

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen – Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 25, 2016
Selectmen’s Chambers
356 Main Street

Board Members Present:

Charlie King, Chairman

Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman

Jim Horgan (6:12 p.m.)

Paula Proulx

Ann Titus

Others Present:

Town Administrator Arthur Capello

Public Works Director Dale Sprague

Developer Dennis Allfrey

Resident Elizabeth Johnson

1). Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:

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

2). Public Input: None.

3). Review of Minutes:

April 18, 2016- Public Session: Page 4 C – Waste Management contract- amend to read \$200 per “additional” lift, add “The administrative charge was dropped.”

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

April 18, 2016- Non-Public Session A -

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

4). Sewer Connection Waiver (Developer requests meeting with the board):

Public Works Director Dale Sprague and developer Dennis Allfrey came before the board to discuss the properties located between Charles and Mt. Vernon Streets with frontage on Ian’s Way. Mr. Allfrey said he purchased the remaining five lots of a nine lot development and then learned the town can’t provide water service to the lots due to the lack of sufficient water pressure and a Dept. of Environmental Services ban on boosters on residential lots. He said he was informed the only solution to problem is to install a private well on each of the lots. He asked the board to waive the water and sewer connection fees in exchange for putting in the wells and relieving the town of the responsibility to monitor the quality and quantity of the water service to those residences. Discussion included the original site plan was approved for condominiums in 2006, it never received approval as a subdivision, the state

Superior Court ordered the town to treat it as a subdivision and allow the previous developer to continue to sell the lots in 2008, there is no evidence the original site plan was received/approved by DES, DES jurisdiction and not waive the sewer connection fees as connecting to the town sewer system is required.

Mr. Sprague said that obtaining the required 20 p.s.i. pressure is difficult to achieve anywhere in town and boosters were previously installed at other lots to address the issue. He suggested filling a reservoir from the town water main and to install a booster between the reservoir and the residences to increase the water pressure to the homes on Ian's Way. But DES would not approve the plan due to concerns about backflow and contamination of the town water system. He said DES conducts an assessment of the town's water system every three years and told the town the previously installed boosters are grandfathered but no additional boosters may be used at residential buildings. The money comes out of different Enterprise funds and can't be used except for sewers. Mr. Allfrey said he did not care where the money came from and said it could also come from waiver of the building permit fees.

Mr. Allfrey also stated the town is responsible to provide water to the lots, the board is taking hard feelings about the previous developer out on the new owner, a mistake was made with the water so the town should pay to fix it, the town did nothing to address the problem and to have the town install and maintain the wells.

Chairman King said the board would take his comments under advisement. He asked Mr. Capello to continue to research the matter and added someone from the town would get back to Mr. Allfrey.

5). Bid Review for Alarm System:

Mr. Sprague told the board the inspection and maintenance of the town's fire protection equipment was overseen by a "hodge-podge" of several companies all on different schedules. He suggested the inspection and maintenance of fire extinguishers, emergency lights, exit signs and sprinkler systems be provided by one company for easier management. An RFP was sent out seeking bids for the services and three responses were received from Tri State Fire Protection (\$1,763.50), Hampshire Fire Protection (\$1,475.00) and Quality Fire Protection (\$1,349.00). Discussion included past experience with the bidders, references, some of the tasks were performed by town staff, using a professional so there is recourse, the services will be paid from each dept. budget, itemize services performed/cost for each dept. and future discussion about creating one line in next year's budget to pay for these services.

Motion: (Horgan, second Johnson) to authorize the Public Works Director to establish a contract with Quality Fire Protection, not to exceed the terms of the contract passed 5-0.

6). Water/Sewer Fees:

Water Dept.- Mr. Sprague provided the Water Dept. Report for the period ending 12/31/15 and discussed the approved budget (\$285,461), projected income (\$273,180) and deficit (\$12,281) for 2016. Discussion included options to eliminate the deficit, water rates have not been increased since 2009, implement a 4.8% increase, not raise the rates for users unnecessarily, the purpose and planned uses for the Water Capital Reserve Fund, search for future water sources, minimizing expenses and misc. sources of additional income.

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) the rate will remain the same for water passed 5-0.

Wastewater Dept. - Mr. Sprague also discussed the Wastewater Dept. Report for the period ending 12/31/15. He told the board the projected income for 2016 (\$529,550) would not meet the total approved budget (\$596,632) resulting in a projected \$67,000 shortfall. He recommended a 15% increase in sewer fees to eliminate the deficit. Discussion included depreciation of equipment and buildings, set aside for depreciation should be a 50-50 split between the town and users, plan to discuss depreciation at the next Town Meeting, current actual budget deficit is \$15,000, ability to take in septage from additional towns without over burdening the system, do the current septage fees cover the cost of chemicals and treatment, the last rate increase was in 2013 and the availability of grants for sewer projects.

Motion: (Horgan, second Titus) to authorize the addition of the Town of Alton to the Farmington wastewater treatment facility passed 5-0.

Consensus of the board was to wait until year end to determine if any changes to fees or depreciation will be needed.

7). Possible Contract for Temp Help for Highway Dept.:

Mr. Capello told Selectmen that no responses have been received to the posting for seasonal general labor for the highway dept. He said the opening has been extensively advertized and expressed concern about the dept. getting into a “desperate situation”. He requested approval to contract with a temporary employment agency if necessary. Discussion included the agencies charge a set fee for each employee over the hourly amount paid to the employee, work hours are Monday through Thursday 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., using prison inmates to perform the work, flexible work hours are available “within reason”, revise the posting to include work hours and pay range and then re-post it.

Motion: (Horgan, second Johnson) to authorize the Town Administrator and the Public Works Director to seek temporary contract employment not to exceed six months as a last resort passed 5-0.

Spring Street- Selectman Proulx asked Mr. Sprague if an overlay or “cut and fix” is planned for Spring Street. He said the highway crew is currently fixing every pot hole and bad spot on the street and installing a solid base for the shim work planned for later this year.

8). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (King, second Horgan) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a, b) passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (King, Johnson, Horgan, Proulx, Titus- yes) at 7:50 p.m.

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

The public session reconvened at 8 p.m.

8). Treasurer Duties:

Mr. Capello gave the board copies of RSA 41:29 Duties of Elected and Appointed Town Treasurers and a memo from Finance Administrator Pam Merrill. Discussion included duties currently performed by the Finance Administrator that should be done by the Treasurer, the position is an elected position but could become an appointed position, if the current \$1,500 stipend is reasonable, research hours worked and stipends paid in other towns, add more part time hours to the Treasurer’s work week or consider adding duties and increasing the stipend in next year’s budget.

Consensus of the board was to reconsider the matter during the year end budget process.

9). Employee Handbook:

Vice Chairman Johnson made the changes to the handbook as recommended by the board at the previous meeting. Selectmen reviewed the draft and suggested some additional changes as follows:

Page 22, #13a- Levels of Discipline- in the Note, remove the word “They” from the third sentence and add the rest of sentence to the second sentence that says “Disciplinary action”. Selectmen also suggested the addition of language clarifying that some levels of discipline may be bypassed depending on the situation.

Page 25,#14d- Exit Interviews- Discussion included employees can’t be forced to participate in an exit interview, create a form to note refusal of the exit interview, employees can’t be forced to sign the form, if a record of refusal is kept in the employee’s personnel file.

Selectmen requested town counsel review the policy changes. Mr. Capello suggested town employees be asked to review the handbook first and then send it to the lawyer for review. Consensus of the board was to approve his suggestion.

10). Merit Increase Policy:

Mr. Capello presented a draft policy to establish a consistent procedure for merit pay increases for non-union employees. Discussion included eligibility for bonuses, explanation of how a bonus is calculated, how a new Selectman could determine if an employee qualifies for a merit increase, how much of merit increase would be received based on their performance review and address the language that states at least a 1% increase will be given annually. Selectmen will review and reevaluate the pay scale if needed on a yearly basis. Mr. Capello said he will provide salary comparisons from other towns during the year end budget process.

11). Official Farmington Face book Page:

Mr. Capello suggested he establish an official town page on Face Book in an effort to get accurate information out to residents. He said access to the page would be restricted with no comments allowed. Discussion included information should only be put on the town website, Face Book is a popular form of media that a lot of residents use, the Police Dept. and Tax Collector have Face Book pages, an opportunity to squelch misinformation, creating an “administrative nightmare”, the Town Administrator should not administer the page, informational notices to e-mail addresses are available through the town website, notices can’t be seen on phones, get an opinion on legal liability, provide the board with the structure and contents of the page and hold a quarterly public forum before Selectmen’s meetings.

Motion: (King, second Proulx) to continue the discussion on the matter to allow the Town Administrator to provide more information to the board passed 5-0.

12). Coast Update:

Mr. Capello said Coast Executive Director Rad Nichols requested to attend the May 2 board meeting to answer questions posed at a previous meeting. Consensus was to ask Mr. Nichols to attend the May 9 meeting as Chairman King will not be in attendance at the May 2 meeting. Selectmen also requested he supply responses to their questions before that meeting to allow time to review them. Mr. Capello asked the board to review the information provided so far to see if there are any additional questions.

13). Town Administrator’s Business:

A). Data Backup System- Mr. Capello told the board he received a second proposal for a backup solution from Tech Soup2 Nuts LLC following the previous meeting. Discussion included option one includes installation, wiring, data protection software, RAID storage with two drives (\$965), option two includes installation, cables, data protection software, RAID storage with three solid state drives(\$1,795), the system would be installed in the fire proof safe, a plug would have to be installed for the safe, the number of terabytes per drive, option one involves too much labor and doesn’t include solid state drives, option two has better security. Vice Chairman Johnson will discuss the configuration of the system with company and e-mail the results to the board.

Motion: (King, second Titus) to authorize the expenditure not to exceed \$2,100 to pursue a data storage solution with the funds to be withdrawn from the Future Technology Capital Reserve Fund passed 5-0.

B). Masons’ Request- A memo from Assessing Clerk Kelly Heon informed the board the Masons fraternal organization requested a six month extension to their tax exemption due to the fire that damaged their building last year. A member inquired about a hardship abatement but abatement applications must be filed by March 1. Because they did not receive a tax bill for 2015 there was no reason to file for an abatement this year. She added that if they are unable to pay taxes this year they can file for a hardship abatement after they receive the final tax bill in 2016. Discussion included damage

to the building has reduced its assessed value to approx. one-half of its previous value, if hardship abatements for a fire have been granted before, the building was for sale but was taken off the market, filing for an abatement at year end is effectively the same as requesting an extension to the tax exemption and submit the proper paperwork within the required timeframe.

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) to deny the request for hardship status and follow up with a letter on how to proceed passed 5-0.

C). Lieutenant Requirements- Selectmen reviewed the requirements for the open Lieutenant's position as submitted by Fire Chief James Reinert.

D). Ambulance Billing Process- Chief Reinert also submitted an update on the process to facilitate ambulance billing/collections. The memo stated he has implemented procedures to obtain patients' Social Security numbers and to make sure the information is entered into the reporting software. Discussion included if the patient has not been previously transported to the hospital there would be no Social Security number on file, patients have the right to refuse to give their Social Security numbers, privacy issues, if the hospital information updates are sent to the dept. and include if all patient Social Security numbers have been collected in the dept. monthly report.

E). Fireworks for Hay Day- Selectmen reviewed an invitation for proposals for a fireworks display at Hay day. Mr. Capello noted donations for the event will be included in the monthly Rec. Dept. report.

F). Public Safety Building- Status update for the project included notices of intent to issue the bond sent to the Dept. of Revenue Administration and the state Treasurer, the interest rate could be as low as 2.25%, site work has gone out to bid and applications for state permits have been submitted. Chairman King suggested any local contractors seeking bidding information contact Construction Manager Jeff Greenhalgh at Groen Construction.

G). Dept. of Labor- The board received copies of the hearing decision regarding a Worker's Compensation claim made by an employee against the town. The hearing officer ruled in favor of the town.

H). Little City Road- Mr. Capello reported that a Quit Claim Deed has been issued to the buyer of the town owned property on Little City Road.

I). Annex Building – Selectman Horgan asked about status of the demolition of the building and if there will be any large holes in the ground remaining after the demo that will need to be filled in. Mr. Capello said the site is almost ready to begin demolishing the building and there will be no holes left at the site.

J). Request For Proposals - Mr. Capello reported that the RFP's for a commercial real estate agent for the sale of town owned commercial lots, chimney repairs and to administer the grant awarded for the Farmington Children's Center have gone out.

14). Next Meeting: Monday, May 2, 2016

15). Adjournment:

Motion: (Johnson, second Horgan) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 9:18 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

Charlie King

Paula Proulx

Neil Johnson

James Horgan

Ann Titus