

Approved March 4, 2024

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2024 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; Milo Childs Campolo, Tree Works; Amy Novak, Historical Commission; Phil Genovese, DPW Director; Kyle Scott, Building Commissioner; Paul Dostal

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS Chair Szynal noted the day before the Fire Department had 5 calls in the morning. She thanked and recognized the Fire Department for their hard work. Shortly after that posting, there was another social media post that was disingenuous. I don't like there being misinformation. The post Chair Szynal saw referenced the Select Board being slow about hiring more staff to the Fire Department. I want to clarify: over the last five years, the Fire Department's budget has increased over \$200,000.00. We have been generous to trying help fund the Department, the Fire Chief has had many goals and we have tried to help him attain those goals. Since March of 2020, there have been 41 new hires for the Fire Department in various capacities. In addition to the \$200,000.00, there was an extra \$18,500.00 to replace cylinders; an additional \$61,000.00 from ARPA funds; \$35,000.00 toward weekend staff and other funds went to protective gear for fire and ambulance personnel. I want to make sure people understand we are not withholding funding and we have been working with the Chief as he has put forward proposed solutions for increasing staffing. That statement was very disingenuous. Chair Szynal went on to say that we have been asking for more information, more numbers but that it our due diligence and obligation to be sure before making any big move with departments, we have evaluated the situation and will be moving forward in the most productive way. Selectman Jaworski also stated there has been a new ambulance and \$20,000.00 toward paramedic equipment.

PUBLIC FORUM No one.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Selectman Jaworski made a motion to approve the Select Board January 12th and January 16th meeting minutes; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved. Chair Szynal made a motion that we accept the January 30, 2024 meeting minutes; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

POSTED BUSINESS

TOPIC 1 Tree Works LLC – Discussion and review Host Agreement Renewal: Chair Szynal informed the Board that we have gone back and forth on the Agreement with Treeworks. Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator informed the Board she has been in communication with Town counsel and there are two agreements: one Settlement Agreement and the Host Community Agreement renewal for 5 years. Chair Szynal asked Ms. Michonski if the Agreements have been reviewed by Town counsel and Ms. Michonski informed the Board the Agreements have been reviewed by the attorneys for both parties. Chair Szynal informed residents that a Host Community Agreement was signed but then changes came down from the Cannabis Commission which changed things retroactively and so we tried to find a way to work this out. This new Host Community Agreement allows Treeworks to continue operating in Town. The Settlement Agreement is for \$40,000.00 and we will use those funds for a capital project in Town. Paul Dostal asked the Board the \$40,000.00, when does the Town expect to receive those funds? Chair Szynal responded it will be over four quarterly payments in 2024; we did receive the first payment; the second is due April 1st and each quarter going forward in 2024. We trust Treeworks will honor that agreement. Mr. Dostal asked if the Host Community Agreement has a monetary component. Chair Szynal responded the new Agreement is that they can do business here with no monetary component. Chair Szynal stated the legislature changed the rules so there is no monetary payment unless a town has an impact. Selectman Jaworski stated maybe Treeworks would make a monetary donation going forward as was promised in the beginning. Selectman Jaworski made a motion that we accept the agreement as presented to us; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved. Selectman Gagnon made a motion that we accept the Host Community Agreement with Treeworks; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved. Mr. Child Campolo thanked the Board and apologized for the delay in getting this all done and stated Treeworks will live up to their promises in the Agreement. Thank you for working with us.

TOPIC 2 Historical Commission and Historical Society - Discussion of relocating Historical Museum: Postponed.

The Board took topics out of order:

TOPIC 4 APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS: Recommendation to appoint Catherine Benincasa, Election Worker: After reviewing the document from Catherine Benincasa requesting to be appointed as an election worker, Selectman Jaworski made a motion to appoint Catherine Benincasa as an Election Worker; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Appointment of Per-Diem Firefighter/Paramedic: Ms. Michonski informed the Board there is a new employee personnel form for the hire of a new firefighter.

TOPIC 5 DPW REPORT:

State Revolving Fund, Clean Water and Drinking Water Infrastructure Projects – Support from Senator Comerford at 1/31/24 public hearing: Mr. Genovese informed the Board Senator Comerford reached out to him with some information about a state revolving fund. Senator Comerford requested information about Hatfield which was provided to her. Senator Comerford attended a public hearing on January 31st and Ms. Michonski stated it went very well. Chair Szynal, we thank Senator Comerford for once again helping Hatfield.

FY24 Snow & Ice Appropriation Deficit – Request for approval to spend in excess of appropriation: Mr. Genovese updated the Select Board the snow & ice appropriation deficit is now \$55,000.00+. We ordered a ton of salt at a cost of \$8,000.00. Selectman Jaworski made a motion in accordance with MGL c.44, §31D, to authorize the Department of Public Works to deficit spend in excess of the approved FY24 appropriation for the purpose of snow and ice removal; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades Project Update – Invitation for Bids: Ms. Michonski updated the Select Board that the wastewater treatment plant project is moving along. The invitation for bids issued; there is a non-mandatory in person pre-bid conference at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at the plant; and sealed bids are due 2:00 P.M. Wednesday, March 20, 2024; sealed sub-bids are due 2:00 P.M. Wednesday, March 26, 2024. There is a grant and loan from USDA for the project. The Town's portion is \$132,000.00.

TOPIC 6 TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) and SAFER Grant Opportunities: Ms. Michonski informed the Board the Fire Chief is looking for direction from the Board about applying for two grants. One grant is for the ladder truck and the other is a SAFER grant opportunity, which is a new grant. The grant for the ladder truck would be a 5% match and the other grant is for full-time personnel funding for 3 years. Selectman Jaworski asked if the grant for the personnel would be to fund existing personnel or add additional personnel and Ms. Michonski stated it would be to add additional personnel. Chair Szynal stated Chief Flaherty has applied for the grant for the ladder truck before and he should apply for it again. Regarding the ladder truck, Chair Szynal stated she is not convinced we need a ladder truck. Chair Szynal stated that Chief Flaherty should apply for the grant with the caveat that it has to fit in the fire station. We need to be sure personnel can use it and it fits in the station. Chair Szynal said the 5% match for the ladder truck would have to go to Town meeting as the approval last year was for the previous grant application which was not awarded to Hatfield.

Agreement for Veterans' Services 1/22/24 -7/1/24 with City of Northampton: Ms. Michonski informed the Board she received the Agreement for Veterans' Services from the City of Northampton. After reviewing the Agreement, Selectman Jaworski made a motion to approve the Veterans' Services Agreement with City of Northampton; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Recommended Letter to Legislative Representatives – Petition for Regulated Use of Golf Carts:

Ms. Michonski is requesting the Board endorse the letter to Senator Comerford and Representative Sabadosa seeking legislative approval to regulate use of golf carts in Hatfield. After reviewing, Chair Szynal made a motion we send this letter to Senator Comerford and Representative Sabadosa moving forward with a home rule petition for golf carts; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Town of Hatfield By-Laws – Discussion re: Updating By-Laws: Ms. Michonski recommended the Select Board begin the process of reviewing the Town's Bylaws and assigning the task and she is suggesting the Board appoint someone from Select Board, Town Administrator, Town Clerk, a resident to look at the bylaws. Chair Szynal suggested Brian Moriarty.

Employee Personnel Change Form for Administrative Assistant: Ms. Michonski is recommending a rate increase for the administrative assistant from \$17.25 to \$18.34. After reviewing the change form, Selectman Gagnon made a motion we accept the rate increase; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

CONTINUED OLD BUSINESS

Proposed Day Pond Restoration Project Update: Ms. Michonski informed the Select Board the project application for Community Preservation funding has been recommended by CPC for \$196,980.00 and submitted for annual Town meeting warranty. Ms. Michonski is recommending applying to EOED RFP MA Dredging Program FY grant for \$95,000.00 in funding.

Comprehensive Plan Update: Ms. Michonski informed the Board the Committee is reviewing proposed recommendations for development of the comprehensive plan and the Planning Board will be presenting a proposed recommended zoning by-law changes at their February 7, 2024 meeting at 7:00 P.M.

TOPIC 3 FY2025 Budget Reviews with Departments @ 6:15 pm - DPW, Recreation Committee, Historical Commission and Building Inspector:

DPW: Phil Genovese, DPW Director presented the DPW budgets to the Board along with a summary for the FY25 budget. There are slight increases due to costs. He included money to contract out the street sweeping program. The current sweeper is very old and replacing it would cost between \$250,000.00 to \$300,000.00 but to hire out would cost somewhere around \$15,000.00 a year. We will keep the old sweeper in case of emergency. Mr. Genovese stated that he would like to hire a grounds person. This subject has been coming up for years. He would like to take the cemetery salary and \$5,000.00 out of the transfer station budget to create this new position. The position would be Tuesday-Friday on the grounds; and Saturdays at the transfer station. Another issue came up at the end of the creation of the budget and it was suggested to take some money from the wastewater plant to hire a trainee. Mr. Meals did this in Deerfield, hiring someone currently in high school who would get the hours in so when that person

graduates, they would be ready to work at wastewater. It would be paid for out of the enterprise fund and something we need to consider doing. Mr. Jaworski asked if the 14% increase shown is for this position and Mr. Genovese responded yes. Mr. Genovese stated the other increase is for the tree budget. In Town there are over 50 ash trees and many trees have succumbed to the ash borne beetle and there will be numerous trees which have to be removed. Public works is level funded; highway-the increase for the street sweeping and the 3% union increases is included. Street lights – level; motor pool-parts increase; facilities/maintenance-increase; transfer station-level funded; town fuel-level funded; cemetery-level funded; water-increase due to testing and chemicals; sewer-we still have to retain another licensed person. Chair Szynal asked if trees were removed, is there money to replace them? Mr. Genovese stated yes, from CPC and the Omasta money. Regarding the vehicle lease, a new police cruiser, fire chief is requesting a new fire chief vehicle, and the Council on Aging is looking for a new van. The fee for replacement would be around \$60,000.00 a year. Chair Szynal asked for the mechanic's opinion on these vehicles and if they need to be replaced.

Recreation Committee: Ms. Michonski presented the Recreation Committee's FY25 which is straight forward. This is a revolving fund with an additional \$5,000.00 operating budget as a supplemental budget to help them if the revolving fund falls short.

Historical Commission: Ms. Michonski presented this budget. The budget increase of \$4,000.00 for the purchase of local artifacts. The other expenditures are the same and the total budget is \$6,350.00.

Building Inspector: Kyle Scott, Building Commissioner presented the Select Board with his FY25 budget noting an increase for the online permitting and salary increases. He has worked for the Town for 10 years and has not received an increase in salary aside from the COLA increases.

TOPIC 7 EXECUTIVE SESSION MGL, Ch. 30A, §21a, 2. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel for Building Inspector: Selectman Jaworski made a motion to move into executive session under MGL, Ch. 30A, §21a #2. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel for Building Inspector and not to return to regular session: Selectman Gagnon seconded: Jaworski - aye; Gagnon - aye; Szynal - aye. Regular session meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm

UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN

Respectfully,
Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant