

FARMINGTON SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, May 9, 2023

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-streamfarmington-selectmen.html> or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MBTV11/> or calling 578-7395.

Chairman Matthew Smith called the meeting to order at 6:31 P.M. with the following members present: Stephan Bunker, Joshua Bell, Byron Staples, and Dennis O'Neil. Kenneth Charles, Police Chief, Tammy Bureau, Treasurer, Leah Giusti, Executive Assistant, MBTV Camera Operator Kai Stone, and members of the press and the public were also present. Interim Town Manager Cornell Knight participated via Zoom. Members of the press and public participated remotely as authorized by PL 209, c.617.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Matthew Smith led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: To approve the expenditure of \$34,428 from the Police Department Training Reserve Account, SX-7982 for Police Academy reimbursement to the Town of Jay for the hire of Officer Rex Schweighofer.

Police Chief Kenneth Charles approaches the board. Mentions that the information in the agenda packets includes information about where the expenditure amount comes from. States that they are lucky to have reserve account for this purpose. Last hire we did not receive an invoice. Chief Charles welcomes the Board's questions. The Board has no questions.

Selectman O'Neil moved to approve the expenditure; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 3: To approve the expenditure of \$52,515.80 from Police Department Vehicle Reserve Account, SX-7983 for an outfitted 2022 Ford Police Interceptor Utility vehicle.

Chief Charles reminds the Board that they went under contract back in November for two vehicles – one is being paid for out of the operating budget, and this second is coming out of vehicle reserve. Chief Charles is requesting approval of this expenditure.

Selectman Bell moved to approve expenditure; Selectman Staples seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 4: To review petition of Jon Bubier to name road

Chairman Smith reads request from Mr. Bubier. Mr. Bubier is not present. Selectman Bunker asks if there has been a sign-off by the 911 addressing officer. Selectman Smith notes that there is no mention of this in the documents received from Mr. Bubier. Selectman Bunker would like to have confirmation from the addressing officer prior to approval.

Selectman Bell moved to pass over the petition until such time as the request is verified by the 911 addressing officer; Selectman O’Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 5: To approve the recommendation of Town Clerk to change the Voter Registration hours prior to and on Election Day, June 13

The Town Clerk recommends that the board change the Voter Registration Hours to register new voters and to change any addresses or name changes prior to and on Election Date, June 13 as follows: June 6 – 10 from 9 AM to 5 PM and at the polling location from 7 AM to 8 PM on June 13. The Clerk also recommends that the Board set the polling hours and location as 7 AM to 8 PM at the Community Center, 127 Middle Street.

Selectman Bell moved to approve the Town Clerk’s recommendations; Selectman Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 6: To update the Board on the Assessor’s opening

The Interim Town Manager, Cornell Knight, addresses the board. There have been no applications received to date for the open Assessor position. Mr. Knight reached out to John O’Donnell to see if he would be available to contract, but he is too busy with clients and revaluations. The next step that he recommends is to speak to KRT Appraisal who will be doing the town’s revaluation and see if they are willing to add assessing contract work in order to complete commitments by August.

Selectman Bell asks if an RFP can be put out for tax assessing service. Mr. Knight states that we can, but time is a concern. There are a number of assessor openings on MMA website, it is a problem in a number of communities. He can put an RFP together, but as he is concerned about time he would prefer to try KRT first.

Selectman Bunker agrees with Mr. Knight and would like him to approach KRT as an interim step. Selectmen Smith and Staples agree with Selectman Bunker.

Selectman Bunker moved to direct Interim Town Manager to approach KRT Appraisal and/or other similar companies for interim assessor contractual services and report back to the Board; Selectman O'Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 7: Treasurer to update Board on collection account status

Treasurer Tammy Bureau approaches the Board. There are 24 properties in Farmington that have expired liens. Treasurer recommends that we send a final attempt letter to all of them. We did have a party come in on 160 Court Street, she is speaking with the wife of the deceased owner and is interested in paying taxes off and buying the property.

Selectman Bell asks if we are confident that we have sent all proper notifications. Treasurer states that Mavis Gensel is confident, Treasurer has only been here a short time. It appears that everything has been done properly.

Selectman O'Neil states that some of the owners want properties to be sold, and those should move forward.

Treasurer notes that some towns put property listings in the newspaper. Selectman Bunker states that we have done so in the past and would be open to doing so once the final letters have gone out. These properties are already foreclosed, and the town owns the properties. There is no standard time frame given in the final letter, it is up to the town's discretion. Letters are more of a courtesy. Letters will begin going out by the end of the week.

The Board will review packets provided by the Treasurer.

The Interim Town Manager needs to check with the Town Attorney on the status of an agreement/letter of understanding with the owner of one of the properties. He would also like the Town Attorney to review the letter before sending.

Selectman Bunker moved to authorize the Treasurer to send final collection letters and report back to the Board at the next meeting; Selectman O'Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 8: To inquire of the Treasurer about bidding out bank services

This inquiry was requested by Selectman O'Neil. The bidding out of bank services is supposed to take place every three years but it has not. He is curious about a time frame to do so as the new treasurer settles in. He would like a sense of how long the process would take. The

Treasurer has gone through this process before and states she did find a template for bids that she can use. The Treasurer will review and prepare a time frame for the Board.

Selectman Bunker asks about the 3-year criteria. Selectman O’Neil believes it is a recommendation. Would like to see the scope of what is available. Selectman Bunker would like to see where we are 3 months from now once new employees are settled in.

ITEM 9: To hear proposal from Beckie Bowering of Franklin Savings Bank

Ms. Bowering, Business Solutions Officer at Franklin Savings Bank, approaches the Board. Ms. Bowering thanks the Board for the opportunity to speak with them. She has been with Franklin Savings Bank for 23 years. Franklin Savings Bank is requesting an opportunity to make a proposal to the Town of Farmington with the goal of expanding their relationship. Franklin Savings Bank is the only bank headquartered in Franklin County. They have a special relationship with Farmington. They invest heavily in local education and economic development. In 2022, the Bank donated an excess of \$300,000 to local communities in Franklin County. It is their continued commitment to be a community bank. In 2022, Franklin Saving Bank participated in a dozen community events. When banking with Franklin Savings, funds stay local, build new businesses, and create new jobs in Farmington. Franklin Savings Bank would like to participate in RFP when the Town decides the time is right.

The Board thanks Ms. Bowering.

ITEM 10: To hear request from Farmington Conservation Commission to proclaim the third week of May as Arbor Week

Bill Haslem, Chairman of the Farmington Conservation Commission, approaches the Board. The proclamation is part of Farmington’s participation in Tree City USA. Requests that the Chairman sign the proclamation

Chairman Smith states that as a member of the conservation commission, he is amazed with the amount of work that gets done, and thanks the commission for their commitment to the town.

Selectman Bunker moved to proclaim the third week of May as Arbor Week; Selectman O’Neil seconded. Chairman Smith signs the proclamation.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 11: To approve donations from Northern Lights and Byron Staples for banners on Main Street and Broadway

Selectman Bell states that he spoke with Patti Haggren of the Downtown Association. The installation of these banners will finish off Main Street and Broadway and complete the banner

project; already done on Front Street. Northern Lights and Selectman Staples decided they were able to and would like to contribute in order to complete the project.

Selectman Smith moved to accept donations; Selectman Bunker seconded.

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 ABSTENTION 2 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell and Staples)**

ITEM 12: To Approve the Minutes of 04/25/23, 04/27/23, and 05/04/23, as amended.

Selectman Bunker moved to approve the minutes; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 13: To Discuss Other Business

The Interim Town Manager states that he will be back in the office next week, likely beginning on Wednesday, May 17.

Selectman O’Neil asks about the access of select board members with department heads and whether the selectmen need permission from the Town Manager and/or Board Members before speaking with them. Selectman Smith states that it is up to the Selectman to determine the appropriateness. Selectman O’Neil is concerned that one on one conversations won’t educate the public or other members as to sharing of information. Interim Town Manager states that if a selectman is bringing information from a concerned citizen, they should bring the information to the Town Manager.

Selectman Bunker states that the public is encouraged to contact department heads directly and, if they are not comfortable doing so, the board will share information on their behalf.

Selectman Bunker states that the American Legion will be out on Saturday, May 20 to place flags on Veteran gravesites. Welcomes volunteers beginning at 8:30 a.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Selectman XXXXX moved to adjourn to the executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S. § 405 (6) (E) for a consultation with legal counsel at 7:37 P.M.; Selectman XXXXX seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 14: To hold an executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S. § 405 (6)(E).

Return to regular session at 8:09 pm.

Selectman Bell moved for a motion to forward bid documents and bid process to the

Town Attorney for review; Selectman O'Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Motion by Selectman Bell to adjourn at 8:11 p.m.; Seconded by Selectman Bunker.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Minutes respectfully submitted by Leah Giusti.

Byron Staples - Secretary