

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

6:30 P.M.

The meeting was held at the Community Center and 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, and Scott Landry. Joshua Bell was unable to attend. Town Manager Richard Davis, Town Secretary Nancy Martin, Fire Rescue Chief Terry Bell, Fire Rescue Deputy Chief Timothy A. Hardy, Fire Rescue Deputy Chief and Budget Committee Chairman S. Clyde Ross, Fire Rescue Captain Timothy D. Hardy, Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Foster, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Jennifer Savage, Police Chief Kenneth Charles, Deputy Police Chief Shane Cote, Public Works Director Philip Hutchins, Budget Committee members Ed David, Betty Jespersen, Mike MacNeil, Judith Murphy, and Lloyd Smith were present. Mt. Blue TV camera operator Kai Strine and members of the press and public were also present. Members of the public participated remotely as authorized by PL 209, c.617.

Votes were taken by roll call.

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 Hold a Public Hearing on the Secret Ballot Referendum to be held on Monday, April 26, 2021

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

Richard Davis provided a copy of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant as it appears in the Town Report. The Town Report is currently at the printers and will be available before the Monday, April 26th referendum. The Town Report is available on the Town's website www.farmington-maine.org under Advisories and Notices on the homepage. The Warrant in the Town Report offers more detail than the three-page referendum ballot. Mr. Davis explained that the 12.13% budget increase may sound shocking; however, last year's budget was less than 2019's due to COVID-19. The mill rate decreased from \$19.98 to \$19.70, resulting in lower tax bills. Mr. Davis stated that the two-year average increase is certainly within a range to be expected. He stated that this budget should not result in a tax increase, and if the Selectmen wish to, they can reduce the mill rate again this year. Despite the pandemic, the Town met its revenue targets, and revenues remain strong. The Town added over \$600,000 to the Unassigned Fund Balance, and the current balance is over \$3,000,000. Auditors recommend that the Town retain an Unassigned Fund Balance large enough to cover two months of expenditures, which is approximately \$1,900,000. The Selectmen can appropriate funds from the Unassigned Fund Balance further lowering the property tax burden. Mr. Davis reported that new valuation from the solar installation will also help to negate the increase in budget. Mr. Davis stated that he has served as Town Manager for nearly twenty years and thanked the community for its support. He

ITEM 2: To Hold a Public Hearing on the Secret Ballot Referendum to be held on Monday, April 26, 2021 (continued)

is proud to say that the Town has put together a budget that meets the growing needs of a growing community and has done so without placing an undue burden on the taxpayer. Stephan Bunker asked Mr. Davis to explain to the viewing audience how a referendum Town Meeting compares to a traditional open Town Meeting. Mr. Davis stated that the Warrant will provide a dollar amount for each Article. Citizens will have an opportunity to vote “Yes” or “No” on each requested amount. It will be an up or down vote, with no opportunity to suggest another amount. Scott Landry asked what the procedure would be should an Article not pass. Mr. Davis stated that the Budget Committee and the Selectmen would then reconvene and come up with a new budget recommendation for the Article(s). The Town would hold a Special Town Meeting and citizens would revote on the Article(s). Budget Committee Member Judith Murphy stated that the Budget Committee worked diligently, reviewing all the figures from the Department Heads, and they asked the Department Heads a lot of questions. In the end, the Budget Committee felt that the departmental proposals were lean, and the Department Heads only requested what they absolutely needed. Matthew Smith stated that the budget is quite lean and everything that the Department Heads asked for is needed. Mr. Smith stated that after coming out of a pandemic, the Town is in very good shape financially. Budget Committee Member Ed David inquired about the American Recovery Act. Mr. Davis reported that the Town of Farmington is projected to receive an estimated \$773,000 in relief funds from the Federal Government. The Town, like other communities, is waiting for guidance on where the funds can be spent. A few of the guide lines indicate that the funds are to be used to replace lost revenue. The Town of Farmington has lost very little revenues due to COVID-19. Incoming excise taxes were slightly low during the month the Town was closed to the public. However; the funds recovered very rapidly once the Town reopened. Other aspects of the funds are to be used for infrastructure, specifically water and wastewater systems. The Town could spend \$773,000 on wastewater infrastructure alone. However; the Town’s needs are currently well met, and he is not in favor of spending money just because we are getting it. The 2021 Budget will be adopted prior to receiving firm guidance from the Federal Government and before the Town receives any federal funds. Any federal funds the Town receives will serve as a supplement to the 2021 Budget and will allow the Town to do more work. The Budget Committee would reconvene to discuss the expenditure of any American Recovery Act funds. Mr. Davis and the Selectmen thanked the Budget Committee for their service.

Chairman Matthew Smith closed the Public Hearing under Item 2 at 6:50 P.M.

ITEM 3: To Approve an Expenditure of up to \$10,000 from the Parks and Recreation Vehicle Equipment Reserve Account to Purchase and Outfit a State Surplus 2014 Ford F-150

Richard Davis provided a memo dated April 8, 2021 from Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Foster. In it, Mr. Foster requested approval to purchase a 2014 Ford F-150 4x4 pickup truck from the State of Maine Surplus program. Mr. Foster also requested authorization for any funds received from selling the 2002 Dodge pickup to be placed into the Parks and Recreation Vehicle Equipment Reserve Account. The current balance of the Parks and Recreation Department Vehicle Equipment Reserve Account is \$18,027.08. Mr. Foster was present and answered the Selectmen’s questions.

ITEM 3: To Approve an Expenditure of up to \$10,000 from the Parks and Recreation Vehicle Equipment Reserve Account to Purchase and Outfit a State Surplus 2014 Ford F-150 (continued)

Scott Landry moved to approve an expenditure of up to \$10,000 from the Parks and Recreation Vehicle Equipment Reserve Account to purchase and outfit a State Surplus 2014 Ford F-150; Stephan Bunker seconded.

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

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell)**

Michael Fogg moved to approve any funds received from the sale of the 2002 Dodge pickup to be placed into the Parks and Recreation Vehicle Equipment Reserve Account; Stephan Bunker seconded.

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

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell)**

ITEM 4: To Award the bid for Cemetery Mowing

Richard Davis reviewed the one bid that was received, explaining that the bidder is the same contractor who has done the mowing for the past six years. Mr. Davis stated that the cost has increased but he feels it is reasonable and recommended that the bid be awarded to Shane Bartlett of Bartlett Builders. Mr. Davis and Matthew Smith stated that they have received positive comments regarding the quality of Mr. Bartlett’s cemetery work.

Michael Fogg moved to award the bid for cemetery mowing to Bartlett Builders of Farmington for a three-year contract at a total cost of \$41,250 for cemeteries and \$9,750 for Town lots; Scott Landry seconded.

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

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell)**

ITEM 5: To Postpone the Special Town Meeting Originally Scheduled for May 11, 2021

Richard Davis reported that the urgency for holding a Special Town Meeting in May is no longer there. The Town was under a time crunch to approve the twenty-year Solar Net

**ITEM 5: To Postpone the Special Town Meeting Originally Scheduled for May 11, 2021
(continued)**

Energy Agreement. The Agreement was projected to save the Town approximately \$140,000 per year in energy costs. Mr. Davis has since learned, through the Town's energy consultant, that the projected savings was based on unrealistic assumptions of the Town's energy usage. The Town is now reviewing a proposed Agreement from Blue Sky Energy which will save the Town an estimated fifteen percent on its energy bill. Because the Blue Sky Energy Agreement is on an ongoing basis, it does not require a Town Meeting vote. Mr. Davis stated that the Zoning Board is working on some amendments that will require a Special Town Meeting perhaps in June. Mr. Davis will recommend a date for the Special Town Meeting at a future Selectmen's Meeting.

Michael Fogg moved to postpone to a later date the Special Town Meeting originally scheduled for May 11, 2021; Scott Landry seconded.

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

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell)**

ITEM 6: To Select a Contractor to Conduct the Manager Search

Richard Davis provided proposals from the Maine Municipal Association and Eaton Peabody Consulting Group, LLC for conducting the Executive Search for a Town Manager. The fee for Maine Municipal Association's services for the search is \$6,400. Per the proposal, "This fee includes all MMA staff services, mileage, meals, lodging, postage, phone charges, and photocopying. The fee does not include advertising or any candidate expenses that the Town might incur." The fee for Eaton Peabody Consulting Group's services is \$6,000, plus reimbursement of direct expenses such as mileage, printing, advertising expenses, and other reasonable expenses. Any and all candidate expenses agreed to by the Town are the sole responsibility of the Town of Farmington. Eaton and Peabody Consulting Group estimates that the search process for a new Town Manager will take 2 -3 months, and it is not uncommon for the candidate to need 30 – 45 days before starting. Mr. Davis and the Selectmen discussed the pros and cons of both proposals.

Matthew Smith moved to hire Eaton Peabody Consulting Group, LLC to conduct the Executive Search for a Town Manager; Michael Fogg seconded.

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

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell)**

