

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the sixteenth day of October 2023 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Michael Geary at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Michael Geary, Scott Bill Hirst, Sharon Davis, Robert Burns; Town Manager Brian Rosso, Solicitor Per Vaage and Town Clerk Marita Murray. Stephen Moffitt, Jr. was absent.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER: RIGL SEC. 42-46-5(A)(1) – INTERVIEWS: BOARD & COMMISSIONS: PLANNING BOARD.

POLL VOTE:

IN FAVOR: Geary, Hirst, Davis, Burns

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Council President Geary reported that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Geary, Hirst, Davis, Burns, Moffitt

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Geary, Hirst, Davis, Burns, Moffitt

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Councilors Hirst, Burns, Davis, and Geary announced they were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ORDER

There were no changes requested to the agenda order.

CONSENT AGENDA

It was noted that the Town Manager's Administrative Assistant's Contract had not been submitted for review and would be placed on the next meeting's agenda.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO APPROVE THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2, 2023; APPROVE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 6, 2023; ACCEPT MONTHLY REPORT: TOWN CLERK.

IN FAVOR: Davis, Hirst, Geary

ABSTAIN: Burns

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO APPROVE THE INTERIM TAX ASSESSOR'S CONTRACT.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Davis, Burns, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS

Hopkinton Land Trust

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to reappoint Sarah Windsor to the Hopkinton Land Trust

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO REAPPOINT SARAH WINDSOR TO THE HOPKINTON LAND TRUST.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Davis, Burns, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Tax Board of Review

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to reappoint Jeffrey Hall to the Tax Board of Review.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO REAPPOINT JEFFREY HALL TO THE TAX BOARD OF REVIEW.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Davis, Burns, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

NEW BUSINESS

Planning Board

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to appoint Christina Bolek as a full Planning Board member.

Councilor Hirst asked Solicitor Vaage if the Town Council should appoint Ms. Bolek for a specific term or to replace a previous board member. Councilor Geary noted that she would be replacing another board member for the remainder of their three-year term. Town Clerk Marita Murray advised that Ms. Bolek would be replacing Alfred DiOrio who was set to renew his appointment, so Ms. Bolek would have a full three-year term.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO APPOINT CHRISTINA BOLEK AS A FULL PLANNING BOARD MEMBER TO REPLACE ALFRED DIORIO FOR A THREE YEAR TERM.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Davis, Burns, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Planning Board

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to appoint Stanton Terranova to the Planning Board and to discuss, consider and possibly vote to appoint Edwin James to the Planning Board.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO TABLE ANY VOTES ON THESE TWO APPLICANTS IN ORDER TO INTERVIEW ADDITIONAL APPLICANTS WHO HAVE APPLIED FOR THE PLANNING BOARD. Councilor Discussion:

Councilor Burns noted that they would be tabling this in order to conduct additional interviews in order to pick the most qualified applicants for full members and determine who would sit as alternates. Discussion ended.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Davis, Burns, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Rooftop Solar RFP

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to award the bid for the Rooftop Solar RFP for the Police Department.

Mr. Rosso advised that only one bid was received for this RFP from Sol Power. Their proposal was for 123 commercial panels for \$141,000. He noted that the town received a grant for \$30,000 and a 30% tax credit, which would reduce the cost by \$42,600 leaving a balance of \$69,000. Mr. Rosso believed that there may be an additional grant opportunity coming through a state program that the town could also apply for. He anticipated, after the grants and tax credit, that this project would cost the town approximately \$40,000. He went on to state that the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank has a loan program and if the town realized 86% efficiency it would reduce our annual electric cost of \$19,500 by \$16,800.

Our debt service will cost approximately \$9,500, which would result in the town saving about \$10,000 annually; this would be for a 10-year term in which the debt service will be paid off and thereafter, the town would be saving a minimum of \$19,500, assuming there is no increase in electrical cost. Councilor Davis asked if Sol Power would be installing the panels and Mr. Rosso indicated yes. She also questioned if the town would own the panels once paid and Mr. Rosso noted they would. Mr. Rosso explained that the equipment this company uses comes with an online module that allows the town to check each individual panel's productivity. Mr. Rosso reiterated that there would be an immediate minimum savings of \$10,000 a year in our operating cost and after ten years the savings would be more. This was a three-phase project with phase one being the Police Department, phase two being the Public Works building and phase three being the Town Hall. Councilor Burns asked for clarification on the cost and Mr. Rosso noted that it fluctuated, but it would be roughly around \$9,500. Councilor Burns questioned if the savings would only apply after the panels were paid for and Mr. Rosso stated no, the annual electric bill for the Police Station is currently \$19,500, and the solar installation would cover 86% of this cost, which meant it would reduce the cost by \$16,800; however, there will be a debt service of \$9,500 so they were savings roughly \$10,000 a year. The Council still wished for clarification on the numbers; Mr. Rosso broke it down as follows: annual electric cost of \$19,500, after the solar panels are installed, that cost will then be \$2,700 per year. In addition to the electric bill we will have to pay \$9,500 in debt service for the solar panels for ten years. That is a total cost of \$12,200, which equals a savings of \$7,300 per year until the debt service is paid off in ten years and then the town will save the entire amount.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO AWARD THE BID FOR THE ROOFTOP SOLAR RFP FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO SOL POWER.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Burns, Davis, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

Affordable Connectivity Program

Mr. Rosso wished to make everyone aware of a federal program for residents that is listed on the Hopkinton Town Website, called Internet for All - Affordable Connectivity Program. He explained that it is a federal program for eligible households, who could receive up to \$30 off their monthly internet service or equipment.

Town Hall Expansion

Mr. Rosso noted that he received DEM approval of the wetlands application that was submitted by Crossman Engineering and DRA, the architect. DRA will be drafting the RFP and he anticipated going out to bid for a construction contract in November. Mr. Rosso hoped to break ground by the end of November or in December. Councilor Geary questioned the next steps and Mr. Rosso advised he would be meeting with DRA tomorrow to formulate the next steps, but everything was on track to begin work at the end of November. He felt the time table for construction would be from November 2023 to November 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ron Prellwitz of Main Street noted that IT Director Jeff Frenette was going to set him up with an email for him as a Planning Board member, through the town’s website; however, they had been unable to connect. Mr. Rosso replied that once Mr. Frenette was back from vacation he would make sure that was taken care of.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO ADJOURN IN MEMORY OF NANCY GREENE.

SO VOTED

Marita D. Murray

Town Clerk

Sydney Fernandes

Deputy Town Clerk