

Approved October 17, 2023

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
October 3, 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 Ohl, Engineer, CEI; Ryan Gueleher; West Street residents: Virginia Canton, David Canton, Ursula Donaldson, Attorney John McLaughlin, Susan Berry, Dennis Routhier, Elizabeth Brown, Kay Marsh, Craig Neal, Jeffrey Barthelette, Theresa Barthelette, Gerald Buzzee and Alan Betsold

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS Chair Szynal announced the passing of Paul Labbee. Mr. Labbee was known and loved by everyone. He served on the Planning Board, Hatfield 350th, he organized the parades, and he was a member of the Lion's Club. Paul was a big part of luminarium, and he was parade marshal in every Memorial Day parade. The Select Board gave their condolences to his family. Selectman Jaworski also said Paul was the voice of Hatfield and his humor will be missed. Selectman Jaworski also stated it's October: check your smoke detectors, batteries and heating units.

PUBLIC FORUM Cindy Doty of 147 Main presented for public forum. She attended the School Committee Meeting the night before. She informed the Select Board the School Committee is looking to put the pickleball court at Smith Academy although they did not vote on it last night. Ms. Doty wanted to know after the school, will the matter go before the Select Board and Planning Board. What is the next procedure? Ms. Michonski replied the Select Board would be handling this. Chair Szynal said there are a lot of questions to be answered. Ms. Doty stated at Town meeting I was waving my arms because I wanted to be heard on this matter. I was disappointed something came to Town floor without a plan. Selectman Jaworski stated finding a place was the first step. Cindy Doty wanted to know if the court is just for Townspeople or can people from other towns use the court. Ms. Doty heard that there are people looking to use the court from Connecticut. I would like to know who the objections go to. Ms. Michonski stated there are still many details to be ironed out but when that time comes, we will be sure to let you know.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Selectman Jaworski made a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of September 19, 2023; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor –aye; motion approved.

POSTED BUSINESS

The Board took Topics out of order to fill the time until the 5:45 pm meeting with the West Street residents.

TOPIC 2 DPW REPORT: Authorize Sewer and Water Billing Commitment FY 24 #1 for collection: Phil Genovese, DPW Director presented the Select Board with the sewer and water bill commitment for FY 24, #1. After reviewing the commitment, Selectman Gagnon made a motion to approve FY 24 Commitment #1: water in the amount of \$472,525.27; sewer in the amount of \$369,177.27 for a total commitment of \$841,702.54; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

TOPIC 3 TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

An Act Supporting Electrical Load Aggregation Programs: Ms. Michonski informed the Select Board currently before the legislature is House Bill #3852, the load aggregation program. The Department of Public Utilities is seeking a petition to change the authority municipalities would have. The letter would show the support of the Town of Hatfield to the aggregation program currently in place. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to support House Bill #3852; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

CT River Walkway MOU Update: Ms. Michonski updated the Board the City of Northampton is reviewing edits to the MOU and will have their attorney review it.

TOPIC 1 @5:45 pm Meet with West Street residents re: Rte. 5 water and sewer project: Chair Szydal welcomed the residents. She informed the residents the purpose of tonight is for a progress report. Michael Ohl stated people have noticed work has been slow. In recent weeks, the contractor was waiting for the new dewatering system, then there was no excavating because all the rain - the water table was high. When they are able to have good workdays, they make progress. Mr. Ohl stated there is 100 to 200 feet of new pipe in. In the last couple of weeks, the contractor was unable to get police details because the police details were at the Big E. Because of MassDOT rules, contractors cannot close lanes during a holiday weekend. No work will be done Friday, Monday or Tuesday. Excavation work will begin Wednesday after Columbus Day. Mr. Ohl stated the residents are given notice when work is being done. West Street residents complained that they still are not being notified in advance of work being done. One resident stated that he left for appointments one morning and came back to find he could not enter his driveway. Residents also complained that after work hours and weekends it is dangerous and difficult to exit their driveways because the large equipment being left on their properties blocks their view of Route 5 traffic. Mr. Geeleher told the residents that he would move the heavy equipment down the road at the end of the week so not to create blind spots so residents would be able to safely exit their driveways. Mr. Geeleher also stated that the excavation is moving north and should be out of the heavy residential area very soon. Mr. Geeleher stated the lift station should be onsite around November 11th. Chair Szydal stated the project has been unreasonably delayed. Mr. Ohl stated the State mandates roadwork is to end around

Thanksgiving. Selectman Jaworski stated we have completion dates from you, and it is his understanding that the project is to be completed by next June and the pumping station to be completed by December 2023. Mr. Ohl stated, at this point, there are no changes to those dates. Mr. Geeleher stated the weather in the last 30 days doesn't help. Because of the no workdays, we are trying to get the work done. However, without going into detail, Mr. Geeleher stated, you have to stabilize the system, it may take 3, 4, or even 5 days for the ground to stabilize. The dewatering was a problem, the ground wasn't stable. This is also a deep excavation. Another resident asked did you not know about the soil? Mr. Geeleher replied there wasn't enough data, so the system had to be redesigned. Chair Szynal asked Mr. Geeleher can you assure the residents that equipment will not be left on their properties over the weekend? Mr. Geeleher replied that anything with steel tracks cannot go into the northbound lane. I tried to have them stagger the equipment. I'm trying to minimize the damage to the road. We can move a few things further north. Chair Szynal stated I think they have valid concerns, and we want to be sure things are safe for them. Ms. Brown told Mr. Geeleher I'm not attacking you, but we have asked for this for three years. Mr. Geeleher stated I'm with all the residents on this. There have been hurdles we tried to work through. The dewatering system is more complex than you see. The underground is always changing, and we need to keep making small tweaks. I'm sorry this has taken so long, but in the end, you will have a sewer line. Ms. Brown stated she spoke to other neighbors, and they are nervous that the system may not work. Mike Ohl said he would like to hear from those residents. Sue Berry stated there have already been many leaks with the pipe being down 18 feet. Mr. Ohl stated we need to keep the sewage in and water out. We identified there were a couple of spots where the pipe joints failed. We created a watertight joint; it was tested and it passed. Selectman Jaworski stated he hoped from this meeting we solved a couple of issues. The residents need to be safe pulling out of their driveways. I appreciate you coming as this project has been more of an issue than was thought. Chair Szynal stated most of the concerns are easily remedied.

UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS

TOPIC 4 **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 of the public body and the chair so declares:** Selectman Gagnon 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 Jaworski seconded: Jaworski - aye; Szynal - aye; Gagnon - aye.

ADJOURN The meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully,
Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant