

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
MONDAY, March 12, 2018**

Meeting was opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons Chris Boutwell and Michael Nelson, Richard Kuklewicz was absent; Town Administrator Steven Ellis, and Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz. Nelson makes introduction and announces meeting is being taped.

Public Comment Period: Individuals will be limited to two (2) minutes each and the Board of Selectmen will strictly adhere to time allotted for public comment
None.

**Jeff Singleton, FRTA Representative
Discuss upcoming FRTA board meetings**

Discussion:

- The Advisory Board meeting is taking place on Thursday, March 15.
- The Annual Meeting is in May.
- There are issues involving the State budget, which may require budget cuts.
- Singleton put forward a bylaw change in order to avoid what occurred a year ago (radical changes in the Montague routes were proposed at the end of the route change process without any public discussion).
- *Boutwell makes the motion to support the intention of the proposed bylaw to ensure that there is proper time for communities to consider route changes that may occur after the formal public hearing process is completed. Nelson seconded, approved. Nelson - Aye, Boutwell - Aye*
- Ellis shared that FRTA will be present at the March 26 meeting as they have concerns about the FY19 budget.
- Singleton would also like to stabilize Route 23 by adding a midday route. He will write a more detailed memo.
- Singleton would like to keep in mind that not much money was saved by eliminating the midday route to Route 23 and then adding double the number of hours by adding Route 21.

Town Administrator's Business

Update on ADA Project and Transition Planning Projects

- We're at a 90% completion rate on the self-assessment for the general non-discrimination policy, effective communication practice, and website accessibility. The next step is for the FRCOG to analyze those data and start to do the physical infrastructure assessment, then have a community engagement process and begin to work on the Transition Plan.
- For the ADA Sidewalk Project, it was determined that the resources could go further than doing what was originally planned (repairing curbs on 4th and 5th Street). In addition, by utilizing some of the Chapter 90 resources, total available funds are closer to \$50,000, which would allow improvements to be made from 2nd Street to 7th Street. This project is almost ready to be put out to bid, and will be an April/May project.

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Discuss Local Options Meals Tax

- The State made available the opportunity some years ago to add a 0.75% meal tax to the base 6.25%.
- Based on 2015 receipts, it would result in about \$65,000 in revenue to the Town.
- Ellis would like to place it on the Town Meeting Warrant.
- Boutwell mentioned that this was brought forward about five years ago and it was "shot down."

Boutwell makes the motion to send the issue of the Optional Meals Tax to Annual Town Meeting. Nelson seconded, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Nelson - Aye.

Southworth Bankruptcy Updates

Ellis: Southworth has been in Chapter 11 bankruptcy since October. They were granted resources that they have financing for to help keep the building functionally operational and secure. There was a sale to another paper manufacturer that was anticipated in December, but the deal fell apart sometime in January. At this point they have most recently filed a motion to convert from Chapter 11 to Chapter 7 bankruptcy, which is an immediate liquidation process. We feel that the Town's interests will be really jeopardized because of the nature of the sale. The motion was denied. Southworth owes us \$320,000. The next step in the process is likely to be an auction, possibly in April. What we want to avoid is a walk-away situation where the Town neither receives its back sewer or real estate taxes. At this point, there are no guarantees, but we will know more in mid-April.

Topics not anticipated

Strathmore Update

Ellis: We've reapplied for abatement money from the EPA. We've engaged our legislative delegation to try to make sure that we do everything to improve our chances for abatement. We also have a plan that is in the midst of a bid process to look at what it would cost to take down the Strathmore. The Governor's Office is likely to file an environmental bond fill sometime late spring/early summer into the extent that we have concerns about any potential environmental impacts associated with the facility on the river.

Executive Session under G.L. c. 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) to discuss collective bargaining strategy with respect to NEPBA. Votes may be taken.

Nelson declared that holding this session in open meeting would be detrimental to the Town's position.

Boutwell makes the motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:40 PM under G.L. c. 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) to discuss collective bargaining strategy with respect to NEPBA. Votes may be taken. We will leave Executive Session only to adjourn the meeting. Nelson seconded, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Nelson - Aye

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Documents and Exhibits:

- Avenue A ADA Bid Timeline
- Avenue A ADA Sidewalk Plans and Specs