

FARMINGTON SELECT BOARD

Tuesday, August 8, 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.

Secretary Byron Staples called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Joshua Bell and Dennis O'Neil. Kenneth Charles, Police Chief, TD Hardy, Fire Chief, Cornell Knight, Interim Town Manager, Leah Giusti, Executive Assistant, MBTV Camera Operator Kai Stone, and members of the press and members of the public were also present. Members of the press and public participated remotely as authorized by PL 209, c.617.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Secretary Byron Staples led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: To hear an update on Walton's Mill Park with Maranda Nemeth of the Atlantic Salmon Federation

Ms. Nemeth was unable to attend. As such, this item will be moved to the August 22, 2023, Selectboard Meeting.

ITEM 3: To authorize the Police Chief to enter into an agreement with the Franklin County Agricultural Society to provide police services for the week of the Farmington Fair, with the amount to be determined at the time of billing

Chief Ken Charles approached the Board. The agreement presented to the board includes a ballpark range, with the flexibility to cover additional expenses if necessary. It does cover overnight services, with the option to add more services depending on activities.

Selectman Bell made a motion to authorize Chief Charles to enter into an agreement with the Franklin County Agricultural Society to provide services for the week of the Farmington Fair; Selectman O'Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 4: To authorize the Police Department to auction one 2007 Great Dane 53-foot utility trailer with Onan generator and motorized awning with proceeds deposited in the Vehicle Reserve Account

Chief Charles stated that the trailer is rarely used but is in fantastic shape. As the department is not using it, thought funds from selling it could help offset upcoming vehicle expenses. Would use Muncipid.com, the same as with the sale of the 2016 cruiser. It doesn't cost the town anything and is good advertising with regional/nationwide exposure. Will look into how much it should get. It is a covered trailer, 53 feet, motorized awning, and diesel generator. Could also list on the town website with a link to the auction site.

Selectman Bell made a motion to authorize the auctioning of the 2007 Great Dane 53-foot utility trailer with proceeds deposited in the Vehicle Reserve Account; Selectman O’Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 5: To review and issue an RFP for Legal Services

Interim Town Manager Cornell Knight addressed the board. He has presented the board with a draft proposal. Proposals will be due August 29, as the new interim town manager will be out of the office the week before. Attorney Meader stated that she will stay on until someone new is under contract. The Board and Mr. Knight would assume that the town is looking for a firm rather than an individual. Mr. Knight believes the Town will receive several proposals. The advertisement will be on the town website and the MMA website. Mr. Knight will also send it to firms with known municipal departments.

Selectman O’Neil asked about record keeping. Mr. Knight stated that Attorney Meader will turn over all documents to the new firm. Selectman O’Neil asked if there should be language requiring that billing be itemized. Mr. Knight states that is standard practice and does not need to be specified.

Selectman O’Neil noted that the RFP refers to immediate resignation/termination of the agreement. Mr. Knight states that he will add language requiring two weeks notice from either party.

Selectman Bell asked how long the contract would be in effect. Mr. Knight stated that the RFP is for one year to start and it is usually renewed on a yearly basis if both parties agree.

With regard to a face-to-face meeting, Mr. Knight suggested that the Interim Town Manager and a member of the Selectboard meet with/interview the top two candidates.

Selectman O’Neil made a motion to issue the RFP as amended; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 6: To review and sign Quitclaim Deed for 185 Temple Road

The Board reviewed the Quitclaim Deed.

Selectman Bell made a motion to approve and sign the Quitclaim Deed for 185 Temple Road; Selectman O’Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 7: To review bids and accept a bid for a new Fire utility pick-up truck

Chief Hardy addressed the Board. He sent the request to six dealerships and received three bids from two of the dealerships. After review, all trucks meet specifications, but the bid from Hight Chevrolet is the best deal. Chief Hardy recommends that the Town accept that bid. The time frame is standard. Upfittings will be taken from the 2010 pickup and will be done in-house. Might need brackets, other minor adjustments.

Selectman Bell made a motion to accept the bid from Hight Chevrolet; Selectman O’Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 8: To request authorization to put 2010 F-150 pick-up out for bid and deposit funds into the Fire Reserve account

Chief Hardy requested authorization to put the 2010 F-150 pick-up out to bid. He would like to use one of the online auction programs. He received no interest in a trade-in when sending it out to bid. He believes that auctioning it off would be the best option. Selectman O’Neil agreed.

Selectman O’Neil made a motion to authorize; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 9: To appoint an interim town manager.

Mr. Knight presented a draft Letter of Engagement re: Interim Town Manager to the board. The agreement was prepared by proposed Interim Town Manager Stephen Eldridge and reviewed by the town attorney who added a two-week cancelation notice if not a good fit with the board, or if the search goes on longer than anticipated. If approved, Mr. Eldridge will start on Thursday, August 10. Mr. Knight would spend the morning with him and bring him up to speed. Mr. Knight will continue to be available to Mr. Eldridge via phone.

Mr. Eldridge is a retired town manager from Monmouth. His last full-time position was as the Town Manager of Berwick, which he held for 6-7 years. He has also served as Town Manager of Lisbon, Rumford, Vinalhaven, and Etna. He has a master’s degree in public administration. He has also served as interim town manager in Bethel and Winthrop. Mr. Knight has known Mr. Eldridge for years and believes he will do a good job here.

Selectman O’Neil had a question about fees. Asked if fees will be prorated. Mr. Knight states they will be prorated and believes Mr. Eldridge will complete timesheets showing hours worked.

Selectman O’Neil made a motion to appoint Stephen Eldridge as Interim Town Manager effective 8/10/23; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 10: To Approve the Minutes of 7/18/23, 7/25/23, 7/31/23, 8/2/23

Selectman Bell made a motion to approve; Selectman Staples Seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 11: To Discuss Other Business

Mr. Knight advised the board that Phil Hutchins, Director of Public Works, is having some trees cut down around Fairview Cemetery. These are hazard trees that are falling onto High Street. Last year, one fell during fair week. The Conservation Commission recommended that they be removed. Mr. Hutchins will be at the next Board meeting with an update on FEMA declarations. He will also have the paving bid ready. Also at the next meeting, the wildlife biologist and game warden will be there to discuss deer management.

The Maine DOT will be updating the six traffic lights in town as part of a \$20 million contract throughout the state. They will begin with foundational work between 9/20-9/29 at Broadway and Main Street. The light upgrades will be done over the winter. This is done at no cost to the town, but continued maintenance will still be the town's responsibility.

Selectman Bell made an inquiry about road work items in the last warrant expended out of the reserve account and he is not sure if that was authorized. Mr. Knight stated that he will look into it and advise Mr. Hutchins of same.

Selectman Bell inquired as to whether or not applications that come in that relate to an ordinance that is in the process of being changed can be stopped. Mr. Knight stated that legal advice could be sought, but he believes that as long as the application meets the current standard, it would be grandfathered in, and it cannot be stopped from going through before the ordinance is officially changed.

Selectman Bell made a motion to adjourn at 6:57 pm; Selectman O'Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 MOTION CARRIED

Minutes respectfully submitted by Leah Giusti.

Byron Staples - Secretary