



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: Monday, March 25, 2013
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Vice Chair Woodbury, Clerk Stevens, Members Berthiaume & Fritze, and
Town Administrator Gaudette
Chairman Pepe was absent

At 6:09 p.m. Vice Chair Woodbury called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the March 11th meeting minutes (Berthiaume / Fritze) passed 4/0.

Citizen Input

None

Communications

None

New Business

Action Item: Letter of Support for "Small Farm" APR

Jan Park, representing the Common Ground Land Trust informed the Board that the Land Trust is applying to the State for an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) for land located at the intersection of N. Spencer Rd and Wire Village Rd, known as "Small Farm". This land meets the criteria for open space as well as the goals of the Master Plan relative to preserving the rural character of the Town. Ms. Park noted that If the Town provides a small amount of funding, it will likely enhance the State grant approval, therefore the Land Trust is asking for a sum of between \$3,000 to \$5,000 be placed on a Town Meeting Warrant. The Board agreed to endorse the APR, but decided not to make a decision on the funding at this time.

A motion to draft an endorsement letter to allow the APR to move forward (Berthiaume / Fritze) passed 4/0.

Action Item: Increase Revolving Fund for Electrical Inspector

Mr. Gaudette advised the Board to increase the salary cap for the Electrical Inspector from \$17,000 to \$25,000. The Inspector receives 70% of each inspection and there is a cap on the amount he is allowed to be paid. This results in him performing inspections at the end of the fiscal year without compensation.

A motion to raise the salary cap for the Electrical Inspector to \$25,000 (Berthiaume / Stevens) passed 4-0.

Action Item: Approve MIIA Renewal Rates

Mr. Gaudette informed the Board that the insurance Advisory Committee recommends renewing with MIIA with rates as listed at a 4.9% increase over last year.

A motion to approve FY14 health insurance rates from MIIA, contingent upon approval at Town Meeting (Berthiaume / Woodbury) passed 4/0.

Action Item: Approve 2013 CIC Stormwater Agreement with MA A&F

Mr. Gaudette applied for extension of the grant and there are now a total of 30 towns. As lead community, Spencer must enter into agreement with the State for the CIC grant in the amount of \$115,000.

A motion to authorize the Administrator to enter into agreement with the State for the CIC Grant (Berthiaume / Stevens) passed 4/0.

Old Business

Action Item: Vote to authorize additional emergency Snow & Ice expenditures in accordance with MGL c. 44, §31D

Steve Tyler informed the Board that as a result of the last storm, there is a \$12,000 deficit in Snow & Ice account. He asked the Board to increase to \$15,000.

A motion to approve the \$15,000 increase and to deficit spend on Snow and Ice (Berthiaume / Fritze) passed 4/0.

Discussion: Ambulance Service for FY2014

In January the Spencer Rescue Squad (SRS) submitted a letter and came before the Board requesting funding due to changes in the industry. Mr. Gaudette looked at alternatives, met with private vendors and received a proposal from a vendor to provide ambulance service with no cost to the community; however it is not an accurate comparison with the current service being provided by SRS. He recommends funding SRS for one year while continuing to investigate the best option for the Town. In the meantime, Chief Parsons and Mr. Gaudette will investigate other options.

At this time, Mr. Gaudette needs direction from the Board whether or not to include a line item in the Fire Department budget for an ambulance service contract. Various cuts were made in other areas to fund this line item.

Vinny Cloutier, member of the Board of Directors for the SRS talked about the 54 year history between the SRS and the Town. He said it would be a grave mistake to end the agreement. He met with the Administrator on multiple occasions and with the SRS Board of Directors and at this time he believes one year of funding by the Town would not be sufficient. On behalf of the SRS, he is requesting that the amount of \$150,000 be placed the ballot to endorse the continuation between SRS and the Town in the form of a proposition 2 ½ override. This will allow time to change the business model.

Mr. Berthiaume said there is no doubt that the SRS is committed the Town and would like to make this work.

Mr. Stevens expressed concern about having an override.

Chief Parsons noted that SRS has been a great supporter of the Fire Department and asked the Board to allow the request to move forward.

Mr. Gaudette said he's concerned about having the \$110,000 in budget if it will not be enough.

Mr. Fritze asked if Paxton will continue using the services of the SRS. Mr. Cloutier said they will continue.

The Board agreed to vote on whether or not to allow at the April 8th meeting.

Discussion: PILOT Agreement with Borrego Solar, Wilson Street Project

Dan Berwick with Borrego Solar, the Board of Assessors, Consultant Chris Reidy, and Principal Assessor Mary Williams were present for the discussion. Mr. Gaudette previously provided the Board with documents on PILOT agreements to review. He is working on a program that will be favorable to the Town and one all can agree on. He expects to have the agreement in place by the April 8th meeting.

Mr. Woodbury noted it is beneficial for the payment schedule to include higher amounts in the early years. Another option is a flat schedule, which allows for consistency for budget purposes. Discussion will continue at the April 8th meeting.

Action Item: Policy Adoption – Health Insurance Contribution Rates for Elected Officials

The policy was introduced at the March 11th meeting.

A motion to approve the policy as written (Berthiaume / Fritze) passed 4/0.

Discussion: Policy Introduction: Health Insurance Opt-out Program

Administrator Gaudette introduced a Health Insurance Opt-out program that would allow employees currently enrolled in the program to receive payments for two years if they opt out of the Health Insurance plan. He is asking the Board to accept as a pilot program after further discussion a future meeting.

Town Administrator's Report

Discussion: SEBRSD Budget Update

The School Committee will hold a special meeting on Wednesday to reapprove the school budget

Discussion: FY2014 Budget Update

Mr. Gaudette reviewed the calendar and budget pro forma.

Discussion: Review Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Gaudette reviewed the draft Annual Town Meeting warrant for May 2, 2013. Additional articles will be added.

Discussion: Review Proposed FY2014 Capital Plan

Mr. Gaudette reported that any item over \$10,000 or with a life expectancy of five or more years is reviewed by the Capital Planning Committee. Items are ranked based on mandate, need, and safety. Approved items are funded through free cash or non-expiring transfers. He reviewed a list of proposed requests, including the Pleasant St. School feasibility study as a Council on Aging building in the amount of \$40,000. It has since been taken off the list and there was some discussion on Maple St. School being a better option for that type of use, if it were to become available.

Board Liaison Reports:

Mr. Fritze said they received bids for the floor of the Fire Station Annex building.

Citizen Input

None

Board Member and Staff Comments

Mr. Gaudette reported that the vicious dogs on Cranberry Lane have been properly licensed. The Chief Darrin has asked the Board to rescind the order of removal.

A motion to rescind the order of removal of the dogs on 6 Cranberry Lane (Woodbury/Fritze) passed 4/0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials:

APR Letter of support
MIIA Renewal Rates
CIC Stormwater Agreement
Spencer Rescue Squad Statement
Health Insurance Opt-out Program
Draft ATM Warrant
FY2014 Capital Plan