

Approved May 3, 2022

Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
April 26, 2022 at 5:45 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; Joe LaVallee, Town Moderator; Phil Genovese, DPW Director; Christy Boudreau and Danielle Stanisewski, members School Committee; Robert Flaherty, Fire Chief, Luke Longstreeth, Captain Fire Association; Rich Abbott, Open Space Committee; Sue Berry and John McLaughlin, Esquire

**CALL TO ORDER** Selectman Jaworski called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m.

**PUBLIC FORUM** Luke Longstreeth presented with answers to questions asked of him during the prior meeting. Mr. Longstreeth was hopeful that this matter could be put on the Warrant for Town Meeting. He wanted the Select Board to know he looked into the setback for wetlands; he reviewed the GSI map and the property is well beyond the setbacks. Mr. Longstreeth said he was confused as to why the matter would not be on Town meeting Warrant. Chair Szynal told him that the Board doesn't want the matter to die, it's a land issue and it needs to go to Town counsel for review and that the Board needs to be sure it's done correctly. Selectman Moriarty told Mr. Longstreeth that given everything done thus far, I stand behind the project, it's too late for the issue to be put on Town Warrant and we need to give the project due diligence. Timing is not great for this year. Ms. Michonski told him that he could come back to a future meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** Selectman Moriarty reminded everyone that real estate taxes, water and sewer bills are due Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Select Board wanted to thank the Council on Aging for the volunteer dinner last Friday. We thank Geri and Cooky for making it possible to do the functions they do.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the minutes of April 19, 2022, Chair Szynal seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, minutes approved.

**POSTED BUSINESS**

**TOPIC 1** Town Moderator, consider annual Town Meeting quorum reduction and setting time for meeting: Joe LaVallee, Town Moderator in last two years the Town went to a reduced quorum. Many items were put on the back burner so we could meet quickly and keep our Town operating. It worked well but things were put on the back burner. This year there are a lot of things to cover, 43 Articles. When we have 37- 38 Articles I would like to have the meeting end by 10:00 PM. It's unfair to have the meeting go past 10:00 PM. This year we have so many things to cover, the myriad of articles in draft

affects everyone. I strongly suggest a full quorum. Mr. LaVallee suggested with so many Articles, the meeting could be spread out over two nights, if needed. You need to remember, this is Townspeople's money and people need to show up and be part of Town meeting. Mr. LaVallee suggested starting at 6:00 PM instead of 7:00 PM. We need people to show up, pay attention and do their responsibility. People need to give a day or two. The Select Board needs to decide what to do on these two issues. I think there are enough issues regarding the Town and residents need to have a voice. Mr. LaVallee reiterated again that townspeople need to show up and be heard. Chair Szynal said she is fine with 75 quorum. After discussion, the Board was fine with Town meeting being held on May 10, 2022 at 6:30 PM at Smith Academy. Selectman Moriarty made a motion that annual Town meeting start at 6:30 and the quorum be held at 75; Chair Szynal, seconded, will be at Smith Academy on May 10<sup>th</sup>; further discussion - masks are up to the individual; all in favor aye, motion carries.

TOPIC 2      Human Resources – request for vacation carryover: Selectman Jaworski made a motion to table Topic 2, Selectman Moriarty seconded, no discussion, all in favor aye, motion carries.

TOPIC 3      Town Administrator Report:

- SA Park Pavilion Bid Results: Rich Abbott informed the Select Board the project received one bid for \$356,000.00. We cannot move forward with this. In the meantime, CPC recommends an article to bring the funding up to \$320,000.00. We are still advocating that if the Articles passes at Town meeting, we would like to give it another shot next December or January. We would like to stick with this and have another round and get CPA funding to continue pursuing it. Mr. Abbott informed the Select Board Wayne Feiden contacted Open Space about the bike path. The Ct. River Trail Northampton is working for the path to end up on Elm Court. Mr. Feiden would like a meeting of the abutters.

- Council on Aging use of Smith Academy Park: Selectman Jaworski informed the Board of the Council on Aging request for use of Smith Academy Park for the following dates: May 16, 1:30-2:30PM; June 3, 1:30-2:30PM; June 27, 1:30-2:30PM; August 5, 6:00-7:15PM and September 9, 5:30-7:00PM. Selectman Moriarty so moved; Chair Szynal seconded, no discussion, all in favor aye, motion approved.

- Agreement of License Property Billing Way, Hatfield, MA: Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator reminded the Board that they voted to accept Mr. Bardwell's proposal for the growing season. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to accept the Agreement to license the property on Billings Way, Hatfield, MA; Chair Szynal seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion carries.

TOPIC 5      Selectman Jaworski reminded the Board Mark Gellotte made a presentation to the Select Board for the land on Jericho Road. Ms. Michonski informed the Board the property has been appraised, and the topic is on Town Warrant. Selectman Jaworski said we have an offer to purchase the property for \$375,000.00. Ms. Michonski reminded the Board that this matter is subject to Town meeting authorization. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to enter into the contract to purchase the real estate on Jericho Road for \$375,000.00 pending Town meeting approval, Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor aye, motion carries.

Select Board took a break waiting for the Finance Committee. Select Board came back at 6:40 PM

TOPIC 4 FY2023 Budget Reviews / Capital Plan Projects /Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles with Finance Committee @ 6:30 PM: Darryl Williams, Chair, Finance Committee wanted to thank Ms. Michonski, Sharon Strzegowski, Laurie Dell'Olio and all who have worked on the spreadsheets. Thank you for all your work on this. Mr. Williams informed everyone that Finance Committee met the night before and that looking at all figures, the Committee wanted to be sure everyone is on the same page with approving all department requests. The budget also includes bringing all employees up to minimum wage of \$15.00. Contractual employees get their contract and COLA. Non-union employees would receive a 3% COLA. This budget does not include COLA for the School Department as they have their own budget. This budget is sustainable this year because we have free cash, some one-time items in the budget, however, in a normal year we don't have free cash. As a group we talked about the need for an operating override. Our current thought is if we want to maintain the services for ambulance, school, fire, police, DPW, we will have to pass an operating override this year so next year we have enough money to do this. It's important that everyone works together. We need every department behind this. We never had an operating override since the 1980's when Prop 2 ½ began. There are things going forward which will be tough. Mr. Barry stated some of this is about the changing demographics of the Town and the difference in services that people expect. There used to be volunteers in the Fire Department but not now. The question comes down to, do you expect to have an ambulance to serve the people of Hatfield? If not, we can't say how many times you will need to wait for Northampton, Deerfield or another surrounding community. If we want to have ambulance service in Town, we need to pay for it. The school is also part of this. The basic reality is that if you look at what is spent in school it's not different from other districts. Mr. Williams stated if a 2½ doesn't go through, we will need to look at reduced ambulance, police, fire and some school. Mr. Barry mentioned the school budget increased 9% this year and the trend is not going away. Mr. Barry said that maybe increasing class size and cutting programs but then we will lose students. Mr. Barry also stated other districts spend more per student, Frontier is spending \$2,000.00 per student and we spend \$1,700.00. Selectman Moriarty informed everyone that when we talk percentages the Town's portion was \$4.8 million, the State is saying is \$3.2 million, the Town is spending \$1.6 million more. We have never wavered from the school spending. But I ask all of you keep in mind Hatfield has other departments and projects. I think if the School Department could take another look at its budget and bring it down to to 5.6%, I believe your budget would be better with the residents and the Board.

Regarding the mini pumper truck for the Fire Department, after discussion, it was agreed that this issue will be put on the Warrant and presented to the voters.

Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the FY23 budget as presented by the Finance Committee, Chair Szynal seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion carries.

With regard to the Warrant, the Finance Committee made the following Motions:

Articles 1 -5: Sean Barry moved to support Articles 1-5; Kim Baker seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Article 6: Sean Barry moved to support Articles 6; Kim Baker seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Article 7 No vote required

Article 8 Ms. Michonski is asking town counsel to review this Article and clean it up. Otherwise, the Article is fine.

Articles 8-9 Kim Baker moved to support Articles 8-9; Diane Bzozrowski, seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Article 10 Kim Baker moved to support Article 10, Diane Bzozrowski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Article 11 Sean Barry moved to support Article 11, Kim Baker seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Article 12 Kim Baker moved to support Article 12, John Wilkes, Jr. seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Article 13 Article 13 will be deleted.

Article 14 Sean Barry moved to support Article 14, John Wilkes, Jr. seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Article 15 No action from Finance Committee required.

Article 16 No action from Finance Committee required.

Article 17 No action from Finance Committee required.

Articles 18-22 Kim Baker moved to support Articles 18-22, Sean Barry seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Articles 23-28 Sean Barry moved to support Articles 23-28, Diane Bzozrowski seconded, Ms. Michonski will add Chromebrooks for \$20,000.00 from free cash, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Article 29 If Article 30-32 pass at Town meeting, the cost to the Town would be approximately \$750,000.00. John McLaughlin, attorney for Susan Berry spoke and said he disagrees with that figure. Darryl Williams made a motion to recommend if necessary Article 29 if residents pass Articles 30-32; Sean Barry seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Articles 33-34 John Wilkes, Jr. moved to support Articles 33-34, Darryl Williams seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Articles 35-38 John Wilkes, Jr. moved to support Articles 35-38, Kim Baker seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Article 39 Kim Baker moved to support Article 39, Diane Bzozrowski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

Articles 40-43 Sean Barry moved to support Articles 40-43, John Wilkes, Jr. seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, Article approved.

The Finance Committee discussed this project and agreed that Phil Genovese, DPW Director could order the pipe for the Raymond Avenue project in advance from finance reserve, 1,000 feet 8' pipe for Raymond Avenue drainage project. Darryle Williams made a motion to appropriate \$10,000.00 from finance reserve for this project, Sean Barry seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

Ms. Michonski requested the Select Board approve the Warrant pending changes and town counsel's review. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the 2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant with the necessary changes to be made and pending town counsel's review, Chair Szynal seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

#### **UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS**

#### **ADJOURN**

Selectman Moriarty made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m.; Chair Szynal seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully,

Karen Brodeur  
Executive Assistant