

Select Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday November 6, 2019 held in Room B-129, Swampscott High School, 200 Essex Street, Swampscott, MA

Members Present: Spellios (Chair), Dreeben, Titcomb, Spathanas, Hause

Members Absent: None

Other Town Officials Present: Sean Fitzgerald (Town Administrator), Ronald Mendes (minutes taker & Asst Town Administrator), Marzie Galazka (Dir. of Community Development), Susan Duplin (Town Clerk); Kevin Breen (Fire Chief); Graham Archer (Fire Captain); and many other members of the Swampscott Fire Department; Martha Sybert (School business Administrator); Martha Raymond (Director of Special Education); Kelly Stevens (Assistant Town Engineer); Julie DeLillo (Director of Human Resources)

Others Present: Various representatives of area Fire Departments and town residents

Mr. Spellios called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Mr. Spellios welcomed Fire Chief Kevin Breen to lead an honor guard of the Swampscott Fire Department into the room. Chief Breen then led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance. Chief Breen then offered some words in support of the appointment of the new Fire Chief. He then said some words in recognition of the many dignitaries in the room and reminisced on his years of service.

Chief Breen then recommended the appointment of Graham F. Archer as the next Chief of the Swampscott Fire Department. Mr. Fitzgerald then offered words of support of the Fire Department and also recommended the appointment of Mr. Archer as the next Chief of the Swampscott Fire Department talking about the exemplary qualifications of Mr. Archer to be the next Chief of the Fire Department.

Mr. Spellios then led the discussion among board members in acting on the recommendation of the Chief Breen and Mr. Fitzgerald. The other board members then offered their words in support of the recommendation. Ms. Spathanas discussed the under-representation of females in the Fire Service as a whole, and specifically in the Swampscott Fire Department. Captain Archer indicated that the department will make a specific effort to encourage diversity and gender balance in the ranks of the department. Ms. Dreeben asked Captain Archer what his vision is for the department, both in the short term and the long term. Captain Archer offered some brief words on his vision for the department. Mr. Spellios then talked briefly about the interview process that led to the selection of Mr. Archer as the next Fire Chief. Mr. Spellios asked Mr. Archer to talk a bit about his background and to introduce the many members of his family that are present in the room.

Mr. Spellios then asked for a motion to appoint Graham F. Archer as the next Chief of the Swampscott Fire Department. MOTION was made (Spathanas) and SECOND (Titcomb), and it was VOTED (unanimous) to appoint Graham F. Archer the next Chief of the Swampscott Fire Department. Town Clerk Susan Duplin then administered the oath of office on Mr. Archer.

Chief Archer then called on Stephen Archer, Chief of the City of Lynn Fire Department to pin the Chief's Badge on Chief Archer. Chief Archer then offered some words thanking the board, Mr. Fitzgerald and Chief Breen for their support. He then offered words in support of the members of the Swampscott Fire Department and other town employees who have supported him over the years. He offered special words of support for Chief Hyde for hiring him, and Chief Breen for mentoring him during the transition; and finally, he thanked his wife and family for their support.

Mr. Spellios then called a brief recess of the board meeting at 6:35pm to allow the people in the room to greet Chief Archer.

The meeting was called back to order at 6:50pm and Mr. Spellios led a discussion on the Warrant for the November 18th Special Town Meeting. The board then proceeded to discuss each warrant article and considered whether to recommend acceptance as indicated below:

Article 2: Amendment to the FY2020 Sewer Enterprise fund budget. There was some discussion about this amendment as the board has heard about this issue in several other forums. **MOTION** was made (Dreeben) and **SECOND** (Spathanas) and it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to recommend passage of this article.

Article 3: Transfer of \$135,000 from sewer retained earnings to be used to reduce the sewer rates. Mr. Spellios explained that this is also part of the issue raised under Article 2 concerning the issues related to the Town's contract with Lynn Water & Sewer Commission. Sewer rates were raised by 3% and if this were to not pass sewer rates would need to be raised by 9% to balance the sewer budget. **MOTION** was made (Titcomb) and **SECOND** (Dreeben) and it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to recommend approval of this article.

Article 4: Appropriation of funds from the Transportation Infrastructure Fund. There was some discussion that the intent of this article is to fund pedestrian safety improvements. Mr. Mendes explained that this purpose can be included with the motion. The board elected to defer making a recommendation on this article until the Finance Committee makes a recommendation.

Article 5: Appropriation of funds from Free Cash to be used to offset the tax levy. Mr. Spellios explained that the board will shortly be hearing a presentation from Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Mendes on the tax rate recap data. The board decided to defer making a recommendation on this article until after hearing this presentation and until after the Finance Committee has made its recommendation.

Article 6: Appropriation of funds from Free Cash to fund provisions of Collective Bargaining agreements. Mr. Spellios explained that this article was a placeholder to allow a mechanism to fund collective bargaining agreements should such an agreement be successfully negotiated that would need such funding. At this time, Mr. Fitzgerald reports that negotiations are not at the stage where he can make a recommendation at this time. The board deferred making any recommendation under this article at this time.

Article 8: Acceptance of G.L. ch. 71, s. 71F (non-resident tuition revolving fund). Mr. Sybert and Ms. Raymond stepped through a presentation on the effect of acceptance of this local option statute. Currently nonresident tuition is received but is accepted as a general fund receipt. If this statute were to be accepted these funds would be received as receipts into this revolving fund and the School Dept. general fund budget would need to be reduced accordingly. There were some questions the board members had that were addressed by Ms. Sybert and Ms. Raymond. **MOTION** was made (Titcomb) and **SECOND** (Dreeben) and it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to recommend approval of this article.

Article 9: Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to clarify the provisions concerning fees in lieu of affordable housing. Mr. Spellios explained that he will be offering an amendment to this article language to change the board that would determine the number of units from being the Zoning Board of Appeals to being the Affordable Housing Trust Board. There was then some discussion in order to provide some clarity on Mr. Spellios' proposed change. The board deferred making any recommendation under this article at this time.

Mr. Spellios then asked Mr. Mendes and Mr. Fitzgerald to step through the preliminary tax rate recap data. Mr. Mendes stepped through the preliminary tax rate recap data presentation. There was initially a review of FY2019 data, which showed that the average single family tax bill went down by \$51, while the average single family tax bill in Essex County, as well as the cohort of communities identified as a peer group to Swampscott, showed the average single family tax bills increasing by more than \$250 per household. Mr. Spellios asked that a more detailed analysis of the town's experience in its pilot program with the small commercial exemption that has been offered over the past 2 years. Also, Ms. Titcomb asked some questions surrounding the recommendation to transfer funds from Free Cash to reduce the tax levy.

Mr. Spellios then asked Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Cresta and Ms. Stevens to step through the road surface management presentation. Mr. Fitzgerald then began to step through a presentation informing the board of the Town's Road Surface Management System and provided an overview. Mr. Fitzgerald then introduced Mr. Cresta and Ms. Stevens who provided more in-depth information on the road paving program. There were several questions from board members during the presentation.

Mr. Spellios then led a discussion of the Town Administrator's annual review. Mr. Spellios indicated that the combined annual review of the Town Administrator is a public document that will be made available. The board sought feedback from town employees and others who work with the Town Administrator. Mr. Spellios then proceeded to highlight the major points on the review. The Select Board continues to be impressed with Mr. Fitzgerald's commitment to public service and his commitment to making the lives of Swampscott residents better. The board suggests that Mr. Fitzgerald delegate more duties to department heads such that information can be better organized, and the workload can be better spread among more staff people. The consensus of the board is that the board is highly satisfied with Mr. Fitzgerald's stewardship of the town. Individual board members then provided comments on their own impression of Mr. Fitzgerald.

Mr. Spellios then moved to the recommendations of the Traffic Study Advisory Committee. Ms. Galazka, Mr. Cresta and Mr. Mendes stepped through a presentation on 6 recommendations of the Traffic Study Advisory Committee. On **MOTION** made (Dreeben) and **SECOND** (Titcomb) it was **VOTED** (unanimous) that recommendations #1, 3, 4, 5 & 6 be approved.

Mr. Fitzgerald then stepped through a recommendation on re-constituting the Traffic Study Advisory Committee. The recommended composition of the committee would be: 9 Member Committee with 4 Citizens; One Member representing a PTO; Police Chief; Fire Chief; Asst. TA/DPW Director; Community Development Director. Staffing: Senior Planner. The mission of the committee would be a diverse group of Swampscott, staff, public safety officials (from various departments) to reduce risks to motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists while they navigate the streets and sidewalks of one of the most densely settled communities in the Commonwealth. To the extent practicable, we promote the five "Es" of traffic safety: Evaluation, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering and Education. Mr. Spellios indicated that this recommendation is a First Reading of this suggestion and members and the public can provide further comments directly to Mr. Fitzgerald and the board will consider this again at a future meeting.

Mr. Spellios then asked Mr. Fitzgerald to proceed with a presentation on the town's Solid Waste program. Mr. Fitzgerald then stepped through a presentation on the current levels of solid waste that are being collected and disposed of in Swampscott. In FY2020, it is projected that the line item for solid waste will have a deficit of approximately \$182,821 by the end of FY 2020. Mr. Fitzgerald then stepped through some recommendations on changes to the collection of solid waste that are designed to address the cost implications of this program. Mr. Fitzgerald also stepped through the changing market

of solid waste and recyclables processing that are placing added pressure on these programs in communities throughout the Commonwealth and the nation. Recommended changes to the program include limiting trash pickup to no more than one 35-gallon barrel (the town is seeking a grant to pay the cost of providing one such barrel to each household) per household. Further trash would require purchasing overflow bags in order to be collected.

Mr. Spellios then proceeded to the Consent Agenda. Consent Agenda items include approval of minutes for June 19th, July 30th, August 6th, October 2nd & October 17th; approval of two Hawking/Peddling/Door to Door Sales permits; a One-Day Liquor License for ReachArts; Change of Manager Applications for Bertucci's and Hawthorne by the Sea; and Acceptance of Gifts from David Grishman and Trur North Ale.

On **MOTION** (Titcomb) and **SECOND** (Spathanas) it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to approve the Consent Agenda Items.

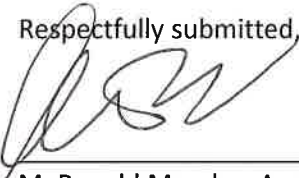
Mr. Fitzgerald reminded people about the Veterans Day ceremony to take place on Memorial Avenue at 11:00am on Monday November 11th.

Mr. Spellios then invited Selectmen to address items during Selectmen's time. Mr. Hause advised of a meeting regarding the Fish House that he attended. Ms. Spathanas brought awareness to the newly expanded Senior Citizens & Veterans Tax Abatement Work Program. There was then a robust discussion of the program, including remarks about the parameters for qualifying for the program from Ms. DeLillo. Mr. Spellios acknowledged that Bella DiGrazia, reporter from the Daily Item, is attending her last meeting in Swampscott as she recently got a new job.

MOTION was made to adjourn (Titcomb) and **SECONDED** (Dreeben) and it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned 9:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,



M. Ronald Mendes, Asst Town Administrator, Admin. & Finance

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Select Board 12/4/2019