
Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Monday, April 6, 2015

Members Present:

Charlie King, Chairman
Brian St. Onge, Vice Chairman
Paula Proulx
Jerry McCarthy
Jim Horgan

Others Present:

Town Administrator Keith Trefethen
Police Chief Jay Drury

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). Approval of Minutes:

March 23, 2015- Public minutes- Item 2b, change the Planning Board Rep. to Jim Horgan. Page 5, Wastewater Rate, add the board discussed how to handle the \$50,000 in depreciation but did not decide how to calculate it. Page 6, Committee Assignments, change Alma to Elmer.

Motion: (Horgan, second King) to approve the minutes as amended passed 5-0.

March 23, 2015- Non-Public minutes-

Motion: (King, second St. Onge) to approve non-public sessions A, B and C as written passed 4-0-1 (Horgan abstained).

3). Public Comment: None.

4). Discuss and Review RFP's/ Public Safety Building:

Town Administrator Trefethen presented a brief history of the process involved with developing the conceptual layout used to send out requests for RFPs for Public Safety Building. He said four contractors responded to the RFP and have provided bids for the project. The proposals vary in cost from \$2.1 to \$4.4 million, vary in total square footage based on the individual designs and materials used and are not site-specific. He asked the board to review the documents and discuss how they wished to proceed. Discussion included requesting more information/clarification from one of the bidders or to exclude the bidder from consideration, setting up bidder presentations to the board all at once or individually, site work needed at the proposed sites, whether to pick the site or the contractor first, whether to demo the building at the present site and use that site for the new building or to cultivate a new site and site recommendations from the former Public Safety Building Committee. Selectmen asked Trefethen to research the committee findings for recommendations on possible sites for the new building. Chief Drury said the committee found that most of the suggested sites did not have enough room for the departments' needs. They found that the top two sites for consideration are the present Fire Department site or the lot adjacent to the Sarah Greenfield site. He said the new 80-acre lot would offer possible other public uses as well as the Safety Building and would allow the town to consider other uses for the current Fire Department site.

Selectmen decided to meet with all four bidders to hear individual presentations of their proposals. They asked Trefethen to set up two presentations at the April 20th board meeting and two at the May 4th board meeting. They also asked him to contact bidder North South Construction to request more information about their proposal before they make their presentation to the board. Chairman King also asked Trefethen to find out why four local contractors did not submit bids for the project.

5). Yard Waste Collection at the Transfer Station:

In a memo to the board, Trefethen said that he and Public Works Director Dale Sprague met with Milton Road Agent Pat Smith to discuss accepting yard waste from Milton residents. The memo explained that Milton used to pay Earth Tenders \$960 a year to accept grass clippings and leaves from Milton residents. The business has closed leaving Milton looking for another location to accept their yard waste. Following the closure of the business, Farmington Selectmen approved acceptance of yard waste at the Transfer Station from Farmington residents on a trial basis. The trial collection was not publicized and resulted in about three loader buckets collected which was moved to the rear of the property to make compost. The memo proposes the Town of Milton pay \$960 to the Town of Farmington to allow Milton residents with a Milton dump sticker to drop off leaves and grass only at the Farmington Transfer Station.

Trefethen then asked the board if yard waste collection will continue at the Transfer Station and if Milton residents should be allowed to drop off their yard waste at the facility.

Selectman Horgan said since the collection wasn't advertized to the community, he wondered who the actual users were. Trefethen said the collection was limited to residents and not for use by town businesses. He added that it was mostly for downtown residents who don't have any other place to put yard waste.

Chairman King said the yard waste collection started as an emergency response to a business closing and is not a business the town should be in. He said town employees would need to manage and police the process and pick the trash out of the grass and leaves. He added he did not want to add to costs incurred by the town and is opposed to continuing the collection.

Selectman Proulx said she would like to keep an open mind as to the needs of Farmington residents. She suggested the collection continue so that the board could see the end results of what is generated by town residents before allowing Milton residents to participate.

Selectman McCarthy said he did not favor inviting Milton residents to bring their yard waste to town at this time. He suggested the board allow the collection to continue for one year to find out how much is taken in during that period. He added that the state Department of Environmental Services does not want this type of operation near the river and there is a limit to how much material can be put in that area.

Motion: (McCarthy, second Horgan) to make the yard waste collection service at the Transfer Station available to Farmington residents only passed 5-0.

6). Repair Heat/AC System at the Municipal Office:

Trefethen told the board that the heating system in the Municipal Building failed in early March. Upon entering the building, it was discovered there was no heat in the building and the system was displaying a malfunction code, so the back-up heating system was used. An investigation of the system showed the condensers housed in cabinets outside the building were encased in ice. Trefethen said he called the installer, Ideal Temp, to fix the problem. During the ice melting and clean-up process, it was discovered that the condensers were damaged by the ice and need to be replaced. Estimated cost to replace the units is \$14,010. The town's insurance company has been contacted to review the property/liability coverage prior to ordering the repairs he said.

Chairman King asked how this could have happened and what can be done to prevent a reoccurrence of the

problem. Trefethen said the fans in the units suck in the air and snow and when that hits the condensers, ice is created on them. He added that this also noticeable in the fall when leaves are sucked into the units when the air is drawn into them. He suggested the problem could be prevented by placing a canopy over the units and installing a wall around them. He noted that this was not included in the initial quote for the installation. King said the company suggested this system design was right for the building but the installation design was not complete.

Selectman Proulx said this situation appears to be caused by a design flaw and suggested the company sold the town a system design that is not appropriate to our needs. She said she did not favor putting \$14,000 into repairs without changing something so it doesn't happen again.

Selectman Horgan asked if the system was under warranty. Trefethen said it is not.

Discussion also included obtaining additional quotes for the repair work, getting other opinions on how to fix the problem and the possibility of modifying the back-up heating system for regular use.

Trefethen said he is awaiting a response from the insurance adjuster before contacting other companies for repair estimates.

7). Modification of the Farmington Pay Plan:

Trefethen presented some recommendations for adjustments to the Farmington Pay Plan in a memo to the board on March 30, 2015. The memo stated the pay plan was developed in 2012 and was last adjusted in 2013 to reflect Cost Of Living Adjustments (COLA) made within that time. Since then, employees have received a 1.5% COLA in 2014 and a 1.7% COLA in 2015 which has not been included in the pay plan. He also stated that two union groups have negotiated wage rates that place some employees above the pay grade established by the plan. He made the following recommendations for adjustments to the plan :

A). Adjust the Pay Plan Maximum Category to reflect the 3.2% COLA adjustments for 2014 and 2015.

B). Move the Custodian position to pay grade 6 (presently it is filled per contract).

C). Create a pay grade 14 and place the Working Foreman, Master Mechanic, Police Detective and SRO Officer within this category.

D). Move the Sewer Plant and Water Plant Operator position from pay grade 10 to pay grade 11.

Discussion included how to stay within the parameters of the negotiated contracts, how often to review the pay plan, comparing pay rates to other local communities, how many employees are paid above the existing top pay grades, why union members are included when their pay rates are negotiated and the lack of a mechanism to establish starting pay for new hires or new positions.

Trefethen added that the town paid \$20,000 or \$30,000 to create the Pay Plan and he did not want to see it go by the wayside. Selectmen asked him to provide them with a copy of the plan which highlights any new positions and his recommended changes.

8).Draft Fund Balance Policy:

Trefethen provided a draft fund balance policy for the board to review and provide their comments. He said the policy would establish guidelines for the size of fund balance and the use of excess funds and has been recommended by the Auditors in the past. The draft policy states that under RSA 41:8 Selectmen have the authority to impose the following guidelines:

A). The town will maintain a fund balance between 5% to 17% of the town's annual budget plus the school and county appropriations in accordance with the Department of Revenue Administration and accepted accounting practices.

B). A nominal amount of the unassigned fund balance may be used to stabilize the town portion of the tax rate. This amount shall reflect a minimal sum anticipated annually, resulting from unexpected appropriations

and unanticipated revenues. The nominal amount in excess of cash reserves is established at \$100,000.

C). The town shall not allocate any portion of the unassigned fund balance to pay operating costs, wages, salaries, benefits or recurring capital expenses.

D). The town shall not allocate any portion of the unassigned fund balance to make debt service payments.

E). The unassigned fund balance may be used for current or planned capital expenses through the use of Capital Reserve Funds, for non-recurring capital equipment and other capital purchases or major projects to increase the town's efficiency in delivering municipal services.

F). The fund balance may be used for overlay purposes when it is anticipated that property tax abatements will be issued for assessment changes implemented in a previous fiscal year.

G). The guidelines in the policy, particularly those associated with expenditures shall first receive authority from voters at the Annual Town Meeting.

Selectmen said they opposed setting conditions on future boards, noting that economic conditions change and most boards do a good job in managing the fund balance within the parameters set by state law.

Discussion also included writing a policy that reflects state guidelines, the results of a recent Foster's Daily Democrat survey on how residents would spend excess funds, eliminating the \$100,000 minimum from the policy and how broad such a policy should be. No action was taken.

9). Any Further Business:

A) Committee Appointment-

Motion: (McCarthy, second Horgan) to appoint John Aylard to a three year term on the Zoning Board of Adjustment passed 5-0.

B). MS232 Report- Trefethen said the report of the actual vote of the Town Meeting appropriations has been completed and submitted. He assured the board the report was gone through and is correct.

C). Part time and Full Time Public Works employees- Trefethen reported that he and Public Works Director Dale Sprague have interviewed candidates for the part-time and full time positions at highway garage. He explained there are two levels in the hiring process, tier one candidates who are required to be interviewed by Selectmen and tier two candidates who can be interviewed and hired by the Town Administrator or department heads. Discussion included proposed pay rates for the candidates, experience and qualifications of the candidates and whether to require the candidates to come before Selectmen or allow the Town Manager/department head to hire a part-time candidate without approval of the board. Consensus of the board showed Selectmen favored meeting with the candidates for the full time position and allowing the Town Manager to hire a candidate for the part-time position. Trefethen said he will invite the three candidates for the full time position to meet with the board at the April 13 meeting.

D). Police Station Roof- Chief Drury reported that the original roof at the Police Station, which is about 25 years old, is leaking in the area near the skylights. He told the board he is seeking permission to obtain quotes for partial roof repair or a total replacement. The board approved the request and the Chief will report his findings to the board.

E). 2007 Explorer-The Chief also reported the Explorer will be sent to Irwin Motors to investigate a rattle in the engine. He said he plans to obtain an estimate to determine if it is more cost effective to repair the engine or replace it once the cause of the problem is known.

F). Request for Former Officer to Return- Chief Drury said Phil Hunter, formerly with the Farmington Police Department, has indicated that he is interested in returning to the force on a part-time basis and asked the board for their approval to start the background check process. Discussion included the policy regarding rehires, creating a list of officers who are interested in part-time work and if the opening is an active, posted listing. Consensus of the board showed they approved the Chief's request.

G). Coast Bus- Trefethen said the bus company plans to reverse the bus route that runs from High and Tappan Streets to the downtown area. They requested the town move the shelter at the High and Tappan Streets stop and install it at a new bus stop in the dirt area located between the former Courthouse and the Town Hall. The stop at High and Tappan Streets will remain in use. Selectmen suggested the company leave the shelter located at High and Tappan Streets and bring in a new shelter for the stop adjacent to the Courthouse. The board approved the new location and said if the bus company brings in a new shelter for the new bus stop, the town will install it. Trefethen said he will forward the board's request to the bus company.

H). Parking at Fernald Park- Selectman McCarthy asked if parking is allowed between the sidewalk and Central Ave. at Fernald Park. Chief Drury said parking is allowed on the dirt section, but is not allowed on the sidewalk.

10. Adjournment:

Motion: (St. Onge, second Horgan) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 8:10 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

Charlie King

Paula Proulx

Brian St. Onge

James Horgan

Gerry McCarthy