

**TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD
SELECTBOARD HALL – 96 MAIN STREET – THIRD FLOOR
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
MONDAY, November 27, 2023**

APPROVED MINUTES

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

Chair, Kristi Morris, called the meeting to order at 6:53 pm. Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and Roll Call was taken.

Selectboard Members: Chair Kristi Morris, Vice Chair Michael Martin, Everett Hammond, and Walter Martone were present in-person.

Administration: Town Manager Jeff Mobus, Town Clerk Barbara Courchesne, Fire Chief Paul Stagner, Deputy Fire Chief John Clafin, and Public Works Director Jeff Strong were present in-person. Operations Supervisor Don Turner and Library Director Sue Dowdell joined via Zoom.

Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Members: Doug Johnston, Heather Frahm, Scott Richardson, and John Bond were present in-person. Jim Fog, Tara Chase, and Tre Ayer were present via Zoom.

School Board Liaison: Steve Karaffa was not in attendance

B. MINUTES

1. Regular Selectboard Meeting – November 13, 2023

MOTION: Walter Martone moved to approve the minutes of the regular Selectboard meeting of November 13, 2023, as printed, and distributed with revisions.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Walter Martone requested correction on page one, “...Matt ~~Preistley~~ **Priestley**...”and correction on page 9 in the last full paragraph, “Further

discussion ensued that the Cemetery Trust Fund has \$850,000 total with \$250,000 of spendable funds and ~~\$650,000~~ \$600,000...”.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

C. ANY REQUESTED ADDITIONS TO THIS AGENDA

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

D. NEW BUSINESS

ITEM #1 Act on request to waive interest on revolving loan.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Act on request to waive interest on revolving loan” item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that prior to the tax sale, Stone Cutters 802, LLC received a loan from the Town's Revolving Loan Fund in the amount of \$30,000 for the purpose of providing funding for revitalization projects in Springfield, which may include acquisition of real estate. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued that the timing of the loan allowed Stone Cutters 802, LLC to possibly participate in the tax sale in September, but the group did not purchase any properties at the tax sale and has returned the \$30,000. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that they have requested that the Town consider waiving the interest that accrued on the loan (roughly \$250) as the funds were not used and have been returned.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to waive the interest on a \$30,000 loan to Stonecutters 802, LLC, which was subsequently returned therefore the interest is still pending.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Walter Martone recused himself because he was a party to Stonecutters 802, LLC. Doug Johnston in-person inquired how long the loan was provided. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded it was for less than 2 months, noting it was just the termination of the funds and how best to do it.

Vote: 3-0, 1 recused, Affirmative, recognizing Walter Martone recused.

ITEM #2 Act on excavator bids.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Act on excavator bids” item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that the capital plan for public works includes the purchase of an excavator in the current fiscal year with an expected cost of \$360,000. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that this is a new machine for the Town and will allow the Town to perform many jobs that it currently contracts out, such as ditching, structure repair and replacement, and emergency water repairs. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that the Town posted the RFP on October 30 and reached out to the usual vendors and the Town only received two quotes, both from Milton Cat. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued that the recommendation is that the Town accept the bid from Milton Cat for a 2023 M318 at a price of \$340,000, noting that the machine is currently available.

Public Works Director Jeff Strong discussed that he knows there are concerns that they will have the manpower to run this machine, but he assures that they will have the manpower for this machine and the purchase of this excavator moves the department ahead. Public Works Director Jeff Strong noted that they had a wheeled excavator quite some time ago and believed it was not replaced due to budget constraints at that time and was replaced with a backhoe. Public Works Director Jeff Strong added that the backhoe is not really practical sometimes, an excavator will allow them to work in one lane of traffic with one lane still open where the backhoe sits sideways across the road.

Further discussion ensued that the 2023 model was chosen over the 2024 model, due to availability. Donny Turner Public Works Operation Supervisor discussed that the models are just about the same machine, the date of delivery would be in the spring for the 2024 model as opposed to 2-3 weeks for the 2023 model.

Everett Hammond commented that they recently hired a person that ran a similar piece of equipment for the State, and he inquired if this person would be comfortable running this machine on backroads vs the State roads. Public

Works Director Jeff Strong responded that he did not have any concerns about that.

Walter Martone inquired if this equipment purchase would help us avoid having to contract work out and if it could be expected that we would be saving \$17,000 a year on outside contracts. Public Works Director Jeff Strong responded that we would save a lot on outside contracts with this machine, noting that some of the outside contracting is done through grant in aid projects for Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). Public Works Director Jeff Strong continued that we could do a lot more miles with this machine. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that we have 862 culverts connected with ditches and we have a lot of work that needs to be done to maintain our MRGP and our grant in aid money we receive each year will not allow us to use grant money entirely to maintain that permit.

Further discussion ensued that this was a wheeled excavator, so it did not need to be trailered around and did not need someone with a Commercial Driver's License Class A.

John Bond commented that there may be opportunities for us to be hired outside the town, and he inquired if there was anything that would prohibit us from doing that to get extra revenue. Public Works Director Jeff Strong responded that we did assist Ludlow and Cavendish during the last flood, but we have enough to do in Town currently. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that Chester did reimburse our Town for the assistance we provided during the last flood.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to accept the bid from Milton Cat for the 2023 M318 wheeled excavator for the price of \$340,000.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Chair Kristi Morris noted that there is a capital equipment purchasing plan, so the money is currently available for the purchase of this equipment.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

Chair Kristi Morris commented that he did see the backhoe attempting to re-ditch Fairground Road and it appeared cumbersome, noting hopefully this equipment will be more efficient.

ITEM #3 Act on board and commission resignations.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Act on board and commission resignations” item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that the Town has received two resignations, one from Ginamarie Russell from the Planning Commission due to work pressures and he asks that the Board accept Ginamarie Russell's resignation with regret.

MOTION: Everett Hammond moved to accept the resignation of Ginamarie Russell from the Planning Commission with regret.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that the Town has also received a resignation from Crissy Webster from the Selectboard due to personal and work commitments and he asks that the Board accept Crissy's resignation with regret. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued that per the Town Charter, when a vacancy occurs on the Selectboard, the vacancy is filled by vote of the remaining board members. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that any residents of Springfield who wish to be considered for the Selectboard should contact either the Chair, Kristi Morris, or himself, noting that he has received three official letters of interest already. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that the Town is in the middle of the budget process, and it is highly desirable that this vacancy be filled quickly.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that the term of this appointment will be until Town Meeting in March and at that time, the town will vote on who will fill the remainder of the term, which ends in March 2025. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that there are two Board members, Walter Martone and Everett

Hammond, whose three-year terms expire at Town Meeting this year and the Town will be voting for three positions, 2 three-year terms and 1 one-year term at Town Meeting. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that Walter Martone has already expressed that he will not be running again.

MOTION: Everett Hammond moved to accept the resignation from Crissy Webster from the Selectboard with regret.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Chair Kristi Morris noted that this resignation would be effective immediately.

Further discussion ensued to clarify that appointments for elected positions are only until the next Town Meeting at which time they must run to be elected by the Town. Additional discussion ensued that there is a list of open elected positions on the Town's website.

Walter Martone congratulated Crissy Webster on her business's success, which is causing them to lose her.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

ITEM #4 Act on board and commission appointments.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the "Act on board and commission appointments" item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that the Town has received applications for two vacant positions, one for the Airport Commission and one for the Downtown Design Commission.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that Kurt Staudter has applied to be appointed to the Airport Commission. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that due to the unfortunate passing of a commissioner, there is a vacancy for a term that ends March 2024, and he recommends that the Board appoint Kurt Staudter to fill this term.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to approve the appointment of Kurt Staudter to the Airport Commission with a term expiring March 2024.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that Bill Cronin has applied to be appointed to the Downtown Design Commission. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that he and the Planning and Zoning Administrator Chuck Wise recommend that the Board appoint Bill Cronin to fill this term.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to approve the appointment of Bill Cronin to the Downtown Development Review Commission.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Further discussion ensued to clarify that Bill Cronin's appointment would be for a three-year term.

Michael Martin commented that Bill Cronin applied for the vacant position as an alternate on the Development Review Board and was an excellent candidate for that position, unfortunately there was only one vacant position, and they chose a different candidate. Michael Martin expressed gratitude that Bill Cronin was willing to continue to pursue service to the Town.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that with Ginamarie Russell resigning from the Planning Commission there is now a vacant position on the Planning Commission, noting that interested parties to serve on that commission should reach out to him.

Further discussion ensued to confirm that the Downtown Design Review Commission had full membership with three members: Bonny Andrews, term expires 2025; Amanda Lamkins, term expires 2024; and Bill Cronin, term expires 2026.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed I have received a request from Planning and Zoning Administrator Chuck Wise for the Board to consider appointing Joe

Wilson (currently an alternate) as a full member of the Development Review Board (DRB). Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that he would be replacing Britton Herring, whose term expires March 31, 2024. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued that Britton Herring would like to remain as the alternate on the Development Review Board. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that Britton Herring requested becoming alternate due to work constraints.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to appoint Joe Wilson as full member of the Development Review Board in Britton Herring’s position and appoint Britton Herring as the alternate member of the Development Review Board.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Further discussion ensued regarding Britton Herring’s availability to serve as an alternate, not being an issue.

Chair Kristi Morris commented that Britton Herring is not resigning as the DRB members are swapping positions, and he questioned if procedurally they should open the position. Further discussion ensued that Joe Wilson would be filling the term of Britton Herring which expires in 2024.

Carrie Kellow via Zoom commented that she understood that because the DRB was doing “On the record”, Joe Wilson was more experienced with these procedures, so she believed the swap was to have a more experienced person help guide the DRB through the initial process of “On the record” hearings.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

ITEM #5 Act on proposed ambulance rates

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Act on proposed ambulance rates” item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that the meeting packet included a memo from Fire Chief Paul Stagner. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that the Ambulance billing rates have not been adjusted since March 2019 and in the memo, Chief Stagner provides a new rate schedule that he is recommending that the Board adopt as of January 1, 2024.

Fire Chief Paul Stagner discussed that the large increase in the proposed schedule was due to the rates not being adjusted for an extended period of time. Fire Chief Paul Stagner compared these rates to other services locally and these are still a little lower than some of the other local services. Fire Chief Paul Stagner continued that the insurance companies are the ones mostly affected by this.

MOTION: Everett Hammond moved to accept the rates as presented by Chief Stagner on his 11/20/2023 Ambulance Billing Rates schedule.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Walter Martone inquired if these new rates would be in line with the allowable rates under Medicare and Medicaid. Fire Chief Paul Stagner responded that Medicare and Medicaid do not dictate what we are allowed to charge, but they will only pay so much. Fire Chief Paul Stagner continued that he based these rates off of the rates of Hartford and Windsor. Further discussion ensued to clarify that Medicare and Medicaid pay set amounts for services, the remaining balance of bills not paid by Medicare would follow their normal billing processes and bills paid by Medicaid would not have a remaining balance as Medicaid does not allow for further billing.

Everett Hammond inquired if there was a projection for the increased revenue with these fees. Fire Chief Paul Stagner responded that they are currently working with Finance on a model to compare last year's calls with the new rates. Further discussion ensued that the preliminary percentage of calls made/patients served last year were: 47.6% Primary Medicare; 16% Primary Medicaid; and the rest on private or supplementary insurance.

Doug Johnston inquired about calls to other Town's requesting services. Fire Chief Paul Stagner responded that we have set fees for costs of services that we charge other towns and if we provide that service to another town and the patient gets transported, we get a set fee from that town for the service and additionally the patient is billed.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

ITEM #6 Appoint Investment Committee members.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the “Appoint Investment Committee members” item included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that the Town of Springfield received a payment of \$3 Million from the State of Vermont as a part of the Correctional Facility Agreement. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that the Town voted to use \$2.7 Million as an endowment, with the proceeds to benefit what is now the Edgar May Recreation Center. Town Manager Jeff Mobus continued that the Town and the recreation center entered into an agreement that creates an Investment Committee to oversee the fund and to consist of 2 members chosen by the Rec Center, 2 members chosen by the Town, and a fifth member chosen by the other 4 members on a unanimous basis. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that this committee has been inactive for several years and Christian Craig has reached out to him about reconstituting the committee. Town Manager Jeff Mobus commented that he believes it is important that the Town keeps agreements.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed that the Edgar May has named their two members as Ken Walker and Rick Bibens and he is requesting that the Board appoint Steve Ankuda and himself as the two Town members of the committee.

MOTION: Walter Martone moved to appoint Steve Ankuda and Town Manager Jeff Mobus as members of the Investment Committee.

Seconded by: Michael Martin

Further discussion ensued that the former members of Investment Committee appointed by the Town were Steve Ankuda and Bob Forguites and the last activity of the committee was believed to be in 2014.

Further discussion ensued that this money was funds that were dedicated towards the Edgar May Health and Recreational Center, and they can receive the interest and dividends even if the fund goes below \$2.7 Million and they can receive unearned income if it goes above \$2.7 Million. Additional discussion ensued that the Town received these funds, and the voters approved the plan to create the endowment.

Town Clerk Barbara Courchesne noted that Edgar May always provides us with a Treasurer report that gets included in the Town Report.

Further discussion ensued that a portion of the funding (\$300,000) went to improve Riverside Park and was expended approximately 15 years ago.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

E. FINANCIAL REPORTS

FY2024 Warrants to November 22, 2023 – copies on website.

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

F. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM PROPOSALS

Chair Kristi Morris mentioned that he had requested an update on some of the properties that we have, and they are in process and some action should be visible.

Walter Martone inquired if the minutes for the Budget Workshop of November 13, 2023, would be a future agenda item. Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed.

G. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

H. OTHER MINUTES & CORRESPONDENCE

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

1. Greeley Road closure notice – Winter 2023-Summer 2024

2. Springfield Conservation Committee – Minutes of November 4, 2023
3. Springfield on The Move – Minutes of October 19, 2023
4. Springfield on The Move – Non-Discrimination Policy
5. Springfield Senior Center – December 2023 newsletter
6. Springfield Town Library – December 2023 events calendar
7. Springfield Town Library Trustees – Minutes of November 14, 2023

I. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

No citizens' comments at the time of the meeting.

J. EXECUTIVE SESSION

In accordance with V.S.A. Section 313 (a)(3), the purpose of this executive session is to discuss the appointment, employment, or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that a public body must make the final hiring or appointment decision, and explain its reasons for the decision, in open session.

MOTION: Walter Martone moved to move into Executive Session.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

The Board moved to Executive Session at 7:55 pm, with no action anticipated.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:01 pm, no action was taken.

K. ADJOURN

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Vote: 4-0, unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie M. Kellow, Recording Secretary