

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Tuesday, November 8, 2022

The conduct of the meeting included remote access by telephone, video, and electronic means. The public could attend in person or by viewing the live stream at <http://mtbluetv.org/program-live-stream-farmington-selectmen.html> or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MBTV11/> or calling 778-5874.

Chairman Matthew Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Joshua Bell, Stephan Bunker, and Byron Staples. Scott Landry was unable to attend. Town Manager Christian Waller, Planning Assistant Cindy Gelinas, Craig Zurhorst, Fen Fowler, Walter Gooley, Jamie McClement, MBTV Camera Operator Kai Strine, and members of the press and public were also present.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

ITEM 2: *To Hold a Public Hearing and Vote on Amendments to the M.M.A. Model General Assistance Ordinances, Appendices A – H, and F

Christian Waller said this is an annual procedural item for general assistance.

Chairman Matthew Smith opened the Public Hearing under Item 2 at 6:32 P.M.

There were no comments from the public.

Chairman Matthew Smith closed the Public Hearing under Item 2 at 6:32 P.M.

Stephan Bunker moved to approve the Amendments to the M.M.A. Model General Assistance Ordinances, Appendices A – H, and F; Joshua Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 3: *To allow Western Maine Transportation Services Community Relations Director Craig Zurhorst to address the Board regarding a funding proposal

Craig Zurhorst said the Franklin County Commissioners dropped funding for the Western Maine Transportation Services (WMTS) in the prior few years and it has been getting by using the ARPA funds, and these funds will be coming to an end. He said we are suffering from a shortage of buses and drivers and must find a sustainable way to provide public transportation in Franklin County, but more specifically Farmington, which has the highest public demand-response use (see handout for figures). Mr. Zurhorst said WMTS should be considered an infrastructure not a service, and he asked the Selectmen to consider funding WMTS through a line-item under the infrastructure section of the Town's budget instead of coming in each year. He asked that the amount of \$25,000 be considered, which would be eligible for local match to drawdown approximately \$36,000 in additional federal funding, yielding a total of \$61,000 to fund public transportation. Mr. Zurhorst said we would discontinue requesting funds from municipalities if Franklin County resumed funding. Mr. Zurhorst thanked the Selectmen for considering the request.

Joshua Bell asked about the rider fee and number of riders. Craig Zurhorst explained the current use of its transportation as demand-response, and the intown fee for Farmington is \$3 for adults and \$1.50 for children 5-11 years, elderly and or disabled, which makes up 10% of the operating costs, and without State contracts it would be \$8 per trip and \$1.50 per mile depending on the level of service. Matthew Smith said we appreciate what you do for the community, and this is a much-needed resource.

ITEM 4: *To Approve the Minutes of October 25, 2022

Stephan Bunker moved to Approve the Minutes of October 25, 2022; Joshua Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 5: *To Consider Nomination of Agent for Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Christian Waller said, due to the Town Clerk finding other employment, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife requires an agent in each municipality be responsible for the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, and we need to nominate someone and update the paperwork with the State.

Matthew Smith moved to nominate Christian H. Waller as the Interim Agent for the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; Stephan Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 6: *To Consider the Application of Fenwick Fowler to the Budget Committee

Christian Waller said there is one opening on the Budget Committee through 2023. Matthew Smith thanked him for donating his time.

Joshua Bell moved to accept the application of Fenwick Fowler to the Budget Committee; Byron Staples seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 7: To Allow Jamie McClement to Address the Board Regarding “Western Maine Community Action (WMCA) Converting Motels into Affordable Housing and Shelter Space”

Walter Gooley said we are here because we heard Jamie McClement speak on Tom Saviello’s radio show about her concerns regarding this topic and he suggested she speak with the Board. Matthew Smith said he spoke with WMCA director William Crandall, and this project is in the very early stages.

Jamie McClement said according to the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA), WMCA was awarded \$7.25 million in ARPA funds specifically for housing projects. Multiple media sites including the MSHA and WMCA websites state that WMCA has purchased and in the process of converting the Mount Blue and Colonial Valley motels into affordable housing and shelter space by providing 34 housing units - 3 being efficiencies for homeless bedrooms, 31 will be 1–3-bedroom apartments. She said transparency is very important, and MSHA lists four categories on its website of who will qualify for these units – domestic abuse survivors, people recently released from a correctional or mental health facility, and those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and she is concerned about how a project this size will affect the Farmington community and infrastructure. Ms. McClement said this project will be on Route 2 and 4 where the lack of a sidewalk and transportation to services and jobs will be an issue, and she wanted our system to work for them. Ms. Clement said she is looking for where to get the answers to questions and she thanked the Board for their time.

Matthew Smith said she should contact William Crandall, and this project has nothing to do with this Board, it will be taken up by the Planning Board for change of use. Stephan Bunker said the Planning Board has a detailed process for this type of project that includes public comment.

ITEM 8: To Discuss Other Business

- A. Stephan Bunker said he is looking forward to continued activities on High Street.
- B. Byron Staples said we had talked about the plan for making changes or amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and if that included Attorney Meader. Christian Waller said he would check the status on that and get back to the Board.

There being no further business to come before the Board, 7:06 P.M. Stephan Bunker moved to adjourn at 7:06 P.M.; Joshua Bell seconded.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cindy Gelinias.

Byron Staples - Secretary