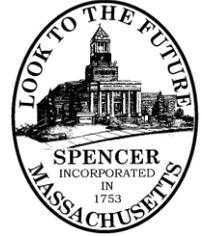


Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen



Date: Monday, February 24, 2014
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chair Woodbury, Vice Chair Berthiaume, Clerk Stevens, Members Fritze and Pepe and Administrator Gaudette

At 6:10 p.m. Chairman Woodbury called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the Executive Session of February 10th, 2014 (Berthiaume/Fritze) passed 5/0.

Citizen Input

Karen Spiewak from Charlton introduced herself and announced she is a democratic candidate for State Representative for the 6th Worcester District.

Communications

None

New Business

Discussion: Legislative Delegation – Senator Brewer, Representative Gobi & Representative Durant

Senator Brewer, Representative Gobi and Representative Durant came before the Board to give their annual update.

The Board presented Senator Brewer with a plaque congratulating him on his upcoming retirement. The Senator thanked the Board noting his time in public service has been a journey of joy and the people of Spencer have been a pleasure to work with.

Senator Brewer said he understands the concerns of the Board with the current budget situation and commended Administrator Gaudette for his report to the DESE. He spoke about Higher Education becoming increasingly unaffordable and said the State is working to allow Massachusetts students to attend free of charge, or at least free of tuition increases. The Governor's FY15 budget calls for \$4.4 billion for public education. He also noted that unrestricted local aid has been level funded, though he is working to increase that number. Senator Brewer said the Moody's and Standards and Poor's ratings are at the best they have ever been.

Representative Gobi talked about reimbursements for vocational school transportation noting some reimbursements have been zeroed out by the Governor; however she is working to restore that funding. The fact that there are no agricultural schools in Central Massachusetts contributes to the high transportation cost. There is a plan for Bay Path to offer a pilot program at Tufts. Representative Gobi also discussed casinos and that the State will award a slot parlor license for a project in the Town of Plainville on February 28th. The license fee is \$25 million.

Representative Durant discussed Chapter 90 Transportation funding for road improvement projects. He said the Governor released \$200 million of the originally approved \$300 million, resulting in \$1 million for Charlton Road in Spencer. He is also working on a bill for post employment benefits to implement cost savings on health care and allow for other retirement options for new employees. There has been some discussion on increasing the minimum years of service for retirement from ten years to twenty years.

Selectmen Stevens asked about fraud and abuse and what is being done about EBT card abuse. Senator Brewer said it is a work in progress. They have eliminated EBT card use at several places including bars and nails salons. Mr. Stevens said the Board will complete a detailed review of the budget and asked what is being done at the State level. Senator Brewer will provide a detailed list of reforms that have been put in place and pointed out the high ratings by Moody's and Standards and Poor's were for fiscal responsibility.

Selectmen Pepe said the current Chapter 90 funds are not enough and wants to see that increased. The existing infrastructure in Spencer is in bad shape and he does not want taxpayers to have to fund improvements.

Selectmen Woodbury would like to see the gas tax used to fund local road and bridge repairs, not just in the Route 128 corridor.

Administrator Gaudette mentioned that Proposition 2 ½ percent increases are taken to fund local assessments for the School District to meet the minimum contribution. He asked for the status of the bill that calls for the requirement that schools be held to Proposition 2 ½ or be required to ask for an override for anything above that amount. Representative Durant said that bill has not made it out of the Rules Committee at this time.

Both the Administrator and the Board thanked the Senator and Representatives for coming.

Old Business

Action Item: Vote the Non-Exercise of Rights of Purchase of Chapter 61A Land (Lot 2 Wilson Street, Carl Wilson Owner; note: Lot 1 was approved on 2/10/14)

Mr. Gaudette noted there was some confusion at the last meeting over Lot 2. At that time, the Board voted not to exercise their right to purchase Lot 1. It was not clear that a Purchase and Sale agreement existed for both lots.

A motion not to exercise the right to purchase Lot 2, Wilson Street for property owned by Carl Wilson (Berthiaume/Pepe) passed 5/0.

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

U & F Superintendent Steve Tyler requests additional funding for Snow & Ice up to \$75,000; with a minimum of \$65,000.

A motion to authorize deficit spending on Snow & Ice up to \$75,000 (Berthiaume/Fritze) passed 5/0.

Discussion: Transfer Station Review with Steve Tyler, U & F

Mr. Gaudette provided a report on the Transfer Station that he and Steve worked on. The Board asked them to research four key areas:

- Improved recycling
- Segregating the contract for hauling
- Operating the facility with Town employees
- Updating the fee structure for stickers and bags

Mr. Tyler spoke with Casella and learned they will not offer free hauling with the Zero-sort Program. They will allow the use of their compactors and containers and determine any rebate by the amount of material collected. Mr. Tyler said this is not a good option and will increase expenses over the FY14 amount. He also discussed his concerns over reducing employees to 20 hours and the loss of benefits.

The Board will make a decision on sticker and bag fees at the February 24th meeting.

Mr. Berthiaume asked to see the cost savings amount for closing the Transfer Station one day per week. Additional discussion will take place at the next meeting.

March meetings will be advertised as public hearings to review the FY15 budget in detail.

Mr. Tyler commended the Highway staff for their long hours working to keep the roads cleaned up with record snowfall and icing situations. Mr. Woodbury asked him to thank them on behalf of the Board.

Town Administrator Report

Discussion: FY2015 Budget Development Update/Initial Municipal Services Review

Administrator Gaudette provided the Board with FY15 Municipal Review budget books and asked them to review in advance of the March 10th meeting.

Board Liaison Reports

None

Citizen input

None

Board Member and Staff Comments

Administrator Gaudette made the following comments:

- Asked the Board to meet with E. Brookfield BOS on March 3rd.
- Casella will be presenting on Curbside Pickup on Holden on March 11th.
- CMRPC will present an ALS Study on March 12th.

Request for Executive Session under Mass General Laws, Chapter 30A, § 21 (a), ¶ 2, for the purposes of discussing strategy in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and ¶ 3, for the purposes of discussing collective bargaining.

At 8:10 pm a motion to meet in Executive Session (Berthiaume/Fritze) in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, § 21 (a), ¶ 2, for the purposes of discussing strategy in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and ¶ 3, for the purposes of discussing collective bargaining passed with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Fritze-yes, Stevens-yes, Pepe-yes.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:25 p.m.

A motion to approve the contract for Utilities & Facilities Superintendent Steve Tyler (Berthiaume/Pepe) passed with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Woodbury-yes, Stevens-yes, Pepe-yes, Fritze-abstained.

A motion to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. (Pepe/Fritze) passed with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Woodbury-yes, Fritze-yes, Stevens-yes, Pepe-yes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials:

Snow & Ice Summary
Transfer Station Memo dated 2-19-14