

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, JAN. 22, 2019
MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM – 7 P.M.**

Present were Vice Chair Andrea Miles, Clerk Jeff Cyr, member Sarah Etelman, member Bruce Forcier, and Town Administrator Michael J. Sullivan. Chair Ira Brezinsky was absent.

CALL TO ORDER

Miles called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Forcier motioned to approve the draft minutes of the Dec. 4, 2018 and Jan. 8, 2019 meeting. Cyr seconded. All in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Forcier thanked the community on behalf of Bag The Community for their donations of time, resources and non-perishables.

Sullivan reminded residents town hall will be closed at noon on Friday, Jan. 25 for town staff to attend a professional development day. The topic is ethics training with the state ethics commissioners.

SPECIAL MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE FOR BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Sullivan said one member of the Board of Assessors is a lawyer by trade and would like to appear before boards other than the assessors as allowed by law. The Selectboard may accept the Board of Assessors as municipal employees, under Section 17 of MGL. The entire board must have the designation opposed to just the individual member. The designation lasts for one year. Etelman moved to designate the Board of Assessors as Special Municipal Employees in accordance with MGL c. 268A. Cyr seconded. All in favor.

VETERAN DISTRICT SERVICE BOARD

Forcier said Brian Willette has expressed an interest in being on the district board. Sullivan said Willette would also need appointment from the mayor of Easthampton. Forcier motioned to recommend Brian Willette be the third member of the South Hadley /Easthampton Veterans District Board. Etelman seconded. All in favor.

TOWN COUNSEL REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION

Sullivan said when the Selectboard appointed Brian O'Toole, an associate of Edward Ryan, as temporary town counsel, members stated they would revisit the appointment in January. O'Toole is doing an excellent job, said Sullivan. Because the Selectboard stated they would revisit the appointment, Sullivan asked if the Selectboard was interested in having Sullivan draft a request for qualifications, and if the board is changing its process in looking for town counsel. Members indicated Sullivan should move forward with drafting language for an RFQ.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND PUBLIC HEARING – 7:10 P.M.

A public hearing was opened at 7:10 p.m. for the discussion of community development funding. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Deputy Director Jim Mazik discussed Community Development Block Grant funds and the town's ability to apply to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for up to \$800,000 in funds. He suggested focusing on and putting the two strongest components forward – bathroom modifications for up to four units at Lathrop Village and town-wide housing rehabilitation. There are 40 people on the waiting list for housing rehabilitation in South Hadley. Mazik said it's a moderate-income program which assists many single families, young couples with children, and the elderly. Projects include new roofs and weatherization.

Mazik said the town can only receive \$1.35 million throughout the course of two years. The objective for this year is to go for a smaller application and focus on housing to exceed no more than \$550,000, saving the \$800,000 balance for the following year for larger projects. Mazik said this maximizes the funding over the two-year period. The town would know if it received the funding in the summer. If funding is received, work would start in the fall.

The town does not yet have an ADA plan in place, but it will be completed by the end of this calendar year. Mazik said when it does, the town can apply for construction money up to \$100,000 without plans and specs. For example, curb ramps, door hardware, and elevator upgrade design work.

Miles closed the public hearing at 7:17 p.m. Etelman moved to authorize submission of the proposed FY 2019 South Hadley Community Development Fund grant application to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development in an amount not to exceed \$550,000 as detailed in the public hearing and to include funding for a Housing Rehabilitation Program and funding for the South Hadley Housing Authority for the renovation of existing bathrooms in four units at Lathrop Village. Forcier seconded. All in favor.

Etelman moved to authorize execution and submission of all required forms, documents, letters, and authorizations pertaining to the proposed FY 2019 South Hadley Community Development Fund grant application. Cyr seconded. All in favor.

ACCEPTANCE OF CHATER 21 & 22 FOR HEALTH INSURANCE

Joe Shea of the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust described changes to the trust's health insurance, including the introduction of copays for the first time and small deductibles on pharmaceuticals. These are the first changes proposed in nearly 20 years. He said the trust has been informed by a number of attorneys that accepting chapters 21 and 22 is the way to go for municipalities to make changes to health benefits. The trust can make the changes but municipalities within have to determine how they're going to implement the changes. Each community would have to create a public employee committee charged with deciding how any savings would be shared.

Representatives from local unions spoke out against acceptance of chapters 21 and 22, including Scott Beaulieu of the South Hadley Education Association, Daniel Kelleher of the custodians AFSCME, Ray Hebert of the South Hadley Police Union, and Peter Jesionowski of the South Hadley Electric Light Department IBEW.

Sullivan said the public employee committee exists and has to have a representative from every union in town. Chapters 21 and 22 were installed by the legislature. If the Selectboard accepts chapters 21 and 22, they would be accepting a law and not passing a law. He said no one wants to see these changes but the future is dim if the town doesn't make the changes – funding for the schools, police and DPW would need to be shifted away.

Cyr said he is a public employee like the rest of the crowd in the room, and the changes proposed will affect his family directly more than most. But he is willing to pay, and accept chapters 21 and 22, in order to see no increase next year.

Etelman moved to accept Massachusetts General Law Chapter 32b Sections 21 and 22 for the purposes of considering and/or negotiating changes to health insurance benefits and/or copays and deductibles offered to all collective bargaining units and retirees by the Town of South Hadley. Cyr seconded. All in favor.

MMA RECAP

Sullivan said he hoped the Massachusetts Municipal Association Conference was beneficial for all Selectboard members. Members attended various workshops during the weekend conference, including seminars on changes to ClearGov, recycling, updates to the voting law and open meeting, age friendly communities and procurement, among others.

TA REPORT

Etelman said she was surprised and happy to see that Senator Jo Comerford was taking the town up on using office space offered to her.

For the full report, see the Jan. 22, 2019 Selectboard packet.

ADJOURN

Forcier motioned to adjourn. Etelman seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED
Kristin Maher
Executive Assistant to Administration