

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 6, 2017

Board Members Present:

Charlie King, Chairman
Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman
Paula Proulx
Ann Titus

Board Members Absent:

Jim Horgan, excused

Others Present:

Arthur Capello, Town Administrator
Fire Chief James Reinert
Bill Wood, AED Coordinator, NH Dept. of Safety, Division of Fire Standards, Training and EMS
Nancy Vaughn, Government Relations Director, American Heart Association-NH
Emily Knight, American Heart Association- NH Board Member, RN Wentworth Douglas Hospital
Pastor Richard Rizzi, First Baptist Church
Resident Elizabeth Johnson

1). Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:

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

2). Public Input:

A). Old Fire Station- Pastor Rizzi said he understood the board is considering selling the property where the old fire station is located as one of the options for the property. He suggested the board consider keeping the land and constructing a new more energy efficient building to house the municipal offices as part of a long term improvement plan for the Town. He asked the board to also compare the amount of revenue received for sale of the property versus the savings that could be realized with a more energy efficient facility over the long run. He added that there is more parking available at the fire station site.

Mr. King said the Town has already made a lot of improvements to the current Municipal Office Building such as added insulation, new heat pumps and new windows.

Mr. Johnson suggested the board could also use the revenue from the sale of the fire station property to make further upgrades to the present Municipal Office Building.

Mr. King thanked Pastor Rizzi for coming forward with a good suggestion and said the board will keep it in mind as the process to determine future of the property moves forward.

B). Status of TIF District- Mrs. Johnson asked the board for a status report of the TIF District Advisory Board.

Mr. Capello said there is still a need for one non-business member of the advisory board who resides in the district or on an abutting property. He said the Town has had a difficult time getting volunteers to serve on the board even after sending out mailers and door-to-door visits by Administrative Assistant Erica Rogers in search of new members.

Mrs. Johnson noted that the new district has been unable to get started because “everyone complains but are not willing to step up to the table and get anything done”.

Mr. King said the “procedural stuff” has not started but that the TIF District fund account has begun and the additional taxes from any improvements or new construction on properties in the district will be deposited in the account.

Mr. Capello added that without the advisory board the money in the account can't be used.

Mr. King said the first few years nothing much may happen as the money accumulates to make payments on the planned improvements to the area so that the money for them won't have to be raised and appropriated by the taxpayers.

Mr. Johnson asked how much of Main Street is included in the TIF District.

Mr. Capello said the Main Street portion of the district runs from the intersection of Route 11 to the Farmington Country Club.

3). Review of Minutes: Tabled until later in the meeting.

4). Heart Safe Presentation:

Chief Reinert said the Town's employees are now trained to perform CPR and training sessions for residents are planned for April. He credited Asst. Fire Chief Bonneau with the successful completion of the program.

The Chief then introduced Mr. Wood to the board.

Mr. Wood announced that Farmington is the 30th town to receive the Heart Safe Town designation. He said the goal of the program is to increase survival rates from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, create a network of local resources involving residents, town officials, businesses and emergency responders and to increase the availability of CPR training and AED's (automated external defibrillators). He added there are about 125 cardiac calls a month statewide and that “time is tissue” during a cardiac event and every minute that passes without assistance equals 10% less chance of survival.

Mr. Wood presented a metal sign promoting the Town's participation in the program and a letter from Chief of Strategy and Planning Nick Mercuri congratulating the Fire Dept. and the Town for completing the training program.

Mr. Wood then introduced Ms. Vaughn and Ms. Knight to the board. Ms. Vaughn presented a certificate of appreciation recognizing the Town's support of the American Heart Association and the Heart Safe Town program.

Ms. Knight thanked the Town for being a part of the program and noted that she works in Dover and that the city, with all of its resources, is not yet a participant of the program.

5). Discussion with the Fire Chief:

Generator Grant- Chief Reinert told the board that the Town may have to pay \$18,000 in matching funds for the grant for the generator at the Emergency Operations Center at Public Safety Building. He said the new NH Dept. of Homeland Security field rep. informed him that they have revised their decision regarding the 50/50 grant which will fund the generator. Initially the Town was to provide a \$100,000 matching share which would have been covered by constructing the building, installation of the concrete pad for the generator, the transfer switch, wiring and other related expenses. He said Homeland Security told him that only 3 rooms and not the entire building can count toward the Town's share of the grant leaving the Town to pay \$18,000 in matching funds.

Chief Reinert said he is in the process of trying to find other funds to reduce the amount such as

from other grants or cost saving measures for equipment and software. He said he is awaiting the final invoices to determine how much savings could be applied to the grant and plans further discussions with NH Homeland Security.

Mr. King suggested the Chief appeal the decision as the Town was previously approved for the grant.

Chief Reinert said he did not think there is an appeal process for this grant.

Mr. Johnson added the grant is still a good deal if the Town would be getting a generator worth \$100,000 for \$18,000.

Ambulance 1- Chief Reinert said the 2006 Ford is running but has had a significant amount of repairs in the last 2 years and needs more repairs this year. He said the vehicle has had 2 turbos, 3 alternators and the catalytic convertor repaired/replaced and is due for tires, rear main seal, leaf springs, shocks, brakes and rocker panels at an estimated cost of \$6,507 in 2017. He questioned the cost effectiveness of putting more money into an 11 year old vehicle and added that it should have been replaced 4 years ago as per the Capital Improvement Plan.

Discussion included whether to continue to repair or replace the vehicle this year, engine idling equals additional mileage, using the ambulance as a back-up vehicle, the pro's and con's of gasoline and diesel engines, the amount of downtime for the vehicle and options for a new/used ambulance.

Mr. King suggested if the rocker panels are in good enough condition to pass inspection they should not be repaired if the vehicle will be replaced in the near future.

Mr. Capello said there is \$66,000 in the Emergency Motorized Equipment Capital Reserve Fund and it is expected voters will approve putting an additional \$40,000 raised from ambulance billing into the CRF at Town Meeting in March. He said a warrant article to expend funds from the CRF for a new ambulance would not be needed as the Selectmen are agents to expend the funds.

Mr. King said all of the needed repairs except for the rocker panel work should be completed even if the Town plans to purchase a new ambulance as it may take as long as 6 or 8 months for the new vehicle to arrive.

Mrs. Titus suggested the Chief obtain 3 outside estimates for the repair/replacement work.

Chief Reinert said the needed work will overspend the vehicle maintenance line of the dept. budget and he has already begun to look at sending the work out to an outside vendor.

Selectmen asked the Chief to obtain 3 estimates for the repair work, to look into the availability of grants and the costs/options for a replacement vehicle and provide the information to the board.

Ambulance Billing Increase- Chief Reinert presented the 2017 ComStar Ambulance Billing Service Rate Change Form and asked the board's opinions about increasing the base rates, specialty care transport and mileage charges. The form includes the Medicare allowed amounts (\$376 emergency base rate), average bundled top 50 customers (\$1,352 emergency base rate) and the current rates in Farmington (\$1,137 emergency base rate).

Mr. Capello suggested the rate be increased to \$1,352 which is the average rate charged by the top 50 ComStar customers.

Selectmen said costs have gone up and the rates have not increased in over 3 years but noted this is a 20% increase which would come out of the patients' pockets if they have no health insurance.

Mr. Capello then suggested the base rates be increased by 5% to \$1,200.

Motion: (King, second Johnson) to increase the rates by 5% for all charges effective immediately passed 4-0.

Collections- Chief Reinert also told the board that the dept. has been doing better at obtaining patients' Social Security numbers which enabled the billing service to collect about \$4,000 more this past billing cycle.

6). Old Fire Station Lots:

Mr. Capello said the survey of the lots has been completed and recorded and asked the board if they wished to list the property as up for sale.

Mr. King said the property still needs a deed but there is enough information available to list it with a third party for sale, seek sealed bids or proposals.

Mr. Johnson suggested the board send out an RFP to get an idea of the market value of the lots. He said the board could base their decision on which proposal would be of more benefit to the downtown area. He added there are also other options to consider including Pastor Rizzi's suggestion discussed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Capello said he was contacted by someone with some interest in the property but has not heard back from that person.

Mr. King said he was open to negotiation based on the proposal and that the Town already owns a lot of property that he would like to see put back on the tax rolls.

Mr. Capello said the Town would probably not want to take out another bond for about 15 years for construction of a Town building.

Mr. Johnson suggested that they look at the lots currently owned by the Town and create a proposed development plan to get better use of what the Town has. If you can't find a better use for any lot, get rid of it he said.

Mr. Capello said he will draft an RFP for the sale of fire station lots for the board to review at their meeting in 2 weeks (Feb. 20).

7). Sale of Other Town Properties:

Mr. Capello said he was awaiting the list of tax deeded properties from the Town Clerk with information regarding which properties contain structures. He said he will provide the list at the next meeting.

Mr. King said a large amount of Town owned properties also affects the property liability costs to the Town.

Mrs. Titus asked for the price of a lot in the Sarah Greenfield Business Park.

Mr. Capello said that previously a lot in the park was valued at about \$40,000.

Mr. King said lots in the Skyhaven Business Park in Rochester recently sold for \$25,000 and that the asking price for the lots in Sarah Greenfield Park needs to be changed. He added that the Town sent out an RFP for sale of the lots in the business park and got no responses.

He then asked Mr. Capello to research nearby towns to find out what they are charging per acre of land in their towns.

Mr. Johnson said one of the better locations for a business – the former Collins Aikman/Davidson Rubber site remains unsold due to the Superfund/EPA issues at the site.

Mr. King said the potential buyers would find that the environmental issues are no longer an issue once they learn about the property. He added that people also don't realize there are

some issues with developing some of the properties along Route 11 such the railroad easement, wetlands, slopes and ledge areas which could need expensive blasting to develop.

8). Public Safety Building Update:

A). Drainage Solution- Mr. Johnson said Groen Construction has proposed a change order to deal with the water shedding off the roof and pooling/freezing in front of the ambulance bays. He said their solution is to install heavy duty 8 inch gutters and downspouts leading to a drain pipe installed in a 4 foot deep trench that will drain the water to the swale area at the detention pond in front of the building. He said the total cost for installation of the gutters, downspouts, heat tape, a drain pipe, trenching and restoring the coarse asphalt layer will be \$7,073.

Mr. Johnson said the other option is to dig a trench in front of the bays which would have to be maintained continually due to freezing temperatures and sand or other materials clogging the trench and would cost the Town about \$12,000.

Mr. King asked how they would keep the exposed ditch line at the end of the gutter from freezing. He said it could become an issue with freezing temperatures or snow cover and suggested they consider using a perforated drain pipe so that the water percolates underground below the frost line.

Mr. Johnson said he would bring the suggestion to the builder at the next construction meeting and ask if this additional change will increase the price of the project.

The funds to solve the water shedding issue will come from the contingency fund and will leave a balance of \$92,000 in the fund. The project is slated for spring before the asphalt "top coat" is put down he said.

Motion: (King, second Johnson) to approve the change order for \$7,073 passed 4-0.

B). Invoice- Mr. Capello asked the board to approve payment of an invoice for the work completed up to Jan.31, 2017.

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to authorize payment of \$284,123.05 to Groen Construction for work completed to date passed 4-0.

C). Completion Date – Mr. Johnson said the building completion date is expected to be Feb. 15 and noted that the Police and Fire Depts. have started to set up some of their equipment.

9). Town Administrator's Business:

A). Legal Bill- Mr. Capello asked the board to approve payment for legal expenses related to the issuance of the bond for the Public Safety Building.

Motion: (Johnson, second Titus) to authorize payment of \$1,016.90 for legal expenses for the bond for the Public Safety Building to be paid from the Public Safety Building and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund passed 4-0.

B). Award Recognition- Chief Reinert recognized Selectmen's Secretary Megan Taylor-Fetter as the January recipient of the Chief's Award for Excellence. He said she will receive an "Award of Excellence" certificate in honor of her outstanding administrative performance for the Fire and Rescue Dept. and inclusion of her name on the award winners' plaque.

Mrs. Titus suggested the awards be included in the Puddle Dock Press newspaper.

Chief Reinert said he would forward the information to the paper.

C). Parking Issue – Mr. Capello said he received another e-mail from resident Stan Freeda regarding his request for information about parking in the North Main Street area. Mr. Freeda requested copies or links to state laws or Town Ordinances used by Selectmen/ Town officials

in making their determinations regarding allowing/prohibiting on street parking and whether any safety issues exist there. He also requested the reasons used to determine where line painting is affordable or not affordable. He said Mr. Freeda's questions have already been addressed and asked the board if an additional response is necessary.

Mr. Johnson asked if the Town has permissive style parking ordinances.

Mr. Capello said that in NH most ordinances are permissive as opposed to prohibitive which means uses are prohibited unless they are expressly permitted.

Mr. King said that previously he told Mr. Freeda that the Town does not have its own permissive ordinance but that the Town recognizes the state's permissive style and that is how the issue is handled here.

Mr. Johnson asked if there is a specific RSA containing the definition of permissive style ordinances.

Mr. Capello said he would send Mr. Freeda a link to the website where the information can be found.

Mr. King said Mr. Freeda asked a new question about the affordability of painting lines and suggested Mr. Capello should answer any questions not already answered on behalf of the board.

Mr. Johnson noted the board had previously decided that painting parking lines is not needed in that area.

Mr. Capello asked the board how many times they wished him to go "back and forth" on this issue with Mr. Freeda. He said he has invited Mr. Freeda to come into the Municipal Office and look at the Town Ordinances book as the ordinances are not available electronically and making copies of the book which dates back to 1970 could result in some expense for Mr. Freeda.

Mrs. Titus said she drove by Mr. Freeda's residence and did not see any vehicle parked on the sidewalk. She suggested Mr. Freeda also ask his neighbors to report any vehicle parked on the sidewalk or in a crosswalk to the Police.

Ms. Proulx said the board can address safety issues on a case-by-case basis and that an ordinance is not necessary.

Mr. Capello said all of Mr. Freeda's questions were answered and that it is up to the discretion of the board whether to paint lines and to decide issues on a case-by-case basis as there is no blanket ordinance covering this issue.

Mrs. Titus asked if Mr. Freeda could come in and discuss the matter with the board.

Mr. Capello said the board meetings are open to the public and there is a public input portion to each meeting so Mr. Freeda can discuss the issue with the board if he chooses to do so.

D). Town Budget Review- Mr. Capello told the board the Town budget will be presented to the Budget Committee on Thursday, Feb. 9, 2017 at 7 p.m. and the Public Hearing on the Town budget is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2017 at 7 p.m.

E). Franchise Fee- Mr. Capello said the Town has received the first Cable TV Franchise Fee payment from TDS (Union Telephone Co.) in the amount of \$551.39.

10). Additional Board Business:

A). Plowing Complaint- Mrs. Titus said a resident complained about the plowing job done at old Fire Station parking lot. She said the lot wasn't finished due to cars parked in the lot and plow crew did not come back to finish the job.

Mr. Capello said he will address the matter with the Deputy DPW Director.

B). Economic Development- Mr. King said only about 80 voters attended the School District Deliberative Session where a potential \$1.1 million operating budget increase and a \$2.52 tax rate increase was under consideration. He said some residents told Selectmen they need to do a better job with economic development and expand the tax base. He then cited several examples of the number of businesses needed to impact the tax rate. He said if the \$1.1 million revenue is raised through taxation an additional \$45 million in assessed property value would be needed. This would equal 250 new homes, 9 Hannaford's grocery stores, 28 Country Tire stores, 80 Dollar General stores, or 25 Energy Resources to offset the tax increase. He added that 3 new businesses at \$4 million would only lessen the tax rate by 25 cents.

Ms. Proulx suggested residents look at both sides of the issue and noted that if taxes went down based on the number of businesses there are then the tax rate in the towns and cities south of Farmington would be less than the Farmington tax rate but they are not lower. She added that there is less congestion here, only a 10 minute ride to shop, less need for emergency services and a better quality of life here. It all depends on where you want to live she said.

Mr. King said the taxes were lower when Davidson Rubber was here but the property would not be worth \$45 million today. He said at best it would probably be worth about \$10 million in assessed valuation. He said that he supports the TIF District but told viewers the extension of utilities costs the Town too and the ownership and maintenance of water and sewer utilities falls to the Town. He added he hopes residents will think about what economic development really means.

Mr. Capello said the current tax rates for Dover and Rochester are \$27.06 and \$28.26 respectively with all of their businesses.

C). Letter from E.D. Swett- Mrs. Titus read a letter from E.D. Swett thanking Mr. Capello for his kindness and assistance in their transition to the office space on the second floor of the Municipal Office Building.

D). New Chairman Needed- Mr. King told the board that this is his last year as Chairman of the board and that they would need to be thinking about who should become the new Chair following Town Meeting in March.

11). Review of Minutes:

January 16, 2017, Public Meeting Minutes:

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

January 23, 2017, Public Meeting Minutes:

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

January 23, 2017, Non-Public Sessions A & C:

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

January 23, 2017, unseal Non-Public minutes:

Motion: (Titus, second Johnson) to unseal the meeting minutes of Non-Public Sessions A & C passed 4-0.

January 30, 2017, Public Meeting Minutes:

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

January 30, 2017, Non-Public Session Meeting Minutes A through F:

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

January 30, 2017, Non-Public Meeting Minutes Sessions B & C:

Motion: (Johnson, second Proulx) to unseal the meeting minutes of Non-Public Sessions B & C passed 4-0.

January 30, 2017, Non-Public Session Meeting Minutes Sessions E & F:

Motion: (Johnson, second King) to unseal the meeting minutes of Non-Public Sessions E & F passed 4-0.

12). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (King, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (King, Johnson, Proulx, Titus- yes) at 8:05 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Titus) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 8:50 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Johnson) to seal the minutes until the matter is resolved passed 4-0.

13). Non-Public Session B:

Motion: (King, second Johnson) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (King, Johnson, Proulx, Titus- yes) at 8:50 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Johnson) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 9 p.m.

14). Next Meeting: Monday, February 13, 2017 at 6 p.m.

15). Adjournment:

Motion: (Titus, second Johnson) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 9:05 p.m.

Respectively submitted
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

Charlie King, Chairman

Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman

Paula Proulx

Ann Titus

