

FARMINGTON SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, November 14, 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.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. Stephen Bunker with the following members present: Joshua Bell; Byron Staples; and, Dennis O’Neil. Kenneth Charles, Chief of Police; Philip Hutchins, Director of Public Works; Stephen Eldridge, Interim Town Manager; Cindy Gelinas, Planning Assistant; MBTV Camera Operator; 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

Selectman Bunker led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: To review the annual advertisement in “Paper Talks” Magazine

Selectman Bell made a motion to support advertisement in “Paper Talks” Magazine on one-ninth page in 75 copies for \$464; Selectman Staples seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 3: To allow Chief of Police Kenneth Charles to discuss preparedness issues surrounding major events

Chief Charles addressed the Board regarding preparedness issues in light of the recent events in Lewiston.

They want to be prepared to negate the challenges of responding to unpredictable events. They brought in outside experts to help train officers to respond to an active shooter event, how to use the tools they have been given, and highlight some of the gaps in training and equipment. They are trying to do all of this in a fiscally responsible manner. The hardest thing to do is ask for money for something that you hope will never happen. He is prioritizing the training aspect. They are coordinating with local agencies and talked about a larger active shooter event. He has made some unplanned purchases since the event, including individual first aid kits and, active shooter casualty response kits to provide care to themselves and fellow officers and/or victims. It costs \$600 – \$700 to outfit them. All officers are issued patrol rifles, but they are very basic. When the shooter in Lewiston left both events he ended up in an unknown location in the dark. Chief Charles found a good deal on weapon-mounted lights, and officers went through several hours of low light and no light training which went very well. He wants to ensure officers have the equipment they need to take care of themselves and others. He received notification today that the department was awarded a federal grant to purchase a ballistic shield. The grant is for

\$3368, and the purchase price is \$3695.

Chief Charles requested permission to accept the grant.

Selectman Bell made a motion to accept the Federal Grant in the amount of \$3,368 for the purchase of a Ballistic Shield; Selectman O'Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 4: To allow Chief of Police Kenneth Charles to accept a Homeland Security Grant through Franklin County Emergency Management Agency in the amount of \$21,410 for the purchase of a LiveScan Fingerprinting Machine.

Chief Charles stated they applied for the grant through an annual competitive process. This is a tabletop version, which is more efficient. It is similar to what is used in the jail. It immediately uploads. Every time someone is charged with a criminal offense, they are required to provide fingerprints. The machine helps to associate people with their criminal record. It helps prohibit those people from obtaining firearms. Much quicker and less prone to mess. It will be kept right at the station. It will cost approximately \$2,800 per year to maintain and the cost will be split with Wilton. The first year of maintenance is covered.

Selectman Bell made a motion to accept the Homeland Security Grant in the amount of \$21,410 for the purchase of a LiveScan Fingerprinting Machine; Selectman Staples seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 5: To approve the expenditure of \$24,360 from the Police Department Training Reserve Account, SX-7982 for Police Academy reimbursement to the City of Lewiston for the hire of Officer Ariana Bacon

Chief Charles stated we have gone through this process before, most recently about six months ago for Officer Schweighofer. Officer Bacon has been a great fit. She is speeding along with field training and getting great feedback from the community and fellow officers.

Selectman O'Neil made a motion to approve the expenditure; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 6: To approve expenditure of \$8,502 from the Police Department Vehicle Reserve Account, SX-7983, to purchase one used 2019 Ford Explorer Police Interceptor SUV (27,000 miles) from Hight Ford of Skowhegan

Chief Charles stated that the vehicle had previously been leased by a university in Massachusetts and does not anticipate that it has been heavily used. He took it for a drive and was very impressed with the condition, it is almost immaculate. It has very low mileage. This will replace

the vehicle that was involved in a crash. The insurance company decided to total the vehicle and they have received a \$15,498 reimbursement. The total cost of the vehicle is 24,000 but the check is already in hand from the insurance claim which left an expenditure of \$8,502. There is approximately \$36,000 in vehicle reserve.

Bell – did reach out to anyone else? Reached out locally, and when he was calling around Hight Ford mentioned this vehicle was available which was a better deal. A new vehicle would have cost around \$45,000.

Selectman Staples made a motion to approve the expenditure; Selectman O’Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 7: To hear from Public Works Director, Phil Hutchins

Phil Hutchins approached the Board to give an update on paving. High Street is 99.8% complete. He has not heard a lot of feedback on the new raised crosswalk, but he is happy to address any concerns. It is considered a raised crosswalk rather than a speed table. It should not cause any issues so long as drivers are not going over the speed limit.

Selectman O’Neil stated that originally they had discussed adding a second raised crosswalk further down the road toward Ron’s Market. Mr. Hutchins stated that will have to be pushed back as there is no room in the budget for it at this time due to weather events.

Regarding the street lights, there were some issues with the CMP inspection which delayed the hook-up, but they should be working by the end of the week. Once they go live they will do an audit to determine which lights are owned by UMF.

They have successfully paved Mosher Hill Road, Ramsdell Road, Savage Road, and Christian Drive this season. One apron remains on Mosher Hill, waiting for material. Ran into some issues on Christian Drive and some spots on Savage and Mosher Hill.

They have started next year’s road plan, which will be covered at the next meeting.

ITEM 8: To review proposed Policy for On-Premises Liquor License Applications

The Board reviewed the proposed policy. Interim Town Manager Steve Eldridge addressed the Board. The proposed policy was initiated by the Town Clerk and other staff. It is an attempt to streamline the process for liquor license applications and encourage businesses to file requests in a timely manner. He thinks it would be a good policy to have in place.

Selectman O’Neil made a motion to table discussion until more information is received; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 9: To Approve the Minutes of 10/24/23

The Board reviewed the minutes of 10/24/23.

Selectman O’Neil made a motion to approve the minutes; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 10: To Discuss Other Business

Interim Town Manager Steve Eldridge addressed the Board. Regarding the Annual Town Meeting, if the meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2024, nomination papers will be available on December 15, 2023, and must be returned by January 25, 2024. There is one Select Board seat open and two School Board positions open.

Selectman Bell made a motion to set the Town Meeting for March 25, 2024; Selectman O’Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 MOTION CARRIED

The Planning Board met and had a constructive meeting regarding Solar Ordinance and will be coming to the Board for a Public Hearing on November 28 to review changes. A special Town Meeting will be held on December 12.

Selectman Bell made a motion a motion to enter executive session pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405 (6)(E) for a consultation with legal counsel at 7:55 p.m.; Selectman Staples seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 11: To hold an executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S. § 405 (6)(E) for a consultation with legal counsel

Minutes respectfully submitted by Leah Giusti.

Byron Staples - Secretary