

**Board:** Select Board / Water Commissioner's Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, March 01, 2021  
**Location:** Online Video/Audio Conference Pursuant to Governor Baker's Executive Order in Response to the COVID-19 State of Emergency

**Selectmen Present:** Jacob Smith, William Bembury  
**Finance Committee:** Daniel Hammock, Benjamin Fellows, Charles Zilinski, Debra Smith  
**Capital Planning Committee:** Peter Mallett, Linda Downs-Bembury, Jacob Smith, Benjamin Fellows, Debra Smith  
**Also, Present:** Bryan Smith, Glenn McCrory, Robert Holst, Brandon Breault, Dana Dodge, Kelly Loynd, Michael Gordon, Philip Wonkka, Robert Holst, Scott Bastarache, Mariah Kurtz  
**Press:** Kathleen Nolan, Montague Reporter

At 6:33 PM **Chairman Smith** called the meeting to order.

**Chairman Smith** explained that the meeting is being recorded and provided an overview of the functions of the video/audio conferencing platform.

#### **Discussion Regarding Town Response to COVID-19**

The Select Board reviewed the memorandum from Bryan Smith, Town Administrator, regarding COVID-19. **Chairman Smith** provided an overview and indicated that the Town is awaiting Governor Baker's new executive order. **Chairman Smith** explained that the State is beginning Phase 3, step 2 which will allow for increased occupancy capacity. **Chairman Smith** discussed the tentative plan for Phase 4, step 1 to begin on March 22, 2021. The Select Board members reviewed COVID-19 vaccine eligibility. **Chairman Smith** noted continued issues with the supply chain. **Chairman Smith** discussed the need for the Select Board to revisit office capacity within Town facilities and personal protective equipment requirements for re-opening.

#### **Library Construction Project Update & Review of Change Order Requests**

The Select Board members reviewed a memorandum from Bryan outlining the site walk that occurred at the Library on February 26, 2021, with Town representatives, the General Contractor, and the Owner's Project Manager. Bryan provided a summary of the outstanding issues that were observed with the building. The Select Board members had no questions at this time. Daniel Hammock joined the meeting and discussed his participation in the comprehensive walk-through and the list of outstanding issues.

**Chairman Smith** noted that the Select Board has received a request from the Library Director and the Board of Library Trustees to open the meeting rooms for use by the public. Daniel explained that the Library Trustees want to continue to follow the State and Town guidelines and don't want to unduly restrict the public. Bryan discussed protocols for public use and sanitation. **Selectman Bembury** and **Chairman Smith** both expressed support for proceeding with opening the meeting spaces to the public and Bryan will follow up with the Library Director.

#### **River, Warner & Strachan Street Project Update & Change Orders**

Glenn McCrory, Highway Superintendent, joined the Select Board to review the survey analysis from Strachan Street and River Street. Glenn explained that Warner Street to the crosswalk is graded correctly. Glenn explained the proposal to mill the intersection at Warner Street on Strachan Street and explained the need to lower two structures and raise a structure to ensure that stormwater flows correctly to the

structures. The Select Board members reviewed the pre and post construction slopes and discussed the proposal for the gutter mill behind the catch basin. **Chairman Smith** asked if the Town should be concerned about the seams created by this corrective work. Glenn explained that the plan requires saw cutting in three (3) locations and then a re-paving of the area. **Chairman Smith** asked about the use of an infrared process to help seal the seams. Glenn explained that Weston & Sampson have used the process before and that he is researching the application. **Chairman Smith** expressed concern about the potential for a seam to be an area of weakness that will deteriorate sooner than other parts of the same road. **Selectman Bembury** asked Glenn to describe the next steps. Glenn explained the need for the Town to issue a counter response to the contractor.

The Select Board members reviewed River Street pre and post construction slopes and Glenn explained that the survey analysis demonstrates the loss of approximately 2% of slopes. Peter Mallet questioned if the corrective action would require a change order. **Chairman Smith** explained that this is not a change order and instead is a deficiency, noting that the Town maintains that the work product it is not to specification. **Chairman Smith** explained that a survey was conducted, and the engineer has drafted a recommendation. Glenn discussed wanting to work with Weston & Sampson to extend the corrective area on Strachan Street to the structure beyond the wall. **Chairman Smith** and **Selectman Bembury** expressed agreement. **Selectman Bembury** and **Chairman Smith** approved Bryan and Glenn to respond to the contractor on behalf of the Select Board. **Chairman Smith** asked if the infrared process should be recommended; he would like to see it included. **Selectman Bembury** expressed agreement.

#### **Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee & Capital Committee- FY2022 Budget Request Review, STM Warrant Review & Church Street Bridge**

At 7:07 PM **Chairman Smith** called the joint meeting of the Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee to order. Finance Committee members Benjamin Fellows, Daniel Hammock, Debra Smith, and Charles Zilinski, as well as Capital Planning Committee members Linda Downs-Bembury and Peter Mallet, joined the Select Board.

#### **Discussion Regarding Church Street Bridge & Traffic Plan**

The Select Board, Finance Committee, and Capital Planning Committee members reviewed a professional engineering services proposal from Weston & Sampson to prepare the Church Street Bridge traffic detour plan during the temporary closure. **Chairman Smith** provided an overview of the proposal and explained that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has not yet sent the letter regarding the downgrading of the Church Street Bridge. **Chairman Smith** explained that the engineering proposal for the traffic detour plan is for a fee of \$2,700.00. **Chairman Smith** discussed wanting to receive the letter from MassDOT so that Weston & Sampson can review it and meet with public safety representatives before presenting a plan for traffic.

Glenn expressed concern with single lane traffic on the bridge and suggested the need to add jersey barriers to protect the sidewalk area. **Chairman Smith** acknowledged the concern and asked that it is expressed to Weston & Sampson for consideration. **Selectman Bembury** and **Chairman Smith** both expressed agreements. **Chairman Smith** made a motion to engage Weston & Sampson for the Church Street Bridge detour plan during temporary, partial or full, closure for the lump sum of \$2,700.00. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **FY2022 Budget Requests & Revenue Review**

The Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee members reviewed the FY2022 budget summary sheet. **Chairman Smith** summarized the revisions that were made to budget requests

for the Police Department, Buildings & Grounds, Health Insurance, and the Capital Improvement Program plan. **Chairman Smith** explained that there is \$94,000.00 in funding available for appropriation. Debra Smith suggested appropriating the \$75,000.00 into the capital improvement program plan for the emergency communication equipment at the school and appropriating the balance into the Capital Stabilization account.

Philip Wonkka, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director, joined the meeting. Chief Wonkka explained that the vehicle radios have been tested and work well. Chief Wonkka explained that the transition for the portable radios has been more challenging and proposed the use of the \$75,000.00 in emergency communication capital fund to purchase repeaters for the vehicles. **Chairman Smith** asked for the clarification that a building repeater for the Elementary School wouldn't be included. Chief Wonkka confirmed that understanding but explained that the mobile vehicle repeaters would work for responses to the Elementary School. Benjamin asked Chief Wonkka for the estimated cost per vehicle repeater. Chief Wonkka estimated that the cost is \$15,000.00 per device. **Selectman Bembury** asked if the vehicle repeaters have been tested in Erving. Chief Wonkka explained that they were tested at the Franklin County Technical School and feels confident that they will be effective in Erving. **Selectman Bembury** asked for an explanation of the issues experienced with the portable radios. Chief Wonkka explained that the portable radios are searching for towers that are not well positioned and that the mobiles in the vehicles are generally working fine. Chief Wonkka added that the vehicle repeaters will allow the radios to work reliably. **Selectman Bembury** asked if the radios would work more efficiently if there was a tower that better served Erving. Chief Wonkka answered "yes" and explained that the State is exploring tower locations. **Chairman Smith** asked if there is any other investment that the Town can make to improve the signal. Chief Wonkka explained that Greenfield has investigated a similar proposal, but it will require the State to make further improvements and expressed concern about the Town doing something on its own, creating a new asset for the Town to maintain. Chief Wonkka explained that he has reached out to Motorola to understand if there are other options to consider for mobile repeaters. Peter asked about the effective range for the repeaters to support the portable radios. Chief Wonkka explained that the service quality will still be reliant on the topography of the area and noted that the repeaters can communicate through buildings. Peter expressed concern about Erving's topography. **Chairman Smith** asked if one (1) vehicle should have a larger mobile repeater unit and suggested installation in a command vehicle. Chief Wonkka will explore that option as well. Debra asked why the budget request only installs one (1) repeater in Fire Department apparatus. Chief Wonkka explained that he has been working within the existing budget and already has one (1) repeater for the Fire Command truck. **Selectman Bembury** asked Chief Wonkka to arrange for a time for staff to test the radios throughout Town to identify weaknesses. Chief Wonkka affirmed that he will work with staff to test coverage and noted that the Town is not losing access to the current system, as it is being maintained as a backup until the transition is complete. **Chairman Smith** asked if there is support to fund the special appropriation. Benjamin, Debra and **Selectman Bembury** spoke in favor of restoring the appropriation. **Chairman Smith** and Peter expressed agreement.

**Chairman Smith** provided an overview of the draft budget changes that were discussed at the last joint meeting. **Chairman Smith** asked about getting further guidance regarding the Assessors' overlay, specifically what the minimum appropriation needs to be and what the current balance in the fund is. Bryan explained that Jacquelyn Boyden, Principal Assessor, is preparing an explanation of the overlay. Daniel discussed his understanding of the use of the overlay. **Chairman Smith** clarified that he is just looking for an overview. **Chairman Smith** suggested appropriating an additional \$19,000.00 into Capital Stabilization, for a total of \$169,000.00. The Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee members expressed agreement.

**Discussion Regarding Emergency Management Director, Assistant Emergency Management Director, Information Technology (IT) Coordinator & IT Technician Compensation**

At 7:46 PM Debra recused herself from the meeting.

At 7:47 PM **Chairman Smith** invoked the rule of necessity because if he were to recuse himself the Select Board would lose a quorum and would not be able to continue with the meeting.

Bryan provided a review of the other Franklin County towns and the compensation for the Emergency Management Director (EMD) position. **Chairman Smith** asked procedurally if there is a process for the EMD function to be associated with the Fire Chief position. Bryan explained that the Select Board appoints the EMD position and would have the discretion to make that association. Bryan noted that the Town has previously appointed a civilian to the position, but that for approximately the last decade, the position has been conducted by one of the Chiefs. Bryan explained that the nature of the work during the day often aligns with the work of the public safety departments and noted the work that was conducted by the EMD during the response to the pandemic and specifically the work of Chief Wonkka. **Selectman Bembury** recommended level funding for FY2021 rates until the Town has more time to consider the structure. Daniel seconded. Daniel discussed being higher than most in the County. Chief Wonkka discussed recommendation to wait and revisit. **Selectman Bembury** expressed agreement. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

The Select Board and Finance Committee members reviewed the IT Coordinator Stipend of \$1,040.00. Daniel asked for an explanation of the extra work that the position had to complete. Bryan provided an overview of the work conducted by the IT Department in FY2021. Regarding the IT Technician position, the position is per diem and is currently paid at a rate of \$57.16. Daniel asked if there is a suggestion for how to assess the IT Coordinator stipend. Benjamin discussed the need to understand the number of hours worked each week. Robert Holst, Acting Chief of Police, discussed the work that has been performed by the IT Department to support the Police Department. Bryan will prepare a summary of tasks and responsibilities from the IT Coordinator. Benjamin asked about implementing a work order ticket system. **Chairman Smith** discussed the plan to institute a ticketing system for users and described the network improvements, and remote work capabilities that have been implemented.

**Selectman Bembury** asked Bryan to calculate the effect of a 2% increase on the IT Coordinator stipend and the IT Technician rate of pay. Bryan explained that a 2% increase would result in a stipend of \$1,061.00 for the IT Coordinator and an hourly rate of \$58.30 for the IT Technician. **Selectman Bembury** expressed support for a 2% increase for FY2021. **Selectman Bembury** discussed wanting to resolve the challenges with the structure of the IT service, noting the tremendous amount of work that has been done, and the need to prioritize a plan. **Selectman Bembury** discussed working with the previous attempts to partner with other Franklin County towns and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Bryan explained that the Town has remained interested in collaborating with other towns, but that the Town's infrastructure has evolved significantly in the past three (3) years and it's possible that the Town may have to develop a solution alone. **Chairman Smith** acknowledged the concern and explained that a transition plan will likely take years.

Regarding the proposal for a 2% increase, **Chairman Smith** discussed wanting to maintain consistency with other positions, such as the stipend positions. Bryan suggested adjusting the stipends for the EMD and Assistant EMD positions by 2% for FY2021 to maintain consistency. **Selectman Bembury** made a motion for a 2% increase for the EMD, Assistant EMD, IT Coordinator and the IT Technician rates. Charles seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

At 8:32 PM Debra rejoined the meeting.

**Review of Special Town Meeting Warrant Draft**

The Select Board, Finance Committee, and Capital Planning Committee reviewed the revised draft Special Town Meeting warrant that is anticipated to occur in March 2021. Bryan explained that Richard Peabody, Town Moderator, has requested that the warrant clearly state a rain date that may be used and the process for notifying voters. Bryan reviewed the proposed draft language that is similar to the language used with the Annual Town Meeting in 2020.

**Article 1:**

Bryan added that Deborah Mero, Town Accountant, has asked that Article 1 is revised to clarify that it is a proposed amendment for the FY2021 omnibus budget article that was approved at the Annual Town Meeting in 2020. The revised language shows line 2 for Public Safety amended by \$122,000.00 for a new Public Safety budget of \$1,053,150.00. The Select Board and Finance Committee members expressed support for the revisions.

**Article 2: Decorative Streetlight Repair Project**

Bryan reviewed the revisions to the draft article that would appropriate \$40,000.00 from Free Cash for evaluation and repair work on the decorative streetlights in Erving Center. The Select Board and Finance Committee members expressed no concerns with the revisions.

**Article 3: Church Street Bridge Replacement Engineering Project**

Bryan reviewed the draft article that would appropriate \$195,000.00 from Free Cash for the engineering work associated with replacing the Church Street Bridge. Bryan explained that the only correction was a typographical error. The Select Board and Finance Committee members expressed no concerns with the revisions.

**Article 4: Purchase of a Solar Powered Messaging Board**

Bryan reviewed the draft article that would appropriate \$20,000.00 from Free Cash for the purchase of a mobile solar powered message board. Bryan explained that there have been no revisions to this article since it was previously reviewed.

**Article 5: Wastewater Emergency Generator Replacement Project for POTW1**

Bryan reviewed the draft article that would appropriate \$80,000.00 from retained earnings for the procurement and installation of a new emergency generator. Bryan explained that the only correction was a typographical error. The Select Board and Finance Committee members expressed no concerns with the revisions.

**Article 6: Rescind Borrowing Authorization for Erving Center Wastewater Treatment Plant**

Bryan reviewed the draft article that would rescind the approved borrowing authority of \$17,940,000.00 for the sludge dryer project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant #2. **Chairman Smith** asked Bryan to amend the article information section to clarify that the borrowing option was no longer viable for Erving Industries. Bryan will make that revision.

**Article 7: To Acquire Parcel 17 Moore Street**

Bryan reviewed the draft article that would authorize the Select Board to take the former Library parcel and provide clear title on the property. Bryan explained that he is awaiting final approval from the Town

Counsel but that there have been no other changes. The Select Board and Finance Committee members expressed no concerns about the article as presented.

**Finance Committee Recommendation:** Debra made a motion to accept the Special Town Meeting warrant, to be held in March, and recommending all seven articles. Benjamin seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Bryan suggested scheduling the Special Town Meeting to be held on Saturday, March 27, 2021, or April 03, 2021. The Select Board expressed general support and asked Bryan to explore the use of a tent for an outdoor meeting setup. Bryan will draft a protocol for the Special Town Meeting to include in the mailing to residents. Bryan will update the budget document and the Annual Town Meeting warrant draft. The Select Board and Finance Committee members will next meet jointly on March 15, 2021, at 7:00 PM.

At 8:52 PM **Chairman Smith** made a motion to adjourn the joint meeting of the Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee, and to continue the Select Board meeting. Debra seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **Discussion Regarding Chief of Police Position Search**

The Select Board members reviewed a memorandum from Bryan regarding the Chief of Police Search and the finalist interviews that are scheduled for Wednesday, March 03, 2021. **Chairman Smith** reviewed the planned format for the interviews of the finalists. The Select Board members confirmed that the meeting will be held online, and the anticipation to provide forty (40) minutes for each interview. The Select Board members discussed how to incorporate public input. **Chairman Smith** suggested having members of the public submit questions and comments through chat feature and that Bryan can summarize comments. **Selectman Bembury** suggested limiting the number of questions to two (2). Bryan spoke to trying to maintain a similar experience for the finalists. **Chairman Smith** acknowledged the concern and suggested that questions could be accepted toward the end and questions that are submitted could be asked for both candidates. Bryan has posted and shared the participation link.

**Selectman Bembury** asked how the Select Board should handle the deliberation and to determine next steps. The Select Board members discussed having some deliberation the night of the interviews. **Chairman Smith** discussed wanting to have time reflect with the anticipation of deciding on Monday, March 8, 2021. Both Select Board members expressed agreement.

#### **Review of the Almost Anything Goes Proposal**

The Select Board members reviewed a memorandum from Bryan regarding the Almost Anything Goes, residential bulky waste collection and disposal program, and the proposal to have Casella Waste Management conduct the collection and disposal work. Glenn rejoined the meeting to discuss the proposal. **Chairman Smith** expressed support for having the waste collection vendor conduct the work as they are trained for this work, and it may be safer. **Selectman Bembury** expressed agreement.

#### **Review of Town Branding**

Mariah Kurtz, Assistant Town Planner, joined the Select Board to review the revised Town logo concepts. Mariah reviewed revised concepts 1-1 through 1-3. **Selectman Bembury** explained his review of the concepts and expressed support for concept 1-1 and expressed disapproval for concept 1-3. **Selectman Bembury** explained that concept 1-2 felt unbalanced to him. **Chairman Smith** expressed support for concepts 1-1 and 1-2 and explained that he disliked concept 1-3. Mariah discussed ideas for sharing characteristics of concepts 1-1 and 1-2. Mariah suggested further refining concept 1-1 with the addition

of tree definition and discussed the option of adding a heron. Kelly Loynd asked about adding rock elements. Debra asked about having a method to ask the residents for further follow up. Mariah discussed the public feedback process. Bryan asked if there is a different landmark in Erving that a concept could be designed around. Mariah added that a different shape could be considered. **Selectman Bembury** expressed support for a concept that features the Millers River and discussed the white-water rapids, fly fishing and the eagles flying. **Chairman Smith** expressed concern about not having a style that is unique to Erving. Mariah discussed feedback that needs to be expressed to the designer.

**Selectman Bembury** questioned the purpose of the project and raised the concern of trying to address too many things at once. **Chairman Smith** discussed the purpose of designing a comprehensive branding package to inform signage, business cards, etc. Bryan asked for time to redesign. **Selectman Bembury** expressed support for incorporating fly fishing, eagles, and rock climbing. **Chairman Smith** discussed wanting a fresh new design based on the feedback and to incorporate the Town.

#### **Discussion Regarding POTW #2 Sludge Dryer Project**

**Chairman Smith** explained there is no current update on the project. Bryan explained that he will meet with Morris Housen later this week and can provide the Select Board with an update after that. Bryan will inquire about the option to amend the State Revolving Loan fund application.

#### **Review of Meeting Minutes for April 27, 2020**

The Select Board passed over this agenda item.

#### **Review of Meeting Minutes for December 14, 2020**

The Select Board passed over this agenda item.

#### **Review of Meeting Minutes for January 11, 2021**

The Select Board passed over this agenda item.

#### **Review of Meeting Minutes for January 25, 2021**

The Select Board passed over this agenda item.

#### **Review of Meeting Minutes for February 08, 2021**

The Select Board passed over this agenda item.


#### **Review of Meeting Minutes for February 22, 2021**

The Select Board members reviewed the meeting minutes of Monday, February 22, 2021. **Selectman Bembury** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 22, 2021, as written. **Chairman Smith** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **Adjournment**

At 9:51 PM **Chairman Smith** made a motion to adjourn. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Bryan Smith  
Town Administrator