

TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE
A JOINT MEETING OF THE D.P.W. SUBCOMMITTEE and TOWN COUNCIL
MONDAY NOVEMBER 7, 2022 6:00pm
RICE ROOM
Minutes (draft)

1. Call to Order 6:00 PM

2. Roll Call: Councilors Michael Marketti (Chair), Gus Steeves, Joe Daou. Citizen Members Kevin Splaine and Steve Lazo. Also in attendance Town Manager Michael McCall, Phil Harding, DPW Project Manager.

3. Consider and approve Joint DPW/Town Council Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2022. Vote 5-0

4. Consider and approve Joint DPW/Town Council Meeting Minutes of October 17, 2022. Vote 5-0

5. Citizens Forum:

Kevin Splaine thanked Phil Harding for taking care of the sidewalk on Chestnut Street. Also asked for an update on meeting concerning East Main Street (sidewalk broken due to construction). The problem will be resolved before winter time as work continues. Also asked for an update on the South Street project. Phil said the work was done this past Friday. Kevin said there is a problem with a dip in the road and sinkholes near the road leading to the water department. Kevin also asked about the open trenches on the West Street project. Discussions continued between the Town Manager, Phil Harding and members concerning open trenches.

Rolande LaRochelle also spoke about the poor road condition and a missing right turn sign on South Street. He also asked about the sign at LaRochelle Way, which is named after his uncle Roger LaRochelle. The spelling of the last name is wrong on the sign. The Town Manger said he would look into it.

George Chenier spoke about the trench on West Street. He said the trench wasn't open, it just wasn't patched. Councilor Lazo said that town regulation is clear that patching is required to prevent a wash out. Steve Lazo confirmed that a trench must be patched.

6. Discuss the Town Manager's appointment of VHB, Tighe & Bond, CHA and Haley Ward Inc. as interim engineers for on-call services. Entertain a motion to recommend to Town Council for confirmation and authorize the Town Manager to sign all related documents. Motion made by Steve Lazo, seconded by Councilor Steeves. Motion passes Vote 5-0.

Discussion: Town Manager McCall spoke about the addition of two engineering firms, CHA and Haley Ward to the list of available interim engineers. Councilor Steeves asked about the engineering firm CHA, who worked on the Overland Project. Steeves said he would have no problem with any of the firms. Kevin Splaine said having four engineering firms would eliminate a conflict. Kevin also asked if the Town Manager has considered contracting with one engineering firm? Town Manager said he has, and his thought is the town might be best served by taking the Town Engineer salary and using it for contracted on-call services. Councilor Lazo asked about the Town Engineer position required in the Charter. Town Manager McCall said he would look into the Charter requirement. Lazo said he has no problem with using a temporary engineering firm. McCall said he will ask the next DPW Director to evaluate whether it is advantageous for the town to hire an in-house engineer, or contract out for services.

7. Review/Discuss transfer for \$150.00 from #600440-520100 Sewer R&M to #600440-530700 Testing & Eval to provide funding for increased sewer testing fees. Entertain a motion to recommend to Town Council for approval. Motion by Kevin Splaine, second by Steve Lazo. Motion passes Vote 5-0

Discussion: Phil Harding spoke to this issue. He said he spoke to the sewer department there is an increase in testing fees. Kevin Splaine asked about the process for transfers, and why the Town Manager can't just make these small transfers in-house without Council approval? Councilor Lazo had one word, "Forklift." Town Manager spoke about agenda #8. Councilor Adams said most towns do it that way, but the Town Charter was changed to make the Town Manager position less heavy. Adams said the Charter Review committee could change it. George Chenier said transfer approval by Council was put in place to eliminate potential abuse. Councilor Steeves cited the section of the Charter which pertains to transfers, confirming that the Council has the final vote on transfers. Steeves also spoke about the transfer of funds between departments one year, to purchase a forklift, which he said no one was told about. Councilor Daou spoke in favor of keeping it the way it is, with Councillors voting on all transfers. Councilor Lazo also spoke about transfers, and believes in "Trust but Verify" Department Heads making transfers.

8. Review/Discuss the transfer for \$272.20 from Project #68100 DPU Rideshare Surcharge to #001499-553300 DPW Road Materials. Entertain a motion to recommend to Town Council for approval. Motion made by Splaine, second by Lazo. Motion passes Vote 5-0

Discussion: Town Manager McCall spoke about the Department of Public Utilities every year transferring back a proportionate share of the amount of rides that originate in each community, from ride share service such as Lyft and Uber. Councilor Steeves asked what \$272.20 would actually buy us for road material? Phil Harding said maybe two ton of coal ash.

9. Review/Discuss the Department of Public Works' request to declare as surplus the following items and entertain a motion to recommend to Town Council for approval

▪ Plotter Printer ▪ Ford Ranger

Motion made by Splaine, seconded by Lazo. Motion passes Vote 5-0

Discussion: Phil spoke of the items to be declared surplus. Councilor Steeves asked if some could be sold for parts. Phil said that might be a possibility. Councilor Lazo commended Phil's decision to declare the items surplus. George Chenier asked how the items are disposed? The Town Manager said sometimes the town uses a website that puts items out to bid.

10. Adjourn: Motion made by Steeves, seconded by Splaine. Vote 5-0 (6:20 PM)

Respectfully submitted by Chair Councilor Marketti