

Approved July 11, 2023

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
59 Main Street, Hatfield, MA

Present: Select Board: Diana Szynal, Chair, Members Edmund Jaworski and Greg Gagnon

Also in attendance: Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Phil Genovese, DPW Director; Michael Dekoschak, Police Chief; John Pease, Agricultural Advisory Commission; Robert Flaherty, Fire Chief; Ray Romero, Firefighter; Attorney Kyle Viera and Robbie Patel; Glenn Hamill; Firefighter Luke Longstreeth

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS Chair Szynal congratulated the Smith Academy graduating class of 2023 which graduated two weeks ago. Selectman Jaworski reminded everyone that tomorrow, June 14, is Flag Day. There is a specific way to retire the American flag. There will be a ceremony on June 14 at 6:00 p.m. at the Legion if you would like to bring your old flag to be retired.

PUBLIC FORUM No one

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Selectman Jaworski made a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of May 9, 2023; Chair Szynal seconded; no discussion; all in favor - aye; motion approved. Selectman Gagnon abstained. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of May 23, 2023; Chair Szynal seconded; no discussion; all in favor - aye; motion approved. Selectman Gagnon abstained. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to approve the executive session meeting Minutes of May 23, 2023; Chair Szynal seconded; no discussion; all in favor - aye; motion approved. Selectman Gagnon abstained.

POSTED BUSINESS

TOPIC 1 Police Chief Dekoschak: Department Update

Personnel: Appointment for full-time police officer: Michael Dekoschak, Police Chief, informed the Board that he has appointed Officer Andrew Motts to full-time duty. Officer Motts has been with the Department since 2015 and is full-time trained. The Board welcomed Officer Motts and thanked him for becoming a full-time Officer. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to approve appointment of Andrew Motts to the Hatfield Police Department; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Discussion of PD fleet and facilities space: Chief Dekoschak informed the Board he submitted pay rate changes to take effect on July 1st for the retention of personnel. The pay rates are normal for the positions. Chief Dekoschak is asking to bring the part-time Officers from \$19.57 to \$23.00 per hour. Chief Dekoschak informed the Board that the money is in his budget. Chief Dekoschak is bringing the full-time officer up to \$28.00. Chief Dekoschak would like to bring Lieutenant Phillips up to \$34.00 per hour, what a lieutenant should be making. Chief Dekoschak informed the Board that he needs to keep the people he has as he is having trouble filling shifts. These Officers will be working all days, not just Monday through Friday with weekends off. Chief Dekoschak informed the Board that he is not looking to raise his pay just the people working for him. Chair Szynal asked why this wasn't in the budget meetings? Chief Dekoschak replied the budget I was

looking for was not included. Chair Szynal asked are we covering all shifts? Chief Dekoschak replied no. Selectman Jaworski commended Chief Dekoschak for not looking for additional funding but we need to find ways to help the Police Department. Selectman Jaworski went on I don't have a problem with this and we want to keep our officers and you kept it within your budget. Selectman Gagnon made a motion to accept the pay as requested by the Chief listed in the forms; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Chief Dekoschak is asking for a new cruiser using ARPA funds. Currently, we have three cruisers. We run these cars 16 hours a day, most days. With an extra full-time person running these vehicles, the mileage and maintenance will run up quickly and in another 1½ years, I will be coming here looking for two new cruisers. The need is great. Chief Dekoschak stated by using ARPA funds this should save the burden being put on the taxpayers. Chair Szynal asked if a decision was needed tonight and asked that the matter be brought up at a future meeting.

Facilities space: Chief Dekoschak stated that if the government was going to clawback ARPA funds, he suggested to use the money to hire an architect to look into redesigning the EMS building to become more spacious. Chief Dekoschak stated he was trying to save taxpayers some monies.

Selectman Jaworski suggested taking these issues up at the next meeting. This way we have time to look into the cost of insuring a new cruiser.

TOPIC 2 Hatfield Main Street Market – Transfer of All Alcoholic License: Attorney Kyle Viera came before the Board seeking transfer of the alcohol license from the Hatfield Center Store, Inc. to Hatfield Variety, Inc. Attorney Viera stated everything in the store would remain the same. The Select Board noted errors in the application and wanted the errors corrected prior to making a decision. The matter was postponed until the next meeting.

TOPIC 3 Agricultural Advisory Commission, John Pease: Discussion of farm activity nuisances: John Pease of the Agricultural Advisory Commission came before the Board explaining he has been talking to various landowners and farmers. Seems there are a lot of visitors coming into Town to use the trails. Farmers are having difficulties reaching their crops because of parked vehicles; poop bags and trash are being left behind; crops are being damaged because vehicles are parking on the crops; and its damaged product for the farmer. Access to the trail systems on Horse Mountain has been diminished because of parked cars. We have noticed that most of the parked cars have out-of-state plates. People walking off the trails have startle landowners. It becomes an issue when the landowners or farmers may be using chainsaws or dangerous equipment to be startled by people walking off the trails an onto private property. The trails need signs. Some properties have been marked "conservation" but the signs have been removed. Mr. Pease said many signs in different areas of Town have been taken down or destroyed. Mr. Pease spoke with Ms. Michonski about contacting a local company to provide signage. Mr. Pease brought up that a mishap happened recently in the meadows and landowners are very concerned. Selectman Jaworski asked if game cameras can legally be put up. Mr. Pease mentioned Farm East Colbank has a large endowment to help communities; maybe we could get signage. Selectman Jaworski asked the Police Chief if game cameras could be put up by landowners and the Chief replied yes but you cannot point it into a private residence. Mr. Pease said people need to be respectful of the farming community, farmers, crops and pick up their trash. Chief Dekoschak stated there has been conversations about putting up gates. Chair Szynal asked if anyone knew who paid for the signs originally and Ms. Michonski thought maybe MDAR. Chair Szynal said we ask people to be respective of the farmland, farmers and their crops. Selectman Jaworski would like to encourage the landowners to put in the game cameras.

TOPIC 4 Fire Chief Flaherty re: Department Business:

- New Deputy Chief Appointment: Robert Flaherty, Fire Chief informed the Board that Deputy Fire Chief Gaughan moved out of town and his position opened up. We decided to promote Captain Ray Romero to the Deputy Fire Chief position. Mr. Romero has stepped up a lot and it was the appropriate decision to make. As of Saturday, Mr. Romero is the new Deputy Fire Chief. The Select Board thanked Deputy Chief Gaughan for all his work.

- Request for funds to supplement FY24 budget: Chief Flaherty made a request for ARPA funds to pay overtime for backfilling shifts while others are at the Academy training and stated this was cut out of the finance process. Chair Szynal asked since you usually find funds from not filling shifts, can we table this? Chief Flaherty said the next class is in December. Chair Szynal stated she would like to see if there would be funds available at the end of the year so we could wait. Chief Flaherty agreed but wanted to be sure this has been put on the radar. Chair Szynal stated she is supportive of the process.

- Request to carryover unused vacation time: Chief Flaherty informed the Board that he knows carryover is frowned on; however, it is still difficult for him to take time off. I've been trying to take time off as I am able. Chair Szynal asked how many hours of carryover time the Chief has and he replied 85. Chair Szynal stated we got into a bind because of COVID but there is a clear reason why this happened. Chair Szynal made a motion that we approve this one-time extension of those hours; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

TOPIC 5 Renewal of Annual Appointments: Alaina Wilcox, Town Clerk presented the Board with the annual renewal of appointments. Ms. Michonski brought up the appointment of the tree warden stating that it should be a 3-year appointment but that the Board has renewed this appointment yearly. Luke Longstreeth has made a request for this position. Chair Szynal asked if there is salary which was rolled over into the DPW Director position when the previous DPW Director took over as tree warden. Mr. Longstreeth thought the salary was \$2,5000.00 but he would do it for free. There is a lot going on that has gone by the wayside. It is not a monetary thing for me. Chair Szynal asked if there would be a conflict with Mr. Longstreeth's current employee and he said no. Selectman Gagnon asked if there is a job description and Ms. Michonski replied no. Chair Szynal stated we need more information as to why it went under the DPW Director job responsibilities, and we could appoint the position at the next meeting. Selectman Jaworski I move that we reappoint all appointees with terms expiring June 30, 2023 as presented on the Annual Appointment List, supplied by the Town Clerk except for the tree warden; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Chair Szynal stated we need to look at the new regulations regarding the animal control officer.

TOPIC 6 Appointments/Resignations:

Resignation of Amy Hahn from Historical Commission: After review of the resignation letter of Amy Hahn, Selectman Gagnon made a motion to accept the resignation of Amy Hahn; Selectman Jaworski seconded with regret; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Appointment of Cheryl Nicholas to Historical Commission: Selectman Gagnon made a motion to appoint Cheryl Nicholas to the vacancy on the Historical Commission; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Certify election of Town Clerk by signature of the Chair: The Chair signed the Certificate of Election as no vote was required. Ms. Wilcox informed the Board she hired a new assistant, Karen Karowski.

TOPIC 7 Conservation Restrictions Amendments: Old Stage Road and Lot 2 off The Jog, Old Stage Road
– review and approval: Ms. Michonski informed the Board the IRS came out with amendments for language for boundary line adjustment clauses. From what Ms. Michonski researched, this amends the requirements for deductions only. This applies to Michael and Isabel Marantz and Paul J. D'Auteuil and it doesn't change anything other than their contribution. Selectman Jaworski stated this is basically for the IRS. Chair Szynal made a motion to approve these; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Attorney Viera and Mr. Patel returned and asked the Select Board if it was possible to obtain conditional approval for the transfer of the liquor license. Attorney Viera would get the corrected documents to the Town the following day. Selectman Gagnon made a motion that we conditionally approval the alcohol license transfer as requested; Selectman Jaworski seconded as long as all corrections are made; no further discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

TOPIC 8 DPW REPORT

Complete Streets Program (Proposed Policy): Phil Genovese, DPW Director informed the Board that a Smith Academy student, Ayden Walen, is looking to do a project to put together a policy to join into complete streets. They will be coming in August to start the process. This program is intersection resigned, crosswalks, bike network, etc. There is up to \$100,000.00 for design funds and \$400,000.00 for construction funds. If you are adopted and your application accepted, it is free money.

Employee Personnel Form, Highway Department: Mr. Genovese informed the Board the increase is for Max Bartlett. He's been there for a year and his probation period ended and Mr. Genovese would like to bring him up comparable to other employees. Selectman Gagnon made a motion that we make an adjustment to Max Bartlett's salary; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Sludge contract for Franklin County: Mr. Genovese informed the Board there was a minimal increase in the sludge contract from the previous year. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to accept the contract by Franklin County Solid Waste Management District; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no further discussion; all in favor - aye; motion approved.

TOPIC 9 TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Comcast License Renewal Agreement Update: Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator informed the Board Comcast has assured Bill Solomon and her they will have the agreement for the Board's July 11th meeting and the Board will have to have a hearing to accept the agreement. The license renewal agreement provides funding for the studio to be moved to Town Hall.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure Improvements Project (Rte. 5, Construction Change Order for Approval: Mr. Genovese informed the Board this Change Order is for the dewatering of Route 5. It's a change in the construction contract. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to accept Change Order #4 presented to us for the Rte. 5 construction project; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Approval of Wage/Salary Rate Adjustment Requests for seasonal employees for Recreation Department: The Board reviewed the Wage/Salary Rate Adjustment requests from Recreation Commission for summer camp

employees. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to accept the Recreation Department budget increases for those positions; Attorney Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Gift donation for trees: Ms. Michonski informed the Board of the gift donation for trees from Omasta Landscaping for \$5,000.00 pursuant to Article 22, appropriation for planting trees. Chair Szynal made a motion to approve this M.G.L. c. 44, 553A ½ from Omasta Landscaping; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

CONTINUED OLD BUSINESS

TOPIC 10 Second Floor Town Hall (Balcony structure Update): Ms. Michonski updated the Board regarding the second floor. The Board agreed to have an assessment done for the floor being leveled. The engineer would like to do another site visit, he wants to follow up with the architect who did the renovations. He needs more information and do another on site visit. He will provide framing details, if necessary.

TOPIC 11 Comprehensive Plan Update: Ms. Michonski informed the Board the committee held a meeting on May 31st. They had an opportunity to talk about what they would like to see for the Town over the next 20 years and what's important to them. We had a community event at Black Birch last Saturday and it was well attended. We had a couple presentations every couple hours and we had stations for each chapter being covered. There was a lot of good input, we raffled off five \$100.00 gift cards.

TOPIC 12 Proposed Social Media Policy: Chair Szynal asked for more time.

TOPIC 13 Smith Academy Park Event Application: Ms. Michonski informed the Board she is finding that people want to see bathroom facilities available. Ms. Michonski told the Board we can't open Town Hall because there is no staff available. Selectman Jaworski suggested event holders could rent sani-cans. Selectman Jaworski questioned if someone uses the park and leaves garbage who cleans it? Ms. Michonski told Cultural Council to bring a trash can and then put it in the dumpster. Chair Szynal stated when the 350th Committee did events, we had a local disposal company drop off barrels and then pick them up. Selectman Jaworski stated the Boy Scouts probably would do it if you gave a donation. Chair Szynal stated we have limits to providing things such as bathrooms and waste. We want people to use the park but they would be responsible for cleaning up the park. Selectman Jaworski stated these people must realize that we do not have personnel to clean up. Chair Szynal made a motion going forward we use this application for anyone who wants to use Smith Academy Park for an event; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS

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 Jaworski made a motion to move into executive session under 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 and not to return to regular session; Selectman Gagnon seconded: Jaworski aye; Szynal aye; Gagnon aye. Meeting ended at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully,

Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant