

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 14, 2018

Board Members Present: Paula Proulx, Chairman, Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman, Dave Connolly, TJ Place, Ann Titus

Town Staff Present: Arthur Capello, Town Administrator, Dan DeSantis, Town Planner, Public Works employees Dale Sprague, Chuck Tiffany, Eric Elliott

Others Present: Molly Donovan, UNH Cooperative Extension Specialist Community & Economic Development, Resident Elizabeth Johnson

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Proulx called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Public Input:

Certification Received -Mr. Capello offered his congratulations to Chuck Tiffany on receiving his Level II Water Works Operator and Distribution Certification.

Conservation Forum- Mr. Connolly said the Conservation Commission will host a forum on Conservation Commissions on June 6 at the Goodwin Library at 6 p.m. The guest speaker will be from the NH Association of Conservation Commissions he said.

Trail Dedication- Mr. Connolly said the Conservation Commission will also host the dedication and opening of the McCarthy Trail on June 10 at 1 p.m. at the trail located behind the Public Safety Building.

Conservation Easement- Mr. Connolly said the closing on the conservation easement for the Robert Hills property (64 acres at Pound and Ten Rod Roads) is expected to take place this summer. Several other easement projects are underway he said.

Town Conservation Lands Update- Mr. Connolly said the French, Dubois and Town Forest properties will undergo some maintenance work this summer.

Addiction Assistance Information- Ms. Proulx asked where residents should go for information on alcohol and drug addiction recovery meetings following a request from a resident. She suggested the information on groups/meetings be available to the Police and Fire Depts. so they may be of assistance to callers looking for help.

Mr. Johnson suggested that Mr. Capello contact Kathy King or Sylvia Arcouette for information regarding meeting times and locations.

Mr. Capello said the information will also be posted on the community bulletin board and that he planned to set up a link from the Town website to the organizations' websites.

Grant Awarded- Mr. Capello said Police Chief Jay Drury applied for and received a Law

Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) grant to implement a diversion program which would allow officers to refer a person with addiction issues to a case manager instead of arresting them in certain situations to avoid having a criminal record.

4). Review of Minutes:

May 7, 2018- Non-Public Sessions A-D, no errors or omissions

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to accept the minutes as written passed 5-0.

Motion: (Johnson, second Connolly) to seal the Non-Public Session D minutes of May 7, 2018 passed 5-0.

Mr. Capello noted that the Town Attorney has advised not to unseal the Non-Public Session B minutes of October 26, 2015 as discussed at the May 7, 2018 board meeting.

5). Steering Committee Update:

Mr. DeSantis said the Town was awarded a grant from PLAN NH to develop plans for the former Fire Station. PLAN NH has engaged the UNH Cooperative Extension to help with community engagement which is an integral part of the process. He then introduced Extension Specialist Molly Donovan to the board.

Ms. Donovan said following a meeting at the Town Hall about 1 year ago it was determined that the Municipal Planning grant would be a good place to start as the grant allows for the assistance of a consultant for a specific site and brings in the Cooperative Extension to help with the community engagement piece.

She then gave the board a recap of what has taken place so far and the next steps for the project as follows:

The Town was awarded the grant and the PLAN NH Steering Committee consisting of representatives from Town committees and other residents was assembled.

The Steering Committee has had 3 meetings and has begun the process to get people thinking about their vision for the downtown in general.

The committee compiled a list of 25 names of people with an interest/role in the town or that represent certain entities or interest groups to participate in "key informant" interviews.

The group then made a list of about 20 questions which were condensed down to questions that can be answered in about an hour. The members interviewed the key informants and their responses were written down on an interview form and submitted to Ms. Donovan.

The data is compiled into a report that contains anonymous responses. The report will help the committee to decide if the right questions were asked, if information is missing and more interviews are needed or to move on to focus groups with a particular group of people.

Residents will then be invited to participate in community discussions about the questions that were asked during the key informant interviews and other questions as they evolve. The process keeps growing until they have enough good data and can stop collecting information.

The information will be available to the Town boards or whoever needs the information to start

considering any changes that may be needed for the community.

Selectmen noted that the most of the key informants were either business owners or residents in the downtown area and there is little representation of the rest of the town.

Ms. Donovan said that was not their intention and asked for names of people from other parts of town who may be willing to be interviewed. She said residents from other parts of town will also have a chance to express their opinions during the focus groups and community forums.

Mr. Connolly asked if the committee members have been interviewed as they are on the committee for a reason.

Ms. Donovan said that the committee is made up of people with diverse backgrounds and their role is to reach out to their individual networks in different parts of the community. The committee's thoughts have not been formally recorded but their voices will come through during the community engagement process she said.

Chairman Proulx suggested that past downtown business owners be asked their thoughts about what didn't happen downtown and what should have happened there. She said there are still some long time residents who would share their thoughts about how they would like to see the downtown materialize.

Ms. Donovan said the committee did discuss speaking with past business owners but did not have any names of people to contact. She said they would be happy to take names of past business owners if the board was willing to share that information. Another option is to conduct focus groups with past business owners and residents over 85 years old she said.

Mr. Capello suggested the board agree to appoint him as the Selectmen's Rep. to the Steering Committee to provide feedback between the board and the committee.

Chairman Proulx asked if this plan is more of a broad stroke of the whole downtown area or a focus on the old firehouse property with how it will fit into the downtown.

Mr. DeSantis said it will be about context and how the firehouse property will fit into the downtown and the revitalization process.

Mr. Capello added that it will also bring in consideration of Form Based Codes and potential zoning amendments.

Ms. Donovan said the process will bring in new volunteers who want to get involved in some aspect of the community whether it is on existing committees or to form new committees to work on particular issues. The process will educate the community about why they begin with the big picture vision and then narrow it down to the tools needed to achieve the goals for the particular site or topic. She said communities also use the written reports for information on the town's priorities for the Master Plan, budgeting and town committees.

Chairman Proulx said she would like for the Selectmen to stay engaged with the process and that in the past there have been advisory boards that have taken on this kind of role and somehow it "morphs" into something where they gain more focus than was given to them.

Ms. Donovan said it is one of her goals to not let that happen and they are not here to

empower any one committee to lead anything.

Ms. Donovan said there are different levels of information including a consensus on the topics, actions to undertake right away and as short and long term goals. The biggest success will be to find improvements downtown that can be done easily, inexpensively and quickly by volunteers. Mr. DeSantis said he will notify Mr. Capello of the next Steering Committee meeting date.

6). Water Meter Discussion:

Mr. Sprague said that it has been 16 years since he made the first meter replacement program presentation in 2002 and the meters are slowing down and losing revenue for the town. The manufacturer of the existing meters will no longer sell the meters or replacement parts in the United States so the town will need to find a new meter company he said.

He said the Water Dept. met with representatives of 3 prominent long time meter companies to get up to speed on the technology available and the pricing for meters, software and other components. He recommended that the board go with a radio system similar to the current meters such as the Badger Ultrasonic E Series CE radio meter that reads 1/10th of gallon a minute, has no moving parts and won't clog. Other features include the ability to store 2 years worth of water usage data and to add cellular reading capability to the software he said.

Mr. Sprague said the Series CE Radio package will cost approx. \$450,000 and includes the meters, readers, installation, hardware, software, Vadar costs and a 10% contingency.

Mr. Connolly asked if the dept. could use the same readers it uses now to read the new meters.

Mr. Sprague said the existing readers could not be used on the new system and the cost for the readers is included in the installation (approx. \$125 per meter) cost. The old meters and readers will be scrapped for whatever value remains, the town will supply the users' name and address to the installation company who will set up the appointments and install the meters he said.

He said the Badger Series ME radio uses a fixed base radio read system which would involve putting up gateways in certain areas in town that read all of the meters within its area. The readings come back into the unit and then are downloaded into the computer and it is an expensive system he said.

Mr. Sprague asked the board for direction as the final paperwork for a low interest loan for the replacement project is due to the state, the Governor's Council and the Governor to authorize expenditure of the funds. He said if the board decides to borrow the money a 1% interest rate will be applied during the purchase and installation phase of the project followed by a 2% interest rate applied to the unpaid balance he said.

Mr. Johnson asked if there is any cost to the town if they complete the loan process and then don't use the money.

Mr. Sprague said there are no fees to the town if the state money goes unused but they want to be notified of the decision not to use the money so the funds can be used elsewhere.

Mr. Johnson asked if the Series CE Radio would accept data from radio and cellular sources.

Mr. Sprague said the Badger software and computer requirements are the same for both types

of systems. The readings come into the computer data base and the software doesn't know if the data is by radio or by phone.

Chairman Proulx asked if Mr. Sprague had determined the cost to the individual typical user. Mr. Sprague said the 2018 Water Dept. budget is approx. \$341,000 and there was no money allocated for the water meter project in the budget. He said the board could decide to self-fund the replacement project through an additional quarterly charge for the meters on the bills or through an increase to the water rates and the amount would depend on if a 10 or 20 year payback plan was used.

He said using the \$450,000 cost with a 10 year payback would require a \$10.50 meter fee per quarter and a 20 year payback would require a meter fee of \$6.12 per quarter.

He said to fund the replacement program alone through adjusting the water rates with a 10 year payback would require an 18.7% increase from \$2.87 per cubic foot to \$3.30 per cubic foot and a 20 year payback would require an 11% increase to \$3.08 per cubic foot.

Mr. Sprague then told the board that the annual income to the Water Dept. is about \$260,000 and with a \$341,626 budget the deficit is approx. \$80,000. He said the metering project would add another \$48,000 to the deficit bringing it to approx. \$128,000.

Discussion also included if it would be cheaper to apply a meter fee or increase water rates, it would be fairer to have all users pay a flat fee for the meters, large water users would be supplementing the cost of the meter for smaller users with a rate increase and the same amount of money is needed no matter how it is broken down.

Mr. Elliott asked if the board decides to go with a rate percentage increase if the sewer rates would also increase by that amount.

Mr. Capello said the problem with including the sewer rate in the increase is that the sewer lines end at the Main Street Bridge so property owners from the bridge out toward Route 11 have no access to the sewer system and can't be charged for sewer usage.

Mr. Elliott asked if board chose the percentage rate increase if the sewer/water users would pay double the amount than water users.

Ms. Proulx said there are different rates for water and sewer use and it will depend on how the board chooses to fund the project.

She then asked what the board's options are if they decide to begin a metering project.

Mr. Sprague said one option would be to purchase a number of meters each year and to install them in-house but he didn't think that would work as the dept. is already short-handed.

The other option would be to purchase a certain number of meters and hire a contractor to install them each year. If this was done over 4 or 5 years the cost would be more than if they did it all at once he said.

Mr. Tiffany said with the 4 year plan they would have to run the software for the old meters and the software for the new meters at the same time until all of the old meters were replaced.

Mr. Johnson said the company wouldn't install 1200 meters all in one year and even if they did

they would still be running duplicate software until all of the installations were complete. Chairman Proulx suggested that to allow the board to do its due diligence, that they make the decisions they need to make about the loan at this meeting and to request a cost analysis that is broken down over a number of years without using the loan.

Discussion then included the cost of self-funding the replacement plan versus funding it through a loan, price increases for materials and installation over 4-5 years, loan interest and payments are set up-front, term length for the loan and a contingency amount would not be needed with the loan.

Mr. Johnson asked for an explanation of the \$6,500 in "Vadar" costs.

Mr. Capello said it is the software used by the Town Clerk for billing purposes and there may be costs associated with any conversion or compatibility issues with the new meter software.

Mr. Sprague said he got the cost figure from the former Director's paperwork and that there is a possibility it may not be needed and if so will not be expended.

Mr. Johnson said that he preferred that there be a separate charge on the water bills for the new meters rather than a rate increase and they need to discuss implementing that fee soon. He offered to create a spreadsheet showing the costs for a 4-5 year meter replacement plan using Mr. Sprague's figures and a 3% price increase for the meters and a 5% increase for labor each year for the next board meeting.

Mr. Capello said the timeline would then be to decide that they are not going to install the meters over 4 years and use the loan from the state special revenue fund at the next meeting. The next water bills would go out in July and the fee for the new meters will begin then so there will be money in the bank to start paying the interest on the loan he said.

Mr. Johnson said this will also allow the Town to have money to make the first payment on the borrowed funds when the meter installations are complete.

He then asked how much time is spent each year or per quarter on physical meter reading.

Mr. Sprague estimated that it takes 40-50 hours to read the meters on an annual basis.

Mr. Johnson said that given the average salary and benefits of the dept. employees the meter reading is costing the town about \$1,500 a year. He said the cellular read system would cost \$12,000 a year more than the radio read system and will not save the town money over having them physically read by employees and "shoots that out of the water".

The following motion was made regarding RSA 485:F

Part 1: Authority to File and Designation of Authorized Representative:

Motion: (Johnson, second Connolly) Whereas, the Town of Farmington, N.H. after thorough consideration of the nature of its drinking water system needs, hereby determines that the construction of certain works, generally described as: water meter replacement project is desirable and in the public interest, and to that end it is necessary to apply for assistance from the Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund (DWGWTF); and

Whereas, the Applicant has examined and duly considered the provisions of RSA 485:F, which

relate to loans from the Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund and deems it to be in the public interest to file a loan application and to authorize other actions in connection therewith: Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved By the Board of Selectmen, the governing body of said Applicant, as follows:

1. That the person holding the position of Town Administrator held by Arthur Capello, is hereby designated as the Authorized Representative of the Applicant for the purpose of filing an application for a loan, furnishing such information, data, and documents pertaining to the applicant for a loan as may be required; and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the Applicant in connection with this application and if such loan be made, is the designated Authorized Representative of the Applicant responsible for furnishing such information, data, and documents pertaining to disbursements for the loan.
2. That if such loan be made, the Applicant agrees to repay the loan as stipulated in the loan agreement.
3. That a certified copy of this resolution be included as part of the application to be submitted for a loan.
4. That persons holding the following position(s) at the time of loan execution are authorized to sign the loan agreement binding the Applicant to the terms and conditions of the loan.
Paula Proulx, Neil Johnson, Ann Titus, Dave Connolly, T.J. Place.
5. That if such loan be made, the Applicant agrees to make provisions for assuming proper and efficient operation and maintenance of the facilities after completion of the construction thereof.

Voted: The motion passed 5-0.

The following motion was made in regard to Part 2: Authorization to Borrow:

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) that the Town Administrator currently held by Arthur Capello be authorized to sign and procure the loan for the Town of Farmington passed 5-0.

Mr. Sprague said he would package the loan documents and get them submitted to the state. He said his next step would be to obtain bids from the installers and advised that the lowest bidder may not necessarily be the best choice as the installers will be contacting residents and entering their homes so the company's references will be paramount in choosing the right one. Selectmen suggested that the RFP to bidders should contain language advising that the low bid doesn't automatically qualify a bidder to be awarded the bid, reference and background checks will be required and they must be bondable and licensed as required.

Mr. Capello asked about joining with other towns that are replacing their meters to get a better rate on the installment costs.

Mr. Sprague said he did not know and would contact Badger to see if they were aware of other towns planning meter replacements.

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to move forward with the potential purchase and installment of the Badger Ultrasonic E Series CE Radio water meters passed 5-0.

Mr. Sprague asked if the board wanted a representative from Badger to attend a board meeting and discuss the technology of the new meters.

Consensus of the board was there were no questions at this point but they would keep the invitation open in case the need arises in the future.

Hydrant Flushing- Mr. Tiffany asked if the board would object to having daytime hydrant flushing in small sections of town during the week as there are only 2 employees available to conduct the task. He said the DPW Director said no other employees can be scheduled for flushing without incurring over time costs.

Discussion included notifying property owners in advance of the flushing, posting a calendar of the date and location of the flushing sites, attempting to accommodate business that use water throughout the day to conduct business, the number of employees it usually takes to complete the flushing and how long it takes to flush a hydrant.

Mr. Sprague suggested the business owners receive a personal visit and advise them to arrive a little early and run the water until it clears out before opening for business on the day the hydrants are flushed.

Consensus of the board was to allow the daytime flushing with advanced notice and accommodation to businesses as possible.

7).DPW 10 Hour Work Day:

Chairman Proulx said at the previous meeting the board requested information from DPW Director Gary Rogers.

Mr. Capello said Mr. Rogers has some big projects planned for this season and asked if the board would consider allowing Mr. Rogers to schedule 10 hour days as needed.

Chairman Proulx said that could be allowed as long as the terms of the union contract that call for prior notification for schedule changes is followed.

Mr. Johnson asked what bigger projects were planned.

Mr. Capello said that several drainage and road grading projects are planned.

Mrs. Titus said she would rather have their 40 hour work consist of either 5 eight hour days or 4 ten hour days and not a mix of both.

Chairman Proulx said they are trying to avoid over time costs and if the Director says it would be better to work a 10 hour day for these two projects he is telling us what he needs.

Mrs. Titus asked what would happen if something came up that he needed someone on Friday of a 4 day week.

Mr. Capello said the Town would have to pay that individual overtime for those hours.

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to stay with the 5 eight hour work days and to give the DPW Director the authority to schedule as needed passed 5-0.

8). Town Administrator's Business:

A). ZBA Appointment- The board reviewed an application for appointment to the Zoning Board

of Adjustment from Elise Haig. Mr. Capello said Ms. Haig is currently an alternate member of the ZBA and is requesting to be appointed as a regular member of that board for a 1 year term. Mr. Johnson asked how many seats are on the ZBA and if anyone else is being considered. Mr. Capello said that currently 4 of the 5 positions on the board are filled and there no other applicants under consideration at this time. He said one problem with small town boards is one of the members may have to recuse him/herself because of a potential conflict of interest with the applicant and this becomes an issue if the applicant requests that a full board hear his case. Mr. Johnson said this is one of the boards that the town has the most trouble with filling all of the seats and that a few years ago there were only 3 members on the board. Selectmen suggested they put a notice to the public about open board seats/alternate positions on the Town website, Cable TV Channel 26 and the Town Face book page. Consensus of the board was to table the matter until the next meeting.

B). RFP for Chip Sealing- Mr. Capello said he received one response to the RFP from All States Asphalt, Inc., Sunderland, MA and that there are not many companies that do chip sealing. Mr. Johnson said he did not see a total price included on the bid. The bid provided a breakdown of the work in cubic yards and the RFP gave the requirements in mileage and he had no way to convert cubic yards to mileage he said.

Mr. Capello said he would get the exact price of the proposal for the next board meeting. Chairman Proulx asked when the DPW Director planned to have the chip sealing work begin. Mr. Capello said the Highway Dept. is conducting the shim coating work and would probably like to have the chip sealing begin within the next few weeks.

C). Town Planner's Hours- Mr. Capello asked the board to consider increasing the Planner's hours to up to 30 hours a week as his attendance at night board meetings is taking away office hours from residents during the day. He said the cost for increase in hours would be under \$1,000 for the year if the additional hours start in June.

Chairman Proulx recalled that the board told residents at Town Meeting that if the Town Administrator felt that more hours were needed that the board would approve it.

Mr. Capello said the need is there with the Planner involved with the PLAN NH Steering Committee, Economic Development Committee, Planning and Zoning Boards.

Mrs. Titus asked if the Planner is "on board" with the increase in hours.

Mr. Capello said that Mr. DeSantis agreed to the potential increase in hours worked.

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to allow the Town Administrator to adjust the Planner's hours up to 30 hours a week as needed passed 5-0.

D). Acceptance of Bid on Town Property- Mr. Capello told the board they needed a motion to accept the sale of the second lot in the Sarah Greenfield Business Park.

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to accept the offer from MBG Enterprises, Inc. for the 3.035 acre lot in the Sarah Greenfield Business Park in the amount of \$36,000 and the Town Administrator will set up the closing and related matters as needed passed 5-0.

9). Additional Board Business:

A). Town Clerk Information- Mr. Connolly asked if the Town Clerk has provided the wage information requested by the board about 1 month ago.

Mr. Capello said she has not yet provided the information requested.

B). Employee Wage Increases- Mr. Johnson asked when the board will address potential non-union employee wage increases.

Mr. Capello said it will be addressed within the next few weeks as the employee reviews have not been completed.

C). Farmington Children's Center- Mr. Connolly asked if there has been any response from the Farmington Children's Center regarding the reports to be submitted to the Town.

Chairman Proulx said they did not receive any reports last year and they need to provide the information or schedule a discussion with the board as this is breach of an understanding on the way it is supposed to work.

Mr. Capello said he didn't receive a response from his e-mail and will follow up with the center.

D). Pothole Patrol- Ms. Proulx asked if the Highway Dept. was still filling potholes in the roads as there is an extremely bad pothole on Lone Star Avenue.

Mr. Capello said he thought they are still filling the holes and he will inform the DPW Director.

10). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c)Reputation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Connolly, Place, Titus-yes) at 8:10 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 8:55 p.m.

Motion: (Titus, second Johnson) to seal the minutes passed 5-0.

11). Non-Public Session B:

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c)Reputation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Connolly, Place, Titus) at 8:55 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Connolly) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 9 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Connolly) to seal the minutes until the matter is resolved passed 4-1 (Johnson opposed).

12). Next Meeting: Monday, May 21, 2018

13). Adjournment:

Motion: (Titus, second Place) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 9 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Paula Proulx, Chairman

Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman

David Connolly

TJ Place

Ann Titus