



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: March 21, 2016 – Workshop Meeting
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Great Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chairman G. Woodbury, Vice Chair Stevens, Clerk C. Woodbury, Member Pepe and Administrator Gaudette

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

Public Hearing #3 - Comprehensive Roads Project **Joint Meeting with the Financial Management Planning Committee (FMPC)**

The hearing opened at 6:10 pm. There were a large number of people in attendance, with sixty people signing in.

Mr. Gaudette introduced members of the Board of Selectmen, U & F Superintendent and the Roads Project Consultant Bill Scarpeti and then presented a Power Point on a Comprehensive Road Improvements Plan. He reviewed the FMPC Charge and explained the history of the Town Budget along with details of Chapter 90 and excise tax limitations which impact the ability to properly maintain the roads.

The Town has a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) score of 51.2, on a scale of 1 to 100 which is very poor in comparison with other communities. Several major projects have been funded by Chapter 90 however with new projects and routine maintenance, the current revenue is not enough to sustain the roads. He cited an MMA report which indicated a \$362 million statewide Chapter 90 funding gap, with Spencer's gap estimated at \$1.3 million annually.

Mr. Tyler provided a listing of current open projects which includes reconstruction of Main, Mechanic, and Chestnut Streets; culvert replacement and tree removal on Charlton Road; drainage & reclamation and bridge replacement on North Spencer Road. He explained that the backlog from 2011 has increased exponentially over the past 5 years and the money is needed to get the roads back on even keel. If nothing gets done, it will lead to additional deterioration and will cost much more in the long run.

Bill Scarpati of Stantec reviewed the PCI and said with the score of 51, his recommendation is to fund for the project at \$34 million, which will bring the backlog to \$15 million.

Mr. Gaudette reviewed different funding and explained the different types of Overrides and the impacts on the average tax bill noting the Spencer is ranked at 311 out 336 towns for the lower end of the tax rate.

There was discussion on why an Override is recommend and not a Debt Exclusion. Several residents made comments including:

- Funding should not be in the form of an Override, but rather a Debt Exclusion
- \$10 million is more manageable for residents; \$34 is way too expensive
- Municipal bonds will be looked into as a possible option
- Representative Berthiaume explained that many earmarked projects do not get approved. When the Town invests in projects, it increases the chances for approval.
- Bill Scarpeti explained that asphalt doesn't last as long since it's not as strong as it was and has become thinner.

Concern over the impact on education with no funds left over after this \$34 million project. Kevin Hayes from the SEBRSD Committee noted if \$34 million gets approved, there will be no chance for any future increase in the school budget, which has been already reduced.

The hearing was closed at 8:22 pm and the meeting was adjourned. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials

Comprehensive Roads Project Presentation #3