

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Tuesday, December 14, 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 live stream 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, Michael Fogg, Joshua Bell, and Scott Landry. Town Manager Christian Waller, Town Secretary Nancy Martin, Greater Franklin Development Council Executive Director Charlie Woodworth, High Peaks Alliance Executive Director Brent West, State of Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands Chief Planner Liz Petruska, and Mt. Blue TV camera operator Tom Martin, and members of the press and public were also present. Members of the media and public participated remotely.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

ITEM 2: To Allow High Peaks Alliance Executive Director Brent West and State of Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands Chief Planner Liz Petruska to address the Board regarding the Rail Trail Bridge project.

Brent West and Liz Petruska gave an update on the Rail Trail Bridge Project. Caldwell Engineering is working on the plans and is close to sending them to the estimators to finalize costs. Using figures from the 2007 engineering plans and adjusting for inflation, Mr. West projects the total project costs would be around \$2.8 million, with 80% of the project will be covered by a federal grant. Approximately \$560,000 would need to be raised through other funds. The Onion Foundation has committed to \$300,000, so Mr. West requests the Town consider funding \$300,000. To proceed with the federal grant process in January 2022, High Peaks Alliance needs to secure letters of commitment from donors indicating they have raised 20% of the projected cost. The University of Southern Maine (USM) performed an economic analysis of the project. They estimate the construction phase will bring twenty-five new jobs and upwards of eleven long-term jobs. USM estimates that once the Rail Trail Bridge is completed, the increased tourism, recreational activities, and business traffic may bring in \$800,000 annually. Once completed, the State of Maine will assume responsibility for maintaining the bridge. Mr. West reiterated that any funding from the Town of Farmington would go directly to the project; no funding will be diverted to High Peaks Alliance. Most of the financial benefits will go to the Town of Farmington. The Board agreed they would need to see the actual engineering plans and costs before committing. Any commitment the Town makes, would be contingent upon approval at the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. West stated that he would forward the engineering reports and costs to the Board in early January 2022. A lengthy discussion ensued: TIF funds, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, solar farm revenues, other grant opportunities, positive effect on property values, and the warrant process. The Board unanimously supports the project and will discuss funding at the January 11, 2022, meeting.

Stephan Bunker moved to table the vote on offering a letter of financial commitment for the Rail Trail Project until January 11, 2022; Scott Landry seconded.

ITEM 3: To Discuss Possible uses of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds/Broadband (continued)

allowed use of funds (aging sewer pipes, air quality/ventilation systems in municipal buildings) reporting, and sustainable goals.

ITEM 4: To Review and Approve the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Town Fiscal Year 2022.

Christian Waller provided Bureau of Labor statistics, and he recommended a 7.3% Cost of Living Adjustment for 2022. Scott Landry stated that the federal forecast COLA of 6.2%. Mr. Waller reported that the federal government uses November to November, and the Bureau of Labor Standards uses the calendar year. Joshua Bell stated that he was surprised the COLA was not higher, one of his vendors increased their pricing by 18%. Stephan Bunker noted that Social Security is increasing 5.9%. Matthew Smith said that as long as he has been on the Board, there was only one time we did not use COLA, and that was the year COLA was a negative number. He stated that we do not have to like this number, but in years past, we have fared well with it. Michael Fogg said that Mr. Waller stated that there are two things to consider: for employees who have been here a long time, it is treating them with fairness and equity; and it speaks towards the retention of talent.

Scott Landry moved to approve a 7.3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for the calendar year 2022; Michael Fogg seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 5: To Grant Blanket Approval to Farmington Elks Lodge #2430 for Beano/ Bingo and Games of Chance for a Period of one year, from January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022

Scott Landry moved to grant blanket approval to Farmington Elks Lodge #2430 for Beano/ Bingo and Games of Chance for a period of one year, from January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022; Joshua Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

The Selectmen signed the letter of approval.

ITEM 6: To Grant Blanket Approval to the Roderick-Crosby Post 28 American Legion for Beano/Bingo and Games of Chance for a Period of one year, from January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022

Michael Fogg moved to grant blanket approval to the Roderick-Crosby Post 28 American Legion for Beano/Bingo and Games of Chance for a period of one year, from January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022; Matthew Smith seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 6: To Grant Blanket Approval to the Roderick-Crosby Post 28 American Legion for Beano/Bingo and Games of Chance for a Period of one year, from January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022 (continued)

The Selectmen signed the letter of approval.

ITEM 7: To Accept A \$4,000 Donation From Seth Wescott/Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, and Place the Funds into the Parks and Recreation Department Skate Board Park Reserve Account

Christian Waller provided a memo dated December 9, 2021, from Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Foster. The Recreation Department received a \$4,000 donation from Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and Seth Wescott from their Golf Classic Tournament. Earlier this year the Chamber of Commerce and Seth Wescott donated \$4,700 to the “improvement, repair, grant match, or planning” of the Dragon’s Nest Skateboard Park. Mr. Foster requested that the Board accept the funds and approve the money to be placed into the Skateboard Park Reserve account, bringing the account to approximately \$8,700.

Scott Landry moved to accept the \$4,000 Donation from Seth Wescott/ Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and Place the Funds into the Parks and Recreation Department Skate Board Park Reserve Account; Michael Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 8: To Approve a Cemetery lot Conveyance

Christian Waller reviewed the following Cemetery lot Conveyance: David A. and Cheryl J. Tompkins, two (2) graves in Fairview Cemetery.

Scott Landry moved to approve the Cemetery lot Conveyance as noted above; Joshua Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

The Selectmen signed the Cemetery lot Conveyance.

ITEM 9: To Approve a Municipal Quitclaim Deed

Christian Waller reviewed the quitclaim deed releasing any interest the Town might have on account of undischarged liens on the property of Vicky Lydon, located at Fairbanks Road, Farmington, ME 04938, Map and Lot: R15-012-E

Scott Landry moved to approve Municipal Quitclaim Deed for Vicky Lydon, located at Fairbanks Road, Farmington, ME 04938, Map and Lot: R15-012-E; Joshua Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

