

Approved December 12, 2023

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
October 17, 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; Rich Abbott and Mark Gelotte, Open Space Committee; Clinton Phillips, Lieutenant, Police Department; Brian Nicholas

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS Chair Szynal reminded residents real estate taxes are due November 1st and water and sewer bills are due November 3rd. Chair Szynal also congratulated the Fire Association as the bonfire was a success and thank you for all your hard work. Chair Szynal also stated she had a telephone with Northampton Fire Chief Pelis and Assistant Ambulance Coordinator Lemberg and Northampton is having the same staffing issues. They will not put forward a proposal for serving Hatfield. Chair Szynal spoke with Chief Flaherty and informed him of the telephone call. Selectman Jaworski stated PVPC received a grant for \$750,000.00 for historic preservation. They will award grants to various towns up to \$100,000.00 to be used for windows, roof replacement and restoration of historic buildings. It will be very competitive as this includes all cities and towns in Western Massachusetts and Worcester. Maybe Historical can apply. Chair Szynal also stated with the clocks being changed soon, please remember to change the batteries in your smoke detectors.

PUBLIC FORUM No one.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Selectman Jaworski made a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of October 3, 2023; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

POSTED BUSINESS

TOPIC 1 Open Space Committee Chair Rich Abbott and Member Mark Gelotte CT River Greenway Trail Memorandum of Understanding: Chair Rich Abbott and Member Mark Gelotte presented before the Select Board with another draft of the Memorandum of Understanding. Chair Szynal stated we have a redraft and the issues I was concerned about at the previous meeting have not been addressed. I wanted the MOU to be only in place until they get to the 25% design stage, but this MOU doesn't do that. Mr. Abbott stated he spoke with Sarah LaValley of the Northampton Office of Planning and Sustainability, and she stated the Town would be involved in all meetings and will have the opportunity along the way for changes or options. Chair Szynal stated the MOU, as it stands, shows it right to the end. Chair Szynal

stated I can't agree to something that I don't know what it is. The way this reads, Chair Szynal stated, we are agreeing to this without an out. Chair Abbott stated that he would send the MOU to Town counsel and see if he can draft language to be included in which would satisfy the concerns of the Select Board. Chair Szynal stated, by not adding language that I feel strongly about - this behavior concerns me, and this is why I am hesitant to sign this as presented. Further, Chair Szynal stated, this agreement doesn't give us an out. I do not want to sign something on behalf of the residents without having more information. Mr. Gelotte stated at Town meeting residents voted for a concept, a multi-use trail, the presumption is the project will move forward under those parameters. Northampton said they will do the maintenance of the 750 feet. Chair Szynal replied it is my intention to honor the Town meeting vote, but we need to know what we are entering into and I'm not stopping the project, I just want to know what the project is. Chair Szynal further stated my obligation is to enter into agreements on behalf of the Town cautiously.

Chair Abbott brought up a letter in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, Letters to the Editor which appeared over the weekend. A woman was walking on a Hatfield trail with her family and there was shooting going on. Chair Abbott asked if signage can be put up there. Lt. Phillips of the Hatfield Police Department replied that the land up there has been used by residents for many years for target practice, hunting, and fishing. As far as any laws being broken - there was nothing of that sort. Chair Szynal asked if there is danger to anyone walking on the trail and the answer was no. Chair Szynal also asked who owns the land. Lt. Phillips replied Hatfield owns the property. Chair Szynal also asked if you could just go up and shoot. Lt. Phillips responded yes, it's public property. Chair Szynal asked if we could stop the shooting up there and Lt. Phillips replied that would be a Town counsel question because it's Town property. There would be nothing for us to enforce, it's legal to shoot on Town land, you can fish, hunt, you can do recreational things on Town property.

TOPIC 2 Police Department Request re Memorandum of Understanding w/Town of Sunderland for shared Clinical Response Services: Lieutenant Clinton Phillips, Hatfield Police Department presented before the Select Board with a draft Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Sunderland for shared clinical response services. Chair Szynal stated this MOU is to provide clinical professional services in situations where de-escalation is necessary. Lt. Phillips stated we have been working with Whately and Sunderland and there is grant money out there for a services worker out in the field. Sunderland applied for this grant through the Department of Mental Health for a full time CSO worker. Lt. Phillips stated there is a need for a CSO worker. We had 120 calls in a year's span where a CSO worker would have been helpful. These are mental health and substance abuse calls. We applied for a full time CSO and were awarded funding for a part time CSO worker. The CSO worker would always be with a patrol officer. When a situation arises where a CSO worker is needed, the CSO worker would be transported by an officer to the scene, the officer secures the scene, then the CSO would go in. If the CSO worker was in Sunderland and Hatfield needed a CSO for a particular situation, the Sunderland officer would bring that CSO to the location in Hatfield and vice versa. Chair Szynal asked do we have that CSO worker one day a week? Lt. Phillips replied we would have that

person one day a week, Sunderland would have them one day a week and Whately the other day. Selectman Jaworski asked if this is 24/7 coverage and Lt. Phillips replied the CSO is only 8 hours. Selectman Jaworski stated I think it's great you have another tool. Chair Szynal asked about the insurance section—what are our options? Lt. Phillips stated CSO pays for all the insurance, it is not paid by Hatfield. Ms. Michonski sent the MOU to Town counsel for review. Lt. Phillips stated that Sunderland's Town counsel is also reviewing the agreement. Chair Szynal stated once the agreement has been finalized, the Board could meet, if necessary, for a formal vote and signature. Chair Szynal stated I believe this is good for the citizens of Hatfield and Lt. Phillips stated he believes the program will be beneficial to the Town.

Selectman Jaworski: Madam Chair I request to take out of order:

TOPIC 5 Day Pond Restoration Project Updated/Recommendation to have a subcommittee:

Brian Nicholas presented before the Select Board stating the more we get into this project, the issue of having a subcommittee has come up. Brian Nicholas stated we went to CPA to present an idea; they expressed interest and Open Space expressed interest. Ms. Michonski stated the first part was to do an assessment of the water quality. Mr. Nicholas suggested DEP come out and wanted them on board for the project. We cleared the technical part as there was no contamination, but slight traces of a solvent were found. We have some metals in the sediment. The next hurdle is to have a representative of DEP walk the property and call out any objections that DEP may have. We are at the stage where we need to ask the Board to endorse the project and move to an application to CPC and move along the permitting process. Chair Szynal asked if the permitting is through DEP. Mr. Nicholas answered yes, DEP wants to know how you will remove the metal and where you will put it. We need DEP approval and that could take over a year. Ms. Michonski stated we will also be working with Conservation and Mr. Nicholas stated we will file a notice of intent with Conservation. We don't have a survey for the Smith Academy property. When it was built, there was a plan drawn but there were no meets and bounds; we need to make sure we own the pond. Mr. Nicholas said if we could find funds for the survey, I believe the end result will be an asset for the Town. It will be a good spot for fishing year round. There will be a solar powered aeration system. Mr. Nicholas stated the walkway has been staked out by DPW, but we need to remove the sediment from the pond before putting the walkway in. Selectman Jaworski stated we are looking for the survey, the Board's blessing and a subcommittee. Mr. Nicholas stated we need approval from the Board for the application to the CPC for November 1. Chair Szynal made a motion that we approve the application as presented to CPC before November 1st, Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to form a subcommittee consisting of Brian Nicholas, Edmund Jaworski, Mike Szych, a person appointed by us, and a student from the school; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

TOPIC 3 Resignations/Appointments: Appointment of Betty Snow to Local Cultural Council: After reviewing the application of Betty Snow; Selectman Jaworski made a motion to

appoint Betty Snow to the Local Cultural Council; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

TOPIC 4 TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Proposed Pickleball Tennis Courts: Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator, informed the Select Board that the pickleball court would not be located at Smith Academy High School. They are still looking at different areas.

Review Exit Interview Policy in the HR Manual: Ms. Michonski informed the Select Board the exit interview policy as it reads now is an employee will have an exit interview with the Department Head. Chair Szynal stated this issue came up in a discussion. There needs to be a slight change to the policy that would identify someone else who would do the exit interview. Ms. Michonski suggested the Select Board Chair or member of the Select Board or the Chair's designee. Chair Szynal made a motion that we change the language that the exit interview be done by the Chair or her designee; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Agricultural Use of Billings Way Property, Agreement to License w/Harrison Bardwell: Ms. Michonski informed the Select Board the Agreement to License Billings Way has been accepted and signed by Harrison Bardwell. She presents the Agreement for their signatures tonight. Selectman Gagnon made a motion to approve the Agreement to License Property Billings Way, Hatfield, Massachusetts to Harrison Bardwell; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Employee Personnel Change Authorization: Ms. Michonski informed the Board that Brenda Keir has been the payroll assistant for some time and that it is time for her to have the title and rate increase for that position. Selectman Jaworski made a motion to approve the rate increase for Mrs. Keir; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Planning Board Vacancy – Procedures to fill Vacancy: Ms. Michonski informed the Select Board there is still a seat available on the Planning Board. The Planning Board voted at their last meeting to fill the vacancy. The position has been posted and letters of interest are coming in. The deadline is coming soon. At the next meeting, the Planning Board will meet with the Select Board to approve a member.

CONTINUED OLD BUSINESS

Smith Academy Park Pavilion Update: Ms. Michonski informed the Select Board that since the last meeting the project has been put out to bid on the Central Registry. Bids will be received until November 15, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

TOPIC 6 Expense of paying Meals Tax and Room Tax – Discussion and Review: Ms. Michonski told the Board a question came up when an employee had to go to conference which required overnight accommodations and meals, The current Town's policy is an employee is not reimbursed for taxes and additional fees. The Town needs to adopt a rule that employees are reimbursed meals and room tax. Chair Szynal told Ms. Michonski to see if DLS or another town has language to add to our HR policy.

UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN Selectman Jaworski made a motion to adjourn; Selectman Gagnon seconded; meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully,

Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant