

Approved February 28, 2023

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
February 14, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
59 Main Street, Hatfield, MA

Present: Select Board Diana Szynal, Chair, Members Brian Moriarty and Edmund Jaworski; Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Lydia Szych, Town Clerk; Robert Flaherty, Chief, Fire Department; Diane Brzozowski, Chair, Darryl Williams, Kim Baker, Sean Barry, John Wilkes, Jr., Finance Committee

CALL TO ORDER Chair Szynal called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PUBLIC FORUM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES The Board tabled the Minutes of February 2, 2023. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of February 7, 2023; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

POSTED BUSINESS

TOPIC 1 Request from Senior to use second floor room for recreational activities: Ms. Michonski informed the Board she received a letter from John Yagodzinski who has requested using upstairs for corn hole for an hour on Fridays. Ms. Michonski informed the Board the bathroom renovations are wrapping up. There has been comments by staff concerned about the noise. Chair Szynal said it was a great opportunity for seniors to get exercise. It was agreed that as long as the bathroom is ready we can give it a try and see how it works. If it's disruptive we can revisit it. Selectman Moriarty agreed with his colleagues and we can get back to John to let him know it may be available February 24. John should be reminded people are working in the building.

TOPIC 2 The Heritage Tavern application for Entertainment License: The Select Board has requested clarification on what Heritage Tavern is looking for.

The Heritage Tavern application for Auto Amuse License: The Select Board has requested clarification on what Heritage Tavern is looking for.

TOPIC 3 **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:** Proposed Social Media Policy Draft: Ms. Michonski presented a draft social media policy for Board approval. Ms. Michonski advised the Board she reviewed the policy with legal counsel, and she does not have problems with the majority of the edits from the attorney. The Select Board requested more time to review this. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to table until we have had time to review; Selectman Moriarty seconded; no further discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Comcast License Renewal Update: Ms. Michonski informed the Board that she attempted to meet with Attorney Solomon but because of scheduling, they were unable. She will try to set up a meeting on Thursday. We can revisit this at the next meeting.

TOPIC 4 Town Clerk, Lydia Szych: Discuss a deadline for receiving Citizens' Petitions, Early Voting and Vote by Mail: Ms. Szych informed the Board the Town does not have a set deadline date for filing citizens' petitions and the Town should set one. Ms. Szych recommended the date of February 28th. Chair Szynal thought in fairness to the person who may be filing a citizens' petition this year, March 15th would better serve that person, but going forward the deadline date will be February 28th. Ms. Szych asked the Board for this year to set the date as March 10th. Chair Szynal made a motion that we set a policy that citizens' petitions are due February 28 for 2024 and going forward but this year will be March 10th; Selectman Moriarty seconded; and asked how this will get out. Ms. Szych stated we will put it on the Town's website and Facebook; no further discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Early voting and vote by mail – Ms. Szych informed the Board vote by mail is required for local elections unless we opt out. Ms. Szych recommends the Town keep the vote by mail as people seem to like it. Ms. Szych informed the Board for early voting in person – you must opt in. Ms. Szych informed the Board there is no early in-person voting for local elections unless at least 50% of the Board of Registrars recommends it to Select Board. Ms. Szych recommends that we don't do in-person early voting for local elections as it's very expensive and time consuming. Selectman Moriarty wanted to be clear - this is for local elections only. The procedures for other elections are set. Ms. Szych said for early voting there are locked drop off boxes outside the Town Clerk's office and outside of Town Hall. There is an application for early voting which you can access on the Town's website for people to fill out.

TOPIC 5 @6:00 p.m. Finance Committee: Joint meeting to discuss FY2024 Budget Reviews with Departments:

Town Clerk: Ms. Szych presented the Town Clerk budget. Ms. Szych informed the Board and Committee the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk are basically level funded with the exception of an additional \$2,500.00 for training.

Planning: Ms. Michonski presented the Planning Board budget. The budget is level funded. There is a part-time planner being hired.

Fire/Ambulance: Robert Flaherty, Fire Chief presented four budgets. Chief Flaherty started with level services budget which includes one full-time and the Chief.

The second budget presented is the 16-hour current model. The Fire Department side the numbers are the same. FY23 approved the budget for FY24 which requested 11% on the Fire Department side. The Fire Department is the same except for a couple percentage increases for software and maintenance. The cost is approximately \$183,000.00 for full-time firefighters, training budget (\$4,000.00) and the Chief's contractual agreement.

On the ambulance side, it's similar to what we are currently working in FY23. It would now be 2 full-time and 2 full-time basics. Chair Szynal asked if the \$292,602.00 is the total salary with 16 hrs./day coverage and the answer was yes. Darryl Williams asked about paramedic school. The Fire Chief said that once someone attends the school which the Town pays for, that person has an obligation to work for the Town for 3 years. Any less than that, they have to pay back the money to the Town (prorated). Total for this budget is \$525,904.26. Chair Szynal asked about the \$3,000.00 software licensing. The Chief responded the software keeps track of certifications and people can sign up for shifts. This program has everything prebuilt in it and this is the annual renewal fee.

The third budget is the 16-hour coverage with station overnight department request. The Fire Department portion is a 2% increase. Ambulance, EMT and on-call is the adjustment. Instead of paying the \$2.73/hr. in-house call, they stay home and paid a higher rate. There would be 2 people in the station and 2 people on at home. Chair Szynal asked if we have the facility for that and the Fire Chief said yes. Chair Szynal also asked if the positions would be easily filled and the Chief said it should not be a problem as there are at least four who have expressed interest in this. The total for this budget would be \$542,186.54.

The fourth budget is the 24/7 full time ambulance/fire. The Fire Chief informed everyone this is the big picture for the next 3-5 years. This essentially would be fire, ambulance and medics put on a 24/7. There would be eight staff for both fire and ambulance and the Chief for a total of \$627,049.50.

Ms. Michonski informed everyone the worker's compensation audit has increased dramatically. For 2020-2021 the audit cost was about \$1,300.00. This year the worker's comp audit was over \$6,200.00. She will be looking into where this cost is derived from.

CONTINUED OLD BUSINESS

UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN Selectman Jaworski made a motion to adjourn; Selectman Moriarty seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; meeting ended at 7:11 PM

Respectfully,
Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant