

Sunderland Selectboard
Tuesday, February 16, 2021

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

Others present: Representative N. Blais, J. Freedman, L. Smith, K. McFarland, L. Baker, L. Rivais, P. Berman, P. Gagarin, J. Pelletier, Kara

Meeting via Zoom recorded by FCAT.

Meeting called to order at 6:35PM.

MINUTES

Mr. Fydenkevez motion to approve Selectboard minutes of February 8, 2021, Mr. Bergeron second, vote 3-0.

BUSINESS

LEGISLATIVE UPDATED: Rep. Blais thanked the Selectboard for their work in response to the pandemic. She discussed increasing Chapter 90 funds, grants to support the local economy and improve food security. This session she will be serving on the Ways & Means, Tourism, Arts, & Culture, and Transportation Committees. Mr. Freedman, Chief of Staff for Senator Comerford, expressed the Senators regrets for not being able to be present. He noted the Senator's work on improving rail connections in Western Mass and the Student Opportunity Act. She also chaired the Public Health Committee and the Committee on COVID-19 and Emergency Preparedness and Management. Mr. Fydenkevez thanked Rep. Blais and Senator Comerford for their support for the Deerfield clinic, but objected to the limited supply of vaccines being distributed to rural communities. The Pioneer Valley legislative delegation has been advocating for improvements to the distribution of vaccines. FRCOG has received funds to set up a pilot program to transport people to medical appointments. A discussion ensued of the ongoing need for vaccines and the importance of getting it right. Mr. Bergeron asked that the legislators be cognizant of the cost of unemployment insurance on businesses.

APPOINTMENT OF PUBLIC WEIGHERS: Mr. Bergeron motion to appoint Andrew Pepyne and Andrea Cossaboom as public weighers, effective immediately, with terms to expire on March 31, 2021, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

Mr. Bergeron motion to appoint Andrew Pepyne, Dean Clonginger, Aleigh Holmquist-Parker, Jason Massey, Thomas Kelley, and Andrea Cossaboom as public weighers for a term of one year beginning on April 1, 2021 and ending on March 31, 2022, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

DESIGNER SELECTION PROCESS REGULATION: The state Designer Selection law was amended making the Selectboard regulation out of date. Mr. Bergeron motion to amend the regulations to align with the state law by updating the threshold for using the designer selection process to \$30,000 design costs or \$300,000 construction costs, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

120 NORTH MAIN STREET: Reviewed the conveyance documents, including the deed, title insurance affidavit, and license agreement to allow sitework to begin should the closing be delayed. Mr. Bergeron motion to sign the conveyance documents, Mr. Fydenkevez second, vote 3-0.

POTENTIAL BORROWING AUTHORIZATION: Discussion of larger capital expenses and the fact that, even with the capital levy, the town is limited to approximately \$120,000 per year to spend on capital. The purpose of the discussion is to try to figure out how to pay for larger expenses. Borrowing was discussed given the low interest rates available and the fact that debt will be retired on the Public Safety Complex and Library this year.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Ms. Smith stated that there were no new cases at North 116 Flats and town-wide the number of new cases look better. She reminded residents to remain vigilant and that people should try to get the vaccine wherever they are able. Ms. Berman asked if CARES Act funds could be used to improve communication and suggested an annual town-wide mailing to inform residents of the various communications mechanisms the town uses.

SELECTBOARD UPDATES

Mr. Pierce stated that the Personnel Committee met to recommend wage adjustments and a 2% COLA for FY22, with the official recommendation forthcoming.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

The Town Administrator noted that the Administrative Assistant for the Board of Assessors did not work out and that they town has re-advertised the position. The town will hire temporary staff for a few hours per week to check and respond to emails and voicemails during the search. It was recommended that the Board of Assessors also step up to help in the interim.

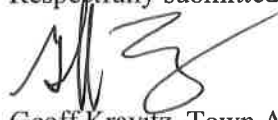
PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Gagarin voiced his support for increasing funds for capital projects and suggested a permanent increase to the capital levy as an alternative to borrowing. He also noted that the elementary school is hoping to go to a 4-day/week hybrid model in March. He asked about CARES Act funds being available for rental and mortgage assistance.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Fydenkevez motion to adjourn at 8:08 PM, Mr. Bergeron second, vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G Kravitz', written over a horizontal line.

Geoff Kravitz, Town Administrator