

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, January 12, 2021
6:30 P.M.

The meeting was conducted through remote access by telephonic, video, and electronic means. The public was able to attend by viewing the livestream at <http://mtbluetv.org/program-live-stream-farmington-selectmen.html> or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MBTV11/> and/or calling 778-5874.

Chairman Matthew Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Stephan Bunker, Michael Fogg, Scott Landry, and Joshua Bell. Town Manager Richard Davis, Interim Police Chief Shane Cote, Town Secretary Nancy Martin, and Mt. Blue TV camera operator Kai Strine were also present.

Votes were taken by roll call.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

ITEM 2: To Approve the Transfer of Criminal Forfeiture Assets Consisting of \$759 in Currency as a Result of a drug Investigation

Interim Police Chief Shane Cote stated that as the result of a drug overdose investigation Farmington Police were able to determine who supplied the drugs and charged them with aggravating trafficking. The perpetrator plead guilty and the assets seized during the investigation were forfeited. IPC Cote explained that 15 M.R.S.A. §5824 (3) requires that the Selectmen approve by vote the transfer of the forfeited assets. IPC Cote provided a Criminal Forfeiture form stating that the municipal officers of Farmington, Maine, approve the transfer of funds.

Stephan Bunker moved to authorize the transfer of criminal forfeiture assets consisting of \$759 in currency as a result of a drug investigation into the Drug Education and Equipment Reserve Account; Joshua Bell seconded

Roll Call Vote – Matthew Smith: Yes, Stephan Bunker: Yes, Michael Fogg: Yes, Joshua Bell: Yes, Scott Landry: Yes

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Chairman Matthew Smith signed the Criminal Forfeiture Approval form.

ITEM 3: To Approve an Expenditure of \$12,740 from the Sewer Department Equipment/Vehicle Reserve Account to Replace a Generator Transfer Switch at the Wastewater Treatment Plant

Richard Davis reviewed an email from Mike Carleton, I.E.C. to Waste Water Superintendent Steve Millett dated December 24, 2020. The cost for replacing the

ITEM 3: To Approve an Expenditure of \$12,740 from the Sewer Department Equipment/Vehicle Reserve Account to Replace a Generator Transfer Switch at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (continued)

generator switch includes cutting a window into the door which will provide visual access to the display. Matthew Smith asked for the current balance in the Sewer Department Equipment and Vehicle Reserve Account. Mr. Davis stated that he did not have the exact amount on hand. He reported that the Reserve account balance is significantly higher than \$12,740. Joshua Bell generated a discussion on the Town's Purchasing Policy and items that exceed \$5,000. Mr. Bell asked if the Town was trending away from requesting bids and if the Selectmen needed to review the policy. Mr. Davis stated that the Purchasing Policy does allow for some flexibility when the situation is urgent. Michael Fogg concurred with Mr. Bell, when placing equipment orders or contracted maintenance, the department head should request two to three bids for items that exceed \$5,000. Mr. Davis stated that large expenditures are regularly put out to bid and he listed insurances, audits, and the Town Report as examples. Scott Landry stated that when there is an issue with the sewer system, the Town would not want to wait too long before having the issue resolved. Matthew Smith recommended a review of the Town's Purchasing Policy be added to the for the Selectmen's Agenda soon.

Scott Landry moved to authorize the expenditure of \$12,740 from the Sewer Department Equipment/Vehicle Reserve account to replace a generator transfer switch at the Wastewater Treatment Plant; Stephan Bunker seconded.

Roll Call Vote – Matthew Smith: Yes, Stephan Bunker: Yes, Michael Fogg: Yes, Joshua Bell: Yes, Scott Landry: Yes

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 4: To Approve the Holdover from 2020 of \$4,000 in the Community Center Land and Property Line

Mr. Davis reviewed a memo from Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Foster dated January 4, 2021. Due to the pandemic, it was extremely difficult to secure contractors for smaller jobs in 2020. Several projects were not completed. Projects that could not be completed include work over the Community Center doors to prevent injuries from falling snow and the installation of a new door in the downstairs weight room. With the demand for contractors slowing down, Mr. Foster is hopeful that these projects can be completed soon.

Michael Fogg moved to authorize the holdover from 2020 of \$4,000 in the Community Center Land and Property Line; Stephan Bunker seconded.

Roll Call Vote – Matthew Smith: Yes, Stephan Bunker: Yes, Michael Fogg: Yes, Joshua Bell: Yes, Scott Landry: Yes

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 5: To Determine the Method by which to Conduct the 2021 Annual Town Meeting

Richard Davis stated that current COVID-19 restrictions limit indoor gatherings to fifty (50) people. With COVID-19 cases trending upwards he expects the restrictions will remain in place through March 2021. Mr. Davis stated that the Town Meeting could be held outdoors, however, Maine weather in March can be problematic. Another option is to hold a secret ballot referendum. Mr. Davis explained that a secret ballot referendum is conducted the same way as a Presidential Election. The 2021 budget includes funds for a secret ballot referendum. If the Selectmen decide to hold a secret ballot referendum, there are deadlines which must be met. The Town Clerk must be notified thirty days in advance and a Public Hearing must be held. Mr. Davis estimated that with forty-five or so Articles the ballot would be four to five pages, which would require the voters to be in the booth for quite a while. He stated that he feels the secret ballot referendum is the most practical option. The Governor's Emergency Executive Order waived some of the requirements for conducting Town Meetings to allow for some flexibility. The Town Meeting could be held in April or May. Should an Article not pass, he felt another secret ballot referendum would be needed. Mr. Davis asked for suggestions on how to conduct the Annual Town Meeting. Michael Fogg asked what other Towns had done. Mr. Davis reported that the Town of Wilton held their Town Meeting outside in the former Bass factory parking lot with chairs placed six feet apart. Other Towns have held their Town Meetings at outdoor theaters. Mr. Davis and the Selectmen had a lengthy discussion on the most effective options for informing the public and holding the Town Meeting. Options discussed included using the Community Center with fifty seats upstairs and fifty seats downstairs and connecting the two rooms with video feed; asking the public to write-in questions for the Selectmen to answer on Mount Blue Television Channel 11 or conduct a two-hour question and answer session. If more than fifty people showed up, a second session could be held and the meeting livestreamed on Mount Blue TV Channel 11.

Joshua Bell moved to conduct the 2021 Town Meeting by secret ballot referendum; Scott Landry seconded.

Roll Call Vote – Matthew Smith: Yes, Stephan Bunker: Yes, Michael Fogg: Yes, Joshua Bell: Yes, Scott Landry: Yes

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 6: To Approve the Minutes of January 5, 2021

Scott Landry moved to approve the minutes of January 5, 2021; Joshua Bell seconded.

Roll Call Vote – Matthew Smith: Yes, Stephan Bunker: Yes, Michael Fogg: Yes, Joshua Bell: Yes, Scott Landry: Yes

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 7: To Discuss Other Business

- A.** Richard Davis reported that the Police Chief Search Committee will meet on Thursday, January 14, 2021 and review the applications. The top candidates will be selected for interviews.
- B.** Joshua Bell asked if Shane Cote’s salary was increased when he stepped up to the role of Interim Chief of Police. Richard Davis stated that IPC Cote’s salary was increased to the Chief’s level when he became IPC.
- C.** Scott Landry asked if the Highway Department was operating under budget. Richard Davis stated that the Highway Department was operation under budget. The lack of snow storms has allowed the Public Works Department to work on other projects such as brush cutting and patching. Mr. Davis reported that Mechanic Jeffrey Fitch and Sidewalk Plow Operator Michael Sawyer are both doing well in their new positions.
- D.** Michael Fogg asked when the final 2020 Budget Expenditures would be available. Richard Davis stated that the Treasurer typically provides the final expenditure amounts in mid-January each year.

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Scott Landry moved to adjourn at 7:09 P.M.; Joshua Bell seconded.**

Roll Call Vote – Matthew Smith: Yes, Stephan Bunker: Yes, Michael Fogg: Yes, Joshua Bell Yes, Scott Landry: Yes

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nancy L. Martin.

Michael J. Fogg - Secretary