

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

6:30 P.M.

The conduct of the meeting will include remote access by telephonic, video, and electronic means. The public may attend in person or 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 778-6538

Chairman Matthew Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Stephan Bunker and Scott Landry. Joshua Bell was unable to attend. Town Manager Christian Waller, Executive Assistant Nancy Martin, Deputy Police Chief Shane Cote, Board of Appeals and Board of Assessment Review Member Dennis O'Neal, Senator Russell Black, Executive Director Greater Franklin Development Council Charlie Woodworth, and Mt. Blue TV camera operator Tom Martin. Members of the press and public were also present. Members of the press and public participated remotely.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: To Award the bid for Property and Casualty Insurances.

Christian Waller reviewed two bid summaries received from Kyes Agency. The higher bid includes \$250,000 limits for Cyber/Data protection and Crime protection. The proposed policies offer replacement costs on the two newest fire trucks. If Kyes is awarded the bid, coverage will be underwritten through Trident Insurance Services, the Metrogard program with Argonaut Insurance Company, and Liberty Mutual Insurance Company.

Stephan Bunker moved to award the bid for Property and Casualty Insurances to Kyes Insurance at the cost of \$108,218; Scott Landry seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3

**ABSENT 2
(Bell, Fogg)**

MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 3: To authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract on behalf of the Town for sexton services with Wiles Remembrance Centers.

Christian Waller provided a copy of the Cemetery Services Agreement. Scope of Services: Open and close graves for in-ground full-size services and cremation interments; install bases for gravestones; install cornerstones; straighten, plumb, and level to the greatest extent practical any stones that may need adjustment; prepare cement foundations for new memorials, billing retailers for the same; sale of lots, including showing cemetery lots to prospective purchasers; record location of lots sold on maps; maintain all records of all lots sold and all lots available for purchase; transmit information on lot sales to Town for deed preparation; transmit revenue from lot sales to Town Treasurer; locate lots for genealogists; arrange for surveys of cemetery sections.

The term of the contract is three years. Wiles Remembrance Center (WRC) may, upon mutual agreement of the Town, continue the agreement for an additional three-year term by giving the Town written notice no later than ninety (90) days before the expiration of the original term. The Town shall pay WRC for the performance services under this agreement \$1,000 annually.

Scott Landry moved to authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract on behalf of the Town for sexton services with Wiles Remembrance Centers; Stephan Bunker seconded.

ITEM 3: To authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract on behalf of the Town for sexton services with Wiles Remembrance Centers. (continued)

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 ABSENT 2 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell, Fogg)**

Selectman Michael Fogg joined the meeting at 6:44 P.M.

ITEM 4: To allow State Senator Russell Black to address the Board regarding a proposed change to increase the number of Franklin County Commissioners from 3 to 5.

Senator Russell Black was present and reviewed Legislative Document 621 H.P. 457: An Act to increase the number of Franklin County Commissioners. The bill was presented by Representative Scott Landry and co-sponsored by Representative Thomas Scofield of Weld and Senator Russell Black of Franklin County. Senator Black stated that the ballot is out. Franklin County Referendum Question 2 reads:

"Do you favor increasing the number of Franklin County commissioner districts from 3 to 5 and staggering the terms of the 5 county commissioners following the redistricting conducted pursuant to the Constitution of Maine 2021?"

The bill requires that "upon approval by the voters of Franklin County at referendum held in November 2022, after the redistricting of the county commission districts is done in 2021...."

The proposed 3-District plan extends District 1 north as far as possible along the western edge of Franklin County. District 1 would consist of Carthage, Dallas Plantation, Jay, Rangeley Plt, Sandy River Plt, South Franklin UT, Weld, West Central Franklin UT, and Wilton. District 2 would consist of Chesterville, Farmington, and Temple. District 3 would include Avon, Carrabassett Valley, Coplin Plt, East Central Franklin UT, Eustis, Industry, Kingfield, New Sharon, New Vineyard, North Franklin UT, Phillips, Rangeley, Strong, and Wyman Township.

The proposed 5-District plan puts as much rural/small town population as possible into Districts 3, 4, and 5. The more densely populated part of Farmington stands alone in District 2; the rest of Farmington is in District 3. The unorganized Territory of East Franklin is split between Districts 3 and 5: Freeman Township is in District 3; Salem, Redington, Madrid, and Mount Abram Townships are in District 5. This Act will be submitted to the county's voters by ballot at the general election held in November 2022.

Senator Black reported that a similar bill was presented several years ago, and the Franklin County Commissioners vetoed the bill. He stated that many people from the northern part of the county have asked for increased commissioners to allow better representation. He also received support for the bill from the southern sector. Senator Black reported that the county valuation is a little over \$4,300,000,000, with over half of the valuation coming from the northern sector of the county. Scott Landry stated that it would be better for the county and the Town. Mr. Landry stated that having five commissioners creates discussion and gives everybody a say. We need more minds, more imaginations to grow the community together. Mr. Landry explained that Farmington is the only town split between districts, and he would prefer not to have two representatives from Farmington, but they cannot mandate that. The Districts will have to put up solid candidates and work together. He stated that this was a bi-partisan, non-political effort. Farmington resident Ryan Morgan noted that this does not alleviate the problem because we still have northern Franklin County as a mass group. Mr. Morgan stated that as a citizen of Farmington, he would vote against the 5 District plan if Farmington is divided. Mr. Morgan urged the Selectmen not to support it. Dennis O'Neal said this is a county issue. It's not what's best for Farmington; it's what's best for the county that we are a part of. It does away with the buddy system. It's harder to get three guys to

ITEM 4: To allow State Senator Russell Black to address the Board regarding a proposed change to increase the number of Franklin County Commissioners from 3 to 5. (continued)

put their heads together consistently. It does give better representation. The system that we have now isn't effective. Mr. O'Neal urged the Selectmen to support the increase. Matthew Smith stated that if we have a healthier county, we can't help but be better. And he does believe in the 5 District plan. Stephan Bunker thanked Senator Black and Mr. Landry for the spreadsheets and maps they provided. He is not ready to offer his support; he would like to listen and learn more to make a thoughtful judgment. Mike Fogg stated that he is in favor of increasing the number of commissioners from three to five. He questions the outcome, what are the pros and cons? It appears the redistricting is being manipulated to some extent to who has more power. He agrees with Mr. Bunker and is not sure what it means for the county. He needs some time to think about it and more information to evaluate before he is comfortable voting. Mr. Fogg stressed that he wants to do what is best for the Town. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Landry to provide the valuation breakdown for Franklin County. The Selectmen agreed to revisit the issue after gathering more information and when Selectman Joshua Bell was present.

ITEM 5: To authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract on behalf of the Town for cell phone services with AT & T.

Christian Waller reported that the Town is looking to switch cell phone carriers and leverage the Town's buying power to achieve better service and better pricing. And to have a technological product that better meets the Town's current needs. Deputy Police Chief Shane Cote reviewed the FirstNet with AT&T Proposal for Service. FirstNetME "provides first responders with mission-critical, call and high-speed data services (location information, images, video, and maps) to supplement the voice capabilities of land mobile radio (LMR) networks." FirstNetME supports faster, better-coordinated emergency response across local jurisdictions, state, and U.S. Border lines. Startup costs for the new plan are \$3,485.35, and the initial credit is \$5,415. The program includes Apple iPhone 11 and various iPads to meet departmental needs. Deputy Chief Cote answered the Selectmen's questions.

Michael Fogg moved to authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract on behalf of the Town for cell phone services with AT & T; Stephan Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell)

ITEM 7: To approve Municipal Quitclaim Deed.

Christian Waller reviewed one (1) Municipal Quitclaim Deed without Covenants for releasing any interest the Town might have on account of undischarged liens on property of Sharmila Das-Wattley, located at 199 Temple Road/U30-008.

Stephan Bunker moved to approve Municipal Quitclaim Deed for Sharmila Das-Wattley located at 199 Temple Road/U30-008; Scott Landry seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell)

The Selectmen signed the Municipal Quitclaim Deed.

ITEM 8: To approve cemetery conveyance.

Christian Waller reviewed the following Cemetery lot Conveyance: Brian L. Taylor and Carol G. Taylor, two (2) graves in Fairview Cemetery.

Stephan Bunker moved to approve the Cemetery lot Conveyance as noted above; Scott Landry seconded.

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

The Selectmen signed the Cemetery lot Conveyance.

ITEM 9: To Approve the Minutes of September 14, 2021.

Scott Landry moved to approve the minutes of September 14, 2021; Stephan Bunker seconded.

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

ITEM 10: To Discuss Other Business.

- A) Christian Waller thanked Deputy Chief Shane Cote and Nancy Martin for their work on the cell phone research and gathering the information.
- B) Stephan Bunker asked Christian Waller for an update on the High Street project. Mr. Waller reported the project is on target, and Kevin Vining anticipates that the project will start around October 8th.
- C) Michael Fogg reported that he received a few questions from the community. Christian Waller provided him with answers, and he addressed the community members' concerns.
- D) Mathew Smith asked the Selectmen if they were comfortable meeting in the upstairs conference room or if they preferred to hold the sessions in the downstairs conference room. He asked them to think about it and to let him know. With COVID-19 on the rise again, he wanted to make sure they were comfortable.
- E) Farmington resident Ryan Morgan, stated that the House of Representatives recently passed an anti-crime/police reform bill. Mr. Morgan noted that the bill nullifies qualified immunity, which shields government workers from accountability when they violate the constitution. Mr. Morgan provided the Selectmen with an article by USA Today dated December 20, 2020, and a second, undated IJR.com editorial by Andrew Chung that discusses the U.S. Supreme Courts decision to reject a case over qualified immunity for the police. Mr. Morgan urged the Board to be one of the leaders and to end qualified immunity.

