

**Board:** Select Board / Water Commissioner's Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, June 26, 2023  
**Location:** Senior & Community Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, MA 01344

**Select Board Present:** Jacob Smith, William Bembury, Scott Bastarache  
**Finance Committee Present:** Debra Smith, Thomas Duffy, Charles Zilinski, Daniel Hammock, Benjamin Fellows  
**Capital Planning Committee Present:** Benjamin Fellows, Linda Downs-Bembury, Peter Mallet, Jacob Smith, Debra Smith

At 6:12 PM **Chairman Smith** called the meeting to order.

#### **Executive Session**

At 6:12 PM **Chairman Smith** made a motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel ... and contract negotiations with non-union personnel regarding Fire Chief Philip Wonkka and Chief of Police Robert Holst. **Chairman Smith** explained that the Select Board will return to Regular Session. **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. **Roll call vote:**

**Selectman Bembury** Aye  
**Selectman Bastarache** Aye  
**Chairman Smith** Aye

At 6:30 PM the Select Board returned to Regular Session.

#### **Fire Chief Employment Agreement**

**Chairman Smith** made a motion to ratify the Fire Chief's contract, effective July 01, 2023, through June 30, 2026. **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **Surplus Equipment Request- School Dept- Tilt Skillet- 3rd Reading**

The Select Board members conducted a third reading of the surplus equipment request from the School Department for one (1) tilt skillet. The Select Board members expressed no concerns about the request. **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to deem the tilt skillet as surplus property and offer for auction, and if no takers scrap for metal value. **Chairman Smith** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **Review of Hazard Communication Policy Draft- 4th Reading**

The Select Board members passed over this agenda item.

#### **Review of Meeting Minutes for March 01, 2021, May 03, 2021, and November 29, 2021**

The Select Board members reviewed the meeting minutes for Monday, March 01, 2021, Wednesday, March 03, 2021, and Monday, November 29, 2021. **Selectman Bembury** made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of March 01, 2021, May 03, 2021, and November 29, 2021, as written. **Chairman Smith** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **Review of Meeting Minutes for January 03, 2022**

The Select Board members passed over this agenda item.

#### **Review of Meeting Minutes for January 10, 2022**

The Select Board members passed over this agenda item.

### **Review of Meeting Minutes for June 21, 2023**

The Select Board members reviewed the meeting minutes for Wednesday, June 21, 2023. **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 21, 2023, as presented. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

### **Review of Equipment Operator/ Building Maintenance Laborer Position Description**

Glenn McCrory, Highway Superintendent, joined the Select Board members to review the revised Equipment Operator/ Building Maintenance Laborer position description. Glenn explained that the current vacancy in the position was created because of the promotion to Foreman position. **Selectman Bembury** explained that he has reviewed the revised position description and has no concerns. **Chairman Smith** discussed changing the CPR and first aid reference to be required within six (6) months of appointment. The Select Board members discussed support for amending the language to read "obtain and/maintain within six (6) months." The Select Board members discussed amending other similar position descriptions in the future to reflect the same language. **Chairman Smith** suggested amending the language regarding the commercial driver's license to read "shall obtain." The Select Board members expressed agreement. **Selectman Bastarache** motion to approve the Equipment Operator Building Maintenance Laborer job description as amended, effective June 26, 2023. **Chairman Smith** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

The Select Board members reviewed a recommendation from Glenn to appoint Cody Pease to the position of Equipment Operator/ Building Maintenance Laborer. Glenn noted that Cody has worked for the Town since 2021, possesses the required hoisting licenses, and is certified in CPR and first aid. Glenn discussed Cody's experience working with the Highway Department staff as supporting rationale for the recommendation. Glenn discussed the proposal for sponsoring training for Cody to obtain his commercial driver's license. The Select Board members discussed support for the recommended promotion with an appointment effective for July 1, 2023. The Select Board members discussed pausing the conversation until after the FY2024 wage adjustment conversation that will come later in the meeting.

### **Review of Highway Plow Truck Procurement**

The Select Board members reviewed the memorandum from Bryan regarding the procurement for a new Ford F550 plow truck and sander for the Highway Department. Glenn explained the procurement process using the State contract VEH110, noting that the request for quotes was sent to four (4) vendors on the contract. Glenn explained that only one (1) response was received, and that was from Colonial Ford. Glenn explained that the approved budget is \$125,000.00 and that the bid from Colonial Ford was submitted as \$113,809.24. Glenn explained that the bid was assuming a 2024 model year, so it includes model year escalation cost of \$6,000.00 and an uncertain delivery date. Glenn explained that if the Select Board was open to purchasing a new 2023 model year Ford F550 with a similar build to the truck that was procured last fiscal year, the vendor has a truck that meets the specifications and that could be up fit as required within the next few months. **Selectman Bembury** expressed support for proceeding with the purchase of a 2023 model year truck that would expedite the time frame. Both **Selectman Bastarache** and **Chairman Smith** also expressed support for purchasing the 2023 model and support for purchasing the green color. The Select Board members expressed agreement to authorize the procurement with an amount not to exceed \$110,000.00. **Chairman Smith** made a motion to award the procurement for the Ford F550 plow truck to Colonial Ford of Marlborough, MA 01752 in an amount not to exceed \$110,000.00 for a 2023 model year, adjusted from the original spec and in green, not blue. **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

**Chairman Smith** made a motion to authorize Bryan Smith to execute all necessary agreements. **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **Review Proposed Revisions to Assistant Treasurer Position Description**

Jennifer Eichorn, Treasurer, joined the Select Board members to review the revised position description for the Assistant Treasurer position and the memorandum requesting a reclassification of the position to Grade D. **Chairman Smith** asked for clarification of the supervisory requirements in the draft position description. Bryan reminded the Select Board members that the Treasurer's Office also has an approved clerical position that is currently vacant. **Selectman Bembury** asked how long Jean Fountain has been with the Town. Jennifer explained that Jean has worked in the Assistant Treasurer position for approximately five (5) years. The Select Board members noted that the revised description includes the provisions to assume the Treasurer's duties in the Treasurer's absence. **Selectman Bembury** asked if the Assistant Treasurer is required to be bonded. Bryan explained the annual bonding requirement that is handled by the Administrative Office and explained that the cost is a few hundred dollars per bonded employee. The Select Board members expressed support for proceeding with the reclassification of the position with the revised position description. **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to approve the Assistant Treasurer description, as amended with a grade level of D, effective June 26, 2023. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **Joint meeting with Finance Committee & Capital Planning Committee- Discuss FY2023 Budget Adjustment(s), Discuss FY2024 Comprehensive Budget Review, Discuss FY2024 Wage Adjustments, Discuss IP Mill Demolition**

At 7:03PM **Chairman Smith** called the joint meeting of the Select Board with the Finance Committee and the Capital Planning Committee to order. Finance Committee members Debra Smith, Charles Zilinski, Thomas Duffy, Benjamin Fellows, and Daniel Hammock joined the meeting along with Capital Planning Committee members Linda Downs-Bembury and Peter Mallet.

At 7:05 PM Thomas Duffy recused himself from the meeting.

#### **Discussion Regarding Wage Adjustments for FY2024**

The Select Board and Finance Committee members reviewed a memorandum from Bryan regarding the potential wage & compensation schedule changes that were contemplated at the last meeting. **Chairman Smith** provided overview of the discussion that occurred at the last joint meeting on the topic and the consensus to review options that reduced the number of steps from fifteen (15) to ten (10) steps, increased the percentage between steps from 2% to 3%, and to consider a base wage adjustment of 2% and of 4%. **Chairman Smith** explained that the Treasurer was asked to review each scenario and to provide an estimate of the financial impact. **Selectman Bastarache** discussed his review of the memorandum and explained that he is leaning towards support for the 4% base wage adjustment. **Selectman Bastarache** explained that during his review he was trying to balance the goal of retaining employees with the ability to fund the current year. Daniel discussed his review of the 2% and 4% base wage adjustment options and expressed his general agreement with **Selectman Bastarache** but also expressed concern about how significant some increases might be. **Chairman Smith** discussed the compounding effect of a grade and step compensation system. **Selectman Bastarache** added that employees will access these step increases over the duration of their career with the Town, over a ten (10) year period with the proposed adjustments. Daniel discussed his satisfaction with the answer and expressed hope that it will satisfy taxpayers. Benjamin asked if there is an intention to review the compensation tables again in four (4) to five (5) years and if there will be an expectation for significant

changes. **Selectman Bastarache** acknowledged the concern but added that it is impossible to know what will be considered when the tables are reviewed next.

**Finance Committee Recommendation:** Daniel made a motion to recommend the 4% base wage adjustment with a 3% step change for General Government and Fire Department. The motion was not seconded and failed.

Benjamin discussed his concern that he has heard that some changes could be approximately 20%. **Chairman Smith** reviewed the proposed changes to the table for a 4% base wage and the 3% between steps. Daniel discussed the considerations for employees that have been with the Town for several years. Debra discussed support for amending the wage and compensation tables as proposed, noting that the Town adopted the grade and step system a few years ago and that the proposed adjustments are meant to reflect the feedback and data that they have reviewed. **Chairman Smith** and **Selectman Bastarache** explained, in summary, that the proposed changes do not reflect 20% changes in compensation.

Daniel made a motion to recommend the 4% base wage adjustment with a 3% step change for General Government and Fire Department. Benjamin seconded. **Vote:** Approved by majority, Debra, Benjamin and Daniel voted in favor, Charles voted no, Thomas remained recused from the vote.

Benjamin discussed the idea of setting a “trigger” for a base wage adjustment to be consider in future years with inflation. **Chairman Smith** explained that the Select Board and Finance Committee had previously committed to reviewing the schedules after three (3) years and that the review happened to align with the inflation that had been experienced. Further, **Chairman Smith** suggested that he would like the consideration of a base wage adjustment to be considered annually at the start of the budget season. **Selectman Bastarache** expressed concern about locking in specific language on triggers because several factors can change, and the Select Board anticipates reviewing annually.

**Chairman Smith** discussed the proposal to separate the Highway and Buildings & Grounds positions into their own wage and compensation schedule so that it can be considered separately from General Government in the future. **Chairman Smith** clarified that the proposal is to create the new schedule mimicking the General Government schedule. **Selectman Bastarache** expressed support for the creation of the separate schedule. **Selectman Bembury** explained that he did not believe it was necessary to create a separate schedule. Both **Chairman Smith** and Debra expressed support for establishing a separate wage and compensation schedule.

**Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to amend the wage compensation tables with a 4% base wage adjustment, modifying the number of steps to ten, and increasing each step to a 3% step annually, effective July 1, 2023, for the Fire Department and General Government. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

**Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to create a new wage compensation schedule effective July 1, 2023, labeled the Highway and Buildings & Grounds, utilizing the same table format and amounts of the previously approved General Government compensation schedule. **Chairman Smith** seconded. **Vote:** Approved by majority, **Chairman Smith**, and **Selectman Bastarache** voted in favor and **Selectman Bembury** voted opposed.

**Chairman Smith** clarified that the percentages are what have been approved and the financial team will conduct a final review and issued the updated wage & compensation tables for FY2024.

### **Review of Equipment Operator/ Building Maintenance Laborer Position Recommendation (Revisited)**

The Select Board members discussed appointment of the Equipment Operator/ Building Maintenance Laborer position and the applicable step. **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to approve the promotion of Cody Pease to the position of Equipment Operator/ Building Maintenance Laborer, Grade D Step 1, effective July 1, 2023, with an approximate rate of \$27.25/ hour subject to verification by the financial team of the Town of Erving, utilizing the newly approved Highway Buildings & Grounds table that goes into effect on July 1, 2023, contingent on obtain a CDL within six-months, and subject to a six-month probationary period. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

At 7:41 PM Thomas rejoined the meeting.

### **Discussion of IP Mill Demolition**

Mariah Kurtz, Town Planner, joined the boards to discuss the proposed demolition of the former International Papermill (IP Mill). **Chairman Smith** explained that the topic was added to the agenda to discuss how to proceed with the recommended options and how to present the options to voters. **Selectman Bastarache** discussed recent correspondence between Mariah and MassDevelopment regarding the status of the Site Readiness grant funding for the project, noting that as the Town continues to make progress, Mass Development is not stipulating a date to complete the work or risk losing the funding. Mariah confirmed that understanding. **Selectman Bastarache** discussed the public forum that was held in the winter, noting that attendees had expressed support for a one-time Proposition 2 ½ capital expenditure exclusion for the full amount of \$3,700,000.00. **Selectman Bastarache** asked if the Select Board wanted to prepare for a Special Town Meeting to address FY2024 budget adjustments and to include this topic, or to include this topic as part of the intended FY2025 comprehensive plan, or to plan for this to be a stand-alone topic for a Special Town Meeting. **Selectman Bastarache** explained that he does not believe that the Town is ready to schedule a Town Meeting regarding a Proposition 2 ½ override because the Select Board has not been able to have a substantive conversation regarding whether a Proposition 2 ½ override is necessary to amend the FY2024 for the operating budget. **Selectman Bastarache** explained that he is leaning towards the preparing for a comprehensive FY2025 budget plan and including the IP Mill project. Peter discussed his understanding of the Proposition 2 ½ override process and the preferences expressed at the public forum. **Selectman Bastarache** expressed agreement with the understanding and again noted that he is not sure if the FY2024 operating budget will need any adjustments. Linda explained that she does not want the Town to wait another fiscal year to conduct the work. Linda expressed support for addressing the IP Mill demolition project in the near future and to address the other items at a later meeting.

**Chairman Smith** discussed the feedback that he has received anecdotally since the public forum that was held and need to for the boards to decide on next steps. **Chairman Smith** explained that he would like to complete the project in FY2024 as well. **Chairman Smith** added that he wants the Town to schedule only one (1) Town Meeting regarding proposed Proposition 2 ½ override topics, which would require the boards to understand if the FY2024 operating budget requires an override. **Selectman Bastarache** expressed support for proceeding with the IP Mill demolition project in FY2024. Peter expressed concern about demolition costs increasing if the Town does not act soon. Regarding a timeline, the Select Board members discussed conducting their review of the FY2024 budget within ninety (90) days and the need to set the tax rate. The Select Board, Finance Committee, and Capital Planning Committee members discussed revisiting the topic in a mid to late July joint meeting. **Chairman Smith** summarized that tentatively a Special Town Meeting could be held in September or October 2023. Daniel expressed support and noted the concern that Free Cash was used to fund part of the School Budget at the Annual Town

Meeting the impact that can have on the ability of the Town to sustain operational funding. Daniel also expressed concern about the potential liability that the former IP Mill site poses to the voters.

**Chairman Smith** asked if the topics should be addressed on the same Special Town Meeting warrant. **Selectman Bastarache** expressed support for the topics to be addressed on the same warrant. **Chairman Smith** expressed agreement and wanting to schedule the Special Town Meeting as soon as possible, with the understanding that a Special Town Election is also required for a Proposition 2 ½ override to be considered. Mariah asked if the Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee members are interested in continuing to invite feedback on the funding options from members of the public. If so, Mariah asked if it would be the initial six (6) options that were presented at the public forum or if the options should be more focused. Debra suggested presenting the option for a one (1) time capital expenditure and a five (5) year debt exclusion option. Benjamin discussed support for narrowing options as Debra proposed. **Chairman Smith** expressed agreement.

Regarding the scheduling of the anticipated Special Town Meeting and the Special Town Election, Daniel expressed support for meeting with residents to discuss the topic at a Town Meeting before it is presented on the ballot at an Election. Peter asked about the timelines. Bryan explained that a Special Town Meeting requires a minimum of fourteen (14) days for posting, but practically at least three (3) weeks to prepare and that an Election requires approximately a month to schedule and prepare for. Debra explained that if the Election happened first, she would like a public information session offered. The Select Board members discussed the preference of having the Special Town Meeting occur prior to the Election. Daniel expressed support for having a public information session in addition to the Special Town Meeting and the Election. Jacquelyn Boyden suggested scheduling the Special Town Meeting and the Special Town Election at the same time so that they can occur in the same week. **Chairman Smith** expressed concern about issuing ballot with more than one option. Thomas expressed agreement.

#### **Discussion Regarding FY2023 Budget Adjustments**

Bryan explained that the FY2023 budget continues to be reviewed as the fiscal year ends and that budget adjustments are not necessary at this time. The Select Board and Finance Committee members agreed to hold the possibility of a joint meeting on July 10, 2023, if adjustments are determined to be necessary as the fiscal year closes.

#### **Comprehensive Review for FY2024**

**Chairman Smith** suggested that the Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee tentatively plan for a joint meeting in the second half of July 2023 to discuss a comprehensive review of the FY2024 budget and meet with Department heads. The Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee members all expressed agreement.

#### **Review of Financial Management Software Procurement**

The Select Board, Finance Committee members reviewed a procurement memorandum from Jennifer regarding the request for proposals (RFP) process for a new financial management software and support platform. **Chairman Smith** provided an overview of the project, noting the special article for the new software procurement that had been approved by the voters as well as summarizing several of the goals of the new software. Jennifer joined the meeting to discuss the procurement for a three (3) year agreement. Debra asked how much additional funding would be necessary to award the procurement. Jennifer explained estimated the need for an additional \$14,000.00 explaining that there is sufficient funding to award for the new software platform but that the Town will need to run the existing software for the current year while launching the new software.

Daniel asked for an explanation for the recommendation to award the procurement to Zobrio. Jennifer explained that there were three (3) responses to the RFP from Edmunds-GovTech, Zobrio, and Oracle. Jennifer explained that the response from Oracle was determined to be non-responsive and the remaining two (2) submissions were reviewed and both companies were scheduled for demonstrations. Jennifer explained that the demonstrations included a review of the modules to ensure that they met the features desired by the Town. Jennifer discussed the comparative criteria review that was used while determining the most advantageous proposal. Benjamin asked about the cost for support. Bryan explained that the cost of annual support was included in the annual fees of the proposal. Jennifer added that she contacted the references provided by the companies, noting that she received multiple responses regarding Zobrio that gave positive reviews. Jennifer explained that she heard back from one (1) reference for Edmunds-GovTech, noting that the reference was positive.

**Finance Committee Recommendation:** Daniel made a motion for the Finance Committee to recommend approval of a Reserve Fund transfer of \$14,000.00, for FY2024. Benjamin seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

**Chairman Smith** asked Bryan to prepare an FY2024 transfer request in the amount of \$14,000.00 for the next joint meeting.

The Select Board members discussed support for proceeding with the recommended award. **Selectman Bastarache** motion to award the procurement for the Erving Financial Management Software is awarded to Zobrio of Pembroke, MA, as the most advantageous proposal received, for a three (3) term of July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2026, in the amount of \$223,722.00, and to authorize Treasurer Jennifer Eichorn to sign any and all documents of the contract. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

At 8:27 PM **Chairman Smith** made a motion to adjourn the joint meeting of the Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee and to continue with the Select Board meeting. **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **FY2024 Agreement with Franklin County Solid Waste District for Sludge Hauling & Disposal**

The Select Board members reviewed the proposed FY2024 memorandum of understanding between the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District and the Town for the hauling and disposal of wastewater sludge. The Select Board members expressed no concerns about proceeding. **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to approve the memorandum of understanding by and between the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District and the Town of Erving regarding the hauling and disposal of sludge, for a term of one (1) year beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024. **Chairman Smith** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

#### **FY2024 Agreement with Franklin County Solid Waste District for Transfer Station Hauling & Disposal**

The Select Board members reviewed the proposed FY2024 memorandum of understanding between the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District and the Town for the hauling and disposal of transfer station items such as solid waste, recyclables, scrap metal, appliances, and bulky waste. The Select Board members expressed no concerns about proceeding. **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to approve the memorandum of understanding by and between the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District and the Town of Erving regarding the hauling of recyclables and the hauling and disposal of solid waste; and the hauling and disposal of bulky wastes and the hauling and the disposal of scrap metal and appliances, for a term of one (1) year beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

### **Review of Trash Disposal Agreement with Republic Services**

The Select Board members reviewed a memorandum from Bryan regarding the proposed agreement with Allied Waste Services of MA, doing business as Republic Services of Springfield, for the disposal of solid waste. Bryan recommended a contract with Republic Services for a term of three (3) years to align with the curbside collection contract with Casella Waste Management. The Select Board members expressed no concerns with proceeding. **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to engage Allied Waste Services of MA, doing business as Republic Services of Springfield, for the disposal of municipal solid waste at the McNamara Transfer Station in Springfield, MA, for a three-year term beginning on July 1, 2023, and ending on June 30, 2026, with a FY2024 disposal rate of \$102.00 per ton, a 5% increase in FY2025, and a 5% increase in FY2026. Further to authorize Bryan Smith, Town Administrator, to execute all necessary agreements. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

### **FY2024 Electric Vehicle Charging Rate**

The Select Board members reviewed a memorandum from Bryan regarding the FY2024 electric vehicle charging rate. Bryan explained that electricity supply rates have reduced from their peak during the fall and winter. **Selectman Bembury** asked for reports on usage of the charging stations. Bryan will have the usage reports provided to the Select Board members. **Chairman Smith** asked Bryan to explore whether the Town's charging stations can qualify for a specific electric vehicle rate. Bryan will research that option. Because of the volatility in the cost of the supply, the Select Board members discussed reviewing quarterly. **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to adopt the FY2024 electric vehicle charging rate of \$0.50/kWh effective July 1, 2023. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

### **2023 Mutual Aid Police Officer Appointments**

The Select Board members reviewed a memorandum from Bryan, communicating the request from Chief of Police Robert Holst to appoint mutual aid Police Officers. The Select Board members expressed no concerns with the request. **Chairman Smith** made a motion to appoint the following mutual aid Officers with a term of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024:

- Bernardston Police Department Chief James Palmeri, Sergeant John Richardson, Officer Curtis Weaver, and Officer Thomas Chabot;
- Gill Police Department Chief Chris Redmond and Sergeant Jason Bassett;
- Northfield Police Department Chief Jonathan Hall, Sergeant Alexander Pirozhkov, Officer Oleg Cobileanschi, and Officer Chad Sumner; and
- Leverett Police Department Chief Scott Minckler, Sergeant Steven Gould, and Officer Christian Santiago.

**Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

### **Adjournment**

At 8:42 PM **Chairman Smith** made a motion to adjourn. **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Bryan Smith  
Town Administrator