

**TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD
SELECTBOARD HALL – 96 MAIN STREET – THIRD FLOOR
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
MONDAY, January 9, 2023**

APPROVED MINUTES

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

Chair, Kristi Morris, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and Roll Call was taken.

Selectboard Members: Chair Kristi Morris, Vice Chair Michael Martin, Everett Hammond, and Crissy Webster were present in-person. Walter Martone was not in attendance.

Administration: Town Manager Jeff Mobus and Town Clerk Barbara Courchesne were present in-person. Water/Wastewater Superintendent Rick Chambers and Library Director Sue Dowdell joined via Zoom.

Budget Advisory Committee: Chair Jim Fog, Corky Bond, Doug Johnston, and Scott Richardson were present in-person. Tre Ayer and Tara Chase were present via Zoom.

School Board Liaison: Steve Karaffa was not in attendance

B. MINUTES

1. Regular Selectboard Meeting – December 19, 2022
2. Budget Workshop Meeting – December 19, 2022

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to accept the two sets of minutes as printed and distributed with revisions.

Seconded by: Crissy Webster

Everett Hammond commented on page 6 of 9 just under seconded by Kristi Webster, toward the top in the paragraph that starts Chair Kristi Morris in the fourth line down, where it says, “ours would likely be slightly slimmer” and inquired if that was what was said. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded he believed it may be what he said, but it would be slightly more general so it would not have so many different things itemized out.

Michael Martin commented on page 7 of the same set of minutes, right in the middle there is a motion by Michael Martin to approve the Town Manager to put together the warrant article for a bond and it says it was seconded by Michael Martin and noted he was not sure if it was Walter Martone. Recording Secretary Carrie Kellow stated she would go back and correct that.

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

C. ANY REQUESTED ADDITIONS TO THIS AGENDA

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

D. NEW BUSINESS

ITEM #1 Inclusion Committee Appointment

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Inclusion Committee Appointment included in the meeting packet and noted that Daniel Bannan was present via Zoom.

MOTION: Everett Hammond moved to accept Daniel Bannan's appointment to the Inclusion Committee.

Seconded by: Crissy Webster

Daniel Bannan via Zoom stated he was comfortable accepting the nomination.

Vote: 4-0, unanimous, recognizing Everett Hammond as being absent.

ITEM #2 Mileage Certificate

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Mileage Certificate included in the meeting packet.

MOTION: Everett Hammond moved to approve the Board to sign the Mileage Certificate.

Seconded by: Michael Martin

Michael Martin inquired if they also got a letter from VTrans asking us if we will comply to State standards for construction and maintenance. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded that is another thing that will come closer to March and noted a financial report of some sort we have to complete also.

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

ITEM #3 Receive Budget Advisory Report; Possible Discussion

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Receive Budget Advisory Report; Possible Discussion included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus described that the Budget Advisory Committee had a technological glitch over weekend and were not able to finish the report. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted there is a work in progress that is nearly complete but the Committee themselves have not had a chance to all comment and create a final document, adding that he asked them to have a final document ready by Wednesday so he can get copies out to the Board for their review so they have time before the workshop on Monday and so we can get copies out on the website for the public to view also.

Chair Kristi Morris recognized this is not a Budget Workshop meeting and that is next Monday. BAC Chair Jim Fog in-person commented they feel confident that it is coming together and the substance of it is in place, noting they are working on final edits. BAC Chair Jim Fog added that a couple of members were not able to view the document as it was shared and so they do not feel comfortable voting on it under those circumstances.

Further discussion ensued regarding the workshop coming up on Monday night and the sooner the BAC report can get to the Board and the public the better.

ITEM #4 Water Bond Resolution and Declaration

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Water Bond Resolution and Declaration included in the meeting packet. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that the loan forgiveness is 50% up to \$1 million which is tied to a lot of lead remediation, so as we are doing the project, we have to be careful as some pieces that are not lead remediation do not qualify for that piece and that is why we have to be a little careful about the exact number.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus read the Declaration of Intent included in the meeting packet and noted that Town Clerk Barbara Courchesne was present in-person so that she certifies this is a full and true copy of the Declaration. Michael Martin inquired if the Resolution Certificate required Board approval as well. Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed that the Board has to approve both documents for the Town Clerk to sign.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to approve the Declaration of Official Intent for the Reimbursement of expenditures as outlined as well as the Resolution Certificate.

Further discussion ensued that the Resolution Certificate had not been read yet and that the Declaration and Certificate could be approved together. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that he did provide the Board with the estimates for the project in the meeting packet as well. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that the Resolution Certificate is the resolution of need, and it basically says that we need the bond to fund the project and we do not have resources without the bond to fund the project. Town Manager Jeff Mobus read the Resolution Certificate included in the meeting packet.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to approve both the Declaration of Official Intent and the Resolution Certificate.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Everett Hammond commented in the past he recalled some of these had a couple Public Hearings prior to the vote and wanted to make sure that had not changed. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded that there is a list they have to publish three weeks in a row in the local paper of record which is the Shopper and a timeframe from which that happens, so it will be published three successive weeks in February. Town Clerk Barbara Courchesne confirmed the dates as February 15th, February 22nd, and March 1st.

Everett Hammond asked to confirm that we are only having one meeting. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded that we would actually be having two meetings, noting we will have an informational meeting at a Selectboard meeting to get the word out because the legal informational meeting that is required by the bond cannot happen more than 10 days in advance of the vote. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that with people voting absentee and early they would have already voted without having any information so that is why we want to make sure we have an informal presentation on February 13th so the information gets out earlier and then we satisfy the requirement by also doing a presentation on March 6th when we have the informational meeting for the Town ballot.

Doug Johnston in-person commented he wanted to make sure that the Public realizes it is 0% for 40 years and emphasize that aspect of that so they are aware of that and any reduction with the bond itself. Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed that they would be trumpeting that because that is the important information to help get that passed, noting it is necessary that this work get done and we have a very favorable funding package. Richard Hunter resident of Pinebrook in North Springfield in-person inquired even though it is a very favorable funding package with 0% interest and possible reductions and understanding it is necessary to do this, what is the affect paying back will have on taxes or where is it provided to be paid back. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded that the Board has not acted on this and a part of this does relate to Economic Development and part to Fire Protection, but probably the majority of it will be on the water and sewer rate users because this is water infrastructure improvement for the water system.

Richard Hunter inquired if this would then be an increase in water bills over that time. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded yes because we would have to pay back that bond. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added say you did \$2.4 million over 40 years, you would be looking at \$60,000 annually over a 40-year period. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added we are currently looking at a couple of our bonds we agreed to 20 years ago and those are starting to come off the amounts due, so in a way this would be supplanting a couple of those that we finish paying off. Further discussion ensued that with some bonds coming off this bond would replace them and nominally affect the rate.

Chair Kristi Morris added that these were good questions, and all of this would be coming out in the Public Hearing and announcements that they will have. Chair Kristi Morris added that this project is to improve the water situation on Clinton Street, which is not ideal for fire suppression for any new businesses that might be coming in once the J&L plant and

Bryant plant are cleaned up and that property starts to get developed. Chair Kristi Morris further added its preliminary and that is the reason the board has decided to go ahead with this project and hopefully the increased business we have will offset the taxes and water rate. Richard Hunter asked to confirm that the idea is to leave in place the appropriate infrastructure to redevelop those places with expected water usage. Chair Kristi Morris confirmed and added that what we have down there is not adequate to attract new businesses coming in.

Chair Kristi Morris discussed the Town Manager has been working on this project for a while and then we have this up to \$1 million in forgiveness so it will not get more attractive if we did not have that and it would cost us more, noting it is all timing. Town Manager Jeff Mobus agreed it is not a good time to be adding debt for anyone, given it's a high inflation period, we have high taxes, and high water and sewer rates, and noted that on the other hand we do have this funding package that if we don't act on it goes away and we have to go back of line and start over again. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that we do not want to do that especially with so much progress being made on the J&L site, we have been wanting to redevelop that property because that is where we can grow the grand list. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that in order to do that we have to be able to provide reliable clean water which, is why the lead remediation is a big part of this, in addition to adequate pressure and reliable lines, noting those lines are a 100 years old Town Manager Jeff Mobus additionally added that pipes can be amortized for over 67 years so those lines don't owe us anything and every break creates a huge problem for all the users.

Water/Wastewater Superintendent Rick Chambers via Zoom added that these projects the prices they have seen just keep going up and up, so he believes this is a great package to move forward with.

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

ITEM #5 Discussion on Possible Flag Policy on Town Property

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Discussion on Possible Flag Policy on Town Property included in the meeting packet.

MOTION: Michael Martin moved to have the Selectboard agree to have a Flag Policy and task the Town Manager with producing a proposal for their approval at the next Selectboard meeting.

Seconded by: Everett Hammond

Chair Kristi Morris restated the motion and added that the intent of the motion is that we create a flag policy on Town property.

Everett Hammond inquired if VLCT had any input on this subject. Town Manager Jeff Mobus responded that they (VLCT) have no draft policies or anything else, but what he did read is that when the Supreme Court made this decision in May of 22, they said that the ruling had a chilling effect on the flag flying policies of Municipalities because all of a sudden there is first amendment contesting if you don't fly all flags that people want to fly. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that in Boston there was a religious group that wanted to fly a flag and were told no and that spawned the free speech question that went all the way to the Supreme Court, so this is becoming more and more common that people are having to deal with this as communities have to address the issue. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that they did say the policy from San Jose, CA is well thought out and it is a policy that clearly states the cities flag poles are not intended to serve as a forum for free expression by the public and it expressly says which flags may be displayed by the city as an expression of the cities official sentiments. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted we can have a policy that expressly dictates which flags are flown.

Crissy Webster raised a question regarding the policy as it is for flags flown on flag poles and does not address when they are displayed other ways. Town Manager Jeff Mobus clarified that it would be flags flown on government and public property. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that in San Jose they have guidewires across the street, and they talk about

which flags can go on there and when, noting that we do have the banners on our streetlights, and we need to consider what can be on those banners. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that what many people seem to be doing is having a policy that limits the flags to the official governmental flags, which would be the United States flag, the State of Vermont flag, and possibly also the Town of Springfield flag, noting the other flag he sees most commonly flown is the MIA flag.

Chair Kristi Morris inquired if the Town Manager was looking for guidance from the Board or the public this evening for which flags, they are willing to include. Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed and added that the Board are the authorizers of policies, and he is the enforcer of the policies once the Board chooses a direction.

Everett Hammond commented that he recalled Chester went through this when they built their new facility, there were some flag issues, and he did not believe it went to the Board but thinks they just took the flags down to address it. Everett Hammond added that he agrees with a policy and believes it is a good idea, noting those flags probably shouldn't be there now and as far as his input he believes the US and VT flag, but he doesn't think we need the Springfield flag. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that the Springfield flag is flown in front of the library and displayed in the Selectboard hall.

Michael Martin reminded the Board that they are not establishing a policy tonight they are merely asking the Town Manager to create a policy that they can debate and approve at the next meeting, and added as far as guidance goes he thinks the Town government should be Switzerland and take a neutral position and fly only approved government flags, such as the State of Vermont, the US flag, and Town flag.

Crissy Webster commented that to play the devil's advocate the State of Vermont in 1800s into early 1900s was a leader in eugenics so that's okay to fly the Vermont flag and it is offensive to some, flags mean symbols to different people and she understands where people are coming from but the symbols of the thin blue line and thin red line are significant to first responders and taking that away from them she is not understanding where it is not on the actual flag pole it is a representation of courage and bravery for those who have fallen those that have put their life on the line every single day and inquired where they are going to draw the line. Michael Martin responded the Vermont flag the US flag town flag, that is where we are going to draw the line. Chair Kristi Morris recapped what he was hearing from the board are the items to consider are the US flag, Vermont flag, Town of Springfield flag, and street banners and we have flagpole considerations and on building considerations.

Michael Martin discussed in crafting this policy there are certain events that we commemorate for instance the Fire Department has an annual commemoration of 911 event, noting that they fly the US flag during that event and for Homecoming, SHS, or the Cosmos, adding we should make some kind of accommodation within our policy for those kinds of events. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that those are considered ceremonial flags. Michael Martin added there was something in the San Jose policy that said something to the affect that if they had foreign dignitaries visiting their community, they could fly the flag of the foreign country in recognition of their visit.

Further discussion ensued regarding the banner that used to hang across the Main Street in Town and that it had been removed because they were damaging private property and there were concerns with liability of the banner hitting a car and causing an accident.

Scott Richardson in-person commented that the complaint is based on feelings, and everyone has feelings. Scott Richardson added the thin blue line flag, which is that thin blue line between law and order and chaos, that is what it represents on a public safety building. Scott Richardson continued with talking about public safety and someone's feelings that they don't like it so now we have to take it down is kind of saying that thin blue line is Valley Street 24/7 or here we have some law and order, and this is to help protect to show support for the brothers in law enforcement and the brothers at the fire station. Scott Richardson further added it is on a public building and US flag code tells you what you can put on a flagpole, noting you can have an American flag and a state flag $\frac{3}{4}$ of the size and that's it, so if you want to fly the Town flag that is a separate flagpole, and it can't be on with the American flag. Scott Richardson noted that is what is flying at the Fire station, the American flag, and the State flag on the flagpole, and these are small flags on the building support for

the public safety, adding that because one- or two-people's feelings are hurt we are going to change all sorts of policies. Scott Richardson commented that Mr. Chairman (Chair Kristi Morris) was right the banners going up through on all of the streetlights those change with the seasons, and he inquired how are we going to do those policies there noting that is Town property.

Richard Hunter in-person commented it seems to him that the banners are of the order the ceremonial flags that they were talking about and probably would not be affected in the same way by a policy. Richard Hunter added that he believes its appropriate for only governmental flags to be flown on the flagpoles of the Town. Richard Hunter discussed as for flags some people object to the thin blue line flag on the basis that it is too much like an American flag that it violates the flag code, noting others disagree and say it is a completely different flag but some people and Mr. Richardson call that a matter of feelings and it probably is to some extent but there is a significant controversy that the thin blue line flag has been flown during pretty overtly racist events that are part of the deepest divides in our society right now and was actually carried by some of the people who entered the US capital on January 6th two years ago. Richard Hunter further added that some of the people though he was not sure if it was the exact same ones carrying the flag, but some of those people were actually physically and with sometimes deadly force attacking police which would be a contradiction in the original intent of that flag and for reasons like that he believes we have to give very careful consideration to the flag policy and the flags that have such a charge to them where some people think that the legitimate courage of Vermonters, Springfielders, and Americans who have given their lives in the line of duty. Richard Hunter further discussed no one wants to impugn them in any way certainly not him, but at the same time to others that thin blue line flag represents racism and white supremacy and he doesn't know the final answer but he does know that is a pretty deep controversy and it needs very careful consideration, noting he believed they (the Selectboard) are on the right track when you say certainly the flag poles of the Town should follow the flag code in displaying the American flag and Vermont state flag on one flagpole and the Town flag on a separate one if it is displayed with the American flag.

Chuck Gregory in-person discussed most of us have been snookered at one time in our life, it might have been on that freezing cold day in the schoolyard and we were told that the flagpole get so cold it tastes like root beer and we were invited to lick it and see for ourselves, or it might have been when we were offered that great hot fudge sundae only to dive into a scoop of lard covered with chocolate syrup, but it is painful to see our public service professionals snookered into breaking the law. Chuck Gregory added they were persuaded to signal their superiority by replacing one of the stripes on an American flag with a stripe of a different color, this is nothing less than defiling and defacing the American flag. Chuck Gregory further added it is defined as a crime by the United states code title 18, which deals with crimes and criminal procedures, section 700 desecration of the flag penalties which states subsection A1, whoever knowingly mutilates, defaces, physically defiles etc. etc. any flag of the United States shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for not more than one year or both, to defile means to sully, mar, or spoil, to deface is to spoil the surface or appearance of something to it. Chuck Gregory continued the American flag, insertion of so much as one stripe of a different color spoils the appearance of the stars and stripes it destroys it as an American flag, this is an outright violation of the laws of the United States. Chuck Gregory further commented it is clear that our Town employees meant to embellish their prestige among us with these flags, but it is equally clear that a major political party who started this movement meant to betray the faith of first responders across the land it is simply unfortunate that our fire fighters and police officers who first and foremost are our friends, neighbors, and family, fell for this newest bit of political snookery, adding when these defaced flags fly they are an insult to the honor dignity and intelligence of our first responders.

Jessica Martin Springfield on the Move Director via zoom thanked Mr. Martin for consideration of including the school's as well, noting that she was not sure if it was possible to phrase the policy to say 'public right of way' that would get your banners included and such like that without going into super specific detail because the Town is also in charge of the chain link fence over there by Riverside where banners have to get approval by the Town, as well as, the two sign areas, one at the base of South Street hill as well as the one there at the intersection by the Plaza Eaton Road and 11. Jessica Martin also thanked them for also considering the Town of Springfield flag which she believed the Selectboard approved in early 1990s, noting she believed Mr. Shuffleburg came up with that. Jessica Martin recapped that those three particular flags

are the United States, State of Vermont, and Town of Springfield, as well as, the school district as well as the Town approving banners, noting she was glad that they (the Selectboard) are doing that because Springfield on the Move is working with the Chamber on updating the banners, adding that the Chamber was extremely aware of the current verbiage on the Apple Fest banners and did not fly them this fall because of the Columbus Day Weekend phrasing on the banners. Jessica Martin added that people are aware of possibly offending groups of people, so in going forward we would like to have a little guidance from them on what we can and cannot put up for the public. Chair Kristi Morris added that she identified at least a couple other areas where we have had displays of some sort, mostly banners or signs.

Jim Fog in-person discussed the previous speakers have intersected a lot of points here, and inquired if it would be true to say that if you approve a system where by the Columbus Day banners are allowed to fly again you would then open yourself up legally to approving some other organization hanging properly sized banners on those fixtures for Juneteenth, Saint Patrick's day, 420 as Mr. Johnson says, or something perhaps even more offensive like Hitler's birthday just to take a really extreme example, if a white supremacist group or BLM wanted to fly a flag from Municipal buildings or from our right of ways would, our allowing the municipal buildings to fly the thin blue line flag open us up to that legally. Jim Fog further inquired if that was what this new rule is saying, so if we do not do what Mr. Martin's suggesting then we can look forward to someone suing us to try to fly something we really do not like or that the majority does not agree with is that the case. Michael Martin responded that was his understanding, yes.

Char Osterlund via Zoom commented that it would be her hope that the Selectboard in advising and a name that they give to this flag policy, they would consider the Declaration of Inclusion that was adopted the Town last January 2022 and to look at the principles that we are a welcoming town. Char Osterlund added she knows some people think that the blue line or red line flag give tribute to the first responders, and they do, but they also have another meaning and to say "Oh, a few feelings are hurt," it has a bigger connotation for a lot of people. Char Osterlund further added her plea is that you (the Selectboard) do look at the Declaration of Inclusion and really take what you approved and follow its principles.

Richard Hunter commented the tiny bit of research between the time he heard about this and the time he came in, indicated to him that the flag code as far as imprisonment or legal penalties for desecrating the flag, has been repelled to that extent the flag code still exists but it no longer has that punitive aspect to it. Richard Hunter added we need to respect our national flag, adding there is some legitimacy to the argument that a black and white flag with a blue line in it even though it strongly resembles the national flag pattern is not the American flag at all anymore, so it is not a desecration, noting he is not either way on that. Richard Hunter added that he is that way about what Char (Osterlund) said, and other concerns that to some people it does represent racism and white supremacy very strongly and it actual does cause some people feel unsafe when they see it flown by law enforcement, noting sometimes in some places it has been worn as face masks for Covid purposes when they are enforcing demonstrations.

Further discussion ensued that the law was repelled, and it was not a desecration of the flag according to Chair Kristi Morris's research. Scott Richardson commented about the inclusion of making everyone welcome, you are including everyone, but you just excluded our public safety, and inquired if they are going to include or exclude. Town Manager Jeff Mobus commented that he would work on the flag policy proposal and return with it at the next regular meeting on January 23rd.

Further discussion ensued that a motion had been made and that they still needed to vote on it.

Vote: 3-1, Crissy Webster voted Nay and recognizing Walter Martone as absent.

ITEM #6 Police Update

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Police Update included in the meeting packet, noting that the evidence room items are being converted from the old software program to the new software program. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that the two applications being vetted for police officer positions that Chief Burnham has received are currently certified

in the State of Vermont. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added regarding patrolling hours 10 pm coverage until 2 am coverage and if we can get one of the other officers, we can get back to round the clock coverage soon.

ITEM #7 Covid-19 Update

Town Manager Jeff Mobus presented the Covid-19 Update included in the meeting packet.

E. FINANCIAL REPORTS

FY2022 Warrants to January 5, 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

No future agenda item proposals at the time of the meeting.

G. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that he included the charter review subcommittee report in the meeting packet, which was the memorandum that Barbara Courchesne and Walter Martone submitted to representatives Morris and Emmons about questions with inconsistencies in the way the charter was printed. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added there were changes to the charter and Mr. Martone and Ms. Courchesne put in a lot of effort going over the different versions of the charter line by line and word by word and found where things were changed at different steps in the process.

Town Clerk Barbara Courchesne discussed that she was very glad they did it and there are some inconsistencies that need to be looked at, noting she thinks she saw Tucker Anderson from the legislative council at the state send a memo saying that it will be addressed and saw Alice Emmons' response, as well. Town Clerk Barbara Courchesne added she thinks there are some that we can address right away without a bill, so she knows it is in the works, but it has definitely at least been acknowledged.

Representative Alice Emmons via Zoom discussed she had some discussions and some correspondence that some of this was technical in nature, on the legislative end and some of it will have to be addressed with a technical amendment through the legislative process. Representative Alice Emmons added she did not believe it will be controversial and what really occurred was that there were some things in working on one draft and converting it to another draft that were lost, noting that it was nothing that was done maliciously. Representative Alice Emmons further added that some of what Mr. Martone was looking at was a version prior to the final version so there was that piece as well. Representative Alice Emmons noted that she and Kristi (Morris) had spoken, and they hope they can get this through pretty quickly, but some of it will need to be legislatively addressed as they had heard as of Friday.

Representative Alice Emmons discussed that Kristi (Morris) and herself might have to introduce a bill to do that but it's not going to get into the depth of the charter like we did last year it's just to make the technical changes and corrections. Town Clerk Barbara Courchesne added some of it was just something easy for instance they have "shall" and "may" together in one sentence and we know how this happens with technology unfortunately.

Chair Kristi Morris explained the process for the Town Charter. Chair Kristi Morris added we submitted it to the citizens of Springfield who voted on a version that was at the Town Meeting and was adopted, so then we sent it up to the State.

Chair Kristi Morris further added the State sees it, drafts it into a bill format, and sends it off to the Gov OPS Committee who reviews it. Chair Kristi Morris additionally added that is where the edits started to come, noting there were subtractions, additions, and edits and then legislative council editors updated some of the words that were in there more technically correct or modern and up to date. Chair Kristi Morris additionally discussed then this testified by Representative Emmons and himself in the various committees in the house and senate to try to get this thing to pass, noting it had several revisions by legislative council.

Chair Kristi Morris discussed each time that gets edited it goes back to the editors and it gets typed and then it comes back with straight lines through what's deleted or intended to be deleted, and then the additions are underlined, so that's where these different versions happened to become a different version than what we intended, what was intended by the committee, what was approved by the house, what was approved by the senate, and signed by the governor.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed he attended the Trails and Rural Economy meeting on December 15th, and he wanted to let people know the VORAC grant had mandated work to be done by December 31st, 2022, noting that at this point most the physical labor has been done but they have to finish the part where you put QR codes on signs. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that they have to get those placed so people can walk on the trail with their phone and take a picture of the QR code to hear some part of the history of Springfield tied to that site. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added there are a couple other things they need to do, but that is the biggest item they also requested.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that during Covid we were able to get donated work, which allowed them to move some money to another item. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that in this case they got donated work from a forester and from an invasive species professional and they transferred those funds over to put it in much improved kiosks that are in place. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted they are big structurally wonderful kiosks that are much bigger than what was originally intended. Town Manager Jeff Mobus additionally added he has been in contact with the State and we've got the grant extended to next December, noting they have not acted on the budget transfers because it is one of the important percentage of the overall budget and the State has to approve the transfer for the work that our community had already done but he believes that the State will be very happy with what they've done and he doesn't expect any problems.

Jim Fog recognized that their Secretary Chuck Gregory was at the Selectboard meeting and he has been taking the lead on the QR code issue and were within sight of that goal. Jim Fog added that it is just winter weather that prevents them from installing the things onto the posts right now and that will happen in the Springtime. Jim Fog further added as far as the construction on the kiosks, when they put the grant projections together the price of lumber was way lower than what it was when they had to buy it and that was due to Covid, the timelapse, and price increases, noting they were fortunate to get those donations to offset that.

Chair Kristi Morris thanked the Trails Committee, noting its impressive the work that has been created over the past couple of years due to the members that they have on that Committee and Jim Fog's leadership. Chair Kristi Morris added they are getting the work done and it is good to see, noting he is getting comments too about how the trails, especially in the Hartness Park area, are becoming cleaned up. Jim Fog noted that is primarily the work of our new Parks and Rec Director Chris Merrill and John Robison his (Chris Merrill's) assistant. Jim Fogg added as far as the kiosks go that was John Bond who took charge of that and so a lot of credit goes to him for those and for the new picnic bench that people can use up at the overlook at the top of Hartness Park which he encourages everyone to check that out. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that Barbara Schultz has done a lot of the professional forestry and arborist type things and Bettina McGrady has done marketing. Jim Fog added that Bettina McGrady had liaised with local businesses for them in a valuable way and helped organize their first annual 5k race this fall.

Library Director Sue Dowdell via zoom announced that the library is getting \$8,580 from The Association of Small and Rural Libraries so that we can redesign our gardens to help to give food to the Family Center and those in need and we are also exploring hydroponics inside the library. Library Director Sue Dowdell added that part of the funds are going to be to make three more little libraries in Town, one at Westview, one at Mountain View, and one at the family center.

H. OTHER MINUTES & CORRESPONDENCE

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

1. Inclusion Committee – Minutes of December 21, 2022
2. Senior Center Newsletter for January 2023
3. Trails & Rural Economy Advisory Committee – Minutes of December 15, 2022

I. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

No citizens' comments at the time of the meeting.

J. ADJOURN

MOTION: Crissy Webster moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: Michael Martin

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie M. Kellow, Recording Secretary