

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
171 Worcester Rd  
Sterling, MA

Minutes of February 23, 2021

Present: Deane Day, Paul Lyons, L DeCiero, Kellie Hebert, David Armas, Jason Parker, Geoff Donohue, Paul Gerardi, Susan Genereux, Blaine Bershad

Via Zoom: Arden Sonnenberg, Ed Pacek, Richard Maki

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm

Deane Day, Blaine Bershad present

Minutes of January 26, 2021 were read. Deane Day made a motion to accept the minutes as read. Blaine Bershad seconded the motion. All in favor 2-0.

Public Session: Dick Maki spoke regarding Ch 90 funding in regards to Pavement Management Plan. Ch 90 decreases yearly by small amounts; costs increasing; need to commit to budget at least one major project in the town from town money in order to make an investment for the community. In order to relieve burden to Sterling taxpayers, a suggestion was made to see if the State can take over Rte 140 & 62 that entire section; needs attention and is a dangerous intersection. Per Mr. Frost the state is not going to do anything at this time, it is not a no but not at this time. Dick Maki offered his assistance as a member of the Montachusett Regional Transportation Committee to help move this along.

Kellie Hebert, Town Administrator, stated that she did not come to the meeting to give out employee pay increases. She went on to state she has seen the challenges of fairly compensating employees of this department. She explained that the emphasis was on her to make sure the town compensation plan is being updated, that they need to have a system to follow to make decision making process to town meeting. This needs to be fairly administered based on right criteria and Personnel by Law. She stated per the By Law, as written, it doesn't allow for midyear pay increases. The Town Administrator did state that there was valid rationalizing from Paul Lyons, Superintendent, for the raises he requested. She stated the issue was what authorization does she have as Town Administrator/Personnel Director which is not allowed by law, there is no mechanism in the Personnel By Law except for the budget process and town meeting. The Town Administrator stated she came tonight to explain to us and not to drag her feet, play favorites, or sign a piece of paper. She stated she is committed in respect to this issue; she will write a recommendation, assist in the next steps, and do the right things on behalf of the town and she indicated she will share these with the SelectBoard. The Town Administrator said she is willing to work with the DPW Board but she is not in a position to sign off on the increases at this time. Blaine Bershad stated he wanted to move forward with a temporary fix; stating people deserve better than what they are getting and that it is not in the town's best interest to keep the compensation the way it is now. Paul Gerardi stated they need to do something and take care of the people who have been here a long time. The Town Administrator commented they need to adapt the system to meet the department's new needs and challenges.

Deane Day made a motion to form a Search Committee for the Superintendent position. Blaine Bershad seconded the motion. Deane Day requested the posting of the positions of Water Foreman and Executive Assistant.

#### Superintendent Report Water

- Three prices were obtained for meters being installed; these include handling the calls to set up appointments, mailing letters and investing the time. This is going along good so far; getting the meters in.


- Paul Lyons relayed to the Board that the Town Accountant stated to him that there needs to be a vote to transfer money from Retained Earnings, then goes to the Finance Committee in order to access funds for meters. Blaine Bershad made a motion to vote to transfer \$300,000 from Retained Earnings to pay for ongoing meter replacement of Badger radios that Toomey Water Services has been installing. Deane Day seconded the motion. A vote was taken. All in favor 2-0.
- Deane Day made a motion to vote to install the Badger meter integrated system. Blaine Bershad seconded the motion. A vote was taken. All in favor 2-0.
- Paul Lyons stated there will be a PFA information meeting on Friday February 26<sup>th</sup>, with the DEP. Paul Lyons stated the DEP CERO was given a concise plan on testing and putting it back on line.

#### Superintendent Report DPW

- Paul Lyons relayed to the Board that SMLD will pay fifty percent of the stump grinding costs the old landfill site.
- Paul Lyons stated the Award of Bid for Lazaro Paving Corp. will need to be signed by the Board.
- Paul Lyons stated that both Casella Waste and Waste Management have knowledgeable staff. Both companies are willing to work with us; Casella will maintain what we are doing for another year. Deane Day made a motion to vote to go with Casella Waste and extend the contract for another year and start a new contract for the second year; price the second year \$660,346. A vote was taken. All in favor 2-0.
- Landfill compost feasible option to lower tonnage and get good soil out of it. Bob Spence runs a recycle/compost operation; Black Earth Compost will give a quote to run the whole operation. The first four years pay for all the equipment, the last four years is free. Blaine Bershad is fairly optimistic for the food waste compost operation within the next year. There are so many things to be ironed out on this project.
- MVP project the highest vulnerability is downtown drainage because it is not good and a real concern for flooding.
- Capital Plan - \$49,000 needed for MS4 Permit in order to bring up to date for year three and the annual report. This MS4 Permit is turning into a whole other department and there is no plan to clean retention ponds in this town.
- Budget FY'22 will be adding a few first things ever; asking for a new truck loader for leaves – the current one has holes in the side, road resurfacing money due to impassable roads, 6 wheel dump truck to replace truck #7, wheeled excavator which will also be the department's roadside mower.
- Paul Gerardi stated there was an issue with a plow on a relatively new truck which was disheartening for him to see it damaged.

Next posted meeting date TBD

Motion to adjourn at 9:10pm

  
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 Gregg Aubin, Chairman  
 Department of Public Works Board