

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Public Session
Monday, May 17, 2021

Board Members Present:

Paula Proulx, Chairman
Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman
Gerry Vachon
Ken Dickie
Doug Staples

Others Present:

Arthur Capello, Town Administrator
Ray Greeley, Board of Trustees Chair
Evelyn Moulton, Trustee, First
Congregational Church

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: None

4). Review of Minutes:

May 3, 2021 – Public Session – No errors or omissions

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

May 3, 2021 – Non-Public Sessions A-E – No errors or omissions

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

Mr. Capello said all of the interviewees offered a position have accepted the offer and the new Welfare Director Terri Magoon started today, the new Finance Director Lisa Kimball starts July 6 and the new Building Inspector Ron LeMere will start no later than June 21.

5). First Congregational Church Fence Discussion:

Board of Trustees Chair Ray Greeley introduced himself and Trustee Evelyn Moulton and told the board that the church owns the parsonage at 25 Pleasant Street and the Town plow was plowing the sidewalk there and hit one of the holes in the sidewalk which caused it to take out a big chunk of their fence.

He said they no longer make that type of fencing material but they found a source that has some of that material left over and the estimate to repair the damage comes to \$983.84.

Mr. Greeley said there also damage to the street including a sunken grate/drain but they were not asking the Town to repair that right now but wanted to make the board aware of the other damage in that area particularly to the sidewalk.

He said 3 sections of their fence were damaged and that the plow hit it more than once but because of the condition of the sidewalk he didn't think it could be avoided.

Mr. Greeley said the estimate mentions 19 missing caps and the caps aren't damaged and since they can get the same posts they should be able to switch the caps over to the new posts and they forgot to remove that from the estimate. He said they hope that the Town will pay for this and that so far there has been no denial of culpability for this and to his knowledge the plow truck driver is not saying he didn't do it.

He said if the Town is welcome to get their own estimates if they are looking to save money which he didn't think they could do as they tried to get everything as cheap as possible as they are a church and they try to keep their costs down as much as possible. The insurance company's informal estimate was over \$1,500 but they didn't submit for a formal estimate because they are waiting for the board's decision he said.

Chairman Proulx asked how they usually handle this type of thing.

Mr. Capello said this is one of the fences they are looking at to see if it is in the Town's right-of-way so he couldn't give an answer on that yet. He said if it is in the Town's r-o-w then the Town is not responsible for the repairs and if it's not in the r-o-w that is a decision the board will have to make. He asked Mr. Vachon if he was correct in that the Town is not responsible for any damage done during snow plowing in a snow emergency.

Mr. Vachon said they are not responsible for anything in the Town's r-o-w except for vehicles and then it is a vehicle accident.

Mrs. Moulton said the Town's sidewalk traffic has taken out portions of their fence before and they also know that the Town has repaired that fence so there is some past precedence here.

Mr. Capello said he is not denying that.

Mrs. Moulton said this was significant damage, there were scuff marks for many feet and it took out a 4 x 4 post. She said they also know of rock walls that have been repaired by the Town such as the one at the corner of Orange and School Streets that is also right next to the sidewalk. She asked the board to take that into consideration when they consider this because this fence has been there for about 20 years and typically they don't have trouble and when they have had trouble in the past the Town has paid for it.

She added that if the Town wished to assume culpability and would prefer to procure the materials and have the Highway Dept. replace it they would have no problem with that. We just want the fence fixed she said.

Mr. Johnson asked when Mr. Capello would have an answer to the r-o-w issue.

Mr. Capello said he hoped to have an answer for them at next Monday's meeting.

Mrs. Moulton asked the board to also take into consideration the damage to the sidewalk as there is more than one hole there. She said where the major portion of the damage came from the area where it dips 4 to 6 inches and it's a safety hazard that needs to be addressed.

Whatever the outcome is with the fence we respectfully ask that the sidewalk be repaired she said.

Mr. Capello said he put it on his to-do list.

Mrs. Moulton asked when they could expect to hear back from the board.

Mr. Capello said he would call them next Tuesday and let them know where they are at with it.

Mr. Staples clarified this was done by the sidewalk plow not one of the plow trucks.

Mrs. Moulton said Mr. Greeley mentioned trucks but it was the sidewalk plow.

6). Distribution of Master Plan Copies:

Mr. Capello said he has not yet read the Master Plan and the Planning Board has not discussed it yet but he wanted the board to have the information for the non-public session tonight.

Mr. Vachon questioned “Hay Day” being designated as a holiday in Chapter IV on page 26.

Mr. Capello said technically it’s not a holiday and suggested that he bring it up at the Planning Board meeting as they are the ones who would make any changes to it.

Chairman Proulx said she believes it has all of the sections they are required to have and absolutely need. She asked if the Planning Director made any comments about if it would hold up well in helping the Town obtain potential grants.

Mr. Capello said he e-mailed Mr. Pimental asking him to meet with him to discuss it if he is in the Planning Dept. office tomorrow.

Mr. Vachon asked if Mr. Pimental has written some grants for the Town.

Mr. Capello said he has assisted the Town with grant applications.

Chairman Proulx said she would like Mr. Pimental’s opinion on whether he thinks it is “heavy enough” to help us get grants.

Mr. Capello said he would ask him when he sees him.

Mr. Johnson said he had some issues he would like to discuss in non-public session.

Chairman Proulx said she read through the goals, policies and action steps and she wanted to make sure it is strong so if they go after these grants these sections will hold their weight.

Depending on what comes up in the near future with the Selectmen, the Economic Development Committee and other things happening for revitalization around town it might be something that we will rely on heavily and as soon as this plan is adopted this is it she said.

7). Town Administrator’s Business:

a). Resignation – Mr. Capello asked the board to accept the resignation of Ernest Morgan from the Highway Dept. as of 05/21/21.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to accept the resignation of Ernest Morgan from employment in the DPW Dept. effective May 21, 2021;

Discussion: Mr. Staples asked if the vacancy has been posted already.

Mr. Capello said he approved the ad last week while on vacation and posted the position.

Vote: The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Dickie asked if there is a backup grader operator.

Mr. Capello said yes.

b). USDA Forms – Mr. Capello said that every so many years because USDA funds are involved

at the wastewater treatment plant they have to fill out some USDA forms and that two board members are needed to fill out the forms. He asked Chairman Proulx and Vice Chairman Johnson to complete the forms as they are now the longest sitting members of the board and they agreed to do so.

c). Renewal of Fire Wardens – Mr. Capello said it is time for the 3 year renewal of the Fire Wardens and it asks for the signatures of 2 of the Selectmen but advised the board to have 3 members sign it.

Mr. Vachon asked who our Fire Wardens are.

Mr. Johnson said 24 people are listed as Fire Wardens which is just about everyone in the Fire Dept. Selectmen then signed the renewal document.

d). List of Town Owned Properties – Mr. Capello said the board requested a list of the current Town owned properties at the last meeting which was included in their meeting packets. He said they have started 90 day process to sell the 3 Pearl Street property and he worked with Town Counsel to get the proper notification out to the heirs and the buyer is aware of this. Mr. Vachon asked if Date of Recording column on the list refers to the date the deed was recorded or the date when the Town took the property by tax lien.

Mr. Capello said that they would be the same date.

e). Winter Street STOP Sign- Mr. Staples said when the bridge was out and the trailer park gate was open the Town put in a temporary STOP sign there. He said the when gate is open people are not stopping and just roll right through the intersection. People come down the hill on Mooney Street and turn the corner because no one is ever there and there is going to be a bad accident he said.

Mr. Capello asked where this is.

Mr. Staples said it's at the intersection of Winter St. and Mooney St. where there is little dead end part of Winter St. that only has 2 houses on it and vehicles come and go all day long and there should be a STOP sign there for when the trailer park gate is open again.

Mr. Johnson said that gate is only supposed to be open for emergencies.

Mr. Capello said the person that does the road maintenance and the DPW have a key to the gate.

Chairman Proulx said the road maintenance person only maintains from the gate into the park and the Town maintains from the gate forward.

Mr. Capello said that is correct.

Chairman Proulx said they only have take care of that little part right before the gate and asked why they don't just put a barrier there and call it good and why we keep going through this.

Mr. Capello said the Town is the not one that opened the gate this past week. He said the whole purpose of that is if a fire engine needed to get in that way and if there is a barrier there they can't do that. Part of the approval for the site plan was to have that gate there for emergency vehicle access if they need to go in that way he said.

Chairman Proulx asked what they do with the developments that have cul-de-sacs.

Mr. Capello said she may have more history on this than he does as that is an old subdivision and the gate was to be put there for emergency vehicles and there was a lot of controversy about it at that time.

Chairman Proulx said for emergency purposes should be next to nothing unless they determine it's an emergency and she has no idea how the key got into the hands of the maintenance guy and other people. If we're not the ones opening that gate there is a situation she said.

Mr. Capello said he could have the lock be changed and they would be the only ones with a key.

Chairman Proulx said there was a period of time when the bridge was out and they had to do it to get people in and out safely but other than that it causes a bad situation in that area.

Mr. Vachon said the STOP sign should be on Mooney Street where it enters Winter Street. He said Winter Street has the right of way and it's a failure to yield just like if you pull out onto Main Street- you have to yield to the traffic that's already on the road.

Mr. Staples said it is a busy area when that gate is open and nowhere in that area is there a STOP sign.

Chairman Proulx said that is not a thru-way and if they starting putting in things that suggest that it is at some point down the road somebody will say that's been there forever-why isn't it open? That was never the intention of that gate she said.

Mr. Capello said he would have the DPW change the lock and not distribute any keys and if anybody in the development has an issue they can come and talk to the board.

Chairman Proulx said they could also call and ask the DPW to open the gate so they can get in and do what they need to do and then the gate is closed by the DPW.

Mr. Capello said that would be okay during regular work hours but he was not going to pay the DPW overtime to do that at night or on weekends. He added there is a Knox box there to allow access for emergency responders.

f). Rec. Dept. Open House – Mr. Capello said the open house is this Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Rec. Center and invited everyone to join them for raffles, crafts, program information and to enroll for summer camp. He said senior bingo is back on Wednesdays, there are Zumba classes for the younger and older population and there is a lot of fun stuff happening there. There are some really good raffle prizes (a recliner, 2 Adirondack chairs, a fire pit and other prizes) and you don't have to be present to win he said.

g). Civic Street STOP Sign- Mr. Staples asked for an update on the STOP requested for Civic St. Mr. Capello said that sign and the other signs put on order are not in yet.

h). Transfer Station- Site Map- Mr. Staples asked if the layout for the Transfer Station has been located yet so they could determine what areas could be used for recycling purposes.

Chairman Proulx said she has not found her copy of plan yet.

Mr. Capello said he spoke with Transfer Station Manager Pete Spencer and he is now recycling cardboard, aluminum cans, metal and books. He said Mr. Spencer worked out a deal with a

book depository that provided a container for used books and they will haul them away for free. We're not making money on it but we're saving money by taking their weight out of the MSW he said.

Brush Pile – Mr. Staples said he brought some brush into the Transfer Station over the weekend and that the brush pile there is huge and it is bone dry.

Mr. Capello said they met with the Fire Chief and they know what they have to do to get the state permit and Mr. Spencer is working on getting it ready to burn.

Mr. Staples asked if they would be able to burn the whole thing at once.

Mr. Capello said that would be the state Fire Warden's decision.

Mr. Staples said they may be able to have the material chipped and then do controlled burns after that.

Mr. Capello said it could be expensive to chip it because if they damage the chipper because there are nails, screws, etc. in it we are responsible for it. The Fire Chief got us the information on the state regulations and Mr. Spencer is doing what needs to be done to get it ready he said. Mr. Vachon said that if there was an inch of snow on the ground and it was 100 ft. away they could burn and it should have been done this winter.

Mr. Capello said they are working with the Fire Dept. and they will have somebody there to do a fire watch when the burn takes place. The plan is in place it's just a matter of figuring out the permitting process and this discussion has already been had he said.

8). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c)Reputation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Dickie, Staples-aye) at 6:40 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Dickie) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 7:15 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to seal the minutes as disclosure would adversely affect the reputation of a person other than a member of the board passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Dickie, Staples-aye).

9). Wage Review:

Police Chief John Drury gave the board a list of the starting wages for area Police Depts. and told them about the difficulty in enticing people to fill the 2 officer vacancies because of the low starting pay despite having a great building and a good crew to work with.

Discussion included conducting a wage study and what information should be included in the study. Chief Drury asked, with the board's approval if Mr. Johnson would work with the dept. on compiling the information and keeping the board updated as the study progresses.

Consensus of the board was to have Mr. Johnson work with the Chief and to begin reviewing the matter on June 7.

10).Non-Public Session B:

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c, e) Reputation, Litigation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Dickie, Staples-aye) at 7:30 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 7:35 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to seal the minutes as disclosure would render the proposed action ineffective passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Dickie, Staples-aye).

11). Non-Public Session C:

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (d) Acquisition, Sale or Lease of Property passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Dickie, Staples-aye) at 7:35 p.m.

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

12). Next Meeting: Monday, May 24, 2021

13). Adjournment:

Motion: (Vachon, second Johnson) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 8 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Paula Proulx, Chairman

Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman

Gerry Vachon

Ken Dickie

Douglas Staples