

Sunderland Selectboard Minutes
Monday, March 23, 2020

Attending: D. Pierce, S. Bergeron, T. Fydenkevez, G. Kravitz

Others present: E. Crowe, A. Kajstura, S. Smiarowski, C. Bennett, B. Berry, L. Smith

Meeting via Zoom recorded and televised by FCAT.

Meeting called to order at 6:35PM.

APPOINTMENT

SELECTBOARD BUDGET PRESENTATION: Mr. Kravitz stated that most of the Selectboard/Administration budget was level funded. Increases included the Selectboard's Administrative Assistant due to the anticipated recommendation from the Personnel Advisory Committee based on the salary survey, the Town Administrator because of negotiations with the new Town Administrator that is aligned with other administrators in the region, lawn mowing due to anticipated an anticipated increase when the contract is bid, and technology because of the new IT vendor, services provided, and license costs. Mr. Fydenkevez asked about the Highway Department's ability to provide lawn mowing service for the town. The Town Administrator will work with the Highway Superintendent on a proposal. Mr. Kravitz also discussed capital requests, including \$50,000 for Village Center Visioning, \$9,000 to make the Town Office Building doors ADA accessible, and \$5,000 for village center signs.

SELECTBOARD UPDATES

Mr. Fydenkevez stated that although the Selectboard is physically present in the Town Office Building, they are all in different rooms and practicing social distancing. Mr. Pierce stated that the Personnel Advisory Committee will make recommendations at the next meeting. Mr. Bergeron noted that the library had ceased curbside pickup, the schools are providing breakfast and lunches for students, the Governor had announced that non-essential businesses were to close at noon on Tuesday, March 24.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

Mr. Kravitz reported on a conversation with Hadley Town Administrator David Nixon about business support and a regional effort to fast-track public construction projects. He also stated that the town had received a 100% incentive to install heat pumps in the Town Office Building and commended both staff and FCAT on their commitment to continuing to provide services the community.

MINUTES

Mr. Pierce motion to approve minutes of March 9, 2020, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to approve minutes of March 16, 2020, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY UPDATE: Mr. Bergeron reiterated that the town is still operating under a state of emergency, town buildings remain closed to the public, but public services are continuing. Ms. Smith, Emergency Management Director, stated that she was in daily contact with MEMA and has made requests for Personal Protective Equipment for first responders. Mr. Fydenkevez stated that the Town Office Building remains operational, is conducting business and residents can call with questions or if they need help. While the Senior Center is closed to the public, it is making meals available Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, is conducting wellness checks, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays working with Frontier to provide meals on those days as well. Mr. Fydenkevez also thanked town employees for their commitment to residents.

FY21 BUDGET: Mr. Bergeron stated that the town was five weeks away from the scheduled date for Annual Town Meeting and the possibility of delaying Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Pierce suggested that it may have to be delayed and there is the possibility that the situation could get worse. Mr. Fydenkevez recommended consideration as an option and the importance of people being able to attend. He noted that schools haven't taken votes on final budgets, that town should continue to look at revenues and expenditures, and suggested considering a delay of 2-3 weeks. Mr. Fydenkevez also stated that the local election is the first week in May

and could potentially be delayed. Mr. Bergeron spoke with Superintendent Modestow about the timeline for budgets and that if Town Meeting is delayed, a several week delay in school budget submission is not a dealbreaker, although it would be important to have solid numbers at Town Meeting. Mr. Fydenkevez stated that the Hadley Town Meeting has been delayed until May. Mr. Fydenkevez asked about salary recommendations from the Personnel Advisory Committee. Mr. Bergeron suggested review of the wage survey and wanted to understand where the recommendations would put Sunderland employees in comparison to comparable communities. Mr. Pierce stated that the Personnel Advisory Committee is continuing its work on a multi-year proposal. Mr. Crowe stated that revenue will likely decrease because of the public health emergency and echoed Mr. Bergeron's comment with respect to ensuring compensation is in line with other communities. Mr. Bergeron noted that free cash has not yet been certified and therefore the revenue picture is not yet clear, but spending requests increased by about 4.9%.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING DRAFT WARRANT ARTICLES: Mr. Bergeron went through the draft warrant articles and noted that it would not be an in-depth discussion of each article, but a general review.

Mr. Fydenkevez motion to include Article 1 on the warrant, Mr. Pierce second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 2 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Fydenkevez motion to include Article 3 on the warrant, Mr. Pierce second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Fydenkevez motion to include Articles 4 & 5 on the warrant, Mr. Pierce second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Fydenkevez motion to include Article 6 on the warrant, Mr. Pierce second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 7 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Mr. Kravitz stated that the town had to make an unanticipated Employer Shared Responsibility Payment to the IRS and this article was to reimburse the account from which these funds were expended.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 8 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 9 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Mr. Bergeron thanked the CPA and original landowner for working together to expand the drinking water protection area.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 10 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 11 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 12 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Discussion about the need for an archaeological survey.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 13 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 14 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. It was questioned whether carrying costs were included in the original grant.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 15 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 16 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Mr. Bergeron clarified that this would be to front the money and confirm that the town would apply for the PARC grant, but the funds would not be appropriated if the PARC grant application was not successful.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 17 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 18 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Mr. Bergeron asked whether there were any other revolving funds and whether the authorized amounts needed adjustment. The Town Administrator to confirm.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 19 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 20 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 21 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Mr. Bergeron stated that Frontier uses three mechanisms for funding capital improvements, a borrowing authorization for large capital projects, use of excess and deficiency funds, and town meeting warrant articles. Sunderland's portion is approximately 27% (\$10,975.55). Mr. Bergeron also commended the Superintendent for following the plan.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 22 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Mr. Fydenkevez asked to reach out to other communities who are doing or have done ditch work. Mr. Pierce suggested a review previous work in Sunderland to estimate costs. Mr. Crowe suggested that if other communities are doing something similar, perhaps the town could collaborate to reduce costs.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 23 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Mr. Bergeron stated that the Planning Board takes great care to review zoning articles before being presented for inclusion on the warrant.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Article 24 on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Mr. Bergeron noted that this would come from sewer user fees.

Mr. Pierce motion to include Articles 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30 (consent articles) on the warrant, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0. Mr. Fydenkevez stated that the consent articles were important because they authorize the town to do things like borrow money. He also noted that HB4935 is pending in the legislature and would allow no penalty for late payment of property taxes until 45 days after the COVID-19 State of Emergency ends.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Fydenkevez motion to adjourn at 7:14PM, Mr. Pierce second, vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Geoff Kravitz, Town Administrator