

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

APPROVED MINUTES

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

Chair, Kristi Morris, called the meeting to order at 7:02 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. Crissy Webster was not in attendance.

Administration: Town Manager Jeff Mobus, Planning & Zoning Administrator Chuck Wise, and Fire Chief Paul Stagner were present in-person. Library Director Sue Dowdell joined via Zoom.

School Board Liaison: Steve Karaffa was not in attendance

B. MINUTES

1. Regular Selectboard Meeting – February 13, 2023

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to accept the Regular Selectboard Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2023 as printed and distributed with revisions.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Walter Martone requested a correction on page 5 at the very bottom the last sentence says, “Town Manager Jeff Mobus says he has been consistent in talks about Seavers Brook Road...” to change that to “**Town Manager Jeff Mobus added we don’t want to begin work on this project until after the watermain is replaced**” and skip down to “**as he doesn’t want to be digging into newly paved roads**”. Walter Martone requested an additional correction on page 17 in item #7 the motion be corrected because we were not applying for a community development block grant as what we were actually doing was “**Michael Martin moved to authorize the Town to approve and sign the Community Development Block Grant resolution to receive \$525,000 for the HVAC system**”, noting this correction was to make it clear we had already gone through the application process and now we are adopting a resolution.

Everett Hammond requested a correction at the bottom of page 3 in the second line up “Everett Hammond inquired if regarding Clinton Street when turning onto Bridge Street...”, noting he was talking about turning to the bridge. Everett Hammond added it does clarify it on the top of the next page though.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

Walter Martone noted a correction on the agenda the year should be 2023 and requested that it be changed for the postings.

C. ANY REQUESTED ADDITIONS TO THIS AGENDA

Town Manager Jeff Mobus requested the addition of an Executive Session after the Citizen's Comments. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted the reason for the Executive Session was to discuss the negotiation or securing of Real Estate purchase options subsequent 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)2, noting there will be no action afterwards.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus requested the addition of a resignation of Library Trustee member to Item #1.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus requested the deletion of Item #8, noting the possible action will not occur tonight and would be in two weeks.

D. NEW BUSINESS

ITEM #1 Act on Deputy Health Office resignation and recommendation

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Act on Deputy Health Office resignation and recommendation included in the meeting packet.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to accept the resignation of the Fire Chief Paul Stagner as the Deputy Health Officer and Deputy Chief John Clafin to be appointed to Deputy Health Officer and authorize Kristi Morris the Selectboard Chair to sign the recommendation for the Deputy Health Officer.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Library Trustee Resignation from Anna Boarini, this item was added to the agenda at the time of the meeting and not included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that Anna Boarini is resigning effective immediately due to moving out of Town.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to accept the resignation of Anna Boarini from the Library Board of Trustees with regrets.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that this does leave us with a vacancy in the Library Board of Trustees and he believes there is one other vacancy as well. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that if anyone is interested in serving as a Library Trustee to reach out to either Sue Dowdell the Library Director or himself.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

ITEM #2 Event Permit – Rabies Clinic

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Event Permit – Rabies Clinic included in the meeting packet.

MOTION: Everett Hammond moved to approve the event permit on behalf of Vermont Volunteer Services for Animals for a rabies clinic to be held on March 25, 2023, at Riverside Middle School parking lot from 11:00 am – 12:30 pm.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Chair Kristi Morris noted that they have held this event in this location in previous years, have the necessary certificate of liability insurance, and Chief Burnham has also approved this.

Sue Skaskiw via Zoom added this is the third year and it is really needed. Sue Skaskiw added if you go to an office to have rabies vaccination you have to pay for the cost of an office visit, noting they have kept it at \$13.00 for several years. Sue Skaskiw described the event as a drive-up and poke. Sue Skaskiw noted they almost have enough volunteers, but believed they could get a couple more by the event.

Chair Kristi Morris inquired how they were getting word out to people about this event. Sue Skaskiw responded there will be some signs going up around Springfield, noting that people are doing Facebook. Chair Kristi Morris noted that if she has an ad or a message on Facebook to share it. Further discussion ensued regarding the application for participants of the event and if possible, participants could have it filled out ahead of time to save time at the event.

Everett Hammond inquired if it was for just Springfield. Sue Skaskiw responded it is open for anyone that includes New Hampshire.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

ITEM #3 Update on grant for 43 Park Street

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the update on grant for 43 Park Street included in the meeting packet. Chief Paul Stagner noted he had not been in touch with the Kingsburys about being pre-awarded this grant. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added they wanted to make sure the Town was aware of the ramifications, particularly because it has to remain green space in perpetuity so we cannot pave it and he noted that there are about 14 different restrictions. Fire Chief Paul Stagner added that a walking or bike path along with some benches could be done, nothing can be paved or permanent on that space.

Walter Martone inquired how big the property was. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded it was $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre. Walter Martone noted that would be a decent sized pocket park and would be a really nice opportunity for people at BRIC. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added he wanted to make sure the Board was okay with the covenants that would come with this grant. Fire Chief Paul Stagner added that if we do take advantage of this grant it does include purchasing the house from the Kingsburys so they get what they deserve out of all of this and it also pays for the complete demolition of the structures there, getting rid of everything, the asbestos abatement, anything to do with the demolition of this property this grant will cover. Fire Chief Paul Stagner further added if the demolition goes beyond the \$115,000, there is a very easy process to add whatever is required to make this a done deal as far as demolition and securing that property.

Fire Chief Paul Stagner discussed they are also going to do whatever is needed to restore the bank, so it does not erode into the river, that is the primary function of this Flood Resilient Communities Fund. Fire Chief Paul Stagner added the only reason this property was accepted in this grant is because it is falling into the river. Fire Chief Paul Stagner further added it is Vermont Emergency Management and is not a FEMA grant. Fire Chief Paul Stagner noted he believes this is the best possible solution for everyone involved.

Further discussion ensued regarding if an action was needed on this item and was determined that they would need to as we will end up with title and it is a land transaction at that point.

Everett Hammond noted he wanted to make sure of those conditions to make sure there isn't something there that we would regret later down the road. Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed that he would get the list to the Board of the strict covenants that would be applied. Everett Hammond inquired if there was a covenant that they didn't like if it could be tweaked. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded they were pretty adamant about the covenants. Fire Chief Paul

Stagner confirmed that and added it can be a nature space, walking path or something along those lines, but in perpetuity that was it. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted it obviously would not be able to be sold in the future.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed the property would come of the tax rolls, as well noting he believed the house was valued at \$44,000 for the assessed value. Fire Chief Paul Stagner added they (the Kingsburys) are going to get 30% more than what it was appraised for, noting the total cost the last time it was appraised was \$57,460.00 but it will be appraised again as part of this process. Fire Chief Paul Stagner added they will appraise it again from a contracted appraiser who will then provide a new amount that the grant will cover.

Further discussion ensued that they will have further action on this in the future and that it should be clearly noticed on an agenda that we would be taking title.

Michael Martin inquired where the amount for the Demolition and Final Site Work came from. Fire Chief Paul Stagner responded that was an estimate that he had provided to the State, but we do not have a firm quote. Further discussion ensued regarding page 2 where it discussed if additional funding is required the sub applicant (the Town) must request and obtain approval if approved a new pre-award letter would be issued and they will initiate an amendment.

Michael Martin noted we don't have a firm price on this and the Kingsburys aren't aware of this at this point and they are being offered through this letter a total purchase price of \$57,460.00. Fire Chief Paul Stagner responded the Kingsburys are aware that he had applied for this grant as a possible solution. Fire Chief Paul Stagner added that they (the Kingsburys) had the property listed with a realtor for a while and he negotiated with the realtor that they would be able to get out of the sales agreement with the realtor. Fire Chief Paul Stagner discussed the budget for this grant itself is designed to be extremely flexible to make sure all the costs are covered.

Discussion ensued that this was a pre-award notification and as we go forward to do this there would be more solid information.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to acknowledge the receipt of the pre-award agreement and for the Town Manager and Fire Chief to proceed with the next steps.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

Chair Kristi Morris noted that they still have the order for the unsafe building and if they don't take that route we have to fall back on that action. Michael Martin added that they would need to renew this if the work was not done by April 1st. Fire Chief Paul Stagner added it will be about three months before they will get the check to the Kingsburys and 8 months to 1 year for the demolition to start.

ITEM #4 Discuss properties damaged by fire.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the discussion on properties damaged by fire included in the meeting packet noting that Fire Chief Paul Stagner and Planning and Zoning Administrator Charles Wise were present. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that Chief Stagner had taken a look at all four properties, and they are asking that three of them be declared unsafe and dangerous. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that Chief Stagner had also spoken with the owners of the fourth property and understands there is a process in place for that one. Fire Chief Paul Stagner noted he attempted to reach out to all the property owners.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus commented that if the Board agrees that these properties are unsafe or dangerous, he asked the Board to appoint a committee consisting of Paul Stagner as the Fire Chief, John Clafin as the Deputy Health Officer,

and Todd Heninger as the Structural Engineer for the purpose of evaluate whether or not further action needs to be taken by the Board.

Walter Martone inquired why 25 Union Street was not included. Fire Chief Paul Stagner responded it is the most recent fire that happened this past July, and he has spoken with the property owner, who is current on their property taxes and water and sewer, they have properly secured the building to make sure no one can get in and harm themselves, there is no threat around the structure of there being an unsafe situation, and she does have plans to sell the property. Fire Chief Paul Stagner added that he believed she had done everything appropriate that they would want someone to take after a fire and the structure itself does not fall under the unsafe building ordinance.

Walter Martone inquired how long a neighborhood has to deal with a burnt out house, adding that she came to the Board of Civil Authority requesting full abatement of the taxes for the entire assessed value of the house stating it was a total tear down and could not be repaired. Walter Martone noted they had secured it however they still clearly violate the vacant building ordinance. Walter Martone inquired if we should be going after them for the vacant building ordinance then if he (Fire Chief Paul Stagner) doesn't think that it is a dangerous building. Further discussion ensued regarding the length of time that some neighborhoods have had to deal with fire damaged houses in the past.

Walter Martone commented we should not consider it acceptable for people just sitting on these buildings and not doing anything with them. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added he suggested for Fire Chief Paul Stagner to look at it under the ordinance, adding that he would get together with Fire Chief Paul Stagner and Planning and Zoning Administrator Chuck Wise and come back at the next meeting with the process they will take with this building so it's not going on for years.

Fire Chief Paul Stagner noted that he has a list that was created in 2016 of about 13 buildings that would fall under Walter Martone's description, noting he believes if we are going after one we should go after them all.

MOTION: Chair Kristi Morris moved to put together an inspection committee consisting of Chief Paul Stagner, Deputy Health Officer John Claflin, and Structural Engineer Todd Heninger to review 84 Valley Street, 31 Pearl Street, and 316 South Street, for violation of the dangerous or unsafe building or structure ordinance.

Seconded by: Michael Martin

Michael Martin added the purpose of the committee is to prepare a report with recommendations for each of the properties.

Walter Martone added that he would like to amend the motion that they would hear back at the next meeting about 25 Union Street. Chair Kristi Morris responded that the motion was specific to an inspection committee for the purposes of the three other burned structures. Further discussion ensued that this should be a separate motion.

Walter Martone inquired if we have to also schedule a special meeting to receive the report. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded that we do not know the availability of Todd Heninger and he would hold the appointment to make sure that his schedule is clear. Chair Kristi Morris agreed and added that was a good point as according to the ordinance we have to have a special meeting for that and we would have to warn for that.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

MOTION: Walter Martone moved to have the Town Manager report back to the Board at the next regular meeting on 25 Union Street, with recommendations on how to move forward with further review of 25 Union Street and potentially 13 other properties that the Chief mentioned, under possibly the unsafe ordinance or vacant building or other ordinances.

Seconded by: Michael Martin

Lori Claffee via Zoom, commented that 25 Union Street property there has been a crib and a few tires sitting out ever since the fire in front of the house and is clearly part of the cleanup from the fire. Lori Claffee added the owner said at the Board of Abatement hearing that the insurance company had declared it a total loss. Lori Claffee further added at the very least there is an ordinance about having trash outside for 7 months.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

ITEM #5 Sign Flag Policy.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Sign Flag Policy included in the meeting packet noting that he has already sent this policy out to all of the departments. Chair Kristi Morris added that they had already approved this previously and just needed to sign the policy.

ITEM #6 Act on Resolution naming MARC as Grant Administrator.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Act on Resolution naming MARC as Grant Administrator.

MOTION: Walter Martone moved that the Selectboard approve the Resolution to Designate A Public Agency Form PM-4 designating the Mount Ascutney Regional Commission (MARC) to act as the grant administrator for the \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant that was awarded for improvements to the 60 Park Street also known as the BRIC building.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Michael Martin noted there is a fee associated with being a grant administrator. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded that the grant pays for that.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

ITEM #7 Covid update

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Covid update included in the meeting packet.

ITEM #8 Possible action on Library Union Contract

This item was removed at the time of the meeting.

E. FINANCIAL REPORTS

FY2023 Warrants to February 19, 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. MANAGER’S REPORT

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Manager’s Report, this item was not included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus announced that next Monday night starting at 7 pm is the Town Informational Meeting. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added the Town and School District will present information on the Town Budget, School Budget, the Town Bond request for the water project, and all of the appropriations. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added this will be at the High School in the cafeteria and will be broadcast live on SAPA TV. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted if people wanted to early vote to come by the Town Clerk and if there were any questions about the budget or the water bond article to contact his office.

G. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM PROPOSALS

Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that they will have an agenda item at the next meeting on unposted roads. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added there will be a future agenda item about increasing Transfer Station fees with neighboring Town’s increasing their fees and the reduced recycling fees we are receiving this year, noting he will come back to the Board with a Transfer Station evaluation and what needs to be done to make that break even. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that we will have to start charging for food composting drop-off because we do pay to have that taken away. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that neighboring Towns are doing that and there is a fee to it, and we have been covering it with what we call the old bottle money but that’s not long term sustainable.

Chair Kristi Morris inquired if the fees at the transfer station cover the Hazardous Household Waste collection. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded it does not and the Hazardous Household Waste no longer happens at the Transfer Station, noting that last year the Southern Windsor & Windham County Solid Waste District received a grant and setup Household Hazardous Waste Collection at ALVA Waste down by the toll bridge and there were 53 days of collection. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted you just have to make an appointment through the Solid Waste District. Chair Kristi Morris commented in his committee this past week they heard testimony that the Agency of Agriculture who funds the Hazardous Household Waste Collection through the pesticide fees had been underfunding that effort and there were going to be some adjustments made to that.

Further discussion ensued that MARC has a link to this waste district on their website and they are not doing collections until May.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Walter Martone announced the Declaration of Inclusion Committee was working on another housing event. Walter Martone added that this event will basically to get some community involvement and generate interest in working towards building new housing in Springfield, working on housing equity issues, and one of the things they particularly want to get interest developed on is the one item we have on the Selectboard’s Strategic Plan to develop housing on Valley Street.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus comment the STARE (Springfield Trails and Rural Economy) Committee met last week and they had been working with the past 2-3 weeks on another grant. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted the group is fantastic and trying to find ways to enhance our trails without hitting the immediate taxpayer budget. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that with their efforts we are applying for another grant to address the marshlands of Hartness Park.

Library Director Sue Dowdell via Zoom commented that the library is collaborating with the Rotary in Town and are collecting soft plastic. Library Director Sue Dowdell added they have given 40 pounds so far of the soft plastic to Rotary and the Town will be getting a bench when we collect 500 plus pounds. Chair Kristi Morris inquired if those materials could be dropped off at the library. Library Director Sue Dowdell confirmed. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that we are also trying to setup an alternative location at the Transfer Station, but we have to negotiate space and figure out how to do that. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that we can do one outdoor bench every 6 months.

I. OTHER MINUTES & CORRESPONDENCE

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

1. Airport Commission – Minutes of January 26, 2023
2. Springfield On The Move – Minutes of January 19, 2023
3. Springfield Town Library Strategic Planning Subcommittee – Minutes of February 21, 2023
4. Springfield Town Library Trustees – Minutes of February 14, 2023
5. Vermont Journal/Shopper – Proposal of February 2, 2023, as Paper of Record

J. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Doug Johnston via Zoom inquired what the results were with the issue with the Meals on Wheels and what became of that as far as guidance goes from the legal aspect of that. Chair Kristi Morris noted they considered discussing that this evening but there was some further additional information that was forthcoming. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded he spoke with the Town Attorney and he said if the entity remains in existence that they would be entitled to request that money whether or not they provided the services. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added there are certainly plans to continue the services and there are different ways of approaching that so at this point we are hoping there is a solution that would allow us to continue supporting that appropriation. Doug Johnston inquired what enforcement action would be taken if they don't stick to what has been written on the ballot. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded the only enforcement action he is aware of is to reach out to the Secretary of State and have their status as a charity reviewed.

Further discussion ensued to clarify the process of the special appropriations.

Chair Kristi Morris expressed thanks to Wes Marshall of SAPA TV for providing this service to the citizens.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION (this item was added at the time of the meeting)

Under the provision of 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)2, the purpose of this executive session is to discuss the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase options. Town Manager Mobus is invited.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted it was two separate properties and no actions expected following Executive Session.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to move into Executive Session.

Seconded by: Walter Martone

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

The Board moved into Executive Session at 8:30 pm, no action is expected to come from this session.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 9:07 pm, no action was taken.

L. ADJOURN

MOTION: Walter Martone moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: Chair Kristi Morris

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Crissy Webster as being absent.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie M. Kellow, Recording Secretary