

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: March 7, 2023
Time: 9:30am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present in person were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, Matthew O’Sullivan, and Union Representative Jay Osowski,. Present via zoom were Legal Counsel Jeremia Pollard and Personnel Director Cara Becker.

The Board voted to go into Executive Session as allowed by MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Paragraph 1 to discuss a grievance. Open session will be held no earlier than 10:00am. .

Open session was called to order at 10:00am.

Present in-person were Selectboard Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Selectboard member Mary Brazie, Grant Administrator Peg McDonough, Chuck Ogden, Road Superintendent James Noe, and for part of the meeting Fire Chief Joe Schneider. Others participating via zoom: Fred Gordan, Finance Committee Chair Laura Allen, Marj Wexler, Mary McGurn, Finance Committee member Dan Blitzer, and attendee at number 917-439-6974.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

MINUTES:

Acceptance of minutes of the February 14 meeting were deferred again for review of proposed edits. The minutes of the February 21 open and executive sessions and the minutes of the February 28 meeting were accepted with minor edits.

NEW BUSINESS:

Fire Chief Joe Schneider recommended to the Board that the Town hire a full-time Fire Chief and also said that he would be interested in filling that position. A great deal of discussion ensued regarding what the needs are for the Fire Department, prioritizing regionalization, urgency of need for a full-time position described in February 14 minutes, certifications needed for a position, EMT vs First Responders certification, and the possibility of hiring of clerical staff to help with data entry and other administrative needs. Board members were not in agreement on a current path forward. Ultimately the Board agreed to get pricing for a Fire Services Feasibility Study. Selectboard Brazie made it clear for the record that the Egremont Fire Department has no performance issues and is just grappling with changing times and changing needs.

GRANTS:

Grant Administrator Peg McDonough presented the feed back on the 4 expressions of interest (EOI) filed under the One Stop For Growth Program. All 4 received favorable reviews.

Project 1: Predevelopment: Housing site Feasibility Testing: water quality/quantity testing for multiple wells and package septic expansion and pricing. \$250,000

Project 2: Building Construction: Municipal Buildings Analysis: Assess 10 Municipal buildings for space allocations, upgrades or expansion. \$50,000

Project 3: Building Construction: Facilities & Transportation Garage: Construct new garage with \$275,00 cash match from voters. \$325,000

Project 4: Infrastructure: Design Engineering - Backup Water Line: Design new permanent connection to Great Barrington for backup water supply for Egremont Water Department customers in 2 town per capital improvement plan. \$300,000

A match of 10% is needed for projects 1, 2, 4. Project 3 already has a match exceeding 10%. Project 2 and 3 compete under the same grant program.

Peg also reported that the EOI filed for the Municipal Vulnerability Program feedback has come back. This programs grant application is due later than the One Stop For Growth Program applications so there is still time to review the feedback. The Board voted unanimously to instruct Peg to apply under the One Stop For Growth Program for Project 3 Facilities and Transportation Garage to obtain the additional funds needed to construct the garage.

Road Superintendent James Noe said that he was recently made aware of United States Department of Agriculture funding that town's could get for equipment, infrastructure and buildings. Funds through these programs are very competitive and were used to the build the Water Plant in the past. The Town may apply again for future Water Department needs.

Jim Noe asked that the Board put on its list for future grant needs seeking funds for a new and larger salt shed for the Highway Department. Our shed is small which means that its storage capacity is low, thus requiring the town to get frequent salt deliveries which is often hard to coordinate.

ARPA Administrator Peg McDonough reported that there is \$21,133.21 left to allocate in American Rescue Plan Funds. \$150,000 has been set aside for grant match needs.

FOLLOW UPS:

The Regional School District Planning Board is holding a community visioning session on March 18 at the Great Barrington Senior Center.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS:

The Planning Committee for the Vision 2035 update to the Comprehensive Plan and Open Space & Recreation Plans are holding a second public workshop on March 11 at Mount Everett High School.

The next regular meeting of the Board will be March 21 at 10:00am.

Chuck Ogden reported that the Compensation Committee is meeting again on March 17. The Committee agrees that the idea of a full-time Fire Chief is premature.

Meeting adjourned at 11:26am

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

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The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.