Betsold and Anna Holhut of the 350th Commemorative Committee; Moderator Joe LaVallee; Phil Genovese, DPW Director; David Keir, Select Board liaison to the School Committee; Captain Luke Longstreeth, Fire Department; Michael Wood, Superintendent; Sue Berry and John McLaughlin

CALL TO ORDER Chair Szynal called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM

ANNOUNCEMENTS Chair Szynal hoped everyone had a nice Easter and Passover. Selectman Jaworski thanked everyone who helped with the fishing derby. A lot of kids showed up and there were a lot of prizes. Chair Szynal reminded everyone that the annual play is later this week, "You are a Good Man Charlie Brown," tickets may still be available by calling Smith Academy or check Facebook. Chair Szynal reminded everyone that real estate taxes, water and sewer bills are due May 2, 2022.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of March 22, 2022 and regular session minutes of April 5, 2022, Selectman Jaworski seconded, Chair Szynal abstained from the April 5th minutes as she was not in attendance, all in favor, aye, minutes approved.

POSTED BUSINESS

TOPIC 1 Executive Session: MGL Ch. 30A, §21a, #3 To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to go into executive session and then return to regular session; Selectman Jaworski seconded. Selectman Moriarty – aye; Selectman Jaworski – aye; Chair Szynal – aye.

At 5:59 P.M. the Select Board returned to open session.

TOPIC 2 Bobby Betsold and Anna Holhut – Proposed Celebration Committee: Smith Academy Park concert series. Bobby Betsold and Anna Holhut informed the Board that there are three articles on the Warrant for Town Meeting submitted by 350th for closing things out. First, regarding funding there is approximately \$10,000.00 left and the Committee would like to transfer the balance back to free cash. Secondly, the 350th would like to create a new committee - Celebration Committee. There are several

activities we want to make permanent and will take on that responsibility. Third, they would like to take the 350th donations account and fund a new celebration funding account. Mr. Betsold stated that they would like to have a stipulation that requires a minimum balance for that account unless it's a year for a large celebration like 375th. Ms. Holhut informed the Board that we are planning five concerts between May and September.

TOPIC 3 Fire Chief Flaherty – Proposed training facility. Chief Flaherty and Captain Longstreeth informed the Board the Department is lacking in training because they do not have a training site. We are hopeful to build a facility to train the Department. About 5 years ago we started looking into what the Town owned and what would be useful. We found some land on Route 5. We would have a building which would look like a normal house except that we would be able to move walls as needed for training purposes. The only resident close by would be 57 West Street and the owner does not have an issue with the Fire Department using the area. We already talked with the owner. The Fire Association would like to take this project on. The Fire Association would be looking for monetary donations and supply donations from local suppliers. The land is 1.3 acres and we would like to purchase the property for \$1.00 and when we no longer need it for training, sell it back to the Town. There would be no burden on the Town, we will have the property insured. Selectman Jaworski said he liked the idea along with the proposal. The Board asked Captain Longstreeth if other local towns have this type of thing. Captain Longstreeth informed the Board that Granby and Sunderland have the same thing. Captain Longstreeth stated, there is a swamp on one side and the wind blows from southwest to northeast and there may be a small amount of smoke which would dissipate over the field. Chair Szynal asked how much it would cost to get the building going. Captain Longstreeth stated around \$200,000.00 but that the Fire Association could fund raise between \$120,000.00 and \$130,000.00 over the course of 5 years and the Fire Association could pay for the remainder. Chair Szynal also asked what the cost would be for insurance. Captain Longstreeth said he was not sure but that he would check with Sunderland. Selectman Moriarty asked if the insurance would be paid through the association and Captain Longstreeth said yes until the property is turned back over to the Town. Captain Longstreeth is hopeful that this could be taken up before Town Meeting, but the Select Board thought it would be rushing the undertaking and there are too many questions to be answered. The Select Board agreed that there needed to be more questions answered before this project could move forward and once the Fire Association has those answers, Captain Longstreeth could come back before the Board.

TOPIC 4 DPW REPORT

- Water Abatement, 119 Elm Street. Mr. Genovese informed the Board the meter was not working so it was replaced. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the water abatement for \$589.20 and sewer abatement of \$1,120.80 for a total of \$1,710.00 for 119 Elm Street; Selectman Jaworski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

TOPIC 6 FY2023 Budget Reviews / Capital Plan Projects /Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles with Finance Committee @ 6:30 pm

There was lengthy discussion regarding FY23 budget. The Select Board and Finance Committee previewed the FY23 workbook. The Board and Committee requested Mr. Wood to give an itemized

breakdown of his request for more monies so that it can be presented to residents. Mr. Genovese was also asked to give an itemized breakdown of the monies he is requesting for FY23. The Select Board and Finance Committee viewed different scenarios of where monies could be used more than other departments; if the items department heads were asking for were realistic and what would the budget look like should major projects be put off. The Board and Finance Committee agreed they would be looking for a 2½ override. They agreed that attempting to find a budget within the confines of 2½ is very difficult. Chair Szynal mentioned that it will be up to the residents what services they want. After lengthy discussions of different scenarios, it was agreed that everyone would go back and work on the budget workbook to iron out some numbers.

There was discussion about COLA for FY23. Ms. Strzegowski calculated numbers for different COLA scenarios which are: 2% - \$38,724.00; 2 ½% - \$47,899.00; and 3% - \$57,075.00 for town employees, non-union. There was discussion of bringing everyone up to minimum wage and what the cost would be: minimum wage to \$14.25 – \$900.00; minimum wage to \$15.00 – \$2,600.00; and departments to 2.3% - \$35,000.00.

The Select Board and Finance reviewed the Warrant. Chair Szynal read each article and explained what it was. As there are many Articles, Ms. Michonski stated that she would try to combine some of them to cut down on the number.

The Finance Committee adjourned and the Select Board resumed their regular meeting.

- Personnel Form for approval. After review of the Wage/Salary Rate Adjustment Request, Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the Wage/Salary Rate Adjustment Request as presented by DPW; Selectman Jaworski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

TOPIC 5 **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

- Billings Way Property License RFP Response and Award Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator advised the Board about the Billings Way Property License RFP. Ms. Michonski reviewed Mr. Bardwell's proposal and stated the Agricultural Commission recommends the Board accept the proposal. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the licensing for one year at Billings Way to Harrison Bardwell; Selectman Jaworski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

- MassWorks Grant Report Update. Ms. Michonski updated the Board on the MassWorks Grant Report Update. Reimbursement request was submitted.

- Closeout of Hazard Mitigation Plan 2021 Update Grant Report and Formal Approval from FEMA. Ms. Michonski informed the Board the Hazard Mitigation Plan has been closed out with FEMA. The plan has been approved and we will receive the official FEMA notification. Selectman Moriarty thanked all those who helped and we appreciate your work.

UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN

Selectman Jaworski made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.; Selectman Moriarty seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully,

Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant