



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: Monday, January 28, 2013
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chairman Pepe, Vice Chair Woodbury, Clerk Stevens, Members Berthiaume & Fritze, and Town Administrator Gaudette

At 6:00 p.m. Chairman Pepe called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the Business Meeting and Special Meeting of January 14 and Workshop Meeting of January, 23, 2013 (Berthiaume / Woodbury) passed 5/0.

Citizen Input:

None

Communications: Fire Department Recognition – Years of Service

Chief Parsons presented Massachusetts Firefighter Service Awards to recognize and honor Spencer Firefighters for their long-term service with the Department.

Awards presented for at least 20 years of service to Firefighters Michael Gadbois, Joshua Gaucher, Robert Churchey, and Mr. Lee Churchey. (Mr. Lee Churchey was not available to attend).

Awards presented for at least 25 years of service to Firefighter Robert Bradshaw.

Awards presented for at least 30 years of service to Firefighters Louis Dragon, William Locke, and Chief Robert Parsons.

Chairman Pepe and the Board thanked all for their service, dedication, and selflessness.

New Business:

Action Item: Contract for Benefits Administration (EBS Foran)

Mr. Gaudette noted with regret, that Human Resources Director, Wendy Judge resigned to seek other employment. EBS Foran Group, an employee benefits broker provides benefits services to the Towns of West Boylston and Leicester. They provided a cost summary in the amount of \$2,000 per quarter to coordinate benefits for Spencer. Mr. Gaudette needs the approval of the Board to enter into this agreement with EBS Foran Group.

A motion to enter into agreement with EBS Foran Group (Fritze / Berthiaume) passed 5/0.

Discussion Item: Invitation to legislators for February 11, 2013

The annual meeting with Representatives Durant & Gobi, and Senator Brewer, will be held on February 11th. The Board instructed Mr. Gaudette to send a list of issues for discussion, which include an update on 9C cuts, House 1 budget, funding for Chapter 70 and Chapter 90. Also, add discussion on the plan to reorganize the Housing Authority.

Action Item: PILOT Agreement – Borrego Solar, Wilson Street

The Board agreed to pass over at this time and move to the February 11th meeting.

Old Business:

Action Item: Community Comparison Chart

The Board will review the draft with the additional communities and discuss further at the February 11th meeting.

Action Item: Approve Contract Amendment for Tata & Howard (CIC Grant)

Mr. Gaudette advised the Board that the agreement with consultants Tata & Howard, who are working on Stormwater Management, needs to be amended to reflect the cost for additional tasks. The new total is \$158,000 and will not affect the total project value of \$310,000.

A motion to revise the agreement with Tata & Howard as discussed (Fritze / Berthiaume) passed 5/0.

Town Administrator's Report:

Initial Capital Request List

Departments submitted capital request. Details will be provided to the Capital Improvement Committee. Mr. Gaudette will keep the Board updated.

House Bills filed for c. 74 Vocational Tuition and Transportation Reform

Mr. Gaudette is working on a Bill with Representative Gobi to change the way out of district tuition and transportation is handled. Currently, if a program of study is not offered at Baypath, a student has the option to go to another vocational school and the Town is responsible to pay 100 percent of the tuition and the transportation. It costs the Town approximately \$40,000 to send a student out of district, compared with \$5,000 to send one to Baypath.

Spencer Rescue Squad

Mr. Gaudette reported that the Town has had a great working relationship with the

Spencer Rescue Squad for almost 54 years. The Town does not have ambulance service in the budget.

Rescue Squad members Gary Suter, Dan Henderson, Pat George, Michael Meloche, John Wilson, Ron Fortin, Jerry Martin, Charlie O'Connor, and Vinny Cloutier were present.

Mr. Henderson and Mr. Suter reported that the Rescue Squad provides medical support at fires, schools and the Spencer Fair. They work with public safety employees in Town and are proud to have provided services for 54 years without requesting Town funds. At this point, they can no longer manage without additional funding. Patient reimbursement rates do not cover the cost from Medicare, and there is also the issue with private insurance money going directly to the individual and not the Rescue Squad. In order to maintain the current level of service, they regrettably ask for assistance from the Town in the amount of \$200,000 annually. They will work with Mr. Gaudette and the Board to gain the support of the Town.

Mr. Stevens asked if they looked into adjusting their business model.

Mr. Gaudette said the Town will evaluate all options to determine if there is a cost benefit to utilize alternatives. He suggested a member of the Board meet with him and a member of the Rescue Squad separately to discuss particulars and report back. Mr. Berthiaume offered to assist.

At 7:07 p.m. Chairman Pepe announced the meeting would adjourn for a tape change.

The meeting reconvened at 7:23 p.m.

SEBRSD Budget Update: Chairman Mary Gershman and Matt McCarthy

Mr. Pepe welcomed SEBRSD Committee Chair Mary Gershman and member Matt McCarthy.

Ms. Gershman apologized to the Board for the serious issues with the School District budget deficit. She reported that the numbers have been reduced in some of the categories and provided a revised sheet. She is working with the DOR to oversee finances and discussing cuts that would be the least restrictive to students.

Mr. McCarthy discussed revolving funds noting that revenue under State statute is not part of the operating budget. Revenue and expenses were not shown in the budget in the past. Mr. Gaudette said it is troubling that revenue from revolving funds is not being shown to the Towns.

The following items were discussed:

- After working the numbers, the estimated \$808,000 revenue deficit is now in the low \$400's
- Mr. McCarthy will get back to the Board on whether or not health insurance is included in the preschool line item

- Mr. Gaudette asked about applying the certified Excess /Deficiency to reduce the deficit
- There is now \$50,000 to \$70,000 in savings with the resignation of the H.R. Director
- There is a deficit of \$350,000 on the teacher's salary line, Mr. Gaudette asked Mr. McCarthy to investigate

Budget line items were discussed in detail. The Interim Business Manager is reviewing the numbers and investigating the line item for private schools. Mr. Gaudette and the Board asked for back-up on how numbers are obtained to be provided. Scanlon Associates will perform a full audit within the next month.

Mr. Stevens questioned how this could occur without the School Committee's knowledge since they receive monthly warrants. It should have been clear they were over budget. He also asked about the process for assessing budget cuts. Mr. McCarthy apologized for his part in not doing more to catch this earlier. He noted that he receives monthly expense reports; however, due to an accounting system change some reports had missing information.

The Acting Superintendent, with administrators from each school, will be responsible for potential cuts. Reinstatement of fees will be in place for the spring season.

Mr. Berthiaume asked why there was a \$1.2 million increase in the total operating budget over the prior year, and now a \$1.8 million increase. Mr. McCarthy explained that grants received are not shown in the budget, but are on a separate sheet per State statute.

The Board asked that the revised budget be completed by the end of February with detail for each line item for revolving and expense.

The School Committee will meet to discuss officially putting the David Prouty Building Project on hold.

Mr. Pepe said he is concerned about the budget for this year and next year and expects the Board to be a full partner in the solution. This could have a detrimental impact on the Town.

FY2014 Budget Update

Mr. Gaudette provided information from the Governor on the FY14 budget. He will move forward with the general government side of the budget at this time.

Board Liaison Reports:

Mr. Berthiaume reported that the David Prouty Building Project is on hold at this time.

Citizen Input:

Brenda Berard, owner of American Styles Hair Salon asked the board to address teacher salary increases during a time when the budget is in the red and to look at special education.

She expressed concerned with losing the local Rescue squad. Mr. Pepe encouraged her to attend School Committee and other Town meetings.

Joe Nanagan, 52 Grove St. said he has a great deal of respect for the Rescue Squad, however is concerned that this is a private company asking the Town for \$200,000 to support them. He said his company can provide Spencer with the same level of services, with no request for funding. He believes any ambulance service in Worcester would offer the same.

Al Atchue, Meadow Rd, said he attended the School Committee Budget meeting on Thursday, and felt the Committee was disrespectful to the Town by not allowing residents to speak.

Board Member and Staff Comments:

None

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant