

**TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD
SELECTBOARD HALL – 96 MAIN STREET – THIRD FLOOR
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
MONDAY, May 8, 2023**

APPROVED MINUTES

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ROLL CALL

Chair, Kristi Morris, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and Roll Call was taken.

Selectboard Members: Vice Chair Michael Martin, Everett Hammond, and Crissy Webster were present in-person. Chair Kristi Morris was present via Zoom. Walter Martone was absent.

Administration: Town Manager Jeff Mobus was present in-person. Fire Chief Paul Stagner and Library Director Sue Dowdell joined via Zoom.

School Board Liaison: Steve Karaffa was not in attendance

B. MINUTES

1. Regular Selectboard Meeting – April 24, 2023

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to approve the Regular Selectboard Meeting Minutes of April 24, 2023, as printed, and distributed with revisions.

Seconded by: Crissy Webster

Everett Hammond requested correction on page 12 of 18 in the top paragraph, the fourth line down “1.75 million” should be 1,075,000. Chair Kristi Morris noted that is for the total for paving for this year.

Carrie Kellow Recording Secretary requested to know who made the motion to adjourn, who seconded, what time the meeting adjourned, and what time the Board came back from Executive Session. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded the Board came back at 10:20 pm, Crissy Webster moved to adjourn, Mike Martin seconded, there was no discussion, and no further action was taken.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Walter Martone as being absent.

C. ANY REQUESTED ADDITIONS TO THIS AGENDA

No requested additions to this agenda at the time of the meeting.

**CONVENE LOCAL CONTROL COMMISSION
ACT ON APPLICATIONS – Renewals and New Applications**
The Board entered Local Control at 7:04 pm.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the tobacco license renewal application for Magic Mushroom included in the meeting packet.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to approve the tobacco license for the Magic Mushroom.

Seconded by: Crissy Webster

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Walter Martone as being absent.

EXIT LOCAL CONTROL COMMISSION

The Board ended Local Control at 7:06 pm.

D. NEW BUSINESS

ITEM #1 Parade permit application – Dam Run – June 11, 2023

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Parade permit application – Dam Run – June 11, 2023” item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed the Town has received a parade permit application from the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center to hold the Dam Run on June 11. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted they have run this event for several years with no problems and that they have been doing this in May for the first 15 years, but May was so crowded that they moved it back a month to June 11 and hopefully there'll be fewer conflicts than on that day.

MOTION: Everett Hammond moved to approve the parade permit application for the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center to hold a Dam Run on June 11 2023.

Seconded by: Michael Martin

Chair Kristi Morris noted the time on that is expected to be from 8 am till 11 am.

Further discussion ensued that Everett Hammond had run the event in the past but was unsure he would be able to do it this year and Crissy Webster noted that she typically participates in the event.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Walter Martone as being absent.

ITEM #2 2023 Local Emergency Management Plan

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “2023 Local Emergency Management Plan” included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed this is the first time that Chief Stagner has done this and there's been several updates in the last year more than half of the positions have changed over the last 12 months. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added there's still one big issue which is the lack of an emergency shelter, but that's something that we could perhaps address as the year goes on and have more information on for next year.

Chair Kristi Morris recommended Vice Chair Michael Martin sign the plan in his absence.

MOTION: Crissy Webster moved to have Michael Martin, Vice Chair, sign the local emergency management plan and approve the plan.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Michael Martin commented on the lack of any shelter information in the plan again this year. Michael Martin added he knows that we have a new School Superintendent and he recalled in discussions previously about shelters and marshalling areas that the previous Emergency Officer Chief Thompson had suggested that the schools would be a place where we would use facilities for sheltering people in emergencies. Michael Martin further added we lack a school contact, and they show work numbers for the School Superintendent and District Office but no after-hours numbers, and he believes that it is important that we have that kind of information in our emergency plan and would like to see what we can do about getting that filled in.

Fire Chief Paul Stagner responded that the main reason why that's not filled in yet is because he has not had the opportunity to discuss specific sheltering plans with the new School Superintendent which he hopes to be able to do before the next school year and will update the plan once he does have that discussion.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Walter Martone as being absent.

Paul Stagner commented that the sheltering is still an area that we're lacking and he's hoping with the interested parties in Town to have something a little more concrete in that section for this Town and he thinks it's going to be an education piece and a marketing piece of how to get that information out that will all be added to this plan as it comes to fruition.

ITEM #3 Act on counteroffer – 25 Union Street.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Act on counteroffer – 25 Union Street” included in the meeting packet.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed at a previous meeting the Board made a motion to “convey real estate at 25 Union Street to Big Sky Properties, LLC for \$10,000 with the following conditions:

1. The owner agrees to raze the existing structure within 90 days.
2. Remediate invasive plant species and storm water runoff to Town DPW specifications.
3. Return the property to residential housing.

Further contingent upon receipt of an Urban Renewal Plan submitted in writing by Big Sky Properties containing these conditions.”

Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that he has discussed this with Matt Priestley of Big Sky Properties and due to the significant asbestos remediation needed at the property Matt Priestley has countered with purchasing the property for \$2,500 and agreeing to all conditions. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added he does not think that the Town is best suited for remediating and developing properties, noting we do not have a budget to perform this work. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued where the Town can help is facilitating the process.

MOTION: Crissy Webster moved to accept the counteroffer of \$2,500 from Big Sky Properties LLC for 25 Union Street.

Seconded by: Michael Martin

Everett Hammond inquired if we knew ahead of time what this was going to be before it all transpired. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded he did not know he thought we were good at the \$10,000. Town Manager Jeff

Mobus added that what happened was that the previous owner was offering it for \$20,000 and Matt Priestley was countering at \$10,000 dependent upon the condition of the property before the Town acquired the property and Matt Priestley offered that same way to us. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added when he did the condition of the property, they found out there was much more extensive asbestos than was anticipated, noting Matt Priestley had a quote for \$15,000 and he suggested splitting that amount in half so he's still eating a large number and we're getting a loss as well, but we're not suited to do this work.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Walter Martone as being absent.

ITEM #4 Real estate notification – 31 Pearl Street

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Real estate notification – 31 Pearl Street” item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that 31 Pearl Street is one of the three properties that the Board recently ordered to be demolished and when the owner learned of the order he reached out to the Town and offered to Quit Claim the property to the Town so that he would not be held responsible for demolishing the property. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added the Town could refuse to accept the property, enforce the order, and then put a Lien on the property and hope that the property would transfer at some point in the future. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that if it didn't transfer our recourse would be to try to enforce the lien to the courts, which could take years and by accepting the title to the property the Town can work to find a partner as we did for 25 Union Street or demolish the property for the order and then attempt to sell it. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued of the of the two choices the Town opted to accept title to the property so we can control the process, hopefully returning the property to residential housing. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that he has had one conversation with one person with an entity that would be interested in developing the property.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed there is significant asbestos at this property. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added he wouldn't expect us to be making a profit from this, we are just facilitating the process of moving fire damaged old homes or blighted homes in either case from the current condition into usable housing stock again. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added they talked about this in their last Executive Session but when they transact business in Executive Session it must be at the next regular meeting public notification of the transaction.

Further discussion ensued that they need to make a motion to formally accept the property, though the property has already been transferred. Additional discussion ensued regarding if they need to cancel the demolition order that they previously issued, and it was determined that they did not need to cancel it as the demolition order stays with the property.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved that the Board acknowledges the acceptance of the property at 31 Pearl Street to the Town.

Seconded by: Crissy Webster

Chair Kristi Morris commented that this is a significantly damaged piece of property that needs to be dealt with in the neighborhood and he thinks this is a great opportunity for the Town to get control of a building that's not going to be taken down by the owner and or repaired or replaced and this is just another way to absolve the owner of the property, the town to get control of it, and for us to determine what's going to happen next, whatever that may be.

Further discussion ensued that 31 Pearl Street does not have the same urban renewal concerns with stormwater or invasive species as 25 Union Street, so they don't have the same side agreement they could do, and they would have to go through the normal process anyway.

Further discussion ensued that the Board has the authority to extend the deadline for the demolition order on the property if needed.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Walter Martone as being absent.

ITEM #5 Main Street light

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Main Street light” item included in the meeting agenda. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that in January a car hit one of the downtown streetlights destroying the light across from the Town Office just below the Claremont Savings Bank parking lot. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that unfortunately the driver of the car did not have insurance and in addition, these lights are not covered by the Town’s insurance. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added VLCT is acting on behalf of the Town and reaching out to the driver and demanding payment it is very possible that the Town will have to resort to the legal process to recover funds.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that HB has always worked on these lights and we have obtained an estimate of \$11,230 to replace the light and there will be a lead time of 12 to 16 weeks. Chair Kristi Morris inquired if there is any reason that this light must be replaced. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded there is not, but it certainly does serve a function in that there's a corner there and in the dark it's a little bit hazardous, but it's not right on a crosswalk and it's not a required positioning. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added they could certainly take time and not replace it but that would mean that we'd want to fill the hole and make it safe there and it certainly would affect the aesthetics. Chair Kristi Morris noted there were some thoughts about moving it or a different location.

Crissy Webster inquired where the funds would come from if the Town had to pay the cost. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded he believed it would be losses and claims which is an unbudgeted line, which means he must either find the money or falls to the bottom line and comes out of fund balance. Further discussion ensued that the Town Manager would be fine if they waited until the next fiscal year at least but the bigger issue is the 3–4-month lead time. Additional discussion ensued that the Board would like to not take any action on this item, and they could move the item to future agenda item proposals.

Everett Hammond commented that the Board is meeting next week for strategic planning, it looks like it's hard to get sidewalk plows through there and it would be good to see what Public Works input would be if they had the funds and maybe the opportunity down the road if they were ever replaced what would they do with them.

Jessica Martin Springfield on the Move Director commented that she believed that the streetlights were from a fundraiser because there are plaques on the bottom of some of these lampposts, so that could be another way to potentially raise funds when and if this lamppost is replaced.

MOTION: Lack of a motion, the item will not be acted on this evening.

ITEM #6 Act on Toonerville Trail mowing bids.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Act on Toonerville Trail mowing bids” item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed the Town has received two bids for mowing the Toonerville Trail this year and a onetime cleanup of the parade route which is along Clinton Street, Main Street, and River Street is included in the bids. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that the bids were from JMC Property Management Services for \$26,756.25 and Thompson Lawn and Garden LLC for \$18,500. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added the owner of Thompson Lawn and Garden is Anthony Thompson who previously worked for Cole Lewis, who mowed the trail for a few years and having mowed the trail many times he is very familiar with the job. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that the budget line item is \$20,000 which includes money for other trail maintenance.

Michael Martin inquired if the Town Manager recalled what those bids were last year. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded last year the bid was awarded to another company which he would not have accepted a bid from that person again, and the bid ended up being around a little over \$7,000.

Further discussion ensued regarding prior year bidders and their amounts.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to accept the bid for Thompson Lawn and Garden LLC in the amount of \$18,500 for the mowing of the Toonerville Trail for this year, which includes a one-time cleanup of the parade route on Clinton Street, Main Street, and River Street.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Walter Martone as being absent.

ITEM #7 Act on truck bids.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Act on truck bids” item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed the Town issued an RFP for trucks for Public Works and the bids were due April 19 and the Town did not receive any bids. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added in response to our RFP the town has been able to receive quotes from two companies that already have or will have the trucks in stock this month.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that to replace the cemetery truck without a plow the quote from Automall was \$65,007.70 net of the trade and everything and for Fairfield’s it was \$66,914. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that to replace a wastewater truck with a plow to maintain the property down there, the quote from Automall was \$74,690 and Fairfield’s was \$75,835. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted as we’ve seen repeatedly this year prices are coming in higher than was expected over a year ago when the current budget was approved and there are sufficient funds in the Equipment Funds for these purchases, but the Town will need to review and update the Capital Plan before next season to ensure that our expectations are realistic.

Further discussion ensued that the Board wanted to act on both trucks in the same motion. Additional discussion ensued that the trucks are both older than 10 years old.

MOTION: Everett Hammond moved to replace the cemetery truck with a 2024 GMC Sierra 3500 from Automall for \$65,770 and for the wastewater truck to be replaced with a GMC Sierra 3500 from Automall for \$74,690 with a plow.

Seconded by: Michael Martin

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Walter Martone as being absent.

E. FINANCIAL REPORTS

FY2023 Warrants to May 4, 2023 – copies will be available on the website on May 9th, 2023.

Town Manager, Jeff Mobus stated that any questions regarding these warrants should be directed to the Finance Director, Cathy Sohngen.

F. MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Manager's Report included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that Project Action has restarted and there will be focus groups this week. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added the expectation is the focus groups will come up with challenges facing Springfield that will be identified as a summit on June 12, this is an effort to identify the challenges and determine how the State and local resources can best work together to help move Springfield forward. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added they are taking a very multifaceted approach and looking at it from different viewpoints, one from the Social Services viewpoint, one from the police viewpoint, one from Neighborhood Development viewpoint, there is about six different categories.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that Chief Jeff Burnham has been very involved in the process and he is on the committee, but not as one of the focus leaders. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added what's different this time with Project Action is the involvement of the state leaders, noting the Commissioner of DPS will come out and participate. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added it will have the players together with the resources and see how we can best affect change, whether against the overdoses or the neighborhood development issues that we're facing. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued it's really looking at our challenges from many different viewpoints at once and having the State right there with us providing any resources they may have to the players involved. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further discussed that ACS for mental health, Turning Point would be there for overdoses and other drug abuse issues, the Union Park Neighborhood Association, churches from the faith side, social service services, both from the state and the local agencies in Town would all be involved.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that he received a call from VTrans about the Exit 7 work, noting months ago representatives for VTrans presented the project and discussed options for the Toonerville Trail. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added the option they prefer is to relocate the trail along Route 5 intersection to be along Route 11 and 5 with the green buffer zone. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added he indicated the Town is not happy with this option. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued there is also a question about the slip lane that they want to change from the original presentation, as well.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that since there are remaining questions, he asked VTrans to come and discuss the project again, especially how the trail is impacted at the next Board Meeting on May 22. Further discussion ensued that the Town was concerned with the trail location as it has a significant impact on the attractiveness and safety of the trail. Michael Martin commented that he understood that the relocation was only temporary during the construction permanent not that it would be a permanent change. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that Chris Merrill and Jim Fog also asked about them relocating the trail closer to the river so it's not going across particularly the exit lane from the interstate to Route 5 and 11 because if they come off that exit

lane and there are pedestrians or bikes going across at the bottom of them it is not a safe situation. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that he believes the Planning Commission shares that concern also.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that the water project along Clinton Street is moving along. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added there was one issue where a valve opened caused a problem at the correctional facility and this was discussed at the monthly project meeting and the hope is the situation will not reoccur. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added they opened a valve too quickly and shut it too quickly and that caused the hammer with a fast rush of water, that did damage at the correctional facility. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued that they have talked about where the issue was and how to prevent it going forward, which is of course opening the valve very slowly and closing it very slowly. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further discussed they've been going fairly quickly until this week, now they're getting close to the area where the contamination is and that is slowing down their process quite a bit.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus announced that the Town is losing a very valuable employee, Rick chambers Superintendent of Water and Wastewater has given his notice, and this is his last week. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that Rick Chambers has done wonderful work for the Town for over 25 years, he's been through the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade and multiple water projects. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that Rick Chambers will be greatly missed. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued that the Town of Cavendish announced that Rick Chambers is their new Town Manager

Town Manager Jeff Mobus announced that the fourth quarter taxes are due May 15, and they need to be received by May 15. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added this is the fourth quarter so not only are unpaid taxes subject to a 1% interest charge, but they are subject to an 8% penalty under State Law for delinquent taxes. Town Manager Jeff Mobus urged people to pay as much of their taxes as they could by May to save themselves a large interest rate or in penalty charge.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that he received a letter back from the owner of 84 Valley Street contesting the demolition order on his property. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that because voluntary compliance is always better, he told the owner that the Board would hear his concerns at the next meeting. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that he wanted to make sure the Board knew that the letter was returned after the 10 days that that is required by law, noting that it doesn't mean they can't listen to him, but it also means that the Board doesn't have to grant him anything.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that on Friday, he received notification that the Vermont Supreme Court denied the appeal of Steve Neratko for wrongful termination as Town Manager. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added Mr. Neratko still has 14 days to file for re-argument.

Chair Kristi Morris discussed that he and his wife were walking on the Toonerville Trail Sunday morning and just below where the production has started there was what appeared to be a small water leak, the water looked to be coming up through the middle of the pavement. Chair Kristi Morris noted that it had rained the previous day, so it is possible it was just seepage or drainage. Chair Kristi Morris added it's just a little bit beyond where they started between there and Severs Brook Road. Further discussion ensued that the seepage was coming through the tar and the Town Manager would have it looked at.

G. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM PROPOSALS

Chair Kristi Morris noted the Main Street light issue will be brought up again as a future agenda item at some point.

Crissy Webster noted she requested an updated budget versus actual for the next meeting.

Chair Kristi Morris noted they have a Strategic Planning Session coming up next Monday, May 15, 2023. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added he would like to start at six o'clock at the Selectboard Hall.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

No committee reports and announcements at the time of the meeting.

I. OTHER MINUTES & CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Morris read aloud the list of Other Minutes and Correspondence and noted these are all available online.

1. Springfield Cemetery Commission – Minutes of May 3, 2023
2. Springfield Development Review Board – Minutes of April 11, 2023
3. Springfield Housing Authority – Minutes of April 11, 2023
4. Springfield Inclusion Committee – Minutes of April 24, 2023
5. Springfield Planning Commission – Minutes of April 5, 2023
6. Springfield Senior Center – May 2023 newsletter
7. Springfield Town Library – Director's report for April 2023
8. Springfield Town Library – Northeastern Roofing Consultants pre-bid notes – May 4, 2023
9. Springfield Town Library – Strategic Planning Subcommittee – Minutes of April 26, 2023
10. Springfield Trails & Rural Economy Advisory Committee – Minutes of April 20, 2023

J. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Jessica Martin Springfield on the Move Director gave a shout out to the Springfield on the Move volunteers who showed up for Greenup Day on Saturday. Jessica Martin added they picked up two bags of trash out of the park and weeded and mulched. Jessica Martin further added they had 13 volunteers spend about three hours there, noting it was great and she believes that the park once it gets mowed is going to look fantastic. Chair Kristi Morris added that Michael Martin also participated in the Greenup Day and believed he was in the Coop Plaza.

Jessica Martin Springfield on the Move Director announced on May 19 the Belonging Day that the Springfield School District teachers, parents, and kids are going to be having in the park and it will be their first event in the Comtu Cascade Park for this season.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus commented that in addition to the SOM volunteers in downtown, Kelly Stettner's BRAT (Black River Action Team) group of volunteers and a couple others met behind the plaza and dealt with, again that problematic area behind the plaza and going up the bank to Pine Street. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added they couldn't do as much as they would have liked with the high water, but they still were able to fill up the container well. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that he would also like to thank the Trails Committee, Jim Fog, for

working on the Bryant Forest off Route 5, noting he believed they got a whole dump truck body worth of stuff to out of that for us.

Wes Marshall of SAPA TV commented that the progress on Mineral Street is progressing well, they've got it dug up from the last house all the way down to the bus stop and filled with gravel and formed up and ready to pour concrete pretty soon. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added there is a stop on that project because the granite curbing came and it was 14 inches, not 18 inches, so it's going to take three weeks to get the 18-inch curbing.

Wes Marshall of SAPA TV announced the passing of Frank Kendall, from the antique barn over in Chester, noting that he passed away last week and was a very prominent member of the area.

L. ADJOURN

MOTION: Crissy Webster moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Walter Martone as being absent.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie M. Kellow, Recording Secretary