

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen – Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 1, 2016
Selectmen's Chambers
356 Main Street

Board Members Present:

Charlie King, Chairman

Paula Proulx, Vice Chairman

Jim Horgan

Neil Johnson

Others Present:

Town Administrator Arthur Capello

Fire Chief James Reinert

Resident Tom DeJulio

1). Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance:

Chairman King called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2). Review of Minutes:

December 14, 2015-Public Session – Page 1 and 2 amend “Fiberage” to “Thivierge”. Page 4, add “last year’s” to read Goodwin Library budget was level funded to last year’s budget, add “some” to read “some members are tired of free programs” and change “increases” to “increased”.

Motion: (Johnson, second King) to accept the minutes as amended passed 4-0.

December 14, 2015-Non-Public Session C

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) to accept as written passed 4-0.

Jan. 25, 2016- Non-Public Session A

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) to unseal and approve the minutes as written passed 4-0.

Jan. 25, 2016- Non-Public Session B

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) to unseal and accept the minutes as written passed 4-0.

Jan. 25, 2016- Non-Public Session C

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0.

Jan. 28, 2016- Public Session – correct the spelling of “drawer”.

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) to accept the minutes as amended passed 4-0.

3). Public Input:

Easements Status- Resident Tom DeJulio came before the board to discuss issues related to Christmas lights/decorations for the town. He asked the board about the status of the easements for access to private property where poles will be installed for the lights. Town Manager Capello said that five of the easements had to be re-written due to small errors. He has received the corrected easements and will see that they are signed by the property owners.

Petitioned Warrant Article- DeJulio also told the board a petitioned warrant article will be coming forward for consideration at Town Meeting. The petition seeks to raise and appropriate \$6,500 for the purchase of brackets, banners and additional Christmas lights. Capello said the petition will be presented to the board once the signatures have been verified.

Invoice- DeJulio then said the town has had his job invoice for materials supplied for about 30 days and asked if the board intended to pay the bill or if he needed to “go another route”. In a letter to DeJulio, Capello said he must also provide a copy of the receipts for the materials purchased on behalf of the town before payment can be made. DeJulio said the invoice contains a list of materials purchased and he has never been required to provide receipts. Discussion included if DeJulio could be considered a contractor or a volunteer, where the materials are being stored, the purchases were not put out to bid, fixing the procedure and this is more than previously spent for this purpose.

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) to pay Tom DeJulio \$1,500 for materials purchased for the town passed 4-0.

LED Conversion- DeJulio said he is looking into converting the existing Christmas light bulbs to LED bulbs which he said will save the town hundreds of dollars as the bulbs don’t break easily and use less electricity. Discussion included the cost to replace the existing type of light bulbs, cost of the LED bulbs depends on their color and planning to make the switch over several years. Selectman Horgan suggested DeJulio put together a replacement plan and bring it to the board before the next budget cycle begins.

Non-Profit Status-DeJulio said the Decorating Committee is considering applying to be become a non-profit organization for fundraising purposes. He added that he hoped not to have to ask taxpayers for any more money if the \$6,500 “seed money” is approved by voters by fundraising and sponsorships by local agencies and businesses. Selectmen advised him to look into both state and federal requirements for non-profit organizations.

4). Welfare Guidelines Update:

Welfare Director Erica Rogers told the board the guidelines have not been updated in about four years. She noticed that some of the applicants move back and forth between the local communities and suggested it would be more efficient if the Farmington guidelines were similar to those in the neighboring towns and cities. Selectmen previously received a copy of the guidelines with suggested revisions for review. Consensus of the board was the content was acceptable but there were some spelling errors that need correction and that a revision date should be included.

Motion: (Horgan, second Johnson) to accept the revised Welfare Guidelines passed 4-0.

5). Write Off Ambulance Billing:

Fire Chief James Reinert told Selectmen there are 438 ambulance billing accounts that are uncollectable dating back to July 2009. He said the third party collection agency used by the town can’t forward the overdue accounts to the credit bureaus because they do not have the patients’ Social Security numbers.

Chairman King said he noticed some of the individuals listed are still living at the same address and asked why these accounts are uncollectable. Chief Reinert said mostly it is due to the lack of Social Security numbers as patients can’t be forced to give their numbers, but sometimes it is due to other misinformation such as bad addresses or the patient is now deceased.

Discussion included there is a new collection procedure policy, the third party collection agency wants the write-offs all in one package, Selectmen can choose the write-off date, if there is a statute of limitations on uncollected bills and streamlining the list to removed deceased individuals.

Consensus of the board was to write-off overdue accounts from 2009 through Dec.31, 2012.

Chief Reinert said their documentation procedures have gotten better and the dept. has been working to minimize this problem. He explained that when a patient is transferred to the hospital they are registered, the hospital staff prints out the face sheet which is attached to the ambulance paperwork. The information is then sent to ComStar. He added there are daily checks and weekly reports to see that the information is being recorded correctly.

The Chief also discussed so-called “frequent fliers” and those people who use the ambulance as a ride to the hospital for situations that may not be urgent or of an emergency nature. Some people have become savvy as to what wording to use so they can’t be refused service and so their health insurance will pay for it. He said the dept. tries to educate people about other agencies that provide free rides to the hospital or doctor’s appointments. Selectmen suggested an informational handout with a list of other transportation sources could be given to users and asked if the situation is out of control. The Chief said he didn’t think it has reached the point of being out of control and noted whether someone is abusing the service is subject to interpretation.

Chief Reinert then stated the 2016 list of average ambulance rates has come out and the rates charged by the dept. are \$150 below the average billing rate of the top 50 billing sites. He said the rate for the basic service is \$1,137 and the advanced life saving service is \$1,893. Capello suggested the board approve raising the rates by \$150 to cover the cost of supplies no longer provided for free by Frisbie Hospital. Discussion included if any of the top 50 sites are comparable to Farmington, Farmington is on the high end of the rates for comparable size towns, include population and call volume when considering rates, competitive and reasonable rates with neighboring towns and the rates haven’t been raised in several years.

Chief Reinert also told the board all 33 positions in the dept. have been filled and 32 of them are dual certified, he has applied for three grants and no one has taken him up on his offer to tour conditions at the fire station since the Public Hearing on the proposed Public Safety Building.

Capello then read a Letter of Commendation to the Police and Fire Depts. praising their handling of the Donald Trump campaign stop at the high school.

Capello said he will work with Chief to trim the write-off list and they will revisit the issue on Feb. 22.

6). Employee Handbook:

Capello told the board it was his goal to revamp the handbook and proposed revising some of the contents. He suggested the board review the contents and discuss the suggested revisions over the next few weeks and when completed send it for legal review. Consensus of the board was to table the matter until later in the meeting.

7). Warrant Articles:

Selectmen reviewed the posting for the warrant articles to appear on the ballot at Town Meeting and consensus of the board was to approve the following articles with the noted corrections as necessary:

Article 1- election of officers for Selectmen, Budget Committee, Treasurer, Trustees, Moderator, Town Clerk and Supervisor of the Checklist.

Article 2- zoning amendments regarding the Aquifer Protection Overlay District, recreational vehicles and storage units.

Article 3- \$2.363 million bond for construction of a Public Safety Building. Selectman Johnson questioned whether two-thirds vote or three-fifths vote is needed for passage. Capello will check the requirements.

Article 4- \$5,798,679 operating budget. Capello noted the amount may change following the Budget Committee public hearing.

Article 5- add \$25,000 to the Highway Equipment CRF. Last line-remove “to” and add “for” after “town”.

Article 6- add \$4,000 to the Recreation Equipment CRF. Spell out “Eq.” in title (Equipment), add a space between the word “of” and the dollar sign.

Article 7- establish a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund and to deposit \$15,000 in the fund.

Article 8 – raise and appropriate \$80,000 from the Police Outside Detail Special Revenue Fund to pay Police Officers payroll and equipment.

Article 9- close out the Building Inspection Special Revenue Fund and place Building Inspection fees in the town general fund. Add the word “required” after “2/3 ballot vote”.

Article 10- deposit \$40,000 into the Emergency Motorized Equipment Capital Reserve Fund and to fund the deposit with \$25,000 from ambulance billing revenues and \$15,000 through general taxation.

Article 11- appropriate \$60,000 from the Community Television Special Revenue Fund for payroll, programming and renegotiating the cable franchise agreement.

Article 12- approve the TIF Development Program and the TIF Finance and Revenue Plan for Route 11 TIF District. Spell out TIF in the title.

Article 13- Landfill Closure Fund- to deposit \$51,407 from the DES Solid Waste Unlined Municipal Landfill Closure Grant into the Landfill Closure Fund.

Article 14- create a TIF Advisory Board. Spell out TIF in the title. Selectman Horgan suggested adding the board will oversee the TIF District. Selectman Johnson suggested switching the order of Articles 13 and 14 so the two TIF articles are together.

Article 16- Long Term Lease- to ratify the 20 year lease agreement between the town and Community Action Partnership for operation of a daycare center on town owned land on Route 153. Chairman King noted this is a package deal including the building and the land and suggested moving Article 16 in front of Article 4 (operating budget).

Article 17- raise and appropriate \$20,000 from the Landfill Closure/Transfer Station Special Revenue Fund for purposes related to the closure of the landfill.

Article 18- raise and appropriate \$15,000 to be added to the Bridge and Road Design CRF to pay the 20% of the required funding from the NH State Bridge Aid. Capello said he received the State Bridge Report and three bridges in town remain listed as “red lined”.

Discussion included changing the order of the articles, changing the Treasurer to an appointed position, Treasurer’s duties are stated in the RSA’s, if the Treasurer is not fulfilling the duties is there a mechanism for removal, changing the school district back to Town Meeting from SB2, low voter turn-out at the Deliberative Session and the candidates for elected positions.

Town Clerk Kathy Seaver told the board she came to the meeting to clarify some issues regarding the Treasurer. She said some functions assigned to the Treasurer were removed by a previous Board of Selectmen and auditors years ago. She said the only task not completed by the Treasurer now is the bank reconciliation which is done by the Finance

Administrator. Seaver said all of the tasks are being done and the town auditors are happy with the way the way things are being conducted. Discussion included difficulty getting a qualified person to run for the position, putting the tax impact statement on warrant articles, schedule of Selectmen coverage at the polls, choosing a designee for the late Selectman Gerry McCarthy, new voter identification procedures, and training for poll workers, the need for 66% approval vote for a change from SB2 back to Town Meeting (60% for town, 66% for SB2, 3/5 vs 2/3 vote..

Motion: (King, second Horgan) to appoint Town Administrator Arthur Capello as the designee for Gerry McCarthy at the polls passed 4-0.

8). Dumpster Bids:

Selectmen reviewed the bids received for supplying and servicing three dumpsters for the Rec., Highway and Fire Depts. Discussion included bids were received from Waste Management and Casella Resource Solutions, the town is in a three year contract with Waste Management, frequency of pick-ups, monthly costs, additional fees, if changes can be made to the current contract and if the previous Town Administrator was authorized by Selectmen to sign the current contract. Capello said he will provide more information at the next meeting.

9). Town Administrator's Report:

Volunteer Appreciation- The board reviewed a copy of the letter sent by Recreation Director Rick Conway to Mrs. Howard thanking her for her many years service as a Bingo volunteer. The auditors advised procedures should be changed to comply with state Bingo laws that require only Rec. Dept. employees handle the sales of cards and awarding of cash prizes. Mrs. Howard was also given a small gift of Bingo cards as a token of appreciation for her service.

Deputy DPW Director Position- Capello gave the board a draft of the posting seeking to fill the new Deputy Director of Public Works position. Selectmen reviewed the proposed ad and suggested that additional information be included stating that this is a non-union, salaried, management position. Selectman Johnson suggested the words "also", "and" and "as examples" be removed from the last sentence of the second paragraph. Consensus of the board was to approve posting the corrected ad as soon as possible.

Proposed By-laws Amendments- The board reviewed a proposed revision to the Conservation Commission's bylaws and asked for the original bylaws for comparison and a clarification on the Section

2 regarding four unexcused absences in a 60 day period which isn't possible because the Commission only meets once a month.

Appointment Renewals- Selectmen approved the reappointment of three members to the Cons. Com.

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) to approve the reappointment of Resta Detwiler, Randy Orvis and Jackie Bissell to the Conservation Commission passed 4-0.

New Bus Received- Capello reported the Rec. Dept. took possession of the new mini bus but Director Rick Conway is the only one licensed to drive it at this time until the staff is trained.

Motion: (King, second Horgan) to table any unfinished business until the next meeting passed 4-0.

10). Next Meeting: Monday, February 8, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.

11). Adjournment:

Motion: (King, second Horgan) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 8:25 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

Charlie King

Paula Proulx

Neil Johnson

James Horgan