

FARMINGTON SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, November 28, 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.

Chairman Matthew Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Stephen Bunker; Joshua Bell; Byron Staples; and Dennis O'Neil. Philip Hutchins, Director of Public Works; Leia Durrell, Assistant Director of Public Works; Stephen Eldridge, Interim Town Manager; Cindy Gelinis, Planning Assistant; Tim Hardy, Fire Chief; 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

Chairman Matthew Smith led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: Public Hearing regarding proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance Solar Energy Systems Performance Standards

Chairman Smith opened the public hearing.

Chairman Smith inquired about the changes to the ordinance. Judith Murphy, Chair of the Planning Board, stated that the setbacks were changed from 75 feet to 200 by unanimous vote. Selectman Bell noted that some residents wanted a 500-foot setback and believes the 200-foot is a good compromise. Ms. Murphy noted that the Zoning Board has done a good job updating the ordinance.

Selectman Bell inquired about application fees. Planning Assistant Cindy Gelinis stated that application fees are up to the board and do not need to be a part of the public hearing. Current fees are \$50 for residential and \$500 for commercial.

Chairman Smith closed the public hearing and brought the item back to the board.

Selectman Staples stated that he appreciates the time and effort put into it changes to the ordinance. Selectman Bell thanked the Zoning Board, recognizing it has been a long process.

Selectman Bell asked the board to consider adjusting the fee structure. He believes the fees are too low and do not cover costs. Selectman O'Neil believes more information is needed and the discussion should be tabled to a future Select Board Meeting. Selectman Bell agreed.

ITEM 3: To review and sign Warrant for Special Town Meeting

The Board reviewed the Warrant. The Special Town Meeting will take place on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center.

Selectman O’Neil made a motion to sign the Warrant; Selectman Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 4: To Award the Bid for the 2024 Paving and Reclamation Program

Public Works Director Phil Hutchins and Assistant Director Leia Durrell approached the board. They received 5 bids for the 2024 Paving Program. Maine-ly Paving Services, LLC was the low bidder. They are a fairly new company, but they dealt with the owner, Jamie Ward, when he was working for other companies. He is wonderful to work with. The mix will be coming from Auburn/Richmond. All mixes will be tested as they come in.

Erica LaCroix stated that Jamie Ward came out of Pike Industries. Pike had been the low bid on a project in Winslow. Pike vouched highly for Mr. Ward, as did 5 other communities.

Selectman O’Neil stated that he appreciates the tabulation sheets and the effort that went into it.

Selectman Bunker noted that the paving plan is subject to reconsideration each year depending on budgets, needs, and road conditions.

Selectman Bell made a motion to Award the Bid for the 2024 Paving and Reclamation Program to Maine-ly Paving Services, LLC; Selectman Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 5: To review Application for Renewal of On-Premises License for Sodexo America, LLC

The Board reviewed the application.

Selectman Bunker made a motion to approve; Selectman Staples seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 6: To hear from Marc Edwards, Regional Outreach Coordinator, Natural Resources of Maine regarding the Maine Trails Bond Initiative

Mr. Edwards was unable to attend the meeting. The Item is tabled for a future meeting.

ITEM 7: To Discuss Other Business

Interim Town Manager Stephen Eldridge addressed the Board. The office staff met this morning with Police Chief Ken Charles and the active shooter training officer. Safety protocols, including keeping doors locked, were discussed. Dirigo Risk Management will be doing walkthroughs next week to review safety and provide recommendations.

Cost of Living Adjustments were discussed for the upcoming budget. The New England CPI in October was 3%, now 2.7%. Would like to know what the Board would like to do before beginning the budget process.

Selectman Bunker made a motion to approve a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment; Selectman O’Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Selectman Bunker stated that he is looking forward to the Chester Greenwood Celebration on Saturday, December 2, and encouraged people to come to watch the parade and shop locally. Selectman Bell added that the Festival of Trees will be held Saturday night at the Community Center.

Selectman O’Neil received a letter from Efficiency Maine and asked if the Town has ever had them do an evaluation. Fire Chief Hardy stated that they used them to update bay lighting and a few small projects, but it has been a few years. He believes there is an opportunity to revisit it.

Selectman Smith stated that he received an email from Becky Bowering at Franklin Savings Bank. He will tell her that they will get back to her after the new year with the new Town Manager in place. Selectman Bunker mentioned putting insurance out to bid next year as well.

The Executive Session being pushed due to opposing counsel being on vacation

Selectman Bell made a motion to adjourn at 7:31 p.m.; Selectman Staples seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Minutes respectfully submitted by Leah Giusti.

Byron Staples - Secretary